

Primary Curriculum Review

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About RoSPA:

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (**RoSPA**) is a national charity, whose mission is to save lives and prevent injuries (www.rospa.com). Unintentional injury is the leading cause of death to children and young people of school age. We support the strategic policy direction outlined in Every Child Matters, which includes staying safe as one its five outcomes for all children and young people. The new Staying Safe Action Plan has provided a much needed focus on injury prevention for children and young people. However, there is concern that past efforts to help children and young people stay safe has made adults and young people more risk averse, which has limited their freedom to explore, experience challenge, take risks and learn valuable lessons from that experience. See for example Cotton Wool Kids (HTI); Better Safe Than Sorry (Audit Commission). At **RoSPA** we advocate that children should be as safe as necessary, rather than as safe as possible, so we also support proposals to increase opportunities for adventurous play (Staying Safe Action Plan, to increase access to LASER events (Learning About Safety by Experiencing Risk) and the Manifesto for Education Outside the Classroom.

Safety and risk education are key to achieving **RoSPA's** charitable mission.

Our aim is to bring about:

More effective education about safety and risk for all

To promote effective safety and risk education relevant to all levels in society, throughout compulsory education, in the workplace and among educators, safety significant professionals, the media and policy makers.

We have eight strategic objectives with respect to safety and risk education (<http://www.rospa.com/safetyeducation/ourvision.htm>) of which the following three are most relevant to this review:

- **Integration of safety and risk education into the statutory and non-statutory curriculum.** An integrated approach to safety and risk across the curriculum in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in the context of Healthy Schools and the frameworks for, Personal Social and Health Education, citizenship, post 16 education and vocational training with a focus on acquiring relevant skills.
- **A whole school approach to safety and risk.** Promotion of a whole school or college approach to safety and risk including policy, curriculum and an ethos which encompasses both teaching safely and teaching safety.
- **Inspection of safety and risk education and policy.** Inclusion of safety and risk education and Health and Safety by OFSTED and other inspecting and examining bodies.

In working to achieve these objectives **RoSPA** contributed to the Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculum review, and to the consultation for the Staying Safe Action Plan. We recently completed a review of the effectiveness of safety education, as part of the Staying Safe Action Plan, summarised in 10 key principles:
http://www.rospa.com/safetyschools/info/ReviewSE_briefing_paper.pdf

Our evidence for the primary curriculum review focuses on the content and organisation of safety education, within the curriculum for Personal, Social, Health and Economic education curriculum (PSHE education).

RoSPA asserts that to be effective, PSHE education should become a statutory part of the curriculum, in order that teachers can receive the training they need to deliver the programmes of study, and so that curriculum time is organised to encompass the content.

Content of the PSHE education programme of study

Why should safety and risk education be part of the primary PoS for PSHE education?

Injury prevention, particularly in the form of road safety education, has long been a feature of the primary curriculum although it has been a lower priority for secondary schools. The reform of the secondary school curriculum acknowledged that personal well being, which includes safety education, and economic wellbeing and financial capability rely on young people acquiring an understanding of risk and the skills of risk assessment and risk management. As a result the programme of study (PoS) for PSHE education will include risk as a key concept and risk management as a key process from September 2008.

The PSHE education framework for Key Stages 1 and 2 should provide the foundation on which the PoS for KS3 and 4 can build. This is particularly important with respect to safety and risk education as the concepts of safety and risk are abstract, but the skills of risk management are needed throughout a child's development so they can be confident, safe and active at school, at play and at home. Transitions (from Key Stage 2 to 3 and from school to the workplace) are particularly challenging for injury prevention as young people encounter unfamiliar environments, novel hazards and require new skills to manage the risks. Preparation for these challenges requires children and young people to have developed the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills and to have rehearsed them in a range of familiar environments, and then with increasing levels of unfamiliarity and complexity. The foundation for these important *transferable* skills must be laid in the primary school.

It is equally important that children and young people acquire a realistic understanding of risk so that they are able to achieve the many positive outcomes that come from sensible risk taking.

Research has shown that young people develop the complex knowledge, understanding and skills needed as they grow and change and as they gain more experience. In the example below we have mapped the development of road safety skills against what is understood about the development of young people's understanding of risk. The central column outlines what most young people can be expected to know, understand and, importantly, take responsibility for during each key stage. It is clear that our expectations of young people often go beyond this, and that some young people demonstrate much greater capability than described. It is also clear that this understanding can be applied to other areas of safety e.g. personal safety, home safety and leisure safety.

