

HEALTHY, HAPPY, SAFE?

AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW
PSHE AND SRE ARE INSPECTED
IN ENGLISH SCHOOLS

About the BHA

The British Humanist Association is the national charity working on behalf of non-religious people who seek to live ethical and fulfilling lives on the basis of reason and humanity. It promotes a secular state and equal treatment in law and policy for everyone, regardless of religion or belief.

The BHA has a long history of work in education, children's rights, and equality, with expertise in the 'religion or belief' strand. We have been involved in policy development around the school curriculum for over 60 years. We also provide materials and advice to parents, governors, students, teachers and academics, for example through <http://understandinghumanism.org.uk/> and our school volunteers programme. We have made detailed responses to all recent reviews of the school curriculum, and submit memoranda of evidence to parliamentary select committees on a range of education issues.

The BHA is an active member of many organisations working in education, including the National Children's Bureau Sex Education Forum (SEF), the PSHE Association and the Children's Rights Alliance for England.

Credits

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Foreword



Andrew Copson
Chief Executive, British Humanist Association

Successive UK governments have, for too long now, only paid lip service to the importance of personal, social, health, and economic education (PSHE), including sex and relationships education (SRE), in English schools. This has manifested itself not only in the repeated failure of government to make the subject compulsory, but also in the failure even to update the official SRE guidance for schools since the year 2000. How much the world has changed for school children in that time.

Young people now are having their first sexual experience at a younger age than ever before. Even prior to that, they are increasingly being introduced to sex by pornography. They are increasingly subject to the risks associated with ‘sexting’ and the internet. They are more likely to contract certain sexually transmitted infections than any other age group. Homophobic bullying is a feature in almost every school. And young women and girls face expectations, perpetually reinforced in the media, that they should never have to meet.

Simply put, the need to inform children about safe sex and sexual health, to dismantle stereotypes and challenge prejudice, and to teach young people about consent and healthy relationships, has never been greater. This, of course, is a role that schools must play, and that means having a mechanism in place by which we can ensure that they do. Regrettably, this report suggests that no such mechanism exists.

For all the previous occasions on which Ofsted at a national level has admirably highlighted the problems with PSHE and SRE provision around the country, individual inspectors appear to be giving the subject far too little attention. In its last subject-specific inspection on PSHE, Ofsted itself said that it requires improvement or is inadequate in 40% of schools. Yet in the first year under the new common inspection framework, which ostensibly was to give more weight to schools’ performance on the personal development and welfare of their pupils, fewer than 1% of reports explicitly mentioned sex and relationships education. And PSHE provision, which all the world knows is patchy across the country, was referred to directly in only 14% of cases. This compares to 36% for history, 26% for geography, 31% for music, 21% for art, and 59% for sport. This is worrying by any standard, and to the extent that these figures provide an indication of the level of PSHE provision in schools, there is much cause for concern.

” To lay the blame entirely at the feet of Ofsted would be wrong. The fact is that the attention given to PSHE by inspectors appears to be entirely commensurate with the importance ascribed to it by government.

Of course, to lay the blame entirely at the feet of Ofsted would be wrong. The fact is that the attention given to PSHE by inspectors appears to be entirely commensurate with the importance ascribed to it by government. If this research demonstrates anything, therefore, it is not simply that Ofsted must start better acknowledging its role in driving improvement in areas of the curriculum like PSHE that tend not to be formally or externally assessed, but also that regardless of this, if the provision of PSHE and SRE is to meaningfully improve, the subject must be afforded the statutory status it deserves. Only then can we ensure that children are being equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to be **healthy, happy, and safe**.

Andrew Copson

Support for the report



Lisa Hallgarten, Coordinator of the Sex Education Forum:

‘This thorough report demonstrates the inadequacy of Ofsted’s scrutiny of sex and relationships education in schools, and the need to train and direct its staff to identify both good and poor practice. It also demonstrates that school inspection cannot be the sole mechanism by which we ensure that all children and young people get the sex and relationships education they need to stay safe and be healthy. Only by making SRE a statutory subject in all schools can the government begin to meet this need.’

Ian Green, Chief Executive of Terrence Higgins Trust:

‘It is disheartening, and yet not surprising, to see the extent to which Sex and Relationships Education is being neglected in Ofsted inspections. We were particularly dismayed to learn that HIV was only mentioned in one Ofsted report last year - and even then that was in the context of a Geography lesson.’

‘We know from our recent survey of 900 young people that SRE is infrequent, low quality and almost never covers consent, LGBT sex and relationships, or gender. But schools are not being held to account for the devastating impact this will have on young people’s mental and sexual health.’

‘The government can no longer dismiss the need for mandatory SRE on the grounds that Ofsted are including it in their inspections of all schools. It is now clearer than ever that Sex and Relationships Education will never be properly taught, inspected and resourced until it is made compulsory in every school.’

Katherine O’Brien, Head of Media and Policy Research at the British Pregnancy Advisory Service:

‘In 2013, Ofsted stated that PSHE is not yet good enough in 40% of schools, yet as a subject it is sadly still not receiving adequate attention. Comprehensive, good quality sex and relationships education can play a key role in improving sexual and reproductive health outcomes – and the vast majority of parents and pupils want to see it on the school curriculum. While we have heard a lot of positive rhetoric on SRE, this is clearly not being matched by practice. We urge both the government and Ofsted to carefully consider this report’s recommendations and take the necessary steps to improving the provision of this important subject. Young people deserve nothing less.’

Natika H Halil, Chief Executive of the Family Planning Association:

‘Alongside the BHA, FPA is fighting for comprehensive sex and relationships education (SRE). We welcome this incredibly valuable report, which demonstrates that Ofsted is not evaluating the quality of SRE in our schools, despite the clear benefits. Evidence shows that SRE helps young people to make positive choices about their sexual health and gives them the skills they need to have healthy relationships.’

As the report highlights, this is not a problem that Ofsted alone can rectify. The best way to achieve consistently high-quality education would be through statutory status and an update of woefully outdated guidance. We hope that this prompts the government to take action to give all young people the education they want and deserve.’





Javen Khan, Chief Executive of Barnardo's:

'This report strengthens our calls for compulsory sex and relationship education (SRE) to be introduced in all English schools as soon as possible. Clearly the Government cannot rely on inspectors alone to ensure all children have high-quality lessons on SRE.'

'The Government must help keep children safe by providing age-appropriate classes covering issues such as 'sexting', consent, and online grooming. Barnardo's research confirms three-quarters of children aged 11 to 15 think SRE lessons would keep them safer, and 87 per cent of parents agree.'

'We all have a responsibility to protect children but it has to start at the very top, with Government ensuring children understand how to tackle the dangers online and in the real world. This will help protect them from being groomed and sexually exploited.'

The NSPCC:

'It's vital that young people learn about sexual consent, the dangers of sexting, and how to stay safe online but far too often they are left to learn about growing up from peers or the internet.'

'This state of affairs is outdated and we need to haul our curriculum into the 21st century, where PHSE is seen as a priority and young people can learn about healthy relationships and ask questions.'

'With the right resources and support schools are a perfect environment where children can learn about these fundamental aspects of modern life and growing up. 'We fully support the BHA that PSHE should be made statutory within all schools.'

