Addressing Extremism Through the Classroom

A Research Report from the Centre for Teachers & Teaching Research

Foreword

9/11 Changed the World.

It was the worst terrorist attack in history claiming the lives of 2977 innocent people.

A shocking moment in time. A moment in which we all remember where we were… However, in 2021, children in our primary and secondary schools were still to be born.

For them 9/11 is an event cited in history books, yet its importance to how we live together in a tolerant, cohesive and peaceful world is as relevant today as it was in 2001.

In the broad context of modern history, 9/11 was a pivotal moment for extremism. And whilst young people should understand the events, causes and consequences of 9/11, it is critical that all manifestations of extremism, past and present, are addressed in our classrooms. Therefore, in the run-up to the 20th Anniversary, this report's publication is an appropriate reminder of the importance of making time and space in schools and within the curriculum to explore and discuss extremism.

SINCE 9/11, a charity focused on education, has commissioned UCL Institute of Education to undertake this critical report, "Addressing Extremism Through the Classroom". Its findings are clear and concise, and we call on schools and education authorities to ensure their implementation. As part of our ongoing work, SINCE 9/11 will be launching the "Talk It Out" campaign to publicise the report's recommendations and raise awareness of why there is no hiding place for extremism in our society.

The Trustees of SINCE 9/11

Acknowledgements

A note on terminology: We have tried to use non-gendered language throughout to assist with the anonymising of our participants, on occasion this has meant pluralising the singular, for example, using 'they' instead of 'she' or 'he'.

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Centre for Teachers & Teaching Research

SINCE 9/11 ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

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Executive summary

The events of September 11th occurred twenty years ago this year. The destruction of the Twin Towers in New York and the attack on the Pentagon represented a key moment in history. While the world had experienced multiple terrorist acts previously, this event exposed the vulnerability of civilian populations in major Western countries to attacks from extremists. It also sparked what came to be known as 'the War on Terror' including long-term wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In the UK, the July 7th 2005 terrorist attacks in London represented a significant moment as, unlike the US, 'home grown terrorists' were responsible for the suicide bombings. While these attacks were executed by Islamist terrorists, governments have become increasingly concerned about 'right wing' terrorist activity. The attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2019 was one example of this, as was the attack on a Pittsburgh synagogue in 2018. In England, police indicate that the threat from far-right terrorism is on the increase and represents one of their greatest concerns (Dodd & Grierson, 2019). Populist politics that draw on racist, homophobic and misogynist discourses have also secured establishment voices (e.g. in Hungary, Poland, Brazil, the USA) (Müller, 2017; see also Clarke & Mills, 2021). And as we were drafting this report, England had again witnessed concerning reports about racism related to football and a shooting by a perpetrator with links to online 'incel' groups. Furthermore, a humanitarian crisis is unfolding in Afghanistan as the Taliban regain control of the country, with concerns about whether the regime will shelter terrorist groups. On this 20th anniversary of 9/11, it is clearly a time for reflection on such events and for those in the education field to consider what role schools can play in challenging potential attraction to extremist viewpoints.

This report is the product of research commissioned in 2019 by the education charity SINCE 9/11 to address the following questions:

> **What role can schools play in enabling young people's resistance to joining extremist or violent movements?**

> **What role can schools play in supporting young people to challenge ideas perpetrated by extremist or violent movements?**

> **What classroom resources and support do teachers require to address issues of extremism and violent movements?**

The study has had to undertake several modifications due to the COVID-19 pandemic severely affecting the ability of researchers to conduct site visits to schools. The current study draws

on: a literature review of empirical research examining how schools, and their teachers, build resilience to extremism in students in England and prevent them from being drawn into violent groups; a survey of teachers; and in-depth interviews with English and Religious Education teachers and safeguarding leads in schools, and a Prevent officer. The study is not only concerned with violent extremism, but also with 'hateful extremism' (Commission for Countering Extremism, 2019) which includes homophobic, misogynistic and racist (including Islamophobic and anti-Semitic) attitudes and behaviours.

Whilst an attraction to violent extremism was not common in schools across the study, almost all the teachers surveyed had encountered 'hateful extremism', in the form of racist views, in the classroom. Such views lay the foundations for violent extremism. Extremist incidents do not occur in a vacuum; they need to be nurtured and grown in environments that legitimise them. These environments can also give rise to violent acts justified as resistance to oppression.

Key Findings

Our study echoes prior literature in finding significant differences across schools and amongst teachers in how they see and use classroom activities to address extremism. However, there was a high degree of consistency amongst our participants on the importance for schools engaging with this issue. The following key findings are indicative of the views expressed by participants in the study alongside findings from the literature. The recommendations presented here point to key areas where we in the education sector could do better in addressing issues of extremism through classroom practice.

Addressing extremism through classroom activity

In our study it was apparent that in the vast majority of schools, students' attraction to violent or extremist movements or groups was rare. However, we note that all forms of extreme views were encountered by some participants at some point. It is the view of the report authors that any number is too many and can have serious consequences for society and needs to be addressed. As with terrorism, it is not necessarily the frequency that is important for the perpetrators, but the fear generated by one 'successful' act. Causing people to live in 'terror' of another act can lead to oppressive behaviours, for example the erosion of civil liberties and freedoms, which in turn can be used to justify the supposed reasons for the act in the first place.

While views supportive of violent extremism were rare, the survey revealed that the majority of participating teachers encountered conspiracy theories in the classroom more frequently than any other forms of disturbing or extremist ideas. Teachers, while still generally confident, were less confident about how to respond to conspiracy theories compared with most other forms of extremism. The interviews also revealed concern about the influence of the online world and disinformation on student beliefs. Teachers from the case study schools raised

concerns about students' exposure to extremist views online, often claiming that this had been exacerbated by the pandemic and lockdowns. The theme of conspiracy theories and online disinformation was significant in this research and suggests that this in an emerging area that needs consideration.

All teachers recognised that schools can make **a** difference in discouraging young people's attraction to extremist views. Indeed, the surveyed teachers had a high degree of confidence in addressing issues related to extremism. However, our case study data indicate that this was not widespread. Some teachers expressed concerns about getting it 'wrong' especially on matters related to race. Others talked about not knowing how much of their own views to share in classroom discussions, and about the difficulty of hearing views that conflicted with their own values. For those teachers who did feel confident, underpinning their strategies was a commitment to open and frank discussion.

We agree with this sentiment. It is important to allow for open debate in classes, so that students come to understand different perspectives on topical issues and develop respect and tolerance of different views. However, such discussions can bring about the possibility of extreme and offensive views being raised. This is an opportunity for teachers and (more powerfully) peers to challenge such views, but also runs the risk of making the classroom an unsafe space for others. This tension - between allowing for the free and candid expression of views and the dignity, respect and safety of others - is one currently being discussed more broadly in society, for example in relation to online space. Callan (2011), writing about American universities, argues that allowing more intellectual candour (honest talking) in classes provides greater opportunity to change opinions and challenge odious views, whereas enforcing stronger rules on speech (which he terms 'civility regimes') can lead to students not sharing their real opinions. Callan further notes that managing such discussions requires skilful teaching.

The literature review notes that the Prevent duty itself may act as an inhibitor of candid discussion, ironically leading to missed opportunities for challenging extreme views. This research supports that claim. The switch to online learning during lockdowns was also noted as an inhibiting factor to open discussion (as well as the limitations of curriculum time). The lack of discussions during lockdown highlights the importance of the physical classroom as a space for discussion. Such a space, separate from the home and online environments, needs to enable meaningful, face-to-face discussion on contemporary issues with peers and be both structured and intellectually challenging.

This tension between allowing for candour whilst ensuring the dignity of others is also present in the differing conceptions of a safe space which came out in the interviews. Holley and Steiner (2005, p.50) define a safe space as one which 'allows students to feel secure enough to take risks, honestly express their views, and explore their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours' and where there is 'protection from psychological or emotional harm'. But as Barrett notes 'In a safe classroom… one person's sense of safety may come at the expense of another's, thus raising concerns as to whether the classroom can indeed be a safe space simultaneously for all students' (2010, p.10). In the survey, teachers felt fairly comfortable in

responding when extreme views were aired in the classroom. However, the survey also noted some tensions around when free speech should be allowed or not, as well as reservations about telling students they are wrong.

Key findings from the research thus suggest that classrooms need to be safe places where discussions about extremism, its causes and consequences, and its different forms, including 'hateful extremism' (Commission for Countering Extremism, 2019) can occur. They also suggest that face-to-face teaching is essential for ensuring that young people develop the critical skills to problematise online, media and other forms of extremist (both direct and subtle) viewpoints. However, creating such classrooms, as our participants indicated, is not easy. Teachers require skills, support and resources in order to do this effectively.

Recommendations

Addressing extremism through school ethos

The school context was identified as key in supporting teachers in this work. This suggests the issue is better framed as a whole school one rather than falling to individual teachers. Leadership in the school is important in the way it supports teachers, creates a positive climate and engages the school with the local community. As indicated above, it is not just 'critical incidents' but the environment in which they develop that is important.

Interviewed teachers recognised that addressing students' attraction to extremist viewpoints was not just an intellectual activity, and that some students' personal circumstances and experiences, as well as their personal and emotional development made them more vulnerable to extremist groups than others. Resilience, empathy and self-confidence training - when isolated from other strategies - can suggest that the problem lies only with the individual rather than the broader community. However, when operating in conjunction with strategies that seek to address, for example, institutionalised bullying, racism, misogyny, homophobia and religious intolerance, they can help to make a student feel less alone and strong enough to resist the advances of extremist groups.

> **Recommendation 1: Schools must continue to enact their anti-discrimination policies consistently.**

Prejudiced and discriminatory beliefs and actions provide an entry point for extremist ideas. Schools need clear policies and guidelines for addressing *all* forms of discrimination and students need to be made aware of these and to be encouraged to raise issues when they occur. These should be supplemented by consistent messaging in schools and classrooms, and in specifically designed programmes, that enhances students' resilience, self-confidence and personal development. This is already standard practice in many, if not most, schools but

we wish to emphasise strongly here the importance of tackling all forms of prejudice and discrimination in addressing extremism.

> **Recommendation 2: School leaders should promote opportunities for students to discuss and problematise extremist viewpoints.**

Extremist viewpoints are already being discussed in many schools and these discussions should be encouraged and not avoided. In particular, school leaders should promote opportunities in the curriculum and in wider school life, such as tutor times, assemblies and in incidental conversations with students, and encourage the use of these opportunities for such views to be problematised. This does not have to involve discussion of the topic of extremism itself, but rather finding space to allow for the discussion of contemporary and historical controversial issues in which more extreme views may be expressed and challenged.

> **Recommendation 3: Students should have the opportunity to develop critical literacy skills across the curriculum.**

Addressing extremism through the classroom

Students need to be provided with critical literacy skills that enable them to analyse texts in a range of forms and style (e.g. policy, traditional media, social media) in order to understand the ways in which attitudes, beliefs and actions are shaped. Such critical literacy skills develop students' political and media literacies and enhance the democratic functions of schooling. These skills should be taught across the curriculum, not just in English, Citizenship and Religious Education. There should also be flexibility for teachers to tailor curriculum to local need.