Becoming a safe road user

<i>Becoming a safe road user</i>	<i>Becoming risk aware</i>	<i>Key Stage</i>
Be aware of the range of road hazards which increase the risk of road accidents. Recognise and, where appropriate, use existing measures to control risks such as, seat belts, speed limits, traffic calming measures	Can identify a range of hazards to self and others in unfamiliar situations based on advice, training and prior experience. Can assess risk to self and others and take action to control risks.	Key Stage 5, Young worker, pre-driver
Be aware of the needs of a range of road users including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Recognise, use and explain the role of control measures intended to reduce the chance of serious injury such as pedestrian crossings, cycle helmets, street lighting. Become familiar with the Highway Code.	Can identify some hazards in unfamiliar situations based on advice, training and prior experience. Can assess risk to self and others and make recommendations to control risks.	Key Stage 4
Identify and use safely a variety of safe routes to school and leisure facilities in your neighbourhood on foot, by bike and using public transport. Be able to explain what is meant by a safe route.	Can identify hazards and assess some risks to self in familiar situations and make recommendations intended to manage the risk.	Key Stage 3
Understand and explain simple road safety advice such as 'Stop, look and listen'. Apply the rules in a controlled setting in your neighbourhood.	Can identify familiar hazards and explain how to manage the risk to oneself and others in familiar situations.	Key Stage 2
Follow rules to keep safe by the roadside such as 'hold hands with an adult', 'wear a seat belt'.	Can describe ways of keeping safe in familiar settings.	Foundation and Key Stage 1

Why is risk education important for other aspects of PSHE education?

Risk underpins the many and complex health and safety related decisions that children and young people make on a daily basis, whether about enjoying activity, friendships, what to buy, following instructions or advice intended to keep them safe. Our understanding of children's developing understanding of risk can be used to plan the delivery of other aspects of injury prevention, but also other topics within PSHE education. Risk is a fundamental concept and risk management should be a key process in the development of a programme of study for PSHE education in Key Stages 1 and 2.

A word about vocabulary! Risk is a word that is used in different ways by different professions, by the public and, as our research shows, interpreted in different ways by children and young people at different ages. We have adopted the term keeping safe for use with children in Key Stage 1, but introduced the technical language of hazard, risk and risk management in Key Stage 2. The use of a consistent vocabulary of risk by those working with children and young people will assist the understanding of this important concept, but also the development of transferable skills of risk management.

Organisation

What is the most effective way to organise safety and risk education within PSHE education?

There are many different ways to organise PSHE education in primary education and teachers often prefer to blend different approaches according to the needs of the young people, timetabling constraints and availability of contributions from partners. Nevertheless some approaches are weaker than others.

The table below describes some of those strengths and weaknesses.

Approach	Strengths	Weaknesses
As a special event eg visit from an 'expert', as a collapsed day, or health week	Provides a high profile for the staff, pupils and wider community.	Is a one off event, which has little relevance to everyday life or the rest of the curriculum. Can become a circus of activity with no time for reflection or sustained action. Requires careful planning.
Dedicated time for PSHE education	Recognises the importance of the subject. Can be delivered by a specialist teacher or team or by the class teacher who has had specialist training. Can provide an opportunity for external contributors with careful planning.	Can be inflexible. Can inhibit transferability of knowledge skills and understanding to other aspects of everyday life or the rest of the curriculum. Some schools colleges may not have staff with specialist knowledge
Integrated into other subject areas	Can assist with transferability of knowledge skills and understanding to other areas of the curriculum. Can appear to save valuable classroom time.	Unless the PSHE education objective is clearly articulated, assessed and evaluated the learning may be dominated by the other subject
Integrated into topics	Assists knowledge, understanding and skill to be integrated into broader examples, with relevance to real life.	Does not integrate well with all topics, so careful planning is needed. As above the PSHE education objective needs to be clear to the learner, assessed and evaluated
Whole school approach	Ensures what is learned in the formal and informal curriculum is reinforced in school policy, in its relationships with external contributors and with parents, carers and the wider community. Helps young people to have a voice. Enables the school to meet requirements of National Healthy Schools Programme	Requires good planning and co-ordination

Recommendation:

Safety and risk education for children in Key Stages 1 and 2 would be most effective if it were an identifiable aspect of the curriculum, delivered by teachers, as part of a whole school approach, supported by external contributors where there are opportunities for prior planning and co-teaching.