Dr Mary Bousted, General Secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL):

'The British Humanist Association has carried out timely and essential work in establishing how PSHE and SRE are inspected. The findings are stark and should be of concern to the Government. It is shocking that sex and relationship education is mentioned in less than 1% of Ofsted reports, and disappointing that PSHE is mentioned in just 14%.'

Girlguiding UK's national youth advocate:

'Since Girlguiding's Girls Matter campaign in 2014, we have called on the Government to introduce high quality Sex and Relationships Education (SRE). We are incredibly disappointed that they still haven't taken the opportunity to make SRE a statutory subject for all schools. We believe teaching all young people about respect and gender equality in SRE would reduce sexual harassment in schools.'

'This report released today raises again that the Government need to support schools by making SRE statutory and update the curriculum to include healthy relationships, sexual consent, online safety, violence against women and girls, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender relationships'



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Executive summary

The BHA, like so many other groups and individuals, has long been committed to comprehensive, age-appropriate personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and its component, sex and relationships education (SRE), in English schools. We have campaigned for it for over six decades but today the evidence is unequivocal. Good-quality PSHE and SRE substantially improves outcomes for young people in terms of delaying the first time they have sex, ensuring that when they do it is safe and consensual, driving down the number of teenage or unwanted pregnancies, halting the spread of sexually transmitted infections, preventing homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying, tackling alcoholism and drug abuse, mitigating the risks posed by the internet and modern technology, and reforming discriminatory attitudes towards women and girls.¹

Despite these benefits, not to mention a substantial and growing consensus on the need for statutory status, PSHE is still not compulsory. Faced by this consensus, the Government's main response for years now has been to emphasise the role of Ofsted in ensuring that, despite not being obliged to, schools do nonetheless teach PSHE. In November 2015, for example, Home Office Minister Lord Bates stated in response to a question on making PSHE statutory that 'we expect sex and relationships education be taught in all schools. In fact, it is inspected by Ofsted as such.'² In February 2016 former Education Spokesperson Baroness Evans stated that: 'Ofsted inspects all schools...so this enables PSHE to be considered in a proportionate and integrated way as part of their inspection'.³

And in January 2017 the Schools Minister Nick Gibb MP, responding to a question on the need for PSHE in schools, said that 'as part of an inspection, Ofsted will consider whether the school is providing a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of pupils and prepares them for adult life'.⁴

Ofsted, too, have accepted this role. When the latest inspection framework was introduced in September 2015, the then Ofsted lead inspector on PSHE stated that 'it is clear from the range of inspection guidance for September 2015 that the evidence schools provide regarding the effectiveness of their PSHE and of pupils' SMSC development is more crucial than ever to informing the judgements inspectors make'.⁵

This report, however, which details the results of an analysis of inspections conducted during the 2015/2016 academic year, since the new common inspection framework (and its greater focus on personal development and welfare of pupils) was introduced, finds that these positive statements of intent have yet to filter through to inspections. Indeed, it suggests that they have yet to filter through to schools' delivery of PSHE too.

The report's main findings are as follows:

- SRE was explicitly mentioned in fewer than 1% of reports across both primary and secondary, while PSHE was mentioned in just 14% of all, and only 8% of primary school reports. Both were mentioned in fewer reports than almost every other established subject, including history (36%), geography (26%), art (31%), music (31%) and sport (59%)
- Homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic bullying (HBT) was addressed in 14% of reports, and very few of these dealt with trans issues specifically. This is despite a 2016 survey finding that 86% of secondary teachers had identified homophobic bullying in their schools⁶, and significant focus from Ofsted on tackling HBT bullying
- References to LGBT-related issues of any kind were found in only 14% of reports
- 'Sexting' was mentioned in just 17 reports, despite having been recently and repeatedly identified as a major area of concern by the Government
- Pornography, online or otherwise, was mentioned in just a single report
- Only 1% of reports mentioned issues related to gender such as gender discrimination, gender stereotyping, or sexism. There were no mentions of sexual harassment or sexual violence
- Mentions of sexual health and safe sex were almost entirely absent from inspectors' reports, with only 1% of reports referring to these issues
- There was only one mention of HIV/AIDS in all the reports. It referred to content on 'emerging economies' in a 'geography lesson'
- Fewer than 1% of reports criticised a school's coverage of PSHE and SRE in any way. This flies in the face of Ofsted's 2013 report into PSHE – which found that the subject's provision is 'not yet good enough' in 40% of schools. Unfortunately, therefore, it seems that Ofsted is routinely failing to pick schools up on their shortcomings.

Summary of recommendations

Statutory PSHE, including SRE

It is clear that PSHE and SRE are not being taught to anywhere near the extent they ought to be in schools, and all the evidence suggests that where they are taught, important content is often overlooked.

But it is also clear that even with its new beefed-up framework, Ofsted alone cannot be relied upon to deal with this. Unless PSHE is placed on a statutory footing and

schools are statutorily obliged to teach the subject, provision will continue to reflect this 'afterthought' status. All the other problems that flow from this – a shortage of trained teachers, insufficient time to cover the range of content, lack of assessment opportunities to gauge pupil progress – will go unresolved. This is not to say that statutory status can necessarily cure all of the subject's current ills, but without it very few meaningful improvements can be made.

Update the SRE guidance

The Government's official guidance on SRE in schools was published in 2000 and is now 17 years old.⁷ Given how much has changed in the lives of young people – in school, at home, in society more broadly, and online – the SRE guidance is badly out of date. Clearer, more comprehensive, more inclusive, and more relevant guidance must be produced especially if PSHE and SRE are not made compulsory.

Inspection framework and handbook to include specific mention of PSHE and SRE

Whilst, as this report notes, the Ofsted inspection framework and the handbook for inspectors have been strengthened in the emphasis they place on safeguarding and personal development, behaviour, and welfare, this has not translated into PSHE being given the attention it deserves in Ofsted inspections and reports. Ofsted various guidance documents should be amended so as to advise schools explicitly that the teaching of content ordinarily covered as part of PSHE and SRE is central to good or outstanding performance in terms of the personal development, behaviour, and welfare of pupils.

Re-introduce subject-specific inspections on PSHE

Ofsted's two previous subject-specific reports on PSHE, published in 2007 and 2013 and detailed below, provided valuable insights into the state of PSHE and SRE in English schools. They were both the product of survey visits carried out by inspectors specifically to assess the quality of PSHE education, without which the reports could not have been produced. These subject-specific inspections were brought to an end for all subjects in 2013/14, and we have therefore lost an important means of evaluating PSHE provision across the system. Similarly, as of 2015, Ofsted no longer publishes reports detailing examples of good practice in schools. Ofsted should resume both survey visits and the publication of good practice reports immediately.

Context

Currently almost nothing by way of PSHE and SRE must be taught in schools. Changes to Ofsted's inspection framework for the 2015-16 academic year saw more emphasis on the subject, but Ofsted's own research has found that it is inadequate or requires improvement in 40% of schools – findings backed up by the research of other organisations. There is widespread support for putting full, comprehensive, and age-appropriate PSHE and SRE on a compulsory footing, from the third sector, from parliamentary select committees, from health bodies, and from parents, pupils, and teachers.

PSHE, SRE, and the new Ofsted inspection framework

In September 2015, Ofsted introduced a new framework,⁸ with an updated handbook for inspectors,⁹ which amended the criteria for inspecting and grading English schools. In a break from the past, this new system places far greater emphasis on the importance of safeguarding, safety, personal development, behaviour, and welfare, all areas which relate to and can be improved by PSHE and SRE.

