

High quality relationships and sex education: Cale Green Primary School

URN: 106091

Region: North West

Remit: Schools

Provider background

[Cale Green Primary School](#) is in Stockport, Greater Manchester. It serves children from a wide range of backgrounds, reflecting the diversity found in the local community. For more information about the school visit: www.calegreen.stockport.sch.uk.

Brief description

At Cale Green Primary School, involving families has long been an important factor in delivering relevant and age-appropriate relationships and sex education (RSE), which successfully supports children from diverse socio-economic, cultural and faith backgrounds. The school responds to the needs of the children and their families through its detailed knowledge of the school community and regular consultation with parents on the content of RSE.

The good practice in detail

The school's inclusive ethos

School leaders see high quality RSE as essential in creating an inclusive ethos and central to developing healthy relationships and behaviours where children are able to assess and manage risk. The school proactively seeks the views of families, especially those whose voice may not usually be heard, for example where English is spoken as an additional language. The views of all parents and carers are actively sought, allowing the parent voice to be clearly heard and responded to.

For the school's inclusive vision to be realised, staff often had to explore views and opinions that are not the same as those held in school, discussing any perceived barriers and working with families to overcome them.

Developing the RSE programme

Following a review of RSE, the provision was substantially increased to better meet the children's needs and is now delivered as part of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. It begins in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 with activities based on friends, feelings and families. This is built on in Key Stage 2 where pupils learn about reproduction, puberty and relationships.

After consultation with teachers and parents it was decided that Year 5 was an appropriate stage to teach pupils about puberty. However, this decision is kept under review, with the recognition that early onset of puberty is becoming more common and that children are better safeguarded if they learn about puberty before it begins.

During a number of health events, staff and parents worked together to look in detail at the activities and resources contained in the RSE scheme, which allowed them to identify the challenges that delivering the content might present. This immediately broke down any barriers parents had as they were able to discuss their concerns with other parents and school staff in an open, supportive environment. Following these discussions, parents and staff agreed together that the RSE scheme was appropriate. A joint decision was taken to introduce it, supported by governors, some of whom were present at the meetings.

Staff met with parents again following a revision of the scheme, which re-established the strong relationships. These have continued to develop. Parents talked to staff about the lessons and were reassured by the teachers' ability to demonstrate their 'matter of fact' approach to the teaching. The school has also undertaken to keep parents regularly informed through a termly RSE newsletter detailing the broad areas of study and the teaching strategies used to deliver lessons. In addition, it details how teachers deal sensitively and appropriately with any questions or concerns from the children and informs parents of any enrichment activities that will be used to support RSE. In response to parents' and teachers' concern about the impact of technology on children, the school has run regular e-safety workshops.

Overcoming barriers – engaging parents from the range of ethnic groups and religious backgrounds represented in the school

Although all the different groups of parents were fully represented when discussing RSE, the school realised that some parents from the minority ethnic groups did not have a strong voice at these meetings. In response to this concern, an additional RSE parental discussion group was set up that also included the school learning mentor, a member of the senior management team, a parent governor (who works in the field of sexual health) and staff from Stockport's Ethnic Diversity Service.

In this very safe and supportive environment, the group articulated that, although they sometimes found the content of the RSE programme challenging, they fully understood its importance and supported the scheme in school. In fact, the group expressed the need for *more* RSE and for *more* information, support and guidance.

This was especially in relation to how to talk to their sons about puberty, the changes that boys experienced, and the boys' own responsibilities.

In response to this desire for more information and guidance, and at the suggestion of parents, the school set up a lending library of resources to help parents understand more clearly the issues their children are facing and to reinforce at home the learning which is taking place in school. Parents have visited an educational book supplier to choose the books, which other parents can now borrow.

Impact

The vast majority of parents have been highly supportive. The school is now able to deliver an RSE programme on which **no children are withdrawn from lessons by their parents** and where the good relationships between home and school have been further strengthened. Feedback from staff, parents and children has been invaluable in informing future planning of RSE and a section of the school community now has a stronger voice. The impact of staff, governors and families working together has further strengthened the position of the school at the heart of the Cale Green community.

What the children say about RSE at Cale Green

'If you need to ask a question but you don't want to say, you know you will get the answer when the teacher has thought about it.'

'Everyone is given the chance to ask questions – even silly ones!'

'It is still really important for boys to know what is going to happen to girls and the other way round.'

'My mum said it was good I was learning because I needed to know all the facts for when I'm older.'

'It would be worse to learn it at high school when things were already happening.'

'The teacher told us about puberty in a factual and calm way.'

'We were allowed to laugh but had to use the proper words which was a bit embarrassing.'

What the parents say about RSE at Cale Green

'When we hide something from them they become more curious.'

'This meeting is good for parents to know how to start a conversation with our children.'

'It's made me think about what and when I will say to my daughter. I understand now we need to talk about this before she starts her period. It's not enough to leave it and let her find out from her friends like I did.'

'I didn't know you talked about feelings and things. It's good to talk about this especially for boys because they keep things to themselves.'

'It's changed my thinking. We need to talk to our children before they ask us.'

'This has been good. I have learnt about how important this is when you teach my child about these things. I want to know the words I need to use now.'

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