

Schools wanting to carry out a curriculum audit and involve student feedback in the planning of a new curriculum for PSHE and Citizenship would find completion of the HRBQ beneficial. This may be as part of developing a Healthy School Action Plan or just as good practice.

Karen Tann is a Senior Teacher at the James Hornsby High School which is a mixed 11-16 Comprehensive school in Basildon, Essex. It was formed by the amalgamation of two secondary schools in September 1998.

Karen Tann

Using the HRBQ in school improvement plans

A self-evaluating school will gain an important insight into the attitudes and knowledge of students related to health issues.

Since the publication of 'The National Curriculum Handbook for Secondary Teachers in England' (1999), I have been leading a team of staff at my school in reviewing our current PSHE curriculum and ensuring appropriate coverage of Curriculum 2000. This work has also involved the implementation of a curriculum for Citizenship, which becomes a new National Curriculum subject in August 2002.

In common with all schools, we are also expected to adopt the National Healthy School Standard. This work complements and reinforces the Healthy School vision, since implicit in the Healthy Schools Standard is an expectation that students are given opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding related to the PSHE and Citizenship Curriculum as part of a planned whole-school approach.

PSHE guidance

If one refers to the initial guidance for schools on PSHE, one is able to identify the knowledge, skills and understanding which are to be taught:

- ✓ Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities
- ✓ Developing a healthy, safer life style
- ✓ Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people.

Also in the initial Guidance for Citizenship, one is directed to three interrelated strands in Citizenship Education. The first of these strands is social and moral responsibility, which includes developing self-confidence and

socially and morally responsible behaviour.

'Hoops for Health'

The school was delighted to accept an invitation to take part in a local project called 'Hoops for Health' in January 2000. This is run jointly by London Leopards Basketball Team, the local Health Authority and Basildon District Council. Its aim is to encourage young people to follow a healthier lifestyle and to offer support to improve fitness to targeted students.

This project fitted admirably with our work on PSHE, Citizenship and the National Healthy Schools Standard. We worked with Year 7 students in several ways:-

- ✓ Launch assembly by members of the London Leopards who promoted the theme of needing to be fit for achieving personal ambitions
- ✓ All Year 7 took the bleep test and students who needed to increase their fitness levels were encouraged with extra support from Basildon Leisure Services
- ✓ The Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire was given to a sample of Year 7 students. This was sponsored by the local Health Authority

HRBQ

The Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire (HRBQ) has proved invaluable for staff working at the James Hornsby High School for curriculum development and addressing whole school issues. In line with guidance given in the frameworks for PSHE and Citizenship staff have been able to collect information on the students' knowledge of, and attitude towards, a range of health related issues. This

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has enabled us to look at our current PSHE curriculum and identify areas where students seem poorly informed or need greater support. Some specific examples are given below.

The information has also allowed us to identify current strengths and targets for attention within the key objectives of our Healthy Schools action plans.

Data & developments

Only a few applications have been provided. Obvious areas not covered here include Sex and Relationships Education and Health Related Fitness. We also used data to look at literacy at home (which newspapers are taken), and issues around self-esteem which obviously impact upon individual students' learning and progress.

Drug Education

At the James Hornsby High School we have a planned Drug Education Curriculum, taught through both Key Stages by form tutors. This programme includes smoking, alcohol, illegal drugs and addictive behaviours. There was a wealth of information supplied by the HRBQ on drug-related issues.

Alcohol / Smoking

It would appear (tables 1a & 1b) that alcohol and smoking education is being targeted at the correct age range and is taught effectively in our current scheme.

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Table 1a Percentage of Year 7 students in each group responding to: Total number of units of alcohol

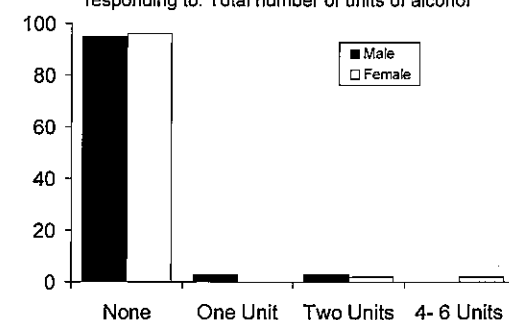
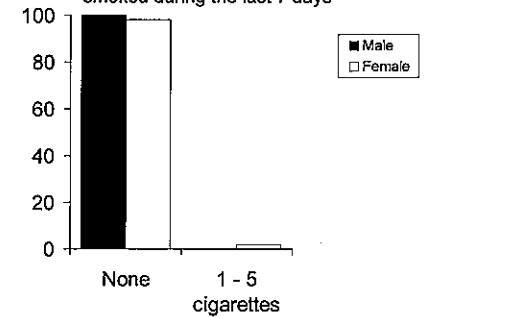