Ofsted's then-PSHE Lead Janet Palmer HMI noted at the time the changes were introduced that 'it is difficult to see how safeguarding can be good if PSHE education is poor',¹⁰ and that 'the evidence schools provide regarding the effectiveness of their PSHE and of pupils' SMSC development is more crucial than ever to informing the judgements inspectors make'.¹¹

In addition, Ofsted inspectors are now directed to assess the degree to which

the leaders of the school have provided a curriculum that, among other things, promotes equality and diversity, raises awareness, and keeps pupils safe from abuse and exploitation. The grade descriptors for outstanding personal development, behaviour, and welfare include evidence that pupils can 'explain accurately and confidently how to keep themselves healthy', 'make informed choices about healthy eating, fitness and their emotional and mental well-being, and 'have an 'age-appropriate' understanding of healthy relationships'.

To reflect these changes it was expected that the inspections carried out under the new framework would look more explicitly at PSHE and SRE provision, and highlight more frequently the extent to which schools are teaching about the full range of relevant issues. This is what this report is designed to assess.

Requirements for PSHE and SRE in England

The current requirements for the teaching of PSHE and SRE in state-funded schools in England are minimal. All maintained secondary schools must teach the biological aspects of national curriculum science (i.e. anatomy, puberty, and reproduction), as well as providing information on STIs and HIV/AIDS. In secondary academies and free schools, however, which now make up about two-thirds of all state secondary schools, none of this applies, since such

schools are not obliged to follow the national curriculum, and the requirement to teach about STIs and HIV/AIDS is not included in their funding agreements. There is no requirement either in maintained schools or academies and free schools to provide PSHE more broadly.

In English primary schools, no SRE is compulsory, though government guidance produced in (and not updated

since) 2000 states that pupils should know about puberty before it happens, and recommends that menstruation, contraception, abortion, safe sex, and HIV/AIDS should be covered.¹² If primary schools do want to provide SRE, they must publish details of what it is they intend to teach, and the same is true for secondary

schools who provide SRE beyond the minimum requirements.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all SRE not included in the national curriculum. Pupils have no right to withdraw themselves.

The current state of PSHE and SRE in England

In 2013 Ofsted published a report examining the strengths and weaknesses of PSHE in English schools, entitled *Not yet good enough: personal, social, health and economic education in schools*.¹³ The

report stated that further improvements are needed to be made in the training of teachers, the coherence and accessibility of the curriculum, and the rigour of assessment in the subject.

Ofsted inspected 50 schools specifically on PSHE and surveyed 178 young people in compiling the report. Its findings included:

- 'PSHE education was good or better in 60% of schools and required improvement or was inadequate in 40%. This indicates that the quality of PSHE education is not yet good enough in a sizeable proportion of schools in England.'
- 'Sex and relationships education required improvement in over a third of schools. In primary schools this was because too much emphasis was placed on friendships and relationships, leaving pupils ill-prepared for physical and emotional changes during puberty, which many begin to experience before they reach secondary school. In secondary schools it was because too much emphasis was placed on 'the mechanics' of reproduction and too little on relationships, sexuality, the influence of pornography on students' understanding of healthy sexual relationships, dealing with emotions and staying safe.'
- 'In just under half of schools, pupils had received lessons about staying safe but few had developed the skills to effectively apply their understanding, such as the assertiveness skills to stand up for themselves and negotiate their way through difficult situations.'
- 'Teaching required improvement in 42% of primary and 38% of secondary schools. Too many teachers lacked expertise in teaching sensitive and controversial issues, which resulted in some topics such as sexuality, mental health and domestic violence being omitted from the curriculum. This was because subject-specific training and support were too often inadequate. In 20% of schools, staff had received little or no training to teach PSHE education. Teaching was not good in any of these schools.'
- The report recommended that 'Schools should ensure that the school delivers age-appropriate sex and relationships education that meets pupils' needs and contributes to safeguarding them from inappropriate sexual behaviours and sexual exploitation.'

The 2013 report followed on from a similar report published by Ofsted in 2007 entitled *Time for change? Personal, social, and health education*.¹⁴ It was based on evidence from inspection reports published between 2001 and 2006. The report found that insufficient time was being allocated to PSHE, that too many schools were not basing their PSHE curriculum on the pupils' assessed needs, and that too few teachers with directly relevant qualifications to PSHE were recruited by schools. In short, the problems identified in the 2013 report were just as present in 2007.

Beyond the research carried out by Ofsted, various reports have been released in recent years highlighting the inadequacy of the current arrangements for PSHE and SRE and the poor level of provision in schools.

Figures released in 2016 by the Department for Education revealed that the number of hours being set aside for PSHE in English secondary schools was declining. In 2011 schools were recorded as teaching a total of 91,800 hours of PSHE, but for 2015 that figure stood at only 65,200 hours.¹⁵

In 2016, the Sex Education Forum conducted a survey of over 2,000 young people, finding that the 'dramatic variations' in the content and quality of the SRE they received was undermining their safety. 50% of those surveyed had left primary school without knowledge about where to get help if they experienced unwanted touching or sexual abuse, a third had never been taught anything about sexual consent at any stage in their school careers, and 16% had not even learnt the correct names for genitalia.¹⁶

Also in 2016, the Terrence Higgins Trust published a report entitled *SRE: Shh... No Talking*, in which it found that SRE continued to be inadequate or absent in many schools. One in seven respondents to a survey of nearly one thousand 16-24 year olds had not received any SRE at all, while 61% received SRE just once a year or less. Half of young people rated the SRE they received in school as either 'poor' or 'terrible'. 95% had not learned about LGBT sex and relationships, 97% had not been taught anything about gender identity and over a quarter didn't receive any information on HIV, despite this being a statutory requirement.¹⁷

Criticisms of the current situation are not confined to civil society organisations in the UK. In 2015 the report of the UN's Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women stated that 'shortcomings remain in ensuring the promotion of gender equality and challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours, including among children and teenagers, especially at schools'.¹⁸ The report also highlighted the fact that sexual and emotional feelings, as well as issues such as sexual abuse, sexuality, and pornography, were avoided in UK classrooms, much to the detriment of children and young people. In June 2016 the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child echoed these observations in its periodic report on the UK, finding that 'content and quality varies depending on the school, and LGBT children do not have access to accurate information on their sexuality.' It recommended that 'the State party ensure that meaningful sexual and reproductive health education is part of the mandatory school curriculum for all schools, including academies, special schools and youth detention centres'.¹⁹

Support for statutory PSHE and SRE in schools

The ongoing failure to afford PSHE statutory status ignores the recommendations of:

- The House of Commons Education Committee²⁰
- The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee²¹
- The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee²²
- The Joint Committee on Human Rights²³
- The Chairs of the House of Commons Health Committee and Business, Innovation, and Skills Committee²⁴
- The Chairs of 14 All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs), including the APPGs on Children, Education, HIV and Aids, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Men's Health, Primary Care and Public Health, and Equalities²⁵
- The Children's Commissioner for England²⁶
- The Chief Medical Officer²⁷
- The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners²⁸
- The Association of Independent Local Safeguarding Children Boards Chairs
- The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)
- The Royal Society for Public Health²⁹
- Six medical royal colleges³⁰
- The Association of Directors of Public Health³¹
- Five national public health organisations³²
- The National Governors' Association³³
- Over 100 education, health, and children's rights bodies³⁴
- 85% of business leaders, 88% of teachers, 90% of parents, and 92% of young people³⁵

The campaign for statutory PSHE and SRE has continued nonetheless, and in late 2016 the Department for Education confirmed that the status of the subject was once again under review.