In both the literature and in this study, there has been scepticism about the teaching of Fundamental British Values (FBVs) as a means of addressing extremism. However, teachers in the study indicated that they used these values as a pedagogical resource to discuss issues associated with democracy and being British.

> **Recommendation 4: Fundamental British Values should be used as a starting point for discussions on democracy, diversity and dissent.**

FBVs have been a key plank in school-based approaches to addressing extremism and cannot and should not be ignored. However, they should be used to encourage classroom discussions about, for example, what it means to be British, about personal and political

values, about different forms of democracy, about addressing conflicts in peaceful and productive ways, and about the importance and limits of freedoms (e.g. when does free speech become hate speech?).

Addressing extremism through support for teachers

In order to engage students in constructive discussions about controversial and sensitive issues, teachers will need to use pedagogies that facilitate respectful disagreement and discussion, and that ask difficult questions in order to understand the motivations for terrorist acts and extremist movements – not just to condemn them – and to consider alternatives. Such forms of pedagogy are underpinned by critical literacy practices which analyse the assumptions, power relations and calls to action contained within texts of all types. These discussions may arise in subject lessons, but also in tutor time, including PSHE lessons, which were taught by form tutors in most of the schools that participated in this research.

> **Recommendation 5: All teachers should be provided with professional development on addressing controversial and sensitive issues.**

Any teacher may find themselves in situations where they need to discuss controversial and sensitive issues with students. Therefore, all primary teachers and teachers of all subjects in secondary schools need to be provided with professional development opportunities on critical literacy and on how to address controversial and sensitive issues in the classroom. This will include clear guidance on managing discussion, creating productive discussion spaces and on the limits of free speech in the classroom. Professional development can also include collaboration between schools for sharing best practice and resources.

Some participating teachers indicated that, while some excellent resources are available, if used by 'untrained' teachers, lessons could become a simple delivery of content rather than an exploration of ideas, opinions and disagreements in a respectful environment. There were also concerns about the availability of professional development opportunities on this topic, beyond the standard Prevent training. Our study indicated though that there are schools addressing these issues well and from which much could be learnt. It is important to foreground such practice. Schools and teachers would benefit from professional development resources and opportunities provided by community organisations and charities concerned about the rise of hateful extremism and that have extensive connections to communities harmed by such practices.

> **Recommendation 6: Educational charities and community organisations should work with stakeholders to develop high quality professional development and teaching resources to support teachers in addressing extremism.**

There are many educational charities and community organisations that are committed to supporting schools in their efforts to challenge all forms of extremism through creating classroom resources, providing guest speakers to schools, offering professional development to teachers, or advice to school leaders. Many such organisations have outstanding expertise and knowledge. However, they often do not have the pedagogical knowledge of teachers. Community organisations and charities concerned about the rise of hateful extremism should work closely with teachers, teacher educators and parents/guardians to develop a set of professional development modules and resources to aid teachers' engagement with all forms of extremism.

> **Recommendation 7: Schools should develop a community engagement strategy to address extremist issues.**

Addressing extremism through school partnerships

Teachers in the study quite rightly recognised that there are limits to what schools can do to prevent young people being attracted to extremist groups and movements. Expectations on teachers to make *the* difference in terms of preventing extremism amongst young people added stress to teachers' lives. It is also an unrealistic expectation. Education policy needs to recognise that addressing extremism is everybody's business, and that successful strategies will entail communities and schools working together.

Community engagement was seen by our participants as critical for addressing issues of extremism. For example, visitors to the school were viewed as a positive influence in that they brought an 'outsider' perspective into the classroom. However, as the literature and our research indicates, on occasion teachers held deficit views of the local community and considered them the source of students' negative attitudes. This report argues throughout that schools and teachers alone cannot address the causes of extremism, it has to be a community approach. As such, schools need to work with local communities to build up trust and respect between both, and to recognise that the vast majority of people living in communities across England all want the same thing: to live in harmony with their neighbours free from discrimination and the fear of violence occurring in their local area. By developing successful community engagement strategies, schools can play a leading role in achieving this outcome.

Chapter 1: Context

On the 11th of September 2021 it will have been 20 years since the terrorist attacks in the United States shocked the world. The war in Afghanistan sparked by those attacks has now come to a close with the return of the Taliban to Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, and the departure of the Western presence from the country. In the last days before this report was launched fears are being widely expressed about a possible imminent resurgence of Islamist terrorism in the West sparked by the Taliban's unexpected success. In addition, in the UK, racism has again reared its head in football. Debates about statues and Britain's colonial history and its consequences for the present are regularly discussed in the media, so too are debates about the relationship between hateful extremism and misogyny, including what has been termed the 'incel' movement. Concerns have been raised about young people's' access to social media sites promoting hateful speech and extremism, especially during the time of school closures. 2021, the 20th anniversary of 9/11, is clearly a time for reflection on how the world addresses all forms of hateful extremism.

The 'war on terror' that followed the US attacks has been controversial, not least because military actions and authoritarianism have been seen as counterproductive and as having the potential to harden the resolve of those articulating hateful speech and to attract others to its various causes. However, education has been widely regarded as one effective means by which hateful extremism can be challenged and thwarted. In this report we focus on what role schools and classrooms can play in this educational process. We first review what existing research says about this before analysing survey and interview data collected through this project to explore what English schools are doing to disrupt the processes by which students are drawn into extremist or violent movements, how they are challenging extremist attitudes, and what teachers require to do this work.

The literature selected for our review of the research was undertaken after the introduction of Prevent in educational settings (DfE, 2015): the mandated policy whereby teachers are to report students who they suspect are at risk of radicalisation. Concomitant to the Prevent policy's reporting mechanism is its promotion of values-teaching. This requires schools and their teachers to 'promote' and not 'undermine' Fundamental British Values (FBVs) (DfE, 2014). The literature provides a broad examination of the research on preventing extremism in students beyond the policy of Prevent and FBVs. However, given the policy context within which schools and teachers are tasked with combating extremism, Prevent and FBVs are often the policy lens through which most current research, in the UK, seeks to understand what and how anti-extremism work is done in schools.

Therefore, whilst Prevent and FBVs are foregrounded in almost all empirical research surveyed - minus a report which traces educational responses to extremism in Europe - this literature review is concerned with extracting what the research says more generally about what schools are doing to combat extremism, what they say works as disruptive practice, and what teachers indicate is necessary for their teaching in order to do it more successfully. This is often set within the policy structures of Prevent and FBVs. However, the literature review,

and the study as a whole, focuses on how schools build resilience to extremism in students, either working within the policies, against them or in addition to them.

Key findings from the literature

Overall, practices in schools which aim to build resilience to extremism in young people are highly varied. Empirical research examining how schools and teachers do this work demonstrates that many intersecting factors contribute to whether successful and measurable anti-extremism work is taking place. Schools and teachers are, in 2021, mandated to report students at risk of radicalisation (under Prevent), whilst simultaneously required to 'promote' and not 'undermine' fundamental British values (FBVs) (DfE, 2014). This policy framework is loose enough to leave schools to define what anti-extremism education is for their particular school context. The literature suggests that for some this is tokenistic, for others it is highly critical and engaging.

Some schools embed such practice into their values education - or in the case of primary schools in particular, their whole school values approach (Vincent, 2019b). Other research details how schools fail to move beyond surface level explorations of violence, extremism and radicalisation (Jerome & Elwick, 2019). However, some studies detail cases of impactful anti-extremist work useful for generating best practice guidance. For instance, the example provided by Davies (2014) of a Northern Irish school's social cohesion event where 'turbulence', rather than mythical harmony was foregrounded and where the difficult work of building social cohesion was acknowledged - 'next practice' rather than 'best practice' (p.462) was the approach to these integrated curriculum events. Overall then, the picture of school approaches to building resilience to extremism in students is variable.

Accompanying this patchwork of practice is the tension, evident across the research, between what schools are doing and what some teachers wish they were able to do. This is most pronounced in research exploring what RE, Citizenship and English teachers want to do pedagogically, and what is actually possible within a national policy and whole-school and departmental context (Belas and Hopkins, 2019; Farrell 2016; Lockley-Scott, 2019). In these subjects, where discussion is the currency of the classroom - and where controversial issues can be the object of study - teachers either express frustration at their stymied practice, or the research findings indicate that curriculum and delivery are superficial and unprobing (Jerome & Elwick, 2019; 2020).

Lastly, the research also speaks of how practices within schools are shaped by teachers' attitudes towards tolerance and discrimination (and their potential blind spots). For example, in their large survey of how teachers enact Prevent policy across the UK in primary and secondary schools, Busher et al. (2019) found that teachers had mixed definitions of extremism. This then shapes the type of anti-extremist curriculum-building that they undertake in their school context. Vincent (2019b) similarly found that some schools were evidencing discriminatory practices when targeting white working-class students as needing tolerance work, but not Muslim students. However, findings within the same research, and across others, indicate that teachers shared concerns about the discriminatory ways extremism might be

addressed in the classroom (for example, singling out Islamic extremism and therefore isolating Muslim students) (Busher et al., 2019; McGhee and Zhang, 2017; Vincent, 2019a, b).

Practices in response to the threat of extremism

Some research found that schools and teachers, defaulted to what was referred to as a 'securitised' response to protecting students from being drawn into extremism. Such a response is viewed as one where probing discussions around controversial issues of violence and extremism, or a more critical examination of shared values, are bypassed in favour of monitoring classroom speech and a superficial engagement with issues and values which obscure structural inequality as a cause of extremism (Jerome & Elwick, 2019). Jerome and Elwick (2019) outline how this manifests in practice suggesting that teachers become limited to certain responses, including reporting students under Prevent and interpreting FBVs in uncontested ways, and so narrowing the scope of critical engagement with issues of violence, extremism and radicalisation. This chimes with other research (Busher et al., 2019; Panjwani, 2016; Sieckelinck et al., 2015; Bryan, 2017); showing that reporting mechanisms dominated educational responses to tackling extremism.

Some studies show that teachers can regard Prevent as a necessary insertion into schools to protect vulnerable children. And yet, constructing children as 'vulnerable' (Coppock & McGovern, 2014) - or emphasising a student's individual risk - legitimises a securitised response from schools and teachers. Busher et al.'s (2019) interviews with 70 primary and secondary school teachers across the UK, revealed 'scant evidence' of resistance to the policy. Similarly, Bryan's research found that 'the participating teachers were entirely compliant in their Prevent training, unquestioning in their belief that the role of the teacher is to determine particular social mores and conduct' (2017, p.223). Moreover, FBVs as the soft power arm to Prevent, were highlighted as having the potential to promote 'fixed and definable cultural boundaries' (Busher et al., 2019, p.447), predefining conversations around violence and extremism. This is recognised as a cause for concern in some studies' findings, as Islamic extremism was more salient for teachers, whereas far right extremism was not seen to be as large a threat. Busher et al. (2019) did find that BAME teachers were more alert to the discriminatory ways in which Prevent might be enacted by teachers but across much of the research, the narrative consistently focused concern on certain types of extremism (Islamic).

