

# Briefing paper: The ITE Experience and Community Cohesion

Sara Bennett, January 2010

*The governing body of a maintained school shall, in discharging their functions relating to the conduct of the school: promote the well-being of pupils at the school, and in the case of a school in England, promote community cohesion*

## Preparing beginning teachers to understand the challenges

This briefing paper has been prepared by Sara Bennett, ITE/ NQTs Network Manager, Global Learning Network South West, for ITE providers in the region. It takes into account Ofsted expectations of ITE providers with regard to the duty to promote community cohesion.

*What is community cohesion?*

*What are the community cohesion standards?*

*What does community cohesion mean in practice?*

*What does Ofsted expect of ITE Providers in relation to community cohesion?*

*How does a school contribute towards community cohesion?*

## Introduction

Section 21(4) of the Education Act 2002 (as inserted by section 38 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) states that:

*'The governing body of a maintained school shall, in discharging their functions relating to the conduct of the school*

*promote the well-being of pupils at the school, and*

*in the case of a school in England, promote community cohesion'*

This duty came into effect on 1 September 2007. From 1 September 2008, HMCI has a duty under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 (as inserted by section 154 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) to report on the contribution made by schools to community cohesion.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) published *Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion* to support schools in implementing the duty (<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk> - Reference DCSF-00598-2007).

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## What is community cohesion?

This extract from the DCSF guidance defines community cohesion in the context of schools as follows

*By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.*

Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Education and

Skills, 2006. Based on the Government and the Local Government Association's definition first published in Guidance on Community Cohesion, LGA, 2002 and resulting from the Cattle Report in 2001.

For schools, the term 'community' has a number of dimensions including *The school community* – the children and young people it serves, their parents, carers and families, the school's staff and governing body, and community users of the school's facilities and services

*The community within which the school is located* – the school in its geographical community and the people who live or work in that area. This applies not just to the

immediate neighbourhood but also to the city or local authority area within which a school is located

*The UK community* – all schools are by definition part of this community

*The global community* – formed by EU and international links

## What are the community cohesion standards?

The standards are framed by four strategic aims and their related objectives

### 1. Close the attainment and achievement gap

Assessment arrangements enable all pupils to attain at the highest level possible and do not put any group of pupils at a substantial disadvantage.

***For schools, the term 'community' has a number of dimensions including: the school community, the community within which the school is located, the UK community, and, the global community***

All staff have an equal opportunity for promotion to all levels within the school.

The school contributes to capacity building within the community.

### 2. Develop common values of citizenship based on dialogue, mutual respect and acceptance of diversity

Curriculum content contributes to an appreciation of cultural diversity, and challenges prejudice, bias and stereotype.

The mainstream

curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn about and become involved in the life of their communities.<sup>6</sup>

Behaviour and discipline policies and procedures reflect the commitment to developing mutual respect and acceptance of diversity.

All staff and governors have the knowledge and understanding to provide opportunities to develop common values of citizenship based on dialogue, mutual respect and acceptance of

diversity.

### 3. Contribute to building good community relations and challenge all types of discrimination and inequality

The school works with the Local Education Authority and other providers to train its staff and governors on their responsibilities under relevant legislation.

All staff and governors have the knowledge and understanding to promote good community relations and challenge discrimination.

The school takes positive steps to promote good community relations.

Partnership arrangements are conducted in line with the school's equality policies.

4. Remove the barriers to access, participation, progression, attainment and achievement.

The criteria and terms of offering a place at school, or placement at a college or work-based learning reflect the local 'catchment area' or produce a broad intake that is representative of the community and that complies with legislation on equal opportunities and school admissions (including specific provisions for faith schools).

The school excludes the minimum number of pupils with no significant differences in exclusion rates between different social or ethnic groups. All pupils have access to the full-curriculum and no one group is over-represented in vocational routes or

disapplied from the National Curriculum.

The staff profile represents the diversity of British society.

The governing body reflects the communities it serves.

All pupils, parents and community members have equal access to education and training provision in the local area.