Methodology

In this report we obtained copies of Ofsted's 'section 5' inspection reports for the 2015-16 academic year, and using specialist software, searched them all for mentions of PSHE, SRE, and related topics. We also compared coverage of PSHE and SRE to that of other subjects.

Types of Ofsted inspections

There are two principal kinds of inspection for state schools in England, set out respectively in section 5 and section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Section 5 inspections are the standard, two-day inspections that all schools are required to have 'at prescribed intervals'. These intervals vary depending on the performance of the school at its most recent inspection: schools judged to be 'inadequate' are re-inspected within two years of their last full inspection (and monitored during that time); schools judged 'requires improvement' will also normally have another full re-inspection after two years; 'good' schools will receive a one-day inspection approximately every 3 years as long as its performance remains 'good'; and some categories of 'outstanding' schools are exempt from full routine inspection altogether.³⁶

Following the completion of section 5 inspections, reports are published detailing the findings of the inspector, who provides a grade in each of four categories, contributing to an overall grade. The categories are 'effectiveness of leadership

and management', 'quality of teaching, learning and assessment', 'personal development, behaviour and welfare', and 'outcomes for pupils'. Schools with early years are also graded on this aspect of their provision.

Section 8 inspections, on the other hand, are shorter and tend to be referred to either as 'short inspections' or 'monitoring visits'. Such inspections are, for example, conducted on schools that have been found to be of concern in a recent section 5 inspection. They do not change the overall effectiveness grade that a school was given after its previous section 5 inspection, nor do they report any individual graded judgments in the usual categories. They are, on the whole, intended to allow inspectors to assess a school's progress since the previous inspection, often on specific issues that were raised last time. However, inspectors may convert a section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection if changes since the previous inspection are identified. The circumstances in which section 8 inspections are carried out are listed in Ofsted's 'School inspection handbook – section 8',³⁷ and are as follows:

- Short inspections of schools judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent section 5 inspection and those outstanding schools that are not exempted from section 5
- Monitoring inspection of schools judged as requires improvement
- Monitoring inspections of schools judged as having serious weaknesses
- Monitoring inspections of schools judged as requiring special measures
- Any inspection that is undertaken in other circumstances where the inspection has no specific designation, known as a 'section 8 no formal designation inspection'
- Unannounced behaviour inspections

In addition to these two types of inspection, the arrangements for the inspection of religious education and collective worship specifically in religious schools in England is set out in section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Given the nature of each type of inspection and the fact that only section 5 inspections are likely to be broad enough in scope to be useful for the purposes of this report, we have only included the reports of inspections deemed to be section 5 inspections.

Research

This report details the findings of a review of the section 5 inspection reports for mainstream state schools carried out by Ofsted in the 2015/2016 academic year since the introduction of the new common inspection framework. These are recorded in Ofsted's management information reports which are updated and published each month.³⁸ Our review captured a total of 2,210 reports for the 2015/2016 academic year, 1,688 primary school reports and 522 secondary reports. This is equivalent to 10% of the total number of state primaries in England and 24% of state secondaries.

For each report we searched for a set of terms related to PSHE and SRE to identify how frequently these issues are being considered as part of inspections. The search terms used in the survey fall under the following categories:

- General PSHE and SRE
- Online safety and sexting
- Safeguarding and abuse
- LGBT+ and homophobia
- Sexual health and safe sex
- Pregnancy and abortion
- Consent
- FGM

We also ran a search for mentions of other school subjects so as to compare the extent of their inclusion in reports to the extent of PSHE and SRE inclusion.

In the case of certain search terms we then investigated more closely to assess the context in which they appeared and whether mention of them highlighted good practice or bad practice.

A full list of the search terms used, including how many times they were mentioned and in how many reports, can be found below. Details of the further analysis conducted can be found in the relevant sections, along with commentary on the findings.

Findings

General PSHE and SRE

Search term	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – primary	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – secondary	Total no. of reports (%) containing mentions
Sex and relationships education/Sex education	5 (<1%)	14 (3%)	19 (<1%)
Personal, social and health (and economic) education	143 (8%)	165 (32%)	308 (14%)
Sex	12 (<1%)	22 (4%)	34 (2%)
Puberty	0	0	0
Resilience	350 (16%)	96 (18%)	349 (16%)
Life skills	32 (2%)	27 (5%)	59 (3%)
Peer pressure	6 (<1%)	0	6 (<1%)
Healthy	800 (47%)	162 (31%)	962 (44%)
Mental health	46 (3%)	71 (14%)	117 (55%)
Assertive	0	2 (<1%)	2 (<1%)
Alcohol	33 (2%)	37 (7%)	70 (13%)
Drug/s	66 (4%)	53 (10%)	119 (7%)
Smoking	18 (1%)	5 (<1%)	23 (1%)
Hygiene	23 (1%)	4 (<1%)	27 (1%)

”

Sex and relationships education was referred to explicitly in less than 1% of the more than 2000 reports

The number of explicit mentions of PSHE and SRE in the reports reviewed was low. Sex and relationships education was referred to explicitly in fewer than 1% of the more than 2000 reports. 308 reports

referred directly to PSHE, in all its forms, 14% of the total or 8% of primaries and 32% of secondaries.

Fewer than 1% of reports criticised a school's coverage of PSHE and SRE.

On the rare occasions when schools were found to have poor PSHE or SRE this was reflected in the grade they were given for their effectiveness on personal development, behaviour, and welfare. One school in Somerset, for instance, was judged inadequate partly on account of the fact that whilst PSHE was provided in Years 7, 8, and 9, it 'is not taught to all pupils in Years 10 and 11'. The same was true of another school in Leicester which was judged to require improvement after pupils told inspectors that they would 'value more education in life skills... and more sex and relationships education'.

However, some reports reviewed did note that PSHE/SRE provision was not sufficient, but nonetheless judged the school's effectiveness on personal development, behaviour and welfare to be 'good'. For instance, a primary school in Gainsborough was marked 'good' both overall and for personal development, behaviour and welfare, despite inspectors finding that 'the school's programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to learn about healthy choices'. Similarly, despite receiving a mark of 'good' for personal development, behaviour and welfare, a school in West Yorkshire was found to have a 'curriculum [that] does not fully meet some aspects of pupils' personal development. For example, pupils only receive limited sex and relationships education.'

Mentions of general search terms relevant to PSHE and SRE varied in number. The words 'health' and 'healthy' drew the most number of results, though as is also noted in the section on sexual health below, they were almost exclusively mentioned in the context of nutrition and exercise, rather than in the context of sex and relationships. Mentions related to alcohol, smoking, and drugs were conspicuous in their absence both at primary level and at secondary.

Commentary

Given all that we know, not least from Ofsted's two previous PSHE-specific reports (see above), it is simply not plausible that PSHE was found wanting in fewer than 1% of schools. Schools are clearly not being held to account for their PSHE provision to anywhere near the extent that they ought to be.