As a point of comparison to the UK, a report from the Radicalisation Awareness Network (Davies & Limbada 2019) outlines the ways in which different European countries are responding to the threat of extremism within schools and the various practices that are embedded in their educational settings. The report details various responses existing according to the country's perceived threat and assessment of their own risk. Davies & Limbada (2019), who authored the study, note that across all European countries it is clear educational settings carry a heavy burden 'to deal with issues of cohesion, individuals at risk and the roots of vulnerability' (Davies & Limbada, 2019, p.7). They suggest that educational responses fall broadly into the following categories: integration and social cohesion; safeguarding and early detection; specialised training; critical thinking and media literacy; and

tackling underlying causes of radicalisation. Notably, some of these responses focus on teacher education, whilst others focus on issues of student welfare and what students should be taught to build resilience to extremism.

Examples of integration and social cohesion practices are ones focused on nuancing conversations around extremism and cultural identities. For example, Austria has a campaign to educate against conflating Islam as a religion with Islamism as a politically driven, extremist ideology. Slovenia has programmes encouraging intercultural dialogue whilst France has programmes aimed at tackling prejudice. A similar educational response is the inclusion, within school curricula, of critical thinking and media literacy programmes and many countries use this to promote active and positive citizenship. Teachers in some countries are also provided with training in the ideological, cultural and religious issues particular to their context. For example, Spain educates its teachers specifically in the country's contemporary conflicts, alongside an in-depth knowledge of the constitutional framework. France educates its teachers about issues of racism within the country.

The opposite response, which might be described less as an educational response and more of a securitised response, falls in the category of safeguarding and early detection. In England, this is evident through Prevent and teachers are invited to use the helpline when making a judgment on a referral and can be directed to a 'Prevent Mythbuster' resource for support. In France, there is the Protect to Prevent programme, whilst in Sweden teachers can report to social services but are not required to report specifically on radicalisation concerns. The picture across Europe is therefore varied and many countries combine reporting mechanisms with teacher education and curriculum design. Comparatively though, the UK response seems to rely largely on early detection practices.

Superficial or token response

However, not all schools and teachers interviewed for the various studies in the literature were resorting to a securitised response. Many schools were seen to be either absorbing changes in policy (Prevent and FBVs) into their already existing values curriculum and whole-school approach, or were treating FBVs tokenistically to ensure compliance with Ofsted. In primary schools, this tokenistic approach is a key finding, where visual displays are often nationalistic, deploying British iconography to demonstrate shared values (Krieken Robson, 2019; Moncrieffe and Moncrieffe, 2019; Vincent, 2019b). Moncrieffe and Moncrieffe (2019) explore how such 'monocultural' displays 'spread whiteness' (p.67) and whilst some teachers in the research were critical of this aspect, it is noted that these types of displays were common. Similarly, Krieken Robson (2019) described FBVs in early years teaching as an 'imposition rather than an exploration' (p.97) and that resources to aid teaching were often nationalistic, not representative of the multi-ethnic background of students, and performatively adhering to policy.

Many schools, after the insertion of Prevent into schools in 2015, were seen to essentially continue with their various practices of preventing students being drawn into violence and

extremism. Busher et al. (2019) describes this as a 'narrative of continuity' where nothing in the curriculum, to address concerns over extremism, changed much for teachers and 'pre-existing institutional practices concerned with promoting positive values, inclusive citizenship and anti-prejudice norms' (p.458) continued. Whilst these approaches appear valid and useful, some research raises concerns about how teachers perceive who requires anti-prejudiced intervention, and who does not. Vincent (2019a), for example, notes how 'schools' perceptions of their local populations were sometimes marked by rather blunt categorisations, assumptions and generalizations of the ascribed views and attitudes of local populations' (p.26). Similarly, Jerome and Elwick (2020) found that teachers often held reductive views about parents and the wider community. They state that 'the teachers we spoke to often characterised them [parents] as sources of problematic attitudes and values, which the school had to oppose to some extent' (p.232). Therefore, whilst there is evidence of anti-extremism work happening in schools, whether as a 'narrative of continuity' or not, the anti-prejudiced practices might stereotype or offer reductive perspectives on the communities the schools serve.

Yet, much research also showed schools and teachers taking the time to build into their curriculum and pedagogy anti-extremism work that was somewhat successful. Jerome and Elwick (2019) interviewed students on their experiences in Citizenship classes, as part of The Building Resilience Project (aimed at context-specific citizenship curriculum). Students, interviewed in focus groups, explained how they recognised that media criticality increases political literacy and that they were comfortable discussing issues of radicalisation with teachers. This research demonstrates that teachers are well placed to do this type of work, given that many young people trust their educators not to shield them from controversial issues. Similarly, in their interviews with teachers of varying professional levels, curriculum design which followed an 'educational response' would emphasise what students wanted to learn and reject an overtly suspicious attitude towards them. The authors also noted that teachers who succeeded in addressing controversial discussions in their classrooms did not teach with the 'right' answer in mind but foregrounded trust and genuinely open discussion. Research into 'controversial issues' pedagogy has noted, however, that a lot of preparation is required by teachers in order to facilitate such conversations in a genuinely open and meaningful way (Hess, 2009).

Many teachers interviewed across the research literature recognised discussion as important with 41% of teachers stating that Prevent has led to more open discussions on extremism, and that programmes such as *Philosophy 4 You* (P4Y) were commensurate with Prevent (Busher et al., 2019). Yet, their capacity to achieve education against extremism in the disruptive and risk-taking ways, such as were outlined by Davies (2014), was not always fully realised. Vincent (2019a) noted that even more controversial values work on migration, voting and terrorism was pedagogically restricted because it often relied on a film stimulus followed by inviting students to give a written response. Similarly, Bryan (2017) noted that the secondary comprehensive school in her study encouraged discussion-based pedagogies not present in another school in her sample. Panjwani et al. (2019) claimed that the curriculum changes introduced in 2015 marked a shift away from liberal educational aims to utilitarian

pedagogies. This, they argued, undermines anti-extremism practices in schools as it foregrounds functional and scientific knowledge, and demotes the arts and humanities. Therefore, school leadership, climate, context and curriculum changes appear to play a part in how far teachers are able to implement best practice, as determined by the level of autonomy each school/teacher has.

Teacher attitudes and what they feel they need

As outlined above, the research tells a mixed narrative about what anti-extremism work is happening in UK schools. These consistency issues are noted by Vincent (2019a, b) as, in part, a result of resource differentials which stymied teachers' practice and led to some *ad hoc* responses. Some teachers expressed concerns over inadequate training (Bryan, 2017; Busher et al., 2019; Lockley-Scott, 2019), whilst some research found that teachers often blamed parents for the prejudices they encountered in the classroom. Whilst teachers seemed concerned, on the whole, about Prevent and anti-extremism work stigmatising Muslim students, they sometimes held stereotypic views of students. This has ramifications for how teachers in certain subjects manage conversations of an inflammatory type in their classrooms.

Certain school subjects are inevitably more likely to explore, or encounter, issues pertaining to extremism. For example, Citizenship is arguably the classroom where these issues will arise but RE and English teachers are also confronted with controversial and challenging issues as part of their subject knowledge. Teachers in these classrooms are often tasked with managing the views of students and these can be conflicting, potentially inflammatory and difficult to assess as problematic or not. Ackroyd's (2021) research into RE classrooms and their interpretation of FBVs, highlights that 'tolerance' and 'respect' are a particular burden for the RE classroom. This is because there is a paradox of needing to, potentially, tolerate intolerance in students' reflections on their spiritual beliefs. Within the English classroom, research has explored English as a subject and its role in values teaching (see *Ethical English* by Mark Pike, or *Subject English as Citizenship Education* by Belas & Hopkins) but little empirical work has been done on the specific role English teachers, and English curriculum and pedagogy, play in anti-extremism work or in the specific context of Prevent.

Prior to Prevent's insertion into educational spaces, RE was viewed as the subject tasked with countering extremist narratives. Miller (2013) evaluated the impact of the government-funded programme, managed by the RE council, 'REsilience' which had as its aims the promotion of cultural awareness to challenge extremism, theological knowledge in order to promote tolerance and respect, as well as knowledge of Islam to challenge religious justifications of Al-Qaida-inspired terrorism. In his evaluation of the programme, Miller noted that 'most teachers of RE have been schooled in phenomenological models of 'bracketing out', suspending judgement, aiming for objectivity and showing 'respect for all' in their treatment of religious and moral questions' (p.189). However, for Miller, this was an inappropriate pedagogical approach for tackling religiously inspired extremist views. Miller (2013) concluded that

confronting extremist views is 'the very stuff of RE' and that a failure to promote 'dialogue, disagreement, investigation, analysis and criticism' is a disservice to young people (p.197).

Farrell (2016) similarly notes, through interviews with RE teachers, that RE is perceived by its teachers as an important classroom for anti-extremist work because 'RE both within the academy and in schools has a long tradition of criticality which needs foregrounding and reassertion as a strategic site for the expansion of democratic, pluralist values and a dynamic alternative to the disciplinary incitements of fundamental British values' (p.295). Therefore, RE teachers position themselves and the subject as vitally important in anti-extremist work but do not necessarily see the subject pedagogy as aligning with the current policy directive (FBVs and Prevent). Farrell and Lander (2019) describe this as the 'incompatibility of multicultural RE with civic nationalism' and instead say that RE teachers should turn to the 'pluralistic underpinnings of Theology, Religious Studies and Philosophy' which help 'to reposition and reappropriate the FBV discourse within a genuinely multicultural interpretive framework' (p.480). Yet, according to Lockley-Scott's (2019) research exploring student and RE teacher responses to dialogue within a case study school, putting this pedagogy into action is stymied because training and a lack of confidence limited teachers' and students' possibilities for meaningful exchange.

There exist pedagogical tensions in Citizenship education also, as some research has indicated. Jerome and Elwick (2020) note how Citizenship, as a subject, wishes to engage young people in debates around controversial issues but these teachers are simultaneously required to monitor students as part of Prevent. What results in Citizenship classrooms then is that controversial issues are not being truly debated but rather teachers lead students to arrive at certain reasoning. In this research, Jerome and Elwick (2020) found that pedagogically this leads to the closing down of open enquiry - given that teachers have a 'moral destination' in mind - and that case studies 'cast history as parable', as they are used as shorthand illustrative cases, without the rich, contextual detail needed to fully understand the complexity of the issue. Examples of this teaching are described, where teachers used IS, IRA and Apartheid case studies without the depth of contextual detail needed for genuine open enquiry.

Student voice

Across the research student voice was important. Students wanted open debate - in pursuit of greater political literacy - and felt that their teachers were the best suited to help them achieve this. Students understood the need to develop critical readings of the media, to be supported in recognising fake news and bias reporting, and to acquire an understanding of the media's preoccupation with 'dark' stories (Elwick & Jerome, 2019). Moreover, students were happy to discuss controversial issues and saw the benefit in open debate but, as outlined above, pedagogical tensions in some classrooms made this hard to achieve. Lockley-Scott (2019) nuances this through her case study findings, showing how students were happy to discuss issues of terrorism, war and politics but were not comfortable with discussing their religious beliefs. The classroom, as a space to explore personal identities and beliefs, was

challenged by the students in Lockley-Scott's research, as they preferred to assume the role of 'onlookers'.