Table 1b Percentage of Year 7 students in each group responding to: How many cigarettes have you smoked during the last 7 days



The figures show that over 95% of students had not drunk alcohol in the past week and close to 100% of students had not smoked in the past 7 days. We therefore did not feel a need to adjust this teaching package greatly. However, illegal drugs were not well known about (tables 2a - below & 2b - overpage).

This has led us to consider the need to teach about illegal drugs at an earlier point in the student's school career. Especially since 12% of the boys and 8% of the girls (table 3a - over page) said that they had already been offered cannabis, and 14% of boys and 8% of the girls (table 3b - overpage) had been offered other illegal drugs.

Table 2a Percentage of Year 7 Males responding to: What do you know about these drugs?

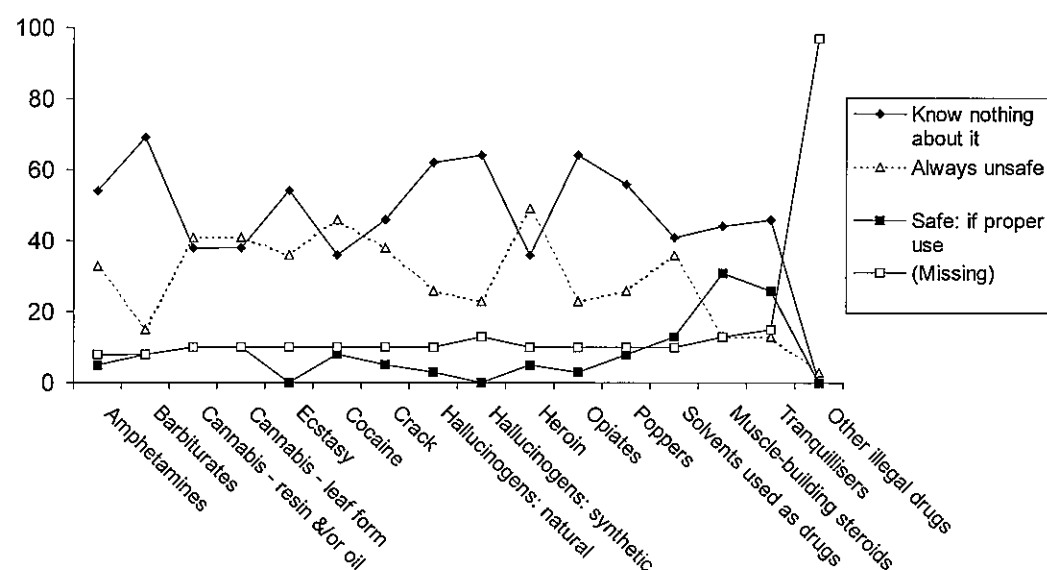


Table 2b Percentage of Year 7 Females responding to: What do you know about these drugs?