More generally, for PSHE and SRE to be mentioned in just 15% of reports represents a significant failing (we will compare this to other subjects in due course), as does the low number of mentions for related terms such as alcohol and drugs. On the basis of this review, there is little evidence that provision of PSHE has improved substantially, if at all, since Ofsted's reports in 2007 and 2013, but just as concerning is how incapable Ofsted would now be of producing a similar report given the under-reporting and under-inspection of the subject. Inspectors are obviously not able to investigate all subject provision during an inspection, but that is why resuming subject-specific survey reports is so essential.

The Government has said repeatedly (and recently) that 'schools should teach PSHE' and that 'PSHE needs to be taught well'.³⁹ Unfortunately, its ability to assess the extent to which either of these things are happening is incredibly limited.

Online safety and sexting

Search term	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – primary	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – secondary	Total no. of reports (%) containing mentions
Sexting	1 (<1%)	16 (3%)	17 (<1%)
Cyberbullying	247 (15%)	61 (12%)	308 (14%)
Online bullying	16 (<1%)	3 (<1%)	19 (<1%)
E-safety	249 (15%)	66 (13%)	315 (14%)
Online safety	53 (3%)	24 (5%)	77 (3%)
Safe online	175 (10%)	82 (16%)	257 (12%)
Pornography	0	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)

Search terms related to the use of technology and the risks posed by internet use returned a low number of results.

'Sexting' was mentioned in just 16 secondary reports (3% of the total) and in only one primary report. Mention of schools' performance on cyberbullying and online bullying were found in just 15% of primary reports and 12% of secondary reports. Terms related to staying safe online were mentioned by inspectors in 28% of primary reports and a third of secondary reports.

Commentary

With the arrival of the new common inspection framework in September 2015 came updated guidance on 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills from September 2015'. The update includes the line 'the impact of new technologies on sexual behaviour, for example sexting' in a section on safeguarding action that schools should take – the first mention of its kind in an Ofsted document. Similarly, in the same guidance, inspectors are directed to consider evidence that 'staff, leaders and managers oversee the safe use of electronic and social

media by staff and learners and take action immediately if they are concerned about bullying or risky behaviours.'⁴⁰

These changes were made in reaction to the emergence of problems in this area that have been well-identified by Ofsted for a number of years now. In 2009 it published a report entitled *The safe use of new technologies*, which evaluated the extent to which schools taught pupils to adopt safe and responsible practices in using new technologies, based on a 'small-scale survey' carried out in maintained schools in England between April and July of that year. The survey found that 'the weakest aspect of provision in the schools visited was the extent and quality of training provided for staff', and that as schools did not regularly review their policies and procedures for e-safety, 'they were not able to evaluate accurately whether what they were doing was having a positive impact in terms of keeping their pupils safe'. The report concluded that schools needed to improve, among other ways, by 'developing a curriculum for e-safety which builds on what pupils have learnt before and which reflect their age and stage of development'.⁴¹

In a follow-up report last year, Ofsted published data from a survey of online safety practices across all inspections during March 2015. The survey found that over 25% of secondary students could not recall if they had been taught about online safety in the last year, that 5% of schools did not even have an e-safety policy, and that staff training on e-safety was 'inconsistent' and too often 'reactive'.⁴²

Away from Ofsted's own research, the evidence on the need for the changes that have been introduced is just as compelling. On 'sexting', for instance, a 2009 study found that one in three UK teenagers had received 'sexually suggestive' messages, and a survey conducted by the Times estimated that around 44,000 secondary school pupils had been identified sending or receiving sexual imagery of minors by phone or online.⁴³ Everything suggests this is a problem that is only getting worse, too,

as in 2016 it was revealed that the police in England had investigated more than 13 times as many cases of sexting among under-16 year olds in 2015 as they had done in 2013.⁴⁴

Despite all this, however, inspectors still appear to be giving online safety insufficient attention in their inspections and their reports. Whilst online safety appears to have been inspected more closely than many of the other search terms in this year, we might still have expected more coverage given the emphasis placed on this issue by government in recent years, as well as the increasing challenges that the internet presents to young people. This may only be the first year under the new framework and guidance, but given how long Ofsted has been aware of online safety issues within schools, inspectors should clearly be being more attentive in this area.

Safeguarding and abuse

Search term	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – primary	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – secondary	Total no. of reports (%) containing mentions
Abuse	92 (5%)	57 (11%)	149 (7%)
Grooming	9 (<1%)	66 (13%)	75 (3%)
Unwanted touching/contact/ attention	5 (<1%)	0	5 (<1%)
Domestic violence/abuse	15 (<1%)	6 (1%)	21 (1%)
Exploitation (including child sexual exploitation/CSE)	64 (4%)	94 (18%)	158 (7%)
Child protection	1,684 (~100%)	522 (100%)	2,206 (~100%)
Bullying	1,600 (95%)	497 (95%)	2,097 (95%)
Safeguarding	1,685 (~100%)	522 (~100%)	2,207 (~100%)



PSHE's importance to safeguarding is not reflected in the extent to which it appears to be being inspected upon by Ofsted or provided by schools.

Safeguarding was mentioned in virtually every report, almost always more than once. Results for the more specific search terms related to safeguarding were (unsurprisingly) more infrequent.

Where concerns were found regarding safeguarding, inspectors appeared appropriately critical. For example, despite grading the school as 'good' for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the outcomes for pupils, one primary was judged 'inadequate' because 'leaders, managers and governors have failed to implement effective procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare' and 'concerns about children's welfare are not always reported quickly enough to the appropriate designated safeguarding staff member'.

Negative observations on safeguarding were made in only a very small minority of reports, with the vast majority reporting positively on schools' safeguarding procedures.

Commentary

Ofsted's school inspection handbook says the following of safeguarding: 'Although inspectors will not provide a separate grade for this key aspect of a provider's work, inspectors will always make a written judgment under leadership and management in the report about whether or not the arrangements for safeguarding children and learners are effective.' The numerous mentions of safeguarding in almost every report are therefore not surprising.

Safeguarding sits under 'leadership and management' rather than 'personal development, behaviour and welfare' in inspection reports, but Ofsted has nonetheless been clear that provision of PSHE, including SRE, will increasingly be seen by inspectors as a vital means by which schools fulfil their safeguarding obligations. In an article published in September 2015, Ofsted's National Lead for PSHE Janet Palmer HMI stated that 'effective PSHE is crucial to effective safeguarding', adding that 'it is difficult to see how safety and safeguarding can be good if PSHE education provision is poor; if pupils are kept ignorant of their human, physical and sexual rights; do not know how to protect themselves and others; or do not know where to go for help'. To repeat the comment quoted at the beginning of this report, she concludes, 'it is clear from the range of inspection guidance for September 2015 that the evidence schools provide regarding the effectiveness of their PSHE...is more crucial than ever to informing the judgments inspectors make'.⁴⁵

Unfortunately, as we have seen above and will see below, PSHE's importance to safeguarding is not reflected in the extent to which it appears to be being inspected by Ofsted or provided by schools.