Davies (2014) also recognised that anti-extremism work in schools must take into account the online literacy of students and how 'young people do not fear technology.' She argued that 'peacebuilding citizenship education has to catch up with how young people communicate, and the scale of it, the dangers as well as the benefits' (p.466). Teachers expressed concerns across the research, stating that a lack of training and confidence were issues - be they regarding Prevent reporting or how to pedagogically include robust and open debate and enquiry in the classroom. Davies' suggestion is that these must be considered alongside the reality of students' online lives. Whilst the research highlights, in various ways, the need for critical literacy skills, there was scant evidence reporting on how teachers themselves must be equally technologically and media savvy, in order to recognise and disrupt extremist narratives attractive to some students and to prevent them being drawn into violence.

Engagement with conspiracy theories

Conspiracy theories and disinformation online have been rife during the COVID-19 pandemic - from 5G masts as the cause of the virus through to Bill Gates controlling people via microchips in vaccines. Research also suggests that COVID-19 disinformation acted as a gateway to broader conspiracy theories such as Q-Anon and also that COVID-19 conspiracy theories/disinformation have been used by different groups, including the far right, to recruit followers (Lawrence & Davis 2020).

Very little is known about conspiracy beliefs in school-aged students. However, recent research (Jolley et al., 2021) suggests that conspiracy thinking starts to develop around the age of 14 and may even peak in late adolescence (in terms of the numbers of people believing in conspiracy theories). How deeply conspiracy beliefs are held at this age is not clear. When a student raises a conspiracy theory, their contribution might be playing a role in a broader identity such as being as an alternative thinker, an outsider or even a disruptive student, rather than being a firmly held belief. However, belief in conspiracies can become stronger and can be linked to extremist behaviours, for example Great Replacement Theory is often associated with right-wing extremism. Many other conspiracy theories (Illuminati, Protocols of the elders of Zion, QAnon) are associated with Anti-Semitism.

A recurring theme in the research was the extent to which young people were critical consumers of online material, particularly social media. Recent research suggests that criticality may be lacking. A study (Wineburg et al., 2020) asked 263 U.S. university students to use online resources to evaluate the trustworthiness of two 'news' stories. One was from a satirical website, the other was produced by a corporate lobbying group. Two thirds did not discover that the first 'news' story was satirical and 95% were not able to identify the lobbying group that produced the second piece of 'news'. Research also suggests that students' interest in conspiracy theories should not be ignored or ridiculed. Instead, this interest should provide opportunities for genuine discussion of issues where a range of opinions can exist.

Such discussions are said to expose students to difference, challenge their thinking and can make them more tolerant of difference (see for example, Hess & Gatti, 2010).

Conclusions

Building resilience to extremism in young people requires students to be able to speak freely about issues within the classroom. Whilst there are a variety of anti-extremist practices evident in empirical research, the overall policy landscape in the UK is one of detection and reporting. This policy approach does not seem to leave room for some schools and teachers to implement the most effective responses for building resilience to extremism in young people. This is because Prevent, and a focus on detection, frames students as *at risk* rather than potential collaborators and agents in anti-extremist work. Panjwani (2016) notes that the government approaches 'the individual's journey to extremism not as a complex process involving a variety of psychological, socio-economic and religio-political factors but primarily as a linear process of indoctrination into an ideology' (p.331). Best practices, evidenced in the research, strive to open up curriculum space to pedagogical approaches that can explore the socio-economic, religio-politico and psychological factors through genuine open discussion about controversial issues.

Beyond the national policy landscape, some schools are successful in creating anti-extremist practices which link to their school ethos and environment. However, Vincent (2019b) notes in her empirical research that sometimes these schools are successful in fostering institutional belonging but this does not always extend out into the wider community. Teachers recognise that there is an important role they can play within the school, but how that translates to wider society appears to them limited. Vincent also notes that 'schools and colleges absorb the duty to promote British values into their existing structures and ethos which combine both elements of the multicultural respect for diversity with the promotion of a value system consistent with their mission of producing well-rounded, and resilient liberal citizens' (p.938). This is identified as best practice, which aims to send out into the world positive citizens, but Vincent comments on how this embedded approach might keep anti-extremist work within the school rather than extending also beyond it. This is clearly a defining challenge for schools and teachers as indicated in the literature: school level cohesion might be easier to foster than cohesion outside the schools' four walls.

Davies' (2014) examination of anti-extremist practices elevates 'social collision' over 'mythical harmony' (p.465), suggesting that teachers must not shy away from the fissures which exist between different groups. Her advice, based upon meta-analysis of other research, is that 'turbulence' over simple 'intergroup contact and encounters' (p.465) is what works by forcing 'inter-reaction and change' (ibid). However, for teachers to achieve this type of 'turbulence' in their schools a lot of prior knowledge, training, curriculum time and resources is required. Davies suggests the following is needed for disruptive change:

> *…to mount a social action campaign requires proficiency in outlining a vision, mobilising support, influencing decision makers, using the Internet and other media, getting funding,*

and engaging in project management. Importantly, it requires some knowledge of the law—understanding rights and restrictions in relation to social action. Such knowledge and skills, perhaps not yet often taught in school, could form a valuable and interesting part of a social science curriculum. (Davies, 2014, p.465)

Yet this is a large undertaking and teachers with the best intentions are often time-poor and unsupported in these endeavours. Exploring controversial issues in Northern Irish schools, McCully (2006) found that trust-building, risk taking, curriculum time, promoting democratic values and a peer-supportive environment were what led to successful attitude change in students with prejudiced views. Unfortunately, the research overall demonstrates that much anti-extremism work is well-meaning but is stymied by overcrowded curricula, a lack of resources, a desire to perform policy for Ofsted, and a mandate to detect and report vulnerability to radicalisation rather than necessarily stamp out its root causes.

Chapter 2: What role can schools play in enabling young people's resistance to joining extremist or violent movements?

How common are such incidents?

When considering the role that schools can play in enabling young people's resistance to joining extremist or violent movements, it is important to recognise that such incidents are relatively rare (DfE 2019). While all schools have a statutory duty to 'prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' (Home Office, 2015), during 2019/20 only 222 cases from the education sector were adopted as Channel cases (i.e. on average less than one percent of schools will have a case progress that far). The majority of these cases were subsequently closed (Home Office, 2020).

The majority of teachers interviewed reflected that although they were aware of potential issues, they had not experienced any such incidents: *'I haven't come across it* [concerns about extremism] *in the classroom'* said one, while another only had *'very minimal concerns when we're talking about perhaps religious extremism.'*

A senior leader at one school acknowledged the far-removed nature of such incidents and concerns for the majority of students:

> *Most young people, 17–18-year-olds, are more interested in earning some money and being friendly with people and, you know, staying connected to their community. And extremism, you know, maybe I'm being naive but extremism, I think, plays a part in not many people's lives.* (Assistant Head Teacher, School 4)

While discussing teachers' experiences of extremism or hate speech in the classroom, they were far more likely to mention incidents which had been caused by homophobia, sexism or misogyny than possible links to violent extremism or terrorism.

A limit on what schools can do

Nearly all respondents to our survey believed that schools had a role to play in helping young people resist extremist ideas (99%) and resist joining extremist groups (98%).

Our interviewees were also broadly in agreement that schools have a role to play in challenging and addressing extremism and radicalisation – 'they can definitely play a role.' However, they also generally suggested that there was a limit to what could be achieved alone and that there were a range of other stakeholders who needed to support such action (such as parents and wider members of the community). The PSHE lead from School 1 questioned the overt duty that had been placed on schools: *'whether the government putting us right at the forefront of it, is where we're best placed, that would be a different argument'*, although they recognised they did have a duty of care to their students. Similarly, an English teacher

from School 3 agreed that schools had a role to play, but argued that it wasn't *'fair to put 100% of the responsibility onto schools.'*

The teacher from School 4 was less enthusiastic, arguing that the position they had been put in limited their autonomy and restricted their ability to properly engage with students on these issues. They described their role as *'babysitters'* and particularly criticised the idea of having to use *'pre-prepared scripts'* in order to discuss extremism with students.

Ultimately, the difficulty for schools and limits on what was possible were captured by the PSHE lead from School 1: *'We can only go so far and we don't know a lot of the time. We've got some idea but you just don't how students could be manipulated, radicalised when they're away from us.'*

While teachers recognised their 'duty of care' toward students in helping them develop tolerance and respect, some queried whether schools were 'best placed' to be 'at the forefront' of enabling young people to challenge extremist ideas. Of concern included the lack of explicit guidance and the potential for great variability between schools in their practices.

Shifting online

As mentioned in the Executive Summary, this research took place during COVID-19 lockdowns when many students were learning from home and often left alone with various devices all day. This led to many teachers raising issues about their students' exposure to disturbing online activity. However, the rise of social media and the ease of access to a wide variety of views, people and organisations were already a concern for many of our interviewees:

> *I wouldn't say that we're aware of particular local threats in the community, which we would class as extremist groups, but we're certainly concerned, because of the scope of the internet and groups to reach young people that aren't based locally, it's always something to be mindful of, yes.* (DSL, School 2)

A widespread increase in exposure to online hateful content (Ofcom, 2020) was reflected in the comments from teachers, one of whom described such material as 'a real danger.' Another teacher said that they were particularly *'concerned about the amount of unmonitored screen time'* that students now had (at least partly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, discussed further, below). This shift (both more widely and because of the pandemic) online meant that *'it's much harder to obviously track'* according to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at School 3, while an Assistant Headteacher recognised the inherent dangers for students of so-called 'echo chambers':

> *I mean, yeah, most students do get their news now from Instagram or from Snapchat or from WhatsApp. So yeah, I'd say it's sort of consolidated their already biased position on various things. So yeah, I worry that the echo chamber that they're in at the moment is just becoming more dogmatic, I suppose. It's becoming, well, continuing to be an echo chamber.* (Assistant Head Teacher, School 4)

While acknowledging some of the dangers, one teacher did highlight that the increased exposure to political issues through platforms such as TikTok and Instagram *'in some ways is good because if we'd have said that ten years ago, we felt young people were disconnected from politics.'* However, the primary feeling expressed was of concern. An RE teacher at School 2 spoke about the distance created by the rise of online platforms and the role that this might be having on students' *'identity formation'* – fearing that they didn't know *'how much influence we can have'* and raising questions around who had responsibility for young people within this complex environment.

