

## Unit 5 How the body works and changes in puberty

### About the unit

This unit of work focuses on the physical and emotional changes of puberty. Children learn about the physical differences between male and female bodies and explore reproduction and growth. It gives children the opportunity to raise questions and address concerns about puberty, including showing them where to get help and support, and looks at the positive aspects of getting older.

The unit should work closely with teaching from the science curriculum as there is much overlap between this area of PSHE and science. This will ensure a well-rounded focus on the emotional, social and physical aspects of sex and relationship education. The unit should fit with the school's policy for sex and relationship education as agreed with the governing body.

It is recommended that teachers deliver sex and relationship education to both sexes together, as they should learn about each other's bodies and the changes each will encounter during puberty. However, it may be appropriate for some questions and discussions to take place in single-sex groups, and teachers should provide opportunities for this. Schools could provide opportunities for parents to be involved in the teaching and learning, if appropriate.

The activities in this unit are designed to be flexible so that they can be adapted for the class, the whole school or individual pupils. It is important to establish clear ground rules for these activities (see the *Teacher's handbook* for more details).

This unit supports the Every Child Matters aims 'be healthy' and 'make a positive contribution'.

### Where the unit fits in

This unit addresses the following aspects of the key stage 2 non-statutory framework for PSHE and citizenship:

#### Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities

1c face new challenges positively by collecting information, looking for help, making responsible choices and taking action

#### Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle

3c learn about how the body changes as they approach puberty

#### Breadth of opportunities

5b feel positive about themselves

5f develop relationships through work and play

5h find information and advice

5i prepare for change

### Expectations

**Expectations should be adapted according to the needs, age, key stage and maturity of the children. By the end of this unit most children should be able to:**

- name the main sexual and reproductive parts of the human body using correct terminology, and describe the functions of some of them
- describe the main physical and emotional changes in puberty for both boys and girls, and the differences between them
- identify basic facts about menstruation
- explain that there are different rates of change during puberty for different people and give some reasons for this
- deal positively with concerns or questions they have about puberty and know where to go for further help and information if they need it.

# Teaching activities

## 1 Changes in the body

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>Children should learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ about some of the main physical and emotional changes that take place at puberty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ask the children, as a class, to think about all the ways they have changed since they were babies. Ask them to draw and write about these changes, organising their responses into different categories, <i>eg appearance, personality, achievements.</i></li> <li>■ Provide the children with diagrams of male and female external parts of the body and ask them, in groups, to label the diagrams using the correct terminology. As a class, discuss each of the organs and its functions, and the reasons why males and females have different organs.</li> <li>■ Discuss the differences between male and female internal body parts, where these parts of the body are located and their function. It may be helpful to use a large outline of a male and female body that children can draw on.</li> <li>■ With the children working in small groups, give them outline drawings of a male and female at different ages, <i>eg as a baby and aged 8, 12 and 16.</i> Ask the children to discuss the differences between the pictures as the people grow older. Provide each group with a set of statements describing the physical differences of the various age groups, including the changes at puberty, <i>eg hips are growing wider, body hair is increasing, breasts are not yet developing,</i> and ask the children to match the statement to the correct drawing. As a class discuss the statements and make sure that the children can identify the different stages of development.</li> <li>■ Separate the children into single-sex groups and provide them with cards describing different types of changes that occur at puberty. Ask them to place the cards under various headings, <i>eg It only happens to boys/girls, It happens to both boys and girls, True, False.</i> Discuss each group's categorisations with the whole class and make sure that any myths are dispelled. Ask the children to complete the sentence 'Something new I have learnt about girls/boys/puberty is...'. Then ask them to complete the sentence 'Something new I would like to know about puberty is...'.</li> </ul>	<p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ describe the main physical and emotional changes that take place at puberty</li> <li>■ name the main external and internal sexual and reproductive parts, using correct terminology</li> <li>■ describe differences between changes for boys and girls</li> <li>■ list the basic facts about menstruation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ It is important that children learn the correct terms for sexual and reproductive parts. When they know the correct terms, they can meaningfully communicate something that may be happening to them. This is particularly valuable if they are trying to tell someone that they are being touched inappropriately, hurt or abused.</li> <li>■ Distancing techniques such as role play and case studies with invented characters can help to depersonalise discussions.</li> <li>■ Be aware that different cultural and religious groups have different beliefs about, and possibly rituals around, puberty. For example, Jewish boys undergo a bar mitzvah at 13, and girls a bat mitzvah at 12, to mark their entry into adulthood. (The materials listed in 'Resources' and the <i>Teacher's handbook</i></li> </ul>

# Teaching activities

## 1 Changes in the body (continued)

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
Children should learn:		Children:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Work with the class to produce a list of what they know about periods, including why they happen. Discuss these and dispel any myths. Using a large diagram of a woman's reproductive system, go through the facts about periods, allowing time for discussion and questions as you go. The children could complete a diagram showing the menstrual cycle.</li></ul>		<p>provide guidance on cultural and faith issues.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Encourage the children to see puberty as a positive time, even if aspects of it can be difficult.</li><li>■ It may be appropriate for the school nurse or a representative from a sanitary product company to give a talk and answer children's questions. Make sure that outside visitors are familiar with the school's sex and relationship education policy.</li><li>■ Girls should be given the opportunity to discuss, in a single-sex group, sanitary protection and how to manage periods.</li><li>■ Link with science: Sc2 2f, Sc2 1a.</li></ul>