LGBT+ and homophobia

Search term	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – primary	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – secondary	Total no. of reports (%) containing mentions
LGBT	0	4 (<1%)	4 (<1%)
Sexuality	14 (<1%)	21 (4%)	55 (2%)
Gay	40 (2%)	15 (3%)	55 (2%)
Lesbian	8 (<1%)	14 (3%)	22 (10%)
Same-sex/ same sex	3 (<1%)	0	3 (<1%)
Homosexual	0	4 (<1%)	4 (<1%)
Bisexual	7 (<1%)	14 (3%)	21 (10%)
Transsexual	0	0	0
Transgender	8 (<1%)	17 (3%)	25 (1%)
Intersex	0	0	0 (<1%)
Homophobic/ Homophobia	157 (9%)	141 (27%)	298 (13%)
Biphobic	0	0	0
Transphobic	1 (<1%)	5 (1%)	6 (<1%)
Orientation	2 (<1%)	14 (3%)	16 (3%)

In the reports reviewed, references of any kind to LGBT issues were few and far between, with only 14% of the total number of reports containing any LGBT-related search terms at all.

The vast majority of these mentions related specifically to the problem of homophobic bullying and the measures schools had in place to tackle it. Of the 553 LGBT-related mentions across both primary and secondary reports, 336 of them were concerned with homophobic bullying and six with transphobic bullying, equivalent to 62%.

Outside of homophobia and homophobic bullying, mentions of LGBT issues were found in fewer than 10% of reports. LGBT children have as much right to relevant PSHE and SRE as do other children, and this imbalance suggests a concerning approach both in inspections and in schools.

It is also noteworthy to consider schools' performance on trans-inclusion. Just 25 of the more than 2,000 reports reviewed mentioned the words 'transgender' or 'transphobic'.

Commentary

While having disciplinary policies in place to tackle homophobic bullying is obviously important, the value of LGBT-inclusive PSHE and SRE is in challenging and preventing homophobia before it manifests itself. The Terence Higgins Trust's (THT) 2016 report on SRE in schools found that only 5% of young people were taught about LGBT sex and relationships, while almost all young people (97%) thought that SRE should be LGBT inclusive. Indeed, young people are eight times more likely to rate the SRE they receive as 'excellent' if it was LGBT inclusive.⁴⁶

The distinct lack of LGBT-related terms within Ofsted reports suggests that what SRE is provided in schools is not particularly LGBT-inclusive, a finding that indicates that inspectors are failing both to pay sufficient attention to this aspect of schools' provision, and to factor an assessment of it into their overall grading. And of course the results certainly do nothing to dispute THT's findings. If the level of reporting by inspectors reflects the state of provision in schools, this is a significant concern.

The focus on homophobic bullying within schools in inspection reports is welcome, though not surprising given the emphasis placed on this issue by the Government. The Equality Act 2010 and Schools guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE) encourages schools to advance the equality of pupils by, among other things, 'removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people which are connected to a particular characteristic they have (for example... gay pupils who are being subjected to homophobic bullying)'.⁴⁷ Similarly, the Government's now 17 year old SRE guidance states that 'schools need to be able to deal with homophobic bullying'. More recently, in 2015, the DfE announced £2 million in funding to 'help prevent and eradicate homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying', stating that it was a problem that needed to be 'eradicated entirely' from schools.⁴⁸



The distinct lack of LGBT-related terms within Ofsted reports suggests that what SRE is provided in schools is not particularly LGBT-inclusive

This emphasis is well-placed. According to Stonewall's The Teachers Report (2014), which surveyed nearly 2000 school staff on a range of issues related to homophobia in schools, 86% of secondary school teachers and 45% of primary school teachers said that 'pupils in their school, regardless of sexual orientation, experience homophobic bullying'.⁴⁹ Similar results were found in Stonewall's The School Report (2012), which surveyed more than 1,600 gay young people and revealed that 'more than half of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people still report experiencing homophobic bullying'. Metro's 2014 Youth Chances Survey found the same.⁵⁰ More concerning, over two-fifths of such pupils had attempted or considered taking their own life as a consequence, and three in five said the bullying had a direct impact on their school work.⁵¹

Whilst references to homophobia and homophobic bullying make up the majority of LGBT-related mentions, they still only feature in 14% of the total number of reports, and the overwhelming majority of those are evidence good practice by schools. Given all we know, it is safe to conclude that homophobia in schools remains under-inspected by Ofsted and likely under-reported by schools.

Gender attitudes and sexual harassment

Search term	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – primary	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – secondary	Total no. of reports (%) containing mentions
Gender stereotyping/ stereotype	7 (<1%)	2 (<1%)	9 (<1%)
Gender role	0	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)
Gender discrimination	0	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)
Gender issue(s)	3 (<1%)	3 (<1%)	6 (<1%)
Sexism/sexist	3 (<1%)	9 (<1%)	12 (<1%)
Misogyny/ Misogynist	0	0	0
Sexual harassment	0	0	0
Sexual violence	0	0	0
Body image	0	3 (<1%)	3 (<1%)

In the 2015-2016 academic year almost no Ofsted reports contained any mention of issues related to gender discrimination, gender stereotyping, or sexism. Sexual harassment and sexual violence were not mentioned once. Gender-related search terms were found in just 1% of reports across both primary and secondary.

Those few mentions all detailed good school practice or good pupil behaviour in terms of sexism and sexist language. One school was reported by inspectors, for instance, to have ‘worked successfully with boys to tackle previous sexist language towards girls’, while in another it was reported that ‘the school council is well organised and very active and influential.

Elected members are passionate about giving pupils a voice. They have organised themselves into sub-committees, promoting issues such as improving self-esteem, combating racism and sexism and raising awareness of issues around bullying’.

Not one inspection report detailed any ongoing issues within a school concerning sexism or gender stereotyping and discrimination at school.

Commentary



The sentiment expressed by government on sexism in schools, and on the importance of PSHE and SRE in addressing it, has not been met with action

In 2015, data released following a Freedom of Information request submitted by the BBC found that 5,500 sexual offences had been recorded in UK schools over a three year period, including 600 rapes. In the

same year, the Girls' Attitudes Survey published by Girlguiding UK found that 75% of girls and young women were affected by the anxiety they felt about potentially experiencing sexual

harassment or intimidation. The survey found that 90% of young women aged 13-21 years old thought that government should be ensuring that all schools are taking action on the problem of sexual harassment and sexist bullying.⁵²

More recently, in 2016, the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee launched an inquiry into sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools, both to establish the scale of the problem and to identify practical solutions to it. The report that followed the inquiry found a 'shocking scale of sexual harassment and sexual violence' in schools. It stated that 'good quality SRE is shown to have positive impact, helping to reduce sexual harassment and sexual violence', recommending that PSHE and SRE are made statutory subjects as part of the new Education Bill.⁵³

Despite not taking the action that many believe is necessary, governments have not been entirely inactive on this issue. In its evidence to the above Women and Equalities Committee inquiry, the Department for Education stated that 'PSHE can help to reduce incidents of harassment and violence by equipping pupils with knowledge and skills', adding that 'sex and relationships education (SRE) can provide the knowledge needed to tackle negative attitudes that lead to sexual

harassment and violence'.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the DfE's forerunner, the then Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), published Guidance for schools on preventing and responding to sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying in 2009 to deal with what was perceived to be a growing problem. Noting that 'prevention and response go hand in hand', the guidance states that beyond taking disciplinary action when such bullying is identified, schools should 'stimulate discussion of gender issues and promote positive attitudes amongst pupils'. 'Using the taught curriculum and wider school activities', it continued, 'schools can work to build a positive ethos where diversity is respected and sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying is not tolerated'.⁵⁵ Just last year, too, a report funded by the Government Equalities Office (in partnership with the Institute for Physics) stated that 'regularly timetabled PSHE sessions are regarded as a high-value activity that can have a positive impact on student's lives' and that 'gender issues would be part of a coherent PSHE strategy... integrated into the school campaign to counter gender stereotyping'.⁵⁶

However, the sentiment expressed by government on sexism in schools, and on the importance of PSHE and SRE in addressing it, has not been met with action. The Government's now 17 year old SRE guidance does not mention sexism, sexual harassment, or gender stereotyping and discrimination once, and whilst Ofsted's inspection handbook is vocal on prejudice-based bullying in the round, only racist and homophobic bullying get specific mentions.

