

The ACT Building Resilience Project

Case Study: **Immigration and protest - a case study of Dover in 2016**

School: **The Towers School and Sixth Form Centre, Ashford, Kent**

The Towers School is a non-selective academy school for pupils aged 11-18. It has a vibrant sixth form of 400 and a school population of 1400.

Aim

- To explore the local issue of migration/immigration and protest in Dover where there was considerable disharmony in the community between those for whom immigration was an anathema and those who felt that helping refugees, asylum seekers and those with leave to remain was a community duty.

Actions

Pupils looked at far right and anti-fascist protest and examine the need to balance rights of protest whilst safeguarding freedoms and democracy on the right of protest and the media balance that often distorts understanding about radical actions

Pupils discovered why the protests around the issue of immigration took place in Dover. They critically examined the reasons the two sides gave for their actions and make judgements on these actions, considering to what extent these are extreme or radicalised actions. Pupils considered how the individual's right to protest weighed against the need to safeguard the community. They picked apart media portrayals of migration, protest and protesters and created short documentary films about the impact of protest on their local community.

Impact

Pupils commented that they had a greater understanding of how people develop radical views and why they consider taking radical actions about issues. They acquired a deeper understanding of democratic principles and the complex matter of balancing conflicting rights.

Next steps

The project helped teachers at the school develop effective strategies to discuss the nature of extremist groups and their actions in a local and authentic context and explore media portrayals of radicals. It especially highlighted the need to contextualise discussions with pupils. The work will now be moved to include sixth form students as they are equally vulnerable to being drawn into radical actions.