Blurring the boundaries between inside/outside of school

The relationship between what happened within school (ostensibly within teachers' remit) and outside of it (responsibility for which was much less clear) emerged as a key issue for many of our interviewees. This is clearly closely connected to the discussion above around how much time young people now spend online and the kind of content they engage with. The DSL at School 3 spoke of sending out information to parents on keeping their children safe online but noted that *'a lot of parents don't check and they expect the school to do a lot and we can't do everything. We do our best.'* Meanwhile, the DSL at School 2 re-emphasised the dangers: *'sometimes because they're young, they're vulnerable, they're interested, they're very susceptible to quite extreme political standpoints and viewpoints and we see that with TikTok.'* They went on to speak about trying to *'educate young people … so they're able to understand what they're looking at and those extreme views.'*

However, another teacher at the same school questioned where the responsibility lay regarding such interventions: *'we can do some of that, but I think a lot of it takes place outside.'* The teacher mentioned a specific incident that had taken place in the past which had not been picked up on within the school, highlighting that *'there's a lot going on outside of school that we're not aware of.'* Similarly, a different teacher identified that for some students the home environment was obviously something they could not control and might be a source of potentially extremist or radical views: *'that emphasised our concern that that increased time in the home environment with potentially quite extreme views or at least very stringent views, there was no-one there in that period of time to give an alternative view or to pull them up.'*

The English teacher in School 3 identified certain issues (particularly around safeguarding) necessitating the adoption of firm boundaries (*'schools can't then take part in the consequences for things that happen outside of school'*) but that the complexity of issues and the use of social media meant that it was easy for such boundaries to become blurred:

> *I think that's a really hard boundary for those that work in the pastoral team because they're inundated with things that happen outside of school because parents will come in and say: "Look, this has happened can you please make sure that…" and then it ends up saying: "No, you have to call the police if this happens," because that's an issue that's occurred outside of school and there has to be a log of it. So that whole boundary becomes very blurred.* (English teacher, School 3)

The challenge of remote learning in a pandemic

These issues of wider online exposure to hateful material and the blurring of responsibility between schools and homes should all be viewed against the more recent backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, and specifically the additional challenges that remote learning and closures have placed on schools. The pandemic clearly has significant implications for schools in terms of their approach: the DSL from School 2 noted that *'there's some topics we wouldn't cover* [via remote learning] *because we wouldn't feel, without having a teacher present, it would be right.'* This highlights the importance of the classroom as being a safe space for discussion.

One of the specific issues, identified by the PSHE lead from School 2, was the difficulty in identifying signs of radicalisation remotely – questioning how they *'could possibly recognise those subtle clues that are part of the jigsaw over a screen'* and calling for additional training and support in this area. Teachers repeated the importance of being able to have face-to-face conversations when dealing with sensitive topics and the lack of such opportunities was cited by an RE teacher in School 2 as a worry: '[in a classroom] *you have more opportunities to address those sorts of things, rather than perhaps exploring things at home and more time to be online at home and being persuaded of things that are, I suppose, are going to make it worse.'*

Both teachers in School 3 spoke about how difficult the situation was, both in terms of broader issues of safeguarding (*'in terms of safeguarding as a whole, it's really difficult in terms of our known vulnerable children being at home'*) and the specific need to be able to teach about such issues in a certain environment:

> *Oh, I think it definitely inhibited. It's very difficult to get a good debate going online. And it's also much more difficult as a teacher to, I think, to keep people present who don't necessarily want to be present – you don't get really to see who is in and out of the discussion by the sort of nonverbal clues that they tend to give in the classroom. For directed questioning, it's a bit more difficult. If they choose not to answer then either they can say that it's to do, that their WiFi is not particularly good. It's a more difficult excuse to use in a live lesson.* (RE teacher, School 5).

Recognising students' own personal qualities

The role of schools in enabling young people's resistance and resilience to radicalisation inevitably depends, at least in part, on the personal qualities of their students. Many teachers had confidence in their students to already possess and demonstrate values such as tolerance:

> *I would say they're really tolerant, yes. They are really tolerant, in saying that I think the events during the pandemic, particularly the Black Lives Matter movements and more*

recently the tragic death of Sarah Everard[1], I think it makes everyone look inwards as well and the students do that. So, sometimes that heightens sensitivity and understanding things and they do like to debate there. (PSHE lead, School 2)

Other teachers were more ambivalent, an Assistant Head advocated for their students' tolerance, but perhaps had to convince themselves of that fact*: 'I think they're getting better. I mean, yes, they are definitely okay. They are accepting of difference. Definitely. They're very tolerant.'*

For one teacher at School 4, building students' personal qualities relied on modelling behaviour and values, as well as the implementation of reward systems, *'there are initiatives whereby students can earn achievement points and things like that for showing* [characteristics such as tolerance and resilience].'

Nonetheless, teachers also recognised that such qualities needed to be fostered and supported. Within their classroom, the RE teacher from School 1 acknowledged that they encountered views which were problematic, but that *'the school's role in that to give them a way to express that, but also think about what the views they hold are in some way hateful, without them really knowing.'* Meanwhile, the DSL in School 2 believed it was important *'to give students an exit strategy, so that they can recognise when they're in a potentially difficult situation when they're feeling uncomfortable and help them work out how to get out of it and save face'.*

Challenging ideas as a way of providing resilience

A point of general agreement amongst many of our interviewees was the role schools could play by challenging behaviour which they thought might lead to something more serious.

The DSL in School 2, PSHE lead in School 1 and Assistant Head in School 4 all specifically mentioned needing to *'challenge'* the views of their students, particularly in terms of misconceptions or what they had seen on social media, while retaining the opportunity for students to speak freely: *'it's going back to challenging it, it's going back to open dialogue and letting people be able to express their opinions.'* This opportunity to express opinions was critical in terms of identifying views which could then be challenged; the Religious Education teacher in School 2 echoed this sentiment *'we have the opportunity for these discussions that might touch on these things and then these things can be aired and challenged and so on.'* Equally a Religious Education teacher from School 5 talked about the idea of creating *'a safe space'* which allows students to both *'talk about their position, and also to have that position challenged.'* This highlights the ambiguities in the idea of a safe space. Is it a space where students can speak freely without fear, or a space where students will feel safe from discrimination and verbal attacks from others?

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[1] A 33 year old white woman murdered by a serving police officer on her way home from an evening at her friend's home in South London.

The same teacher explained how the role of challenging students' views can allow them to recognise how others see them and why those views might be problematic:

> *But generally, the boys here […] want to do the right thing, I think, and sometimes it can be a bit of a shock for them, when they have views that they've heard from their parents or from others or they've seen on the internet. When they have that challenged, it can feel like it can feel a bit of a shock to them, they see themselves in a way that is a bit uncomfortable. But I think it's important to put them in that position so that they do get to see how other people see them.* (RE teacher, School 5).

A useful distinction should be made here between intellectual safety and dignity safety. A classroom should not be intellectually safe as learning can be difficult and opinions should be challenged. However, it should be a place where all students' dignity is left intact and they are respected in terms of who they are (see Callan, 2016).

Chapter 3: What role can schools play in supporting young people to challenge ideas perpetrated by extremist or violent movements?

Promoting Fundamental British Values

All teachers who responded to our survey reported that their schools used a combination of approaches to promoting Fundamental British Values, including taught lessons addressing FBV indirectly and/or explicitly; school ethos; assemblies or collective worship; the school environment; and off-timetable days (Table 1).

Table 1. Approaches to promoting Fundamental British Values in schools.

	n	%
Taught lessons that address Fundamental British Values indirectly (e.g. teaching about mutual respect and tolerance as a theme in a novel)	92	95.8
School ethos (e.g. Values, Aims, Mission)	85	88.5
Assembly / Collective worship	83	86.5
Taught lessons that address Fundamental British Values directly (e.g. teaching a lesson about the importance of democracy in the UK)	82	85.4
School environment (e.g. wall displays)	78	81.3
Drop-down / off-timetable days	57	59.4

Respondents showed relatively high confidence in using all approaches in their school. Table 2 shows the percentages of participants reporting high/moderate or slight/no confidence in using the approaches that were in use in their schools. As respondents had responsibility in these areas, this high level of confidence is probably not representative of all teachers across the profession, a view supported by our interviewees.

Table 2. Confidence with using approaches promoting Fundamental British Values in schools, percentages of those using an approach.

	High/ moderate	Slightly/ none
Taught lessons that address Fundamental British Values indirectly	83.7%	16.3%
School ethos (e.g. Values, Aims, Mission)	87.1%	12.9%
Assembly /Collective worship	74.7%	25.3%
Taught lessons that address Fundamental British Values directly	78.0%	22.0%
School environment (e.g. wall displays)	83.3%	29.5%
Drop-down / off-timetable days	75.4%	24.6%

All teachers interviewed were aware of their school's duty to promote Fundamental British Values and were using a range of strategies to achieve this. These included assemblies, displays, school ethos ('leading by example') and values, tutor-led PSHE and Citizenship sessions and subject curricula. Values clearly had a significance to interviewees, with one teacher saying that they *'underpin, genuinely, everything we do.'* School ethos made a significant contribution, with one PSHE Lead stressing that *'we actually believe it (the school ethos)'* and wanting students to feel *'they have a role and a part to play in the community.'*

However, at the same time reservations were expressed about the responsibility to promote British values, such as considering them to be a bit *'woolly'* or saying that it would be better if they were *'more inclusive.'* Some interviewees questioned the values themselves, for example finding the language of *'fundamental'* values problematic, but also expressing concern about shared values (*'shared with whom'?*).

The multicultural nature of some schools was seen as an advantage in being able to promote values, as it facilitated a focus on diversity and difference. Sometimes multicultural communities led to inter-group conflict however, and the expression of views that needed to be challenged or *'unpicked.'*

Teachers' own values were also mentioned. One teacher said that teachers should be *'leading by example'* and should not *'air and share'* their own views, because of the risk of providing a biased presentation to students. However, another interviewee had been caught up in a terror attack and said that they would mention this to students when teaching related topics, because of the effect it still had on them.

Some teachers felt that while students were aware of British values, they *'can't always verbalise it.'* In one school an English teacher questioned *'whether students recognise them or notice them, or teachers are aware of them, or can identify them in their practice.'*

There were concerns about the potential for promotion of British values to be a box-ticking exercise, with one teacher worried about attempts to *'perform for Ofsted'* and sceptical of superficial attempts to promote values.

Through all the interviews, however, was a clear care and concern for supporting young people to become thoughtful, responsible adults, able to engage critically with challenging ideas and to live safe and fulfilling lives.

Values in the curriculum

Our interviewees included teachers of English, Religious Education and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). Unsurprisingly, they all identified opportunities to deal directly both with British values and with extreme views in the course of their teaching.

For example, RE teachers mentioned the opportunities that the subject provided to teach an understanding of all faiths, and to challenge stereotypes, *'we try to encourage these kinds of policies* [like promoting fundamental British values].' The RE curriculum included the discussion of the presentation of religion in the media and addressing popular conceptions of ideas such as *'jihad'*, or teaching about anti-Semitism and the history of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. English teachers mentioned specific texts, such as *Animal Farm*, which provide the opportunity to reflect on democracy, equality and fairness; or using a GCSE topic on non-fiction texts to explore controversial and sensitive issues.

PSHE and Citizenship, frequently taught in English schools by the form tutor, were particularly significant in addressing extreme views. Teachers mentioned a range of controversial and sensitive issues that were covered in these lessons, including racism, questions of sexual and gender identity, and religious intolerance. The delivery of this part of the curriculum was beset by challenges, however. While the curriculum was prepared by a subject expert who had received extensive training, delivery was the responsibility of all form tutors, regardless of training. This resulted in a high level of variability between teachers in their confidence in coping with the discussions that arose.