# Teaching activities

## 2 Rates of development

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>Children should learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ that physical change happens at different rates for different people</li><li>■ that puberty can be a positive and exciting time</li><li>■ how to access support for questions about puberty</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Read a book such as <i>Hair in funny places</i> by Babette Cole. As a class, make a list of all the physical changes that happened to the two parents, caused by Mr and Mrs Hormone. Ask the children to reflect on the female character's concern that she was not developing at the same rate as her friends. Explain how hormones are activated at different times for different people and that this is the reason why changes at puberty occur at different rates in both males and females.</li><li>■ Provide a 'question box' for the class to submit questions and concerns anonymously. Once a week select a few of these questions to discuss with the class.</li><li>■ Discuss with the class that puberty can be an exciting time, and that there is a lot to look forward to. Ask them to make a list of positive and exciting aspects of entering puberty and starting to grow up, eg <i>being given more responsibility, staying out later, getting taller, wearing make-up</i>. Ask them to draw a picture of themselves now and a picture of themselves at 13. Then ask them to write words and phrases around the pictures to describe themselves both at the moment and how they think they will be at 13. Make sure they include a variety of descriptions, such as how they look and feel, their opinions, what they enjoy/will enjoy doing and why.</li><li>■ As a class, discuss possible questions or concerns about starting puberty, including those about not developing as quickly as other children of the same age. Encourage the children to recognise that many other children will have the same concerns, and that there are often positive solutions to them. Ask the children to discuss, in pairs, possible concerns and make a list of places they could find advice and/or answers to those concerns. Encourage the children to include a range of sources, eg <i>internet sites, parents or carers, priest/rabbi etc, friends, magazines</i>. Would they use different sources for different problems? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using the different sources?</li></ul>	<p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ explain that there are different rates of change during puberty for different people, and know why</li><li>■ demonstrate that they are able to deal positively with concerns or questions they have about puberty</li><li>■ demonstrate that they can get support for puberty issues</li><li>■ identify which sources of support are appropriate for different concerns</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ These activities could be used as an opportunity for children from different faith or cultural groups to share and celebrate beliefs and practices around puberty and growing up.</li><li>■ Make sure you think about issues surrounding the concerns you have chosen before the lesson begins, to prepare for further questions and discussion that may arise.</li><li>■ The class discussions on puberty could lead to further discussion or activities on self-image, particularly in terms of comparisons the children make between themselves and their peers.</li><li>■ The Home Office <i>thinkuknow</i> website provides guidance for children and parents on using the internet safely. Teachers should also be aware of their school's policy on safe internet use.</li></ul>

# Teaching activities

## 2 Rates of development (continued)

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
Children should learn:		Children:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Use letters from the problem pages of a magazine or website, or devise scenarios, and ask the children to write a reply, giving advice and comfort and dispelling any misconceptions the person may have. Discuss the concerns and replies as a class.</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ It is important to look out for children submitting queries or concerns that relate to child protection issues, including domestic violence, and to follow school policy and procedures.</li><li>■ In the final activity make sure letters are appropriate in content and language, and that the children are aware of how and where they can get help and support if they have any concerns or worries.</li><li>■ Link with science: Sc2 2f.</li></ul>

## Links with other subjects

### Science

#### Sc2 Life processes and living things

- 1a that the life processes common to humans include nutrition, movement, growth and reproduction
- 2f about the main stages of the human life cycle

## Resources

- *Faith, values and sex and relationships education* by Simon Blake and Zarine Katrak (National Children's Bureau, 2002) – offers strategies for developing sex and relationship education policy within a multifaith society. It contains a comprehensive list of faith-related websites.
- Home Office: *thinkuknow* – a website that provides guidance for children and parents on using the internet safely
- National Healthy Schools Programme – helps schools develop a whole-school approach to promoting health and well-being. This makes sure that what is taught in the classroom is reflected and supported by the school ethos and environment. For more details see the *Wired for health* website
- Schools Health Education Unit (SHEU) – offers evaluation and monitoring services to those concerned with the health and social development of young people
- *Sex and relationship education guidance* (DfES, 2000) – guidance for schools, teachers and governors that explains the legal requirements of sex and relationship education and suggests how to deal with sensitive issues
- *Sex and relationships education in schools* (Ofsted, 2002) – a survey of sex and relationship education and a guide to good practice. Appendix 1 contains learning outcomes for sex and relationship education at each key stage

- Sex Education Forum – provides a range of publications and factsheets that promote good practice. It contains links to organisations such as Brook and the Family Planning Association (FPA), which provide their own resources for schools
- *Teachernet* – contains case studies of sex and relationship education practice across a range of schools, and includes information on provision of sex and relationship education to pupils with special educational needs
- *Wired for health* – this website contains information for teachers and healthy schools coordinators on health issues. It includes four separate websites for pupils of different ages

The website addresses of these resources are on the PSHE pages of the QCA website ([www.qca.org.uk/pshe/](http://www.qca.org.uk/pshe/)).

Care should be taken when encouraging children and young people to access websites.