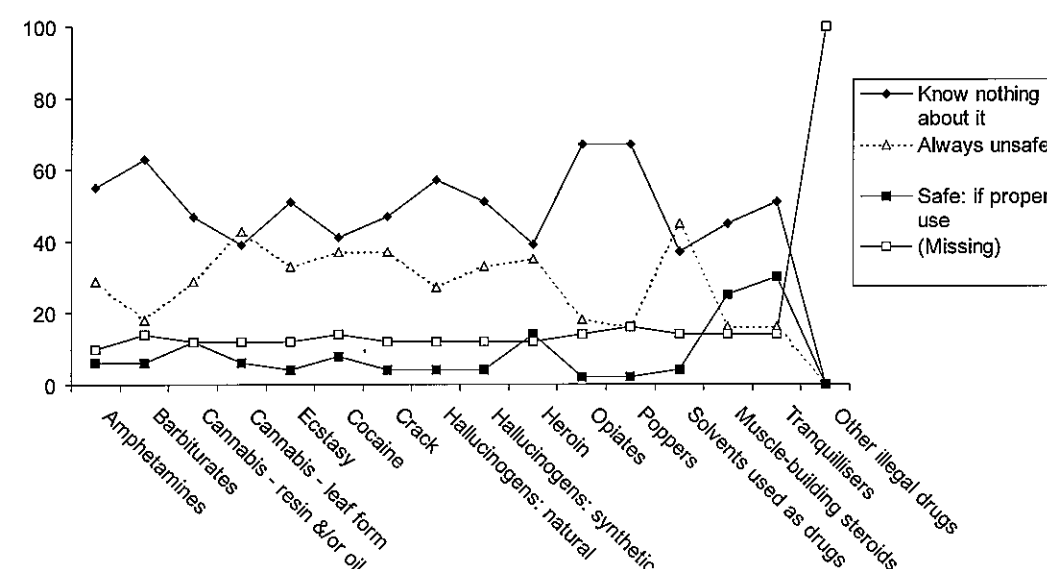


Table 3a Percentage of Year 7 students in each group responding to: Have you ever been offered cannabis?

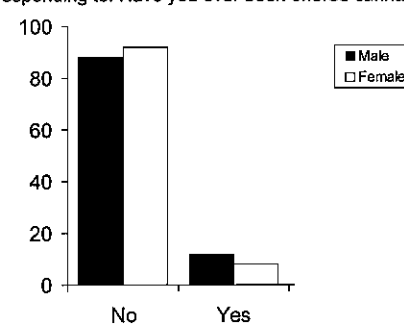
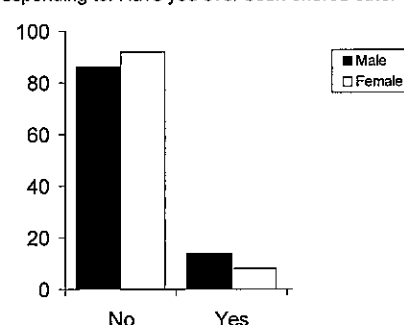
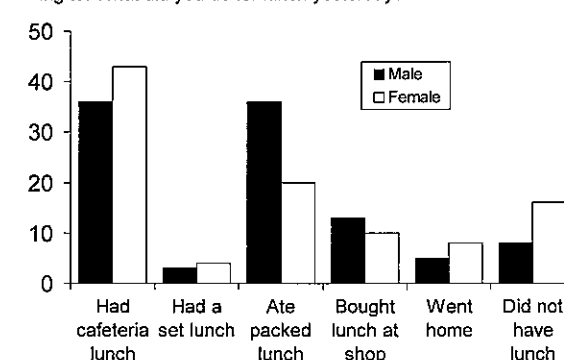


Table 3b Percentage of Year 7 students in each group responding to: Have you ever been offered other drugs?



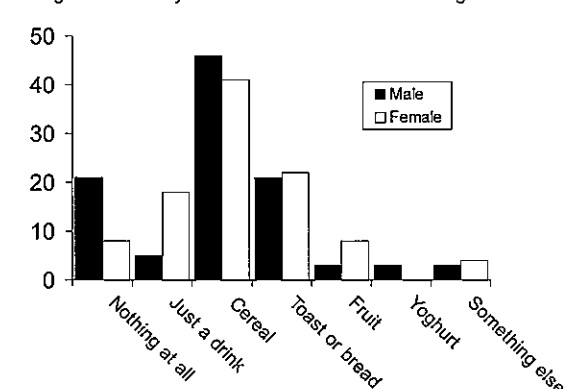
well balanced menu. Of concern to us (table 4) was the number of students who said they did not have lunch (8% of males & 16% of females).

Table 4 Percentage of Year 7 students in each group responding to: What did you do for lunch yesterday?



Even more worrying was that over 25% of the sample (table 5) had nothing to eat or just a drink at breakfast time. This is especially worrying if the same students belong to both categories.

Table 5 Percentage of Year 7 students in each group responding to: What did you have for breakfast this morning?



In January 2001 we held a special drug education initiative which lasted approximately 2 weeks including a poster campaign, a competition and culminating in an event staged by Essex Police and Essex FM radio: the "2 smart 4 drugs" roadshow. This informed students in a relevant but entertaining way. We would hope to be successful in holding such an event again in future years and so plugging the gap in student knowledge in Year 7.