The curriculum also offered the opportunity to educate students about different democratic models, which teachers believed would help them identify extreme views.

One PSHE lead described how they would exercise *'flexibility'* in order to respond to current issues among students, by '[changing] *the programme according to need*.' This meant that issues could be addressed without identifying individuals or having to hold a *'special assembly.'*

Conflict and extreme views in the classroom

Survey respondents had encountered a range of extreme views in the classroom. All but five respondents had encountered racist views on at least one occasion. The other most commonly encountered extremist views were homophobia and conspiracy theories. These were also the views expressed most frequently, with 55 respondents encountering conspiracy theories 'fairly regularly' or 'a few times'. More than two fifths of respondents reported encountering racism (42) or homophobia (40) at least a few times.

Less commonly encountered were anti-Semitism, with more than half of respondents reporting that they had never encountered it in the classroom. Nearly half of respondents (40) had never encountered far-right extremism and around a quarter of respondents (25) had never encountered extremist views on women, with another quarter having never encountered Islamophobia.

Table 3. How frequently have you encountered extremist views in the classroom?

	Fairly regularly		A few times		Once or twice		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Conspiracy theories	20	20.8	35	36.5	19	19.8	11	11.5
Extremist views on women	4	4.2	23	24.0	33	34.4	25	26.0
Homophobia	10	10.4	30	31.3	35	36.5	11	11.5
Islamophobia	5	5.2	23	24.0	31	32.3	26	27.1
Racism	8	8.3	34	35.4	39	40.6	5	5.2
Far right extremism	1	1.0	18	18.8	26	27.1	40	41.7
Anti-Semitism	2	2.1	6	6.3	25	26.0	51	53.1
Other extremist views	0	0.0	6	6.3	3	3.1	72	75.0

Nearly all respondents reported feeling at least 'somewhat confident' in dealing with extremist views when encountered. In fact, confidence levels were high, with more than three quarters of respondents reporting that they felt very or fairly confident in dealing with extremist views. The lowest levels of confidence (around a fifth of respondents feeling only 'somewhat' or 'not at all' confident) were found for conspiracy theories and far-right extremism.

Table 4. How confident did you feel in dealing with these views when you encountered them?

	Very confident		Fairly confident		Somewhat confident		Not at all confident	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Conspiracy theories	32	37.6	26	30.6	20	23.5	1	1.2
Extremist views on women	42	59.2	13	18.3	9	12.7	3	4.2
Homophobia	51	60.0	17	20.0	11	12.9	5	5.9
Islamophobia	30	42.9	27	38.6	5	7.1	5	7.1
Racism	48	52.7	27	29.7	10	11.0	5	5.5
Far right extremism	26	46.4	14	25.0	8	14.3	3	5.4
Anti-Semitism	18	40.0	12	26.7	7	15.6	0	0.0
Other extremist views	4	16.7	6	25.0	1	4.2	0	0.0

All interview participants had also experienced young people expressing strong and sometimes extreme opinions in the classroom, and teachers were willing to address values as a response to issues arising in the classroom. In fact, responding to conflicting viewpoints was identified as a key way for students to learn to challenge extremist ideas:

> So if somebody does hold extremist views it's not like, oh, they can just think and say that because that's what they think. It's like, no, there's something that you should be able to talk about with people but still be respectful. (RE teacher, School 1)

Hate speech was frequently mentioned as something that required addressing, including racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, misogynist views, homophobia and transphobia. Hateful views were addressed differently, depending on the age of the student. Younger students (age 11-12) were generally seen as ignorant or naïve: *'because they're so young it is quite clear that it's not malicious.'* On the other hand, older students were held responsible for their views and in extreme cases parents were brought in for a discussion. Teachers reported that some students had difficulties with judging appropriate jokes and that there were instances of students making hateful remarks under the guise of humour. There were very few references to hate speech requiring a punishment. One teacher described an *'extremely rare'* incident which was followed up with a sanction where a student had told an EU staff member *'well you won't be here to tell me what to do because you'll be going back to your* [country].'

More challenging for teachers and students was making a distinction between appropriate freedom of speech and inappropriate hate speech, with one teacher saying that there is a *'fine line between hate speech and freedom of speech.'*

One teacher suggested that students were not sufficiently reflective about the things they said, '[they need] *to be thinking about what they're saying a lot of the time.'*

As indicated above, some views appeared to be influenced by extremist material online: *'another big thing is the challenging of what they view, social media, misconceptions.'* Other views were reflective of family or community attitudes. One teacher described a student being reported by his peers for expressing sexist views that they found unacceptable, but struggling when the boy's parents were invited in because the views were supported strongly by his family. In the main, however, students were regarded as *'exceptionally tolerant'.* If intolerant views were expressed, one PSHE Lead described how they would

> *…like to find out a little bit more about why they think that, so that I'm being open to their views, so I would I like to talk to them more about why and then lead them down that conversation of, 'okay you think that's immoral, is that impacting on you as an individual?' and saying, 'okay let's open your mind a bit'.* (PSHE Lead, School 2)

This approach enabled this person to explore the foundations of students' views and hopefully encourage them to reconsider or at least be more accepting.

One teacher articulated the difficulty of trying to encourage a balanced discussion, while also feeling that they needed *'to say kind of what I think is the truth as well.'* This was acknowledged as a particular challenge for leading classroom discussions:

> *So, I do need to have my experience there, too, but without a… I guess what I'm trying to avoid is saying, you know, "You're wrong." Because I think, again, that promotes a kind of intolerance in discussion. So, I need to say…I need to find some way around that. And perhaps that's the part that I really struggle with.* (RE teacher, school 5)

Conspiracy theories were another area where students were reported as expressing extreme opinions. While one teacher expressed doubt that students believed in them, others were emphatic that students *'loved'* conspiracy theories, including around COVID-19 vaccines and 5G networks. In some cases, conspiracy theories were used as a way in to teaching students to think critically:

> *Obviously the big one at the moment is the vaccine and microchips. So that's the one I'm experiencing most at the moment and so that's quite a nice easy one to use as an example because it's so extreme that we can use the extreme one to debunk and then start talking about, right let's look at your news sources, where are you getting your information.* (PSHE Lead, School 2)

Pedagogies for addressing controversial issues

All interviewees mentioned examples of controversial and sensitive topics that came up for discussion in their schools – either as a planned part of the curriculum or spontaneously. These issues provided opportunities for some students to put forward extreme viewpoints and for deconstruction of these views.

One Head of PSHE put forward a view echoed by other teachers, *'the heart of it is, I always say to the staff, make sure they're having conversations.'* This discussion-based approach was at the centre of most teachers' efforts at challenging extreme ideas, for example, *'get people discussing and giving them a safe space.'* *'Difficult conversations'*, if tackled well, were seen as a good strategy for encouraging students to question their thinking and understanding. However, one teacher noted that the limited time available for these conversations (for example in tutor sessions) meant that it could be difficult to get a discussion going.

The same head of PSHE advocated asking questions in order to challenge students' views. This person described a lesson where a group of students *'were of the assumption that homosexuality was really wrong, abhorrent and that it should not be seen as similar level of discrimination and prejudice compared to racism.'* He asked the students, *'how do you feel about racism?'* and shared with them a poem about *'if you don't stand up for other people's human rights eventually yours will be taken.'* *'Arguments'* and a *'heated discussion'* ensued, but some students came back later that day to tell him that it had changed their minds.

The delivery model where form tutors were responsible for delivering these areas through a tutor programme was a particular challenge. One English teacher observed that some subject areas were amenable to including controversial issues and teachers were likely to be skilled, however:

> *You're asking teachers who aren't specialists to teach topics that can be quite hard-hitting or that* [teachers] *feel quite unprepared for* […], *especially when the content can be quite sensitive. So, I think that's a real issue if I'm being honest with you.* (English teacher, School 3)

An English teacher in another school was indeed concerned that *'there might be something* […] *that would come up that would surprise me and I wouldn't know how to deal with it.'*

The curriculum provided opportunities for students to develop relevant skills such as critical thinking and examining sources. The Extended Project (EPQ – a post-16 qualification) was mentioned as one particularly valuable opportunity for students to explore systematically a controversial issue and have to *'do analysis of their sources'* and without this experience, the teacher was concerned that *'they can be quite easily led.'* In School 2, students did not necessarily do the EPQ, but the skills were taught starting in Year 8: *'so, things like, "here's the source, is it written by an expert, are they neutral, do they have a vested interest?"'* The need to develop empathy and understand others' viewpoints was also mentioned.

Preparing for life beyond school

As well as challenging extreme opinions expressed in the classroom, teachers also described preparing students for encounters and experiences they might have in the community: *'We spend a lot of time trying to build in that resilience and that understanding of how people can manipulate their ideas.'* This included specific teaching about stereotypes and propaganda. One teacher described how they build awareness by revisiting the same themes each year. A recurring theme, as indicated above, was the extent to which young people were critical

consumers of online material, particularly social media. One teacher described how they liked to think that the students in their school were critical consumers, but was evidently disconcerted by the experience of a former student who had been radicalised. Another PSHE Lead described how they endeavoured to enable students to develop 'exit strategies' to get out of difficult situations, for example through students role-playing scenarios in the classroom.

Chapter 4: What classroom resources and supports do teachers require to address issues of extremism and violent movements?

Teacher confidence

Teacher confidence in addressing issues of extremism and violent movements, as reported in the interviews, was mixed. As one Prevent Education Officer (PEO) told us, *'Some feel confident, some don't. […] That's the same with lots of issues, not just extremism. It's a lot about confidence, training.'* Even where they felt reasonably confident, some were aware that they still had development needs:

> *Yes, I do feel, on the whole, confident but I would like to know more.* (English teacher, School 3)

These issues of confidence were closely related to teachers' feelings of vulnerability when teaching about controversial issues, '*Some people are afraid of being accused of being this, that and the other themselves.'* (PEO)

Teachers' confidence could be quite shaky:

> *Yeah, I mean, it's a bit like, you know, driving a car – while you're doing it, you feel 'Yes, I can do this.' And then when somebody says, 'How are you doing that?' you think, 'Oh, my God, I'm doing it all wrong.' So I feel, you know, in a classroom, I feel I'm doing okay, but I'm not sure…I don't have anything to say that that's wrong but yes, I think I do okay.* (RE teacher, School 5)

Discussing difficulties with colleagues was seen as a good strategy for developing practice: *'one of the ways that I can sort of gauge my ability in this area is to talk with other people about their difficulties to see whether we have the same kind of problems and how did we both deal with them.'* (RE teacher, School 5)

Even when teachers expressed confidence in addressing issues of extremism and violent movements, they were aware of their personal limitations in discussing certain issues. One teacher told us about how their personal experiences affected teaching:

> *I'm confident with it but I am very aware and I'm very honest with the students that I run the risk of bias because I was tied up in 7/7, which catches their interest and I do have to say to them, 'Look, I try to be as neutral as I can, however, you could well trigger me in something that you say', so I do just let them know.* (PSHE Lead, School 2)

This struggle between the personal and the professional and finding a nuanced position was experienced more widely. As one RE teacher described:

That's where my role becomes quite fuzzy. Because I feel I need to say that this is… this is kind of not necessarily the truth. I need to say that this is a good point, basically, that this particular point is one that is a good example of critical thinking, perhaps. But then, you know, to be honest, I do need to say kind of what I think is the truth as well. So I do need to have my experience there, too, but without a… I guess what I'm trying to avoid is saying, you know, "You're wrong." Because I think, again, that promotes a kind of intolerance in discussion. So I need to say…I need to find some way around that. And perhaps that's the part that I really struggle with… where you find that you want to be intolerant of intolerance. And so that puts you in an intolerant position. So how do you quite negotiate that? (RE teacher, School 5)

The teacher and the way they present themselves was seen as a significant factor, as a Prevent Education Officer described, *'You can be indirectly teaching them by the way that you present yourself in the classroom, being very respectful to everyone, letting people have their own voice.'* This person went on to say about teachers:

They're worried about coming across one way or another so again, that's probably about confidence or being self-assured…. I think it just varies so much. I think the main thing is for me, the main message when I'm just talking to members, regular teaching staff, is it doesn't really matter if you feel confident or not. If you notice something, pass it on to someone else who does because the safeguarding leads that I've met in schools are usually amazing at their jobs so they will feel confident tackling it or they'll get in touch with me and work together." (PEO)

This quote seems to exemplify the surveillance mode or dealing with extremism identified in the literature and demonstrates the ways in which there is little concern for the skills of the teachers, only in their willingness to report.