The low number of mentions in reports indicates that not nearly enough is being done by Ofsted to ensure that schools are fulfilling their role to ensure that schools are sufficiently protecting children from sexual harassment or taking steps to prevent it from happening in the first place.

Sexual health and safe sex

Search term	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – primary	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – secondary	Total no. of reports (%) containing mentions
Sexual health	0	16 (3%)	16 (3%)
Safe sex	0	2 (<1%)	2 (<1%)
Unprotected sex	0	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)
Condom	0	0	0
Contraception	0	0	0
STI/STD/sexually transmitted	0	4 (<1%)	4 (<1%)
HIV	0	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)
AIDS	0	0	0

Almost without exception since the new inspection framework was introduced, inspectors have omitted to mention anything regarding schools' provision of information about safe sex and sexual health. Search terms specific to sexual health and safe sex returned results in just 5% of secondary reports, and there were no mentions whatsoever in the reports for primary schools. Further, mentions of 'health' and 'healthy' discussed above (see the General PSHE and SRE section) almost all related to 'lifestyles', 'eating', or 'exercise', or were simply used in general terms alongside words like 'well-being', 'welfare', and 'safety'.

There was only one mention of HIV/AIDS in all the inspection reports reviewed for the 2015/16 academic year

There was only one mention of HIV/AIDS in all the inspection reports reviewed for the 2015/16 academic year, and even that simply detailed a 'geography lesson' in which pupils 'discussed the impact of HIV in emerging economies'.

With so few examples it is not possible to create an accurate picture of the nature of SRE provision in this area, but what little reporting was done by inspectors suggests it is mixed. While some reports noted that pupils 'appreciated learning about safe sex and how to avoid sexually transmitted infections' or were able to 'learn about the impact of chlamydia resulting from unprotected sex', others found that there were 'relatively few opportunities for older students to learn about what constitutes safe sexual practices'.

Commentary

Given the importance of ensuring that children are informed about sexual health, as well as the fact that providing information on STIs and HIV/AIDS is the only obligation that any schools (specifically, maintained secondaries) have beyond national curriculum science when it comes to SRE, the level of attention it receives in Ofsted reports is deeply concerning.

According to the Health Protection Agency, young people (specifically aged 15-24 years old) remain among those at highest risk of contracting a sexually transmitted infection, and in fact experience higher incidences of certain STIs than any other age group.⁵⁷ Whilst this is the result of a range of issues, the evidence is clear that a lack of knowledge on the part of young people when it comes to sexual health is a significant contributing factor. The level of contraceptive use is at its lowest among 16-19 year olds,⁵⁸ for instance, and 53% of young women and 43% of young men were not 'sexually competent' at the time of their first sexual experience, which includes not using or being aware of 'a reliable method of contraception'.⁵⁹

On top of this, a high proportion of young people do not receive or do not access the necessary sexual health services. The 2013 National Surveys of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Natsal) found that 50% of young women and 75% of young men aged 16-24 years old had not been tested for chlamydia in the past year.⁶⁰ Such was the Government's concern over young people's use of sexual health services, that in 2007 it published guidance to schools entitled Improving Access to Sexual Health Services for Young People in Further Education Settings, noting that

'innovative approaches are needed to raise young people's awareness of health risks and to help them access the advice and treatment they need to avoid negative health outcomes that impact on their future life chances.'⁶¹ In simple terms, 'Young people are at risk of poor sexual health and are, therefore, in need of comprehensive, effective sexual health education'.⁶²

Again, government inaction has long betrayed government rhetoric when it comes to the importance of teaching children about sexual health and safe sex in schools, and it appears that a similar inconsistency exists in Ofsted's approach. According to Ofsted's Inspectors Handbook, for a school to be rated 'outstanding' pupils must be able to 'explain accurately and confidently how to keep themselves healthy', and make 'informed choices about healthy eating, fitness and their emotional and mental well-being'.⁶³ Good sexual health is an integral part of a young person's all-round well-being, and yet inspectors' observations in this area rarely extended to sexual health issues. Such little focus on schools' promotion of sexual health is concerning and the lack of oversight risks leading to the same gaps that have existed for years going perpetually unaddressed.

Pregnancy and abortion

Search term	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – primary	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – secondary	Total no. of reports (%) containing mentions
Pregnancy/ pregnant	0	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)
Abortion	0	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)
Menstruation	0	0	0
Reproduction	0	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)

In all the reports reviewed, there was only one mention of a school providing information to pupils about pregnancy and one mention of abortion. They were both in secondary schools and as follows:

‘Pupils value the academy’s focus on their wider personal development and enjoy the timetabled “values” days that focus on some particularly challenging areas. For example, during the inspection all Year 10 pupils took part in a ‘building healthy relationships’ day, participating in drama workshops and discussions on marriage, teen pregnancies and relationships.’

‘The academy’s programme of personal, social and health education includes topics relevant to pupils’ welfare and the care of others. This was reflected in the boys’ engagement in a form-time discussion focused on abortion.’

Commentary

Whilst teenage pregnancy rates in the UK have fallen considerably in recent years and decades, dropping from a high of 55 per 1,000 15 to 17 year old girls in 1971 to 23 per 1,000 in 2014,⁶⁴ the research and expertise has been clear that the quality of education in this area still needs to improve.

Consent

Search term	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – primary	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – secondary	Total no. of reports (%) containing mentions
Consent	0	2 (<1%)	2 (<1%)
Consensual	0	0	0
Rape	0	0	0

Alison Hadley, for instance, who led the Government’s strategy to cut teenage pregnancies in half by 2010, has stated repeatedly that the ‘the job is not done’ and that ‘universal, high-quality sex and relationships education...need[s] to be in place so successive generations of young people have the knowledge, skills and confidence to make choices.’⁶⁵ Furthermore, research has shown that young people who leave school later, with qualifications, are less likely to have early intercourse, more likely to use contraception during their first time, and (for women) less likely to become pregnant.⁶⁶ Given the evidence on the level of contraceptive use among young people cited in the previous section, the need for sustained education is clear.

As with other search terms it is not possible to read too much into the low number of mentions of pregnancy and abortion in the reports reviewed. However, even being cautious not to over-analyse, one mention of each across every inspection report in an academic year does seem very low. Pregnancy and abortion are incredibly important topics for young people, particularly young women, and where possible inspectors should be seeking to assess schools’ provision of information in this area. Evidently this is not happening to the extent that it might.

Mention of schools teaching about consent in sex and relationships education were almost entirely absent from Ofsted's inspection reports in 2015/2016. Just two reports noted teaching on this issue. Both highlighted positive instances of secondary schools educating pupils about consent, one in a safeguarding context and the other as part of PSHE. Those mentions were as follows:

'The safeguarding leader is highly attuned to the risky situations that the academy's pupils might be exposed to. She has used tutorial slots effectively to focus on issues such as sexual consent, grooming and bullying.'

