

## **What exactly does Jigsaw teach about LGBTQ issues and is it age-appropriate?**

### • How much LGBTQ teaching is there in Jigsaw?

It is firstly important to understand that any reference to adult relationships, whether LGBTQ or heterosexual people is NOT describing sexual activity as this would be **inappropriate**. Relationships lessons focus on respect and regard between people e.g. friendships and families.

In upper Key Stage 2 the Changing Me Unit age-appropriately explains puberty and the biology of human reproduction.

Jigsaw is a complete scheme of work for Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) covering the entire PSHE curriculum for primary children aged 4-11. **Only a very small number** of these lessons in the entire scheme have any focus upon LGBTQ issues.

Jigsaw's philosophy is about inclusion and valuing all children.

### What LGBTQ material is taught in lower primary (infants)?

LGBTQ is not mentioned specifically in lessons for children aged 4-7. However, in lessons that explore differences in families, pictorial resources such as those below are used as a discussion focus.

Questions such as:

'Which photos show a family?'

What is important about a family?'

'What does your family mean to you?'

help children understand about their own and other's families and how a family is founded in love and respect. Should children raise the question about pictures that show a same-gender couple, Jigsaw's teacher notes suggest this is explained to children in the following way:

'Some children have two mummies or two daddies.'

Teachers **are not** expected to go beyond this response, or give more detail, as that would not be age-appropriate. However, this does acknowledge and include any children who have LGBTQ people as part of their family.

## What LGBTQ content is discussed for children aged 7-11?

In materials for 7-11-year olds, some lessons about bullying provide opportunities for teachers to discuss and correct homophobic language the children may be using, such as the inappropriate use of the words 'gay' and 'lesbian', or the use of slang words that are LGBTQ- phobic.

In the same lessons they will also be exploring racist and sexist language, or insulting language that is used about a person's physical appearance, their abilities, or whether they have special needs. In these lessons, teachers explain that any insult is unkind and hurtful.

Teachers explain that being gay is a type of adult relationship where two men or two women love each other in a romantic way, and if they choose, they can get married. Teachers are not expected to go beyond this definition and give more detail. It is simply explaining what being gay means and that the word 'gay' (or other LGBTQ -related words) should not be used in an insulting or derogatory way.

In Jigsaw's Relationships and Changing Me lessons for pupils aged 7-11 that cover relationships, puberty, growing-up and how a baby is made, children are given opportunities to ask questions if there is something they don't understand.

LGBTQ relationships or being LGBTQ **are not explicitly discussed** in the lessons, unless questions are raised about it. In which case, Jigsaw's teacher notes give possible age-appropriate ways for teachers to answer these questions.

## Being Transgender

In one lesson for 10-11-year olds, children are introduced to the word 'transgender' so they understand what it means. This lesson has a focus on prejudice and discrimination where a transgender example is used.

The Equality Act is also explained in an age-appropriate way. Being transgender is discussed in the following terms:

Most people are not transgender. A transgender person doesn't feel their body matches with their gender. Let me explain...a person who was born with a male body may feel they are a female, and a person born with a female body may feel they are a male. There can be all sorts of reasons why this happens.

Some transgender people choose to change their appearance or body so their gender matches with how they feel. This is called transitioning. Not all transgender people choose to do this though.

*(If children want more detail, teachers are advised to explain they will learn more about transgender people in secondary school and they should return to the focus of the lesson which is about prejudice and discrimination).*

Jigsaw's decision was to include this lesson as a matter of course within the Year 6 (Age 10 -11) materials so children understand what being transgender means, in line with the Equality Act.

This lesson does not promote transgenderism as a preferred lifestyle. It simply explains what being transgender is, and how some people who are trans face unfair prejudice and discrimination, in the

same way that other people do e.g. through racism, ageism, sexism and prejudice against people who are disabled.

#### What Jigsaw doesn't do

- Jigsaw does not teach or encourage children to be LGBTQ
- Jigsaw does not teach what LGBTQ people do sexually or how their relationships function
- Jigsaw does not promote LGBTQ lifestyles as a preferential way of living
- Jigsaw's advice about answering children's questions age-appropriately does not sexualise children, destroy their innocence, or encourage them to experiment. There is more properly researched peer-reviewed evidence that supports this claim, than not.
- Jigsaw materials do not undermine 'family values'.

#### What Jigsaw does do

- Jigsaw teaches children to be kind, understanding and respectful of others even if they are perceived as different
- Jigsaw teaches children that people have rights but there are also responsibilities that go with These
- Jigsaw teaches children that there are laws to protect them and others from being hurt or abused and helps protect them from bullying
- Jigsaw helps clarify (age -appropriately) questions that children may have about the world

*"...consultation does not provide a parental veto on curriculum content. We want schools to consult parents, listen to their views, and make reasonable decisions about how to proceed (including through consideration of school's wider duties)—and we (the Def.) will support schools in this. We trust school leaders and teachers to make the right professional choices....children should feel included and should grow up understanding the value and importance of kindness and respect for others and themselves..."*

Rt Hon Damian Hinds 10th April 2019