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Promoting tolerance and mutual respect with 11-14 year olds: a nested case study of understandings and practices in Religious Education departments in England

How do specialist teachers of RE understand the concepts of tolerance and mutual respect?
### National Level
- Educational policies on SMSC, Prevent and Teacher’s Standards
- Societal discourse about tolerance and mutual respect
- Changing attitudes to religions and religious belief in the UK

### RE Departments
- Set within school and local community context
- SACREs and local authority guidance about RE curriculum inform the design of schemes of work for key stage 3, 4 and 5
- Departmental ethos and pedagogical emphasis

### Individual RE teachers
- Teachers personal understandings of tolerance and respect
- Teachers personal lesson planning
- Teachers individual classroom practices and interactions with pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department A</th>
<th>Department B</th>
<th>Department C</th>
<th>Department D</th>
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</table>

2-3 teachers per department are individual units of analysis
Teachers’ Standards (Department for Education, 2011, p. 5)

Teachers must not “undermin[e] fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs”

Prevent (HM Government, 2011, p. 34)

Extremism is defined as, “opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect, and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs”
What is tolerance?

Forst (2017, section 1) suggests that tolerance is necessarily comprised of three elements: “objection [...] acceptance [...] rejection”

• Object to something – we dislike, disapprove or have disgust for something
• Acceptance – we must decide to accept the thing
• Rejection – we can specify on what grounds the thing would be rejected, rather than accepted
Conceptions of tolerance developed from Forst (2003, p. 75; 2017, section 2) in order of the level of “mutuality of recognition” they require:

<table>
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<th>Lesser to greater level of mutuality of recognition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance as permission/putting up with something</td>
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<td>Tolerance as coexistence</td>
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<td>Tolerance as respect (Formal equality model and Qualitative equality model)</td>
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<td>Tolerance as esteem</td>
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| Tolerance as putting up with something/someone (lower level of mutual recognition) |
| Tolerance as recognising something of value in something/someone (higher level of mutual recognition) |
Department for Education’s constructions of mutual respect and tolerance

Teachers must not “undermin[e] fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs” (Department for Education, 2011, p. 5)
Teachers’ constructions of mutual respect and tolerance

Fiona: I’ve never liked the word ‘tolerance’ because I just think we’re putting up with something [...] I kind of thought appreciating, I’d like to use the word, we’ve got one of our British values is appreciation of diversity, rather than, because tolerance is a bit like, just tolerating people, like I just about tolerate you (haha) I don’t necessarily appreciating you…

Dan: It’s got a negative connotations really, doesn’t it? When you say, ‘oh I tolerate something’

Fiona: Yes, it is, it’s like, ohh, you know, I’ll... it’s not exactly a sort of compliment of any type is it? If we’re looking at some sort of, at diversity, and all that kind of thing, then hopefully you’re working towards some sort of appreciation, and or respect, from what you said. But I think that respect might still go with tolerance to a certain extent, I would just prefer, to hope that we could go even further, and value the fact that we’ve got some sort of diversity.

| Tolerance as permission/putting up with something | Tolerance as coexistence | Tolerance as respect (Formal equality model and Qualitative equality model) | Tolerance as esteem |
Constructions of mutual respect

Table showing the relationship between forms of respect identified by Darwall (1977) and Hudson (1980)

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<th>Discourses of respect from Darwall and Hudson</th>
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<td>Appraisal respect (Darwall)</td>
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<td>Evaluative respect (Hudson)</td>
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References