Specialist trained teams

Our interviewees included teachers who were experienced in teaching or leading areas closely relevant to British values, for example RE, PSHE, Citizenship and English. While our sample did not include any specialist Citizenship-trained teachers, subject leaders had been able to access a significant amount of training and support in developing their programmes of study. They also reported a high degree of self-motivation, for example: '[I feel] *very well equipped. You know, I read very widely, I have an interest in current affairs and I sort of know some things.'* (S4) However, this teacher expressed concern that the *'average teacher'* would be less well-informed and in a weaker position for tackling these sensitive and controversial issues: *'Are you talking about the average teacher or me? The average teacher, no, I don't think they're particularly well equipped. No, definitely not.'* (Assistant Head, School 4)

Herein lay a particular problem for this curriculum area, as a common model for delivering PSHE and Citizenship was through the form tutor programme and this raised concerns among respondents:

I used to teach PSHE, just me, but when it became an Academy the idea was that it would get rolled out amongst the form tutors which has a plus and a minus. There's part of me which I like the continuity that I'm teaching everything, marking everything, picking up on… (PSHE Lead, School 1)

These concerns included lack of control, but also the challenges arising from non-specialist teachers delivering such a sensitive area of the curriculum.

At the moment, there is a subject lead for it, but it falls upon form tutors to deliver that curriculum. So you're asking teachers who aren't specialists to teach topics that can be quite hard-hitting or that feel quite unprepared for teachers, especially when the content can be quite sensitive. So, I think that's a real issue if I'm being honest with you.' (English teacher, School 3)

Where teachers without specialist knowledge or training were delivering this area of the curriculum, there were risks to how material was presented. One teacher suggested that this delivery model resulted in PSHE being treated as an area just to *'pick up and deliver'* without *'training or prior reading'* – implying that form tutors might not prepare their lessons thoroughly themselves, but instead work through a pack of materials prepared for them. The same teacher told us that they felt *'the delivery doesn't always allow students to effectively learn or understand some of these topics that can be quite difficult, like extremism'* and the lessons ended up being more about *'delivery of content as opposed to exploring the opinions or thoughts or views of students.'* (English teacher, School 3)

Specialist training was seen as being of particular benefit for leading student discussions and knowing how to 'deal with the opinions, values and ideas of students that could come up from discussions like that which can be quite sensitive.' A number of interviewees described the need for teachers to be able to 'unpick' students' ideas and felt that non-specialists were ill-equipped for this task. An English teacher was clear that their own development needs were not being met,

It would be nice to have training on how to explain these ideas. it would be good to have some training on that, how to have those conversations and help them understand why what they're doing is wrong and helping them to understand the behaviour of others as well. (English teacher, School 1)

Access to training

The majority of survey respondents had accessed some training in challenging extremist views. Over two-thirds of respondents (66) had received online training and about half had received face-to-face training either from a colleague in school (47) or from an external agency (50) or had carried out their own research (45). Fewer had received informal peer support, such as from Twitter or online forums (18).

Table 5. What training have you received in challenging extremist views?

	Number	%
Face to face training by an external agency	50	52.1
Face to face training by staff at my school	47	49.0
Online training	66	68.8
Informal peer support	27	28.1
Own research	45	46.9
Other	4	4.2

Similarly, all interviewees had experience of statutory Prevent training. As our survey revealed, this was most frequently delivered via an online platform. Opinions were divided in regard to statutory PREVENT training. Some teachers in the sample felt it was very useful and current whilst others felt the mode of delivery was ineffective and content significantly out of date. The Safeguarding Lead from School 3 told us they had not been able to access training beyond the basics and questioned the quality of what was available:

Personally, other than the Home Office PREVENT and doing the WRAP training, [I've accessed] nothing. So, the Home Office PREVENT training, which is online, which most schools will use, is currently out of date.

Schools subscribed to different online professional development services, although the value of repetitive online courses was questioned:

I think it only becomes less valuable when it's repetition because I always do my PREVENT renewal training in effect, recently and I went, I'm switching off, I'm not really engaging with it anymore and it's because it's the same format every time. (PSHE Lead, School 2)

This view was echoed by another interviewee:

For all staff, we do Prevent training every two years, but the problem is that we have tried to get different training over those two years, rather than just using the same Prevent training that then people just click through online and then, 'We've done this, done this, done this, seen this.' (DSL, School 3)

While the messages around Prevent were seen as important and in need of regular revisiting, for longstanding members of staff, the delivery mode did not encourage engagement.

It doesn't work because your mind wanders, and you didn't necessarily take notes and you're never tested on it. Yeah, there is… it's not alive. You know, it's the sort of thing that is done once, and then it just trickles away. (RE teacher, School 5)

By contrast, the Prevent Education Officer, who delivered face-to-face training to schools, felt that their training offer contributed usefully to equipping teachers to deal with potential radicalisation of young people:

Well obviously I think that the Prevent training that we do is really useful. I would say that. But I do think it's really useful in terms of reassuring people and giving them a few tools about what to look out for and what to do about it if they notice something and also that local context again. But I think also it's important for them. Every single teacher, whatever you teach, the most important thing they could do is to think about their own curriculum and how they teach it and loads of really simple things. (Prevent Education Officer)

The superior quality of such training was endorsed by a Safeguarding Lead:

Our prevent officer, so he kindly agreed to come in and deliver training directly on prevent, it was excellent training actually, it was all about the far-right and the shift there and symbols that the far-right use and things to look out for in books. I think a lot of my colleagues were very shocked by some of the very well-coded numbers and symbology that the far-right are using and to look for those signs, making sure that staff always understand the signs of possible extremist views or being radicalised. (DSL, School 2)

This type of training, as well as opportunities for colleagues to explore and discuss *'scenarios'* were greatly appreciated:

There have been times when it's been open for discussion for teachers to digest that information but also to talk about, 'If we see this in a classroom, what do we do?' and those scenario-based training that has been made available for teachers. (English teacher, School 3)

There was also a desire from some to have a greater understanding of the Prevent process

It would be nice to have more real-life stories available of those who have experienced the full length of extremism. I think we watched one interview in our training but to have more interviews available from a broader spectrum of cultures and faiths would be better and would be nicer to have access to not only for myself but for students. (English teacher, School 3)

However, specialist training for teaching controversial and sensitive issues was difficult to come by. As mentioned previously, the PSHE and Citizenship Leads interviewed had been able to access or had sought out a significant amount of training and support, even though it was difficult to find:

There is a distinct lack of training I think, or good quality training anyway and like I say, you can join associations like PSHE which are very useful. You might be lucky, you might work in a strong borough where there's people with very good subject knowledge and good service provision but if you're not… I often think [where I am] I'm lucky, I'm fortunate.

How would I tackle teaching some of what I'm teaching in other schools? (PSHE Lead, School 1)

The level of service provision was recognised to vary greatly between local authorities, with the Prevent Education Officer observing that they were only permitted to support the urban authority, while there was just as much need, but no support, for the neighbouring rural areas.

Several teachers suggested that training for all staff on dealing with controversial and sensitive issues would be useful, although they acknowledged funding for such training was a significant barrier to engagement, meaning that cascading training was the only viable option:

The school's always been supportive, if you need training you can go and do that training and then you can share that with the rest of the staff. (PSHE Lead, School 1)

It was seen as simply unfeasible to get access to appropriate training for all the form tutors, as the same PSHE Lead described, *'I'd like to get more of the form tutors out on training but that's quite difficult because it's time and money, etc, etc.'*

Many of the teachers interviewed had completed in-school training developed by the head of PSHE/ Citizenship or DSL (S1, S2, S4). The training and associated resources were developed by one individual, motivated by personal interest and passion. Although reported to be successful and well-received, the dependence upon a single person not only highlighted the absence of specialist-trained teams within schools but raised concerns about potential issues should the designated individual leave the school or retire.

I use the PSHE lessons which are planned by Sir, which have loads in that. A lot of videos from YouTube that he's put in there, so YouTube, the lessons themselves that's he's made. I guess my lessons as well if they're related. I can't think of any other resource, we don't have any textbooks or anything. (RE teacher, School 1)

The Assistant Headteacher interviewed in School 4 was one of these teachers developing programmes out of great passion and interest. This person explained that they were nearing retirement and were now being shadowed by a colleague who would be picking up the programme when the time came.

Support from Government

The measurement of effectiveness and success of in-school programmes was a concern for the teachers interviewed and they wished to see a clearer approach:

I'd like to see probably more of a centralised approach from government, that would be quite useful, so I could at least compare what I've done from the standard, can you call it a standard? (PSHE Lead, School 1)

The Assistant Headteacher from School 4 expressed a similar view, finding expectations frustratingly unclear:

It's all about expectations, isn't it? I have no idea what their expectations are at the moment. It's very difficult to assess what is happening, isn't it? I have no idea what their success criteria are. Yeah, how are they accountable and what is it that they're doing? To them, is something that successful? I mean, they set up this initiative, and they've asked us to do it. And I don't know whether or not they're measuring it. (Assistant Headteacher, School 4)

In fact, some teachers struggled with the concepts, finding British values *'woolly'* and *'difficult to put it into words'* (RE teacher, School 5). It is perhaps surprising that this level of uncertainty persisted, given how long the area has been established in English schools:

I'll be quite interested to hear what fundamental British values are. I mean, that's the thing that ever since it was brought in has been not really answered. And it's actually a big part of, it's a part of the RS syllabus. And in the GCSE syllabus, there are questions that include it, and it's just quite unhelpful to not really know exactly what is meant by that. (RE teacher, School 5)

Teaching resources and visiting speakers

Survey respondents mentioned a range of resources that they used to support teaching about extremism and Fundamental British Values in addition to those provided by Prevent Officers. Resources are listed in Table 6.

