

# 'No Outsiders' offers a vision of tolerance and equality

Posted: Wed, 31 Jul 2019 by [Megan Manson](#)

*The current wave of religious protests outside schools began with objections to the No Outsiders scheme of work. As its author prepares to give the NSS's [Bradlaugh Lecture](#), Megan Manson asks what the fuss was about.*

This year, England has been experiencing one of the most vicious attacks on inclusive, secular education it has ever seen. Across the country, schools have been subjected to protests from Islamic and other religious fundamentalists who accuse the teachers of everything from robbing children's innocence to trying to turn their children gay. The first school to be subjected to these protests was Parkfield Community School, whose outstanding Ofsted rating was awarded in part for a programme it launched called 'No Outsiders'.

There is a great deal of misinformation and confusion about No Outsiders, not only among the protesters but within the media and the wider public. So what exactly is this programme?

No Outsiders is the programme created by Andrew Moffat, assistant head at Parkfield. Its name is inspired by a Desmond Tutu quote ("Everyone is an insider, no matter their beliefs, whatever their colour, gender or sexuality"), and it aims to promote equality "for all sections of the community". Moffat has published a book, *No Outsiders In Our School: Teaching The Equality Act in Primary Schools*, which explains exactly what the programme is all about.

At its core, No Outsiders is a scheme of work consisting of 35 lessons plans (five for each primary school year group), each one based around a particular children's picture book. Some books and accompanying lesson plans are specific to the 'protected characteristics' identified in the Equality Act, including age, sex, race, disability and sexual orientation. But most address broader themes of diversity, acceptance, and the problems of bullying and discrimination.

Books for younger years include stories carrying positive messages about the different sorts of people children may encounter, and later ones examine topics such as war, discrimination and human rights. A few books address same-sex relationships directly, and it's these books that have been the target of protests. Even a cursory glance at the books and the accompanying lesson plan reveals that these are handled in a thoroughly sensitive and age-appropriate manner.

Perhaps the biggest misconception about No Outsiders is that it's a [relationships & sex education \(RSE\)](#) resource. It's certainly not a sex education resource. It's not specifically a relationships education resource either, although many of the lessons do address important concepts like family, friendship, and getting along with others. This resource is concerned primarily with individuals – and how all individuals, no matter who they are, deserve to be treated with respect and tolerance.

If No Outsiders doesn't fit into RSE, where does it fit? Like many primary resources, the *No Outsiders* scheme of work is holistic, and fulfils a wide range of the requirements placed on schools by the Department for Education.

First, No Outsiders is a proactive response to the school's duty to promote equality. The primary aim of No Outsiders is to provide "much needed support for every primary school in the delivery of the objectives outlined in the Equality Act 2010". All schools must pay due regard to the Equality Act, and No Outsiders approaches this duty in a very proactive manner.

Schools have a duty to promote the '[fundamental British values](#)' of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. These values, particularly those of liberty, respect and tolerance, are at the heart of No Outsiders, which uses simple stories to introduce these challenging concepts in a manner suitable for primary school children.

No Outsiders additionally ticks many boxes for citizenship education or Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). There would even be scope for using aspects of it in Religious Education (RE), if the school takes a more 'ethics and morals' based approach to RE; every story has some kind of moral message at the end. By extension, No Outsiders is also a useful resource for promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

The activities in No Outsiders are also designed for children to put other aspects of the curriculum into practice. Its strategy of centring each lesson on a storybook has great scope for promoting English literacy. Other activities create opportunities for incorporating art and design, drama, geography and history.

The lesson plans only comprise of about half the volume of No Outsiders The other half focuses more on implementation. It examines Moffat's own experiences in rolling out No Outsiders in his classroom, highlighting some of the challenges he has faced. It also looks at going beyond the lessons to make sure the 'no outsiders' message permeates throughout the school through assemblies, displays and internal policies.

In No Outsiders we see the emergence of an assertive approach to a school ethos based on secular, pluralistic values and fundamental human rights. For a long time, proponents of faith schools have insisted that faith schools promote morality and ethical codes in a way other types of fail to do. No Outsiders dispels this, presenting a practical and positive vision of how any school can promote an ethos that inspires tolerance, kindness, friendliness, generosity and self-pride in all its pupils. The government must provide robust support to any school implementing this programme without kowtowing to religious objections.

[\*\*Discuss on Facebook.\*\*](#)

## **Megan Manson**

Megan Manson is a campaigns officer at the National Secular Society. The views expressed in our blogs are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the NSS.

[I'm excited to see the 2019 Bradlaugh Lecture with Andrew Moffat \(No Outsiders: Reclaiming Radical Ideas in Schools\). I hope you'll join me there.](#)

[Click to tweet](#)

## **Bradlaugh Lecture**

- [Find out more and book your ticket](#)
- [Share on What's App](#)
- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Share on Email](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS Feed](#)

Tags: [RSE](#), [Education](#), [LGBTQ rights](#)

## Related Campaigns

- [\*\*Faith free sex education\*\*](#)

Age-appropriate relationships and sex education should be every child's right.

[Read More](#)

- [\*\*Education and Schools\*\*](#)

Join our campaign for an inclusive and secular education system.

[Read More](#)

- [\*\*Conversion therapy\*\*](#)

We challenge this harmful pseudo-medical practice promoted by some religious groups.

[Read More](#)

- [Opinion](#)