**What does community cohesion mean in practice?**

*External relationships*

A high degree of connectivity between schools and the different communities they serve  
Opportunities for partnership, dialogue and mutual understanding

A well-connected network of agencies and

local groups

A sense of global, national and local connectedness

*Making the links*

Faith groups

Ethnic groups

Cultural groups

Socio-economic groups

*Internal relationships*

Harmony and understanding between staff and children from different ethnic, religious and social groups

Celebration of commonalities

Respect for difference

A safe, inclusive ethos  
Zero tolerance of racist/other offensive banter and name-calling

A curriculum and behaviour code that promote the above

**What does Ofsted expect of ITE Providers in relation to community cohesion?**

Ofsted Inspectors are tasked with ensuring that ITE providers prepare trainees for the challenges of promoting community cohesion, both in their school based placements and in their early teaching careers.

Whilst trainees would not be expected to lead on this agenda, they would be expected to

Demonstrate a broad understanding of the

duty to promote community cohesion

Demonstrate an understanding of how schools can successfully contribute towards community cohesion

Demonstrate an understanding of the cross curricular nature of community cohesion

Show an interest in how their specific school has developed it's own community cohesion strategy

Have started to develop class based resources, linked to their own

subject area, which help to promote this duty

ITE Providers should:

Ensure that their own values and processes reflect a commitment to community cohesion

Ensure that their trainees are equipped to understand and contribute to the duty to promote community cohesion

Beginning teachers should understand the challenges of promoting community cohesion, and be given time in their ITE experience to develop an awareness of the importance of

Acting as positive role models

Challenging stereotypes and fear of difference

Encouraging a climate of

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learning and mutual respect

Stressing the social benefits of diversity

Celebrating achievements

Promoting curiosity

'Joining it up'

Beginning teachers should be encouraged to build confidence to adopt a 'zero tolerance' approach to

Bullying, physical attacks, abuse of personal property

Offensive language, jokes, name calling

Putting others under pressure to conform

Teasing about names, dress, customs, accents, food, religion, appearance

Refusal to mix with other ethnic/ social groups

Graffiti/ offensive literature

### **How does a school contribute towards community cohesion?**

All schools, whatever the mix of pupils they serve, are responsible for equipping those pupils to live and thrive alongside people from many different backgrounds. For some schools with diverse pupil populations, existing activities and work aimed at supporting pupils from different ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds to learn with, from and about each other, will already be contributing towards community cohesion. For other schools where the pupil population is less diverse or predominantly of one socioeconomic, ethnic,

religious or non-religious background, more will need to be done to provide opportunities for interaction between children and young people from different backgrounds. Just as each school is different, each school will make an important but different contribution to community cohesion.

Broadly, schools' contribution to community cohesion can be grouped under the three following headings

*Teaching, learning and curriculum* – helping children and young people to learn to understand others, to value diversity whilst also promoting shared values, to promote awareness of human rights and to apply and defend

them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action – for example through the new 'Identity and Diversity: living together in the UK' strand within citizenship education.

*Equity and excellence* – to ensure equal opportunities for all to succeed at the highest level possible, striving to remove barriers to access and participation in learning and wider activities and working to eliminate variations in outcomes for different groups.

*Engagement and extended services* – to provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from

different backgrounds and build positive relations, including: links with different schools and communities; the provision of extended services; and opportunities for pupils, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups.

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## Appendix 1

# Ofsted Inspection of schools' duty to promote community cohesion

Inspectors will report on schools' duty to promote community cohesion by a new judgement in the leadership and management section of the inspection report: How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?

If ITE providers understand what the Inspectors are looking for in their inspection of schools, this then in turn helps them to understand how best to prepare trainees.

### Key questions for schools - Minimum expectations

The guidance is built around the three core questions that inspectors should ask of schools and can be summarised as follows

#### *1. What do you understand about the context of your school in respect of community cohesion?*

Schools must show that they have developed an understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of their community in a local, national and global context.

#### *2. How has the school's understanding of its context informed a planned set of actions to promote community cohesion?*

The school should have taken an appropriate set of planned actions based on an analysis of its context and should be evaluating the impact of its work.

Inspectors should be able to discuss the planned actions with senior staff. Their observations of, and discussions with, learners should enable them to consider whether these are appropriate.