'Pupils benefit from well-developed programmes for citizenship and personal, social, health and economic education that are taught by a team of specialist teachers. The curriculum plays a crucial part in helping pupils understand how to safeguard themselves and others. For example, all learn about issues such as consent and child sexual exploitation.'

Commentary

Consent is an incredibly important area of young people's learning, and schools' teaching of it should be being assessed by inspectors wherever possible. When asked recently, 34% of young people said they had not learnt anything at all about sexual consent, while 50% had not discussed scenarios that helped them consider real-life situations to do with sexual consent.⁶⁷

Neither consent nor rape are mentioned in the Government's existing SRE guidance from 2000 – a significant gap – but the Government has on a number of occasions in recent years stressed the importance of schools teaching children about sexual consent.

In 2014, the Home Office published an Action Plan entitled 'A Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls', calling for greater action to 'promote the teaching of sexual consent and the importance of



Neither consent nor rape are mentioned in the Government's existing SRE guidance from 2000 – a significant gap

healthy relationships in schools'.⁶⁸ And in 2013 the This is Abuse campaign was re-launched in order to 'encourage [teenagers] to consider their views of abuse and the meaning of consent within relationships'.⁶⁹ The summary report of that campaign, published in 2015, noted that 'teenagers didn't understand what consent meant within their relationships' and 'held the common misconception that rape could only be committed by a stranger down a dark alley and didn't understand that it could happen within their own relationships'.⁷⁰

Further, in 2015 the Department for Education commissioned the PSHE Association to produce formal guidance on teaching about sexual consent. The guidance was intended for the teaching of children age 11 and above, so as to begin 'before young people are sexually active, otherwise it is too late', whilst making clear that 'recognising that some young people will be sexually active before the age of 16 does not equate to encouraging underage sexual activity'.⁷¹

Again, however, this intent is yet to manifest itself in the form of any meaningful action by Ofsted or otherwise. The impact of Government initiatives on consent cannot be assessed unless inspectors evaluate the work that schools are doing on the issue.

FGM

Search term	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – primary	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – secondary	Total no. of reports (%) containing mentions
Female Genital Mutilation/FGM	67 (4%)	42 (8%)	109 (5%)

References to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) were found in 109 reports, or 5% of the total. All mentions referred to procedures and training that schools have in place to identify children at risk, in line with their legal obligations.

On the whole, where FGM was mentioned, it highlighted good practice. And whilst few reports were critical of a school's performance in this regard or pointed out shortcomings in their procedures, inspectors were not entirely blind to the issue. For instance, one report found that 'training for teachers around safeguarding is at times, "ad hoc". There is not a systematic, whole-school plan round ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training, particularly around issues such as child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation'. Another notes that 'the safeguarding policy makes no reference to forced marriage or female genital mutilation'.

Commentary

According to a 2015 study, approximately 60,000 girls aged between 0 and 14 were born in England and Wales to mothers who had undergone FGM, and approximately 103,000 women aged 15-49 who have migrated to England and Wales are living with the consequences of FGM.⁷²

In the same year, the Serious Crime Act 2015 amended the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 to introduce a new mandatory reporting duty on teachers, as well as health and social care professionals, to notify the police where they discovered cases of FGM.⁷³ The Government subsequently produced a FGM resource pack to support schools in maintaining good practice in this area.⁷⁴

Given this duty, one might have expected to see more mentions, particularly negative, of FGM in the reports reviewed. However, as schools' work on FGM falls under their safeguarding policy, which was mentioned in every report, we cannot say with confidence that inspectors are not being attentive to this aspect of a school's performance. It is important that a clear picture is produced of just how rigorously schools are fulfilling their obligations on FGM, though, and it may therefore be worth Ofsted conducting a specific investigation of this in due course.

PSHE/SRE vs other subjects

Search term	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – primary	No. of reports (%) containing mentions – secondary	Total no. of reports (%) containing mentions
SRE	5 (<1%)	14 (3%)	19 (<1%)
PSHE	143 (8%)	165 (32%)	308 (14%)
History	553 (33%)	239 (46%)	792 (36%)
Geography	384 (23%)	198 (38%)	582 (26%)
Religious Education/ Studies	249 (15%)	182 (35%)	481 (22%)
Science	841 (50%)	442 (85%)	1283 (58%)
Mathematics	1688 (100%)	522 (100%)	2210 (100%)
Biology	5 (<1%)	34 (7%)	39 (2%)
Chemistry	6 (<1%)	32 (6%)	38 (2%)
Physics	2 (<1%)	41 (8%)	43 (2%)
Music	488 (29%)	208 (40%)	696 (31%)
Drama	133 (8%)	137 (26%)	270 (12%)
Art	479 (28%)	209 (40%)	688 (31%)
Sport	940 (560%)	373 (71%)	1313 (59%)

At primary level, PSHE and SRE (and related names for the subject, abbreviated or otherwise) were mentioned fewer times than almost all other established subjects. While music and art were mentioned in 31% of reports respectively, PSHE was mentioned in just 14% of reports and SRE in less than 1%.

Commentary

Established subjects such as science, maths, and history are regularly assessed by schools. The same is true of art, drama, and music, albeit to a lesser extent. The results of these assessments are collected and made public. Schools are ranked by these results and parents choose schools based on them. Whatever one thinks of

this system, it is clear that schools are held to account for their performance in terms of teaching these subjects long before an Ofsted inspector shows up.

The same cannot be said, however, for PSHE and SRE, and it is therefore incumbent on Ofsted, perhaps more so than in all other subjects, to provide the means by which schools' provision is assessed. This is not happening.

Conclusion

The findings of this report point to a state of affairs in which PSHE is not given the regard it is due by either inspectors or the majority of schools. Various reports in recent years have noted that the time set aside for PSHE in the curriculum is inadequate, that when the subject is taught it is ordinarily not inclusive of LGBT+ pupils, that it does not keep pace with advances and developments in our use of technology. Also that it fails to introduce children to a variety of experiences and concepts before those introductions are made, prematurely and often unhelpfully, by the media. Ultimately, the evidence finds, PSHE does not currently contribute to the safety and wellbeing of children to anywhere near the extent that it could do if it was provided more comprehensively in schools.

In light of the findings of this survey, and of the body of evidence and research detailed throughout this report, we make the following recommendations.

Recommendations

Statutory PSHE, including SRE

First and foremost, we believe that PSHE, including SRE, must be placed on a statutory footing and made compulsory in all schools. This PSHE must be age-appropriate, inclusive and relevant to all children, and comprehensive.

Whilst this report primarily highlights the shortfalls in Ofsted's inspection of PSHE, it also provides a worrying insight into the extent to which the subject is being taught in schools. There are clearly a number of reasons for the low level of PSHE provision around the country, many of which Ofsted has identified in the past. Schools frequently report a lack of curriculum time for PSHE, for instance, as well as a shortage of specialist teachers and expertise.

Schools evidently have a responsibility to do what they can to solve these problems, and Ofsted to ensure that they do, but it should be clear to government that Ofsted alone cannot be the answer in making sure PSHE is taught, and unless PSHE is made a compulsory part of the curriculum none of these issues can be sufficiently addressed. Existing teachers will have little incentive to seek out training in it and new teachers will be disinclined to specialise in it (indeed, the lack of initial teacher training is also