Healthy eating

A key part of the National Healthy Schools standard is promoting sensible, healthy eating and ensuring that food provided in schools is both appetising and forms part of a planned

This may reflect either a desire amongst young people to attain an exceptionally low weight for their height, due to peer pressure

and media publications. It may be due to poverty and inability to pay for food or it may reflect a different set of priorities where money is spent on something else (e.g. trading cards). The figures from the survey show that in fact 33% of boys and 48% of girls want to lose weight. We do have a high proportion of students receiving free school meals (28%) so we would hope that these students do at least eat lunch. However, the balance of type of food that is consumed is also a concern. Not unexpectedly, students favour sugar and fat rich items compared to fruit and vegetables. The information provided has led us to include some important points for action in our aim to create a healthier school. The PSHE curriculum is to be reviewed, concentrating on education about healthy eating, self esteem and self image.

The Food Technology curriculum will also be examined in the light of these findings. We have now reintroduced our breakfast service in the canteen and we will be working with the catering staff to review the range of food offered to students. The possibility of a system to encourage better food choices by students will be considered (e.g. points for healthy foods which can add up towards a reward).

Relationships and Bullying Behaviour

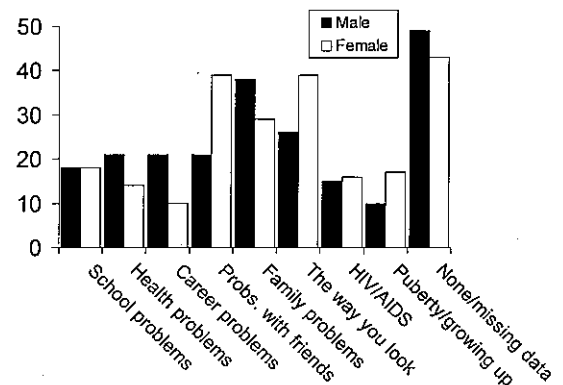
Schools should have in place an anti-bullying policy and be following procedures to combat bullying behaviour in school. We already had such a policy and have been working at developing further supportive systems around this issue.

There was a need to add more strategies to our current policy and practice. We then carried out a questionnaire involving both students, parents and our home-school link team. Training sessions using 'Kidscape' were run. We have a team of staff who are able to work with both recipients and perpetrators of bullying behaviour and a Mediator has been appointed to work with targeted students. Recognising student reluctance to approach adults to discuss concerns we have also set up a peer mediator scheme, staffed by trained volunteers. We also have a box where students can drop a note if they are unable to approach a teacher face to face. We hope that in our follow-up survey next year will reflect a positive picture of a successful support system for students and a reduction in the small number of students who are worried about bullying very often.

Worries

The HRBQ yielded some useful information about 'worrying' (table 6).

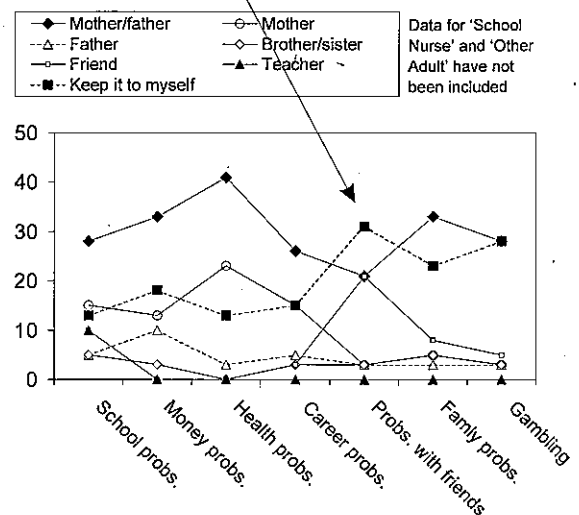
Table 6 Year 7 students responding to: How much do you worry about these problems? (Quite a lot or A lot)



A significant number of girls and boys worry about problems with friends and a significant number of girls (39%) worry about the way they look.

The most likely person for our students to confide in would be one or other parent. A worrying number of male students (table 7) would keep things to themselves, if they had problems with friends (31%).

Table 7 Percentage of Year 7 Males responding to: If you wanted to share any of the problems listed below, to whom would you turn?



The James Hornsby High School is in a unique position, since at the time of HRBQ we had only been operating for four terms and therefore, much of the information gathered was therefore new to us.

However, I suggest that any other school wanting to carry out a curriculum audit and involve student feedback in the planning of a new curriculum for PSHE and Citizenship would find completion of the HRBQ beneficial. This may be as part of developing a Healthy School Action Plan or just as good practice.

A self-evaluating school will thus gain an important insight into the attitudes and knowledge of students related to health issues and be able to act upon it.