#### *3. What impact are you having?*

The school should be able to demonstrate the impact of its actions and that they have a positive impact on community cohesion within the school and beyond.

Inspectors should consider whether the school's actions have had a positive impact within and beyond the school. For example, do learners have an understanding of common values and how do they feel about working alongside people from different communities? This will be evidence of impact.

Preparation for the inspection is likely to include analysing the SEF and RAISEonline for data about the school community and the community within which it is located.

The RAISEonline chart 'Basic characteristics of your school' will show the school deprivation indicator, the level of free school meals and the proportion of pupils who do not have English as their first language – but these figures do not show the extent of variation which is crucial in considering these issues.

The RAISEonline chart of basic characteristics by National Curriculum year group will show how the school community changes year by year – an inspection trail might identify some of these variations and see how the school is responding to them. The RAISEonline ethnicity chart provides some more detailed information, but the SEF may be more up-to-date.

The RAISEonline census information chart may be helpful if the vast majority of pupils are from one ward – but link this to the school's deprivation indicator.

Information about the achievements of different pupil groups in the SEF and RAISEonline may raise questions about equity of provision.

The views of pupils and their knowledge and understanding about their community and the way the school promotes cohesion within

it, form an essential part of the evidence base for the judgement on how well the school contributes to community cohesion.

Inspectors will need to explore within discussions with pupils how effective they feel the school's work has been in this respect by assessing their knowledge and views of the diversity of their local and national communities. It is essential to ascertain pupils' views on how well they get on with different groups within the school and local communities, and what the school has done to promote good relationships and mutual understanding.

When evaluating each of the following, inspectors should assess how effectively the school is contributing to community cohesion through the quality of its provision, its promotion of equity and excellence, and the engagement of its pupils:

*How effective is the school in identifying what needs to be done to promote community cohesion, in particular taking into account the needs of the communities it serves?*

Include the extent to which the school is aware of the implications of community cohesion for the school and the curriculum as well as the needs and cohesiveness of learners and their families from different ethnic, religious, non-religious and socio-economic groups. Evaluate how the school has identified these needs. For example, has the school worked effectively in partnership with other agencies to identify the language needs of its community?

*What is the school doing to promote the engagement of all pupils in its own community, particularly of hard to reach groups such as those for whom English is an additional language or are from more socio-economically deprived groups, or, in rural schools, those who live in isolated areas?*

Following on from the first bullet, do the school's actions for these groups link with the needs identified by the school? Inspectors might take a look at specific groups within the context of the particular community, considering how the school is providing for these groups in its teaching and curriculum, and evaluating its effectiveness; for example, through increased contact with their parents/carers. Are these groups represented on the governing body? If not, can the school convincingly explain why not? How does the school seek and use their views? What is the school doing to promote their engagement in the community through extended services which build positive interaction, excellence for all and equity of learner outcomes?

*How effective is the school in contributing to community cohesion within the community in which it is located?*

Following on from the first bullet, inspectors should consider how representative of the local community the school is (including ethnicity, religious, non-religious and socio-economic aspects), and what it has done to promote cohesion with those groups who may not be prominently represented within its own school community, including its links with other schools with a contrasting pupil population. How effective are learners' opportunities to meet and work with representatives of other communities?

*How effective is the school in contributing to the cohesiveness of the wider community through developing learners' understanding of the UK community, for example by promoting common identity and values, the appreciation and valuing of diversity, the awareness of human rights, and the skills for participating in society?*

This aspect will also involve bringing together evidence across the inspection – for example about the curriculum, teaching, ethos and the school's citizenship, PSHE, RE and SMSC provision.

*How effective is the school in contributing to the cohesiveness of the wider community through developing learners' understanding of other communities both in Europe and globally?*

Inspectors should consider the school's use of the curriculum, teaching, learning and extra-curricular activities in raising pupils' understanding of others' lives and in appreciating diversity. For example, schools may have developed innovative links with schools abroad, but should be able to demonstrate how this has a beneficial impact for all pupils.

*How does the school know whether its strategy is successful?*

Evaluate how well it understands its own performance in, for example, promoting achievement for all groups, as well as their personal development and well-being – therefore part of this aspect will involve bringing together evidence from other aspects of the inspection.