Table 6. What resources do you use to support the promotion of Fundamental British Values?

Source/supplier	Resource (if named)
Association for Citizenship Teaching	The Deliberative Classroom
Church of England	Valuing All God's Children
Cre8tive Resources	
CWP	
Global Acts of Unity	
Holocaust Educational Trust	
Hope Not Hate	
Lost Voices	
Loudmouth (theatre company)	
NATRE	
Philosophy 4 Children	
Police	
PSHE Association	
Show Racism the Red Card	
SINCE 9/11	
Stonewall	
TES	
Votes for Schools	
WRAP 3	

Our interviewees tended to describe using bespoke resources that had been created in-house, *'resources that I've built up over the years. Just my little PowerPoint things,'* although they were aware of programmes or resources that could be *'bought into'* (Assistant Headteacher, School 4). Finding appropriate resources was seen as *'quite difficult'* because of the need for them to be used by *'lots and lots'* of different teachers, and the need to have a balanced and unbiased approach. The Safeguarding Lead from School 3 described how resources needed to be chosen carefully to counteract the view *'from the media, it can be very, very focused on one culture, one religion and it's about getting away from that.'* Twitter and YouTube were mentioned as useful sources, as teachers often uploaded their own resources to share free with colleagues in other schools. Of course, professional judgement is needed as to the appropriateness of such resources:

> So, any guidance on resources and things that can be produced in schools that becomes consistent would be very welcomed and I know that we look for things ourselves. (DSL, School 3)

Care of course should always be taken in employing such resources and new guidance is expected from the Department for Education soon.

Interviewees also mentioned visiting speakers and further resources. The Prevent Education Officer mentioned *Solutions Not Sides* and *Stand Up! Education Against Discrimination*, both of which provide resources to help schools address discrimination. Other interviewees mentioned topics, such as LGBT awareness, where they recalled a visitor had come in but couldn't remember who. The English teacher from school 3 had a positive recollection of an Imam from a local mosque contributing to teaching about Islamic extremism:

> *[He] came to look at verses of the Qur'an and unpick some of those for students, so they had a better understanding of the faith system but also the attitudes towards extremism that are sometimes stereotypically linked to the Islamic faith.* (English teacher, School 3)

Overall, while visitors and resources were valued, they seemed to be seen as potentially beneficial add-ons, rather than central to any of the school's provision.

A whole-school issue

Teachers also felt that addressing issues of extremism and violent movements would be more effective if there were greater co-ordination and integration of Fundamental British Values across all aspects of the school culture and curriculum. These included, for example:

> *I think it would be nice if it wasn't just in PSHE. Like I said I know in English it's quite easy to do but it would be good to do more broadly across the school. I think most of our students if I said to them what are the fundamental British values, they wouldn't know, or they wouldn't know 100% what they meant. I'm not sure how it could be embedded more because we've got so many things to focus on and so many things to do. I don't know how it could be embedded in more subjects but it would be good if it was to help students to see how it fits into their world in a way.* (English teacher, School 1)

> *So, you know, I think we take it seriously, but I think it's, as with most of these initiatives, I think it's sort of an add on. It's not completely woven into the curriculum in a way that I suspect people feel that it should be.* (Assistant Head Teacher, School 4)

Community engagement and external agencies

Community engagement was reported to be a useful support for schools in addressing issues of extremism and violent movements. Our interviewees valued visitors and community connections, such as with the Imam mentioned above, which enriched their provision.

As well as specialist knowledge, it was perceived that an advantage of visiting speakers was their status as an outsider, which enabled them to have a different relationship with students to that enjoyed by teachers and school leaders.

For example, we had our local liaison police officer coming in to talk about hate crime, for example, so we use … when we've been able to, yes, we'll get someone in to do sessions, just to get that, not neutrality, that distance that is sometimes needed. (PSHE Lead, School 2)

As well as support with delivery and training, teachers also appreciated the support of external agencies when dealing with safeguarding issues.

MASH is our Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub which is linked to the Council and they are brilliant in terms of, making that phone call: 'Can I discuss this with you?' 'How do you think I should proceed?' 'Am I doing the right thing?', and to be able to ask those questions. We have a police liaison officer who started coming into school every Tuesday, part of the safety team. So she's a fantastic point of contact as well and then obviously we know the processes going through to our, if it's a specific Prevent and we're clear it's Prevent, going through to the Prevent Officer […] and going through that process with them then to guide us through the potential of taking it further in channel and taking it to panel and things. (DSL, School 3)

This returns us to the first part of this section of the report. Schools alone cannot address these issues. They have to be part of a concerted effort by government, communities **and** schools. However, with the right support structures in place, schools can and do make **a** difference!

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This research has been concerned with:

- What role schools can play in enabling young people's resistance to joining extremist or violent movements;
- What role schools can play in supporting young people to challenge ideas perpetrated by extremist or violent movements; and
- What classroom resources and support teachers require to address issues of extremism and violent movements in their classrooms.

It is clear that schools can play an important role, especially when they engage well with their local communities; and that schools and teachers, when supported and appropriately resourced, can help young people to problematise 'hateful extremism'.

In this report we have suggested that schools cannot ignore the issue of extremism, violent and/or hateful, and need to confront it through classroom activity and appropriate policies that recognise that extremism is strengthened where hatefulness is allowed to fester. We have encouraged the development of students' critical literacy skills – that is the ability to understand the ways in which different texts (written, spoken and visual) construct particular views of the world based on the assumptions underpinning them. Teachers will also need professional development to deliver these skills as well as guidance and professional development that can support the creation of classrooms as safe places for open and free discussion on controversial issues.

This research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although not the focus of the research this context generated some interesting responses showing concern about the influence of conspiracy and disinformation on young people, who have increasingly accessed the world via social media. The switch to online teaching as part of the lockdowns also highlighted, for some teachers, the importance of face-to-face teaching and the relatively 'safe' space of the classroom as a means of engaging young people in discussion and challenging intolerant views.

Fundamental British Values were inevitably a discussion point in addressing how schools confront the issue of extremism. While there was some scepticism directed towards FBVs, as there was in the literature, they do provide a starting point for discussions of values and what it might mean to be British in today's society. In the hands of skilful teachers, they can be used in ways that enhance students' understanding of and contributions to a healthy democracy.

While terrorist activity is unlikely to disappear and while examples of 'hateful extremism' are never far from the surface, we are hopeful that they can be diminished. As educators, we are convinced that education, and the teachers who enable it, have a central role in making this hope practical. However, for this to occur, teachers need to be able to bring their own pedagogical expertise to the task, enhanced through appropriate professional development, of creating their classrooms as safe places for exploring sensitive and controversial issues in a wider work environment where such discussions are valued. The burden, though, should not be solely on teachers; addressing extremism in the classroom is everybody's business.

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Appendix: Methods

Literature review

To conduct the literature review, search terms included: extremism, radicalisation, Prevent, 'fundamental British values', combined with English, citizenship and RE. Peer reviewed journal articles and books were analysed, with some theoretical research - note above - included to frame the issue of anti-extremism practices in schools. Nearly all are studies conducted post-2015, minus selected literature from Northern Ireland which offers an interesting exploration of prejudice-combatting practices and guiding principles which might be drawn from them (McCully, 2006). One report, included in this literature review, examines educational responses to extremism across Europe and is included because it offers insight into practices deemed successful in various contexts as a point of comparison. Even though this sits outside the context of the research project, the report's analysis of these educational practices are worthy of inclusion as they speak back to ways in which schools in the UK act to disrupt extremism and the potential for violence in young people.

Survey method

The survey was drawn up by the project team.

The survey was opened on 23rd April 2020 and publicised through social media, the SINCE 9/11-IOE Student Summit in December 2020, an article in TES (1st December 2020) and through the CTTR mailing list. On 19th October 2020 a revised version of the survey was opened, with the intention of reducing the survey length in order to boost responses. This version of the survey omitted a small number of questions, and moved personal information to a separate, optional, section at the end. The original version of the survey remained open and both surveys were closed on 7 June 2021. Findings reported here are only for questions that remained the same across both surveys.

Sample

A total of 96 respondents completed the whole survey. Of these, 31 agreed to be contacted for a follow-up interview and provided an email address.

22 participants (22.9%) who responded to the second version of the survey declined to provide their personal characteristics, therefore their gender, ethnicity, age and religious affiliation are unknown.

Nearly two-thirds of participants (61, 63.5%) reported that they were from White backgrounds. Nearly all of these identified as White British (58, 95.1%).

The majority of participants reported that they were aged between 30 and 59, suggesting that our sample is slightly older on average than the population of teachers in England, who have an average age of 39 (OECD, 2019).

Interview method

Recruitment for case study schools (interviews with teachers and focus groups with Key Stage 3 students) commenced in October 2019. However, due to complications resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in IOE ethical requirements for research during this time, the original methodology was revised in March 2020 to allow for interviews with individual teachers and community stakeholders (Prevent Education Officers) to be conducted online and via telephone.

In-depth, semi-structured, individual interviews were conducted to enable a more fine-grained analysis and understanding of the subjective experiences and perceptions of teachers and PREVENT Education Officers.

In order to facilitate exploration of the research questions in varied and diverse contexts, participants were invited to interview through advertisements on social media, the SINCE 9/11-IOE Student Summit in December 2020, the Co-operative Schools network, PREVENT Education Officer network, CTTR / IOE / SINCE 9/11 networks and teachers expressing consent to interview in the project survey.

The interview schedules were developed by the project team. Each interview schedule consisted of approximately 30 open-ended questions which focused on teacher role, experience and confidence, school context, training and the role of schools in enabling young people's resistance to extremism. Interviews took 20 minutes to 1.5 hours to complete. Interviews were transcribed and pseudonymised to protect participant confidentiality and anonymity.

Transcripts were reviewed and analysed, separately by 3 project team members. In the initial analysis stage, all interviews and observations were subjected to an exploratory probe, which identified several overarching themes aligned with RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3. 100% agreement was reached by the team members on the themes presented in this report.

A total of 10 teachers and 1 PREVENT Education Officer were interviewed (see Table A1).

Table A1. Summary of interview participants

School	Role/subject
S1	Religious Education (RE)
	PSHE
	English
S2	Religious Education (RE)
	PSHE
	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
S3	English
	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
S4	Assistant Head Teacher
S5	Religious Education (RE)
PEO	Prevent Education Officer

Table A2. Summary of participating schools.

School	School Type	Selective / Non-Selective	Gender of Entry	No. of pupils enrolled[2]	Pupil Age Range	Urban / Rural	% FSM[3]	% White British	% EAL
1	Free School	Non-selective	Mixed	500	11-18	Urban	40	15	36
2	Academy Converter	Selective	Male only	1000	11-18	Urban	5	51	26
3	Academy Converter	Non-selective	Mixed	2200	3-19	Urban	10	46	19
4	Foundation School	Non-selective	Mixed	1800	11-19	Urban	20	5	65
5	Independent Boarding School	Selective	Male only	600	13-18	Rural	0	Unknown	Unknown

Source:

Schools, pupils and their characteristics, Academic Year 2020/21 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

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[2] Rounded to nearest 100.
[3] Rounded to nearest 5%.