



explore...

lasting relationships and marriage

IMPACT STATEMENT

Explore exists to help young people to learn about long term relationships, including marriage. We measure our impact in three ways:

1. *Addressing a need.* The July 2010 Ofsted Report on PSHE (*Note 1 below*) in secondary schools (which is the most recent), stated that in many schools the programmes of study were not covered in full. It pointed out that the areas that suffered included aspects of sex and relationships education.
⇒ **Explore** assists to address these generally widespread omissions.

The current Ofsted website identifies one example of outstanding education in the field of sex and relationships, which is John Henry Newman School in Hertfordshire (*Note 2*) Ofsted highlights that the school supports the parents and carers as the primary educators in SRE, and it responds to the needs of the students to enable them to make responsible and well-informed decisions as young people. Teachers lead most of these sessions; but the issue of relationships is handled by TenTen, a visiting drama group. (*Note 3*)

We note with satisfaction that, since its inception, **Explore**'s approach has always been on exactly the same basis as that adopted by this highly-commended school. As it happens, there are two differences: our approach is to offer authentic examples of relationships, rather than actors; and we are not tied to any particular faith group.

⇒ **Explore**'s approach is in line with the very best practice.

2. *Transforming lives.* It is fundamental to an **Explore** session that it should make a profound difference to the understanding and confidence of the young people involved.

This is accomplished by three steps. First, in the introduction to a session, we set out the scope of the dialogue, which is to talk about long-term relationships, and then we enquire how many pupils have actually discussed such matters before (usually, it's less than 5%).

⇒ By this exchange, the young people know the intention of the **Explore** session is to be transformational.

Note 1 <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/personal-social-health-and-economic-education-schools>

Note 2 <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/good-practice-resource-outstanding-sex-and-relationships-education-catholic-context-john-henry-newma>

Note 3 <http://tententheatre.co.uk/about/index.html>

Secondly, the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils in the course of an **Explore** session can be seen and judged. In our experience, we have noted there is never any disturbance or distraction: the attentiveness is total. And the qualities of reflectiveness, of empathy and of earnestness that are observed among the young people taking part simply cannot be faked.

⇒ By these observations (and we take care to make notes on every occasion), we can conclude that the **Explore** experience is enthralling for the participants at the time.

Thirdly, the formal feedback of pupils after an **Explore** session indicates in their own words their assessment of the session. (Again, we take care to read and collate the feedback received). Always, there are high or very high ratings (usually, 80 or 85%) given for the content and value of the **Explore** session. In passing, we note this is significantly higher than the 7/10 student rating in the example given by Ofsted for the “Teenage Kicks” session run by Walton High, the school Ofsted names as being outstanding school across the whole PSHE syllabus. (Note 4)

More impressive are those students who give verbal responses. Often they make heart-breaking remarks about the new realisation and personal hope that arose from the **Explore** session. Examples of these many and various remarks are given in **Explore**’s publicity material and website.

⇒ By such feedback, we can see examples of the extent of appreciation for the **Explore** experience across the group, and also the depth of it, for particular individuals.

Altogether, we can see and measure that the **Explore** experience is transformational for the young people because i) that’s how it is presented, ii) that’s the manner in which they participate and iii) that’s how they assess it.

3. Making a lasting difference

The intention is that the valuable lessons learnt by students at an **Explore** session should be held permanently.

In some instances this requirement is easy to satisfy. Certain topics covered in **Explore** dialogues are so vivid, that the lessons learned from them can be learned only once, and memorably at that. More broadly, however, there is a general problem in pinpointing exactly which small event might have been the vital cause that helped a young person to develop a sympathetic and responsible attitude towards relationships: **Explore** is certainly a help, but it is necessarily difficult to quantify how much.

John Wright is Head of PSHE at Bishop Challenors School. He recently said: “*We regard the **Explore** session as a tool to complete the relationships side of the PSHE programme for Y10 pupils. It is a unique approach that is invaluable to pupils, and unavailable elsewhere – it certainly could not be delivered by the regular teaching staff. As a PSHE advisor to the Diocese, I always recommend **Explore** to other schools I meet.*”

*“Pupils appreciate the sheer authenticity of volunteer couples in the **Explore** experience, which enables the students to ask and find out from real examples just how relationships can continue to be close and supportive, and adapt and face up to life’s challenges. Later, we find the same pupils reaching Y11 with a much more balanced and long-term view about relationships and how they would go about handling them. Quite often they refer back to the **Explore** experience they remember from the previous year. They can recall the anecdotes clearly, and use them as firm evidence for the judgements and plans that they form.*”

*“We have been using **Explore** for five or six years. Over that time we have seen the value it gives to the PSHE curriculum, and the better preparation of our pupils for the realities of adult life. “*

Note 4

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/filedownloading/?file=documents/surveys-and-good-practice/w/Walton%20High%20-%20ALD%20Evaluation%20Summary%20Teenage%20Kicks%20Oct%202011.docx&refer=1>