**Registered Charity No. 1070500**

Dear

We are writing to you because a of number parents with children at your school have raised concerns with us over the content of RSE and PSHE as taught in the school, specifically the apparently heavy emphasis on transgender and LGBT themes and the use of the PSHE provider, Jigsaw.

Looking at the school’s ‘Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education Policy 2020-2023’ as made available on your website we were surprised by how heavily saturated the subject is with LGBT themes. It appears that while pupils do not learn about the biology of reproduction and conventional sexual matters until Year 6, they are already learning about LGBT relationships from Year 1. The policy states that by the end of Year 1 pupils should ‘*know that there are different types of relationships including families, friends and others (this includes same sex families)*’. By Year 3 it is stated that they must be able to ‘*identify*’ these ‘*different types of relationships*’. We find it peculiar that teaching about same-sex relationships is given priority over even the biological aspects of reproduction and taught from age 5. This makes a mockery of the claim of the policy to be ‘*age and circumstance appropriate’*.

We are especially concerned about the use of the organisation, Jigsaw, to deliver PSHE and RSE. Jigsaw’s materials heavily promote transgender ideology. For example, in a policy document titled ‘How does Jigsaw approach gender identity?’, Jigsaw states:

*At no point does Jigsaw say there are only two genders but equally it doesn’t suggest there are more; neither, in the primary programme does it refer to gender fluidity.*

This statement contradicts the biological reality that there are two sexes. However, its claim that it does not promote gender fluidity is contradicted further on in the document when it states:

*Jigsaw is very aware of the challenge of a binary-focused English language and does its best to use a mix of boy/girl language and gender-neutral language e.g. for names of characters in stories and scenarios etc. Jigsaw tries to reflect the diverse demographic children are a part of, always emphasising the importance of being kind, compassionate and accepting, focussing on the qualities of people as human beings, accepting children who see themselves as boys, as girls, as non-binary etc.*

Jigsaw further promotes non-binary/gender fluid concepts in its use of ‘Jigsaw friends’ who are cartoon characters with gender-neutral names and of no discernible gender. A Jigsaw lesson for ages 6-7 on ‘Gender Diversity’ states:

*The main aim of the lesson is about treating everyone as individuals and that it is fine to be who you are, to have your own identity.*

The reference to having ‘*your own identity*’ is further evidence of Jigsaw’s promotion of gender fluid/non-binary concepts. Non-binary is not an identity recognised in law and therefore Jigsaw which claims to be promoting the principles of the Equality Act 2010 cannot appeal to that legislation in defence of what it is doing. It is entirely inappropriate for six-year old children to be introduced to such concepts and is likely to be confusing and possibly distressing for them.

A Jigsaw lesson for ages 10-11 years on ‘Understanding Difference’ introduces children to the story of Robert/Roberta Cowell a man who had gender reassignment surgery in the 1950s. Cowell died alone in 2011 having cut off contact with his wife and children many decades earlier following his adoption of a female identity. He had last seen his two daughters in 1948. We would suggest that such a man should not be held up as role model and that his story is not appropriate to be told to children in primary school. However, as presented by Jigsaw, Cowell’s life is depicted as one long exciting adventure in which his sex-change operation was just the latest exciting instalment following his career as a racing driver and Second World War pilot. Thus, gender surgery is represented as not much more consequential than driving a car or flying a plane and just another thrilling experience.

In explaining the Cowell story, Jigsaw goes on to make some highly questionable statements. Children are told ‘*At that time people didn’t understand that some people are born transgender*’. It is biological nonsense to suggest that people are ‘born transgender’ or that gender is ‘assigned at birth’ which is the implication here. A study by two of the world’s most respected academics in this area, Dr Lawrence Mayer and Dr Paul McHugh of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, concluded that:

*The hypothesis that gender identity is an innate, fixed property of human beings that is independent of biological sex— that a person might be ‘a man trapped in a woman’s body’ or ‘a woman trapped in a man’s body’—is not supported by scientific evidence.*

On the contrary, gender dysphoria, which is recognised as a disorder, is often a fleeting process especially among children. For example, NHS England cites research showing that only 12-27 per cent of children who experience gender dysphoric feelings continue with them into adulthood. Jigsaw also states:

*…some transgender people are happy not to transition but stay with the body they were born with. There are a whole range of transgender people, and this is called gender diversity.*

This suggests that gender is self-defined by the individual and Jigsaw further promotes this view by suggesting that schools use terms like ‘birth-body’ and references in other documents to their being a ‘*whole range*’ of gender identities. Promoting such ideas to children is dangerous and tragic stories such as that of Keira Bell and others who were encouraged to take puberty blockers and other body altering drugs only to regret it later should serve as a warning against premature exposure to gender ideology.

Nowhere does Jigsaw explain the legal position on gender change which is governed by the Gender Recognition Act 2004. Under this Act a person cannot be legally recognised in the opposite gender until they are 18 years old and then only after a medical diagnosis of gender dysphoria, a period of two years living in the acquired gender and a declaration that they intend to live permanently in that gender. Given what the law says it is simply inexplicable as to why the transgender issue is considered suitable or appropriate to discuss in primary school.

Further, we note that when discussing the protected characteristics of the Equality Act, Jigsaw uses the word ‘gender’ rather than ‘sex’. ‘Sex’ is in fact a protected characteristic whereas the more ambiguous ‘gender’ is not. This once again illustrates Jigsaw’s attempt to distort reality, symptomatic of its deep commitment to transgender ideology.

We would appeal to your school to act in the spirit of its own RSE policy which states that ‘*We shall endeavour to have an approach that is educational, rather than one based on propaganda.*’ We do not believe that such an approach can be achieved as long as the school continues to use Jigsaw for RSE and PSHE. We would urge the school to cuts its ties with Jigsaw and cease to use its materials. We would also encourage the school to revise its own RSE policy to ensure that it is age-appropriate and does not prematurely introduce children to LGBT issues or gender ideology.

We hope you will engage with us on this issue and we look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely



Piers Shepherd

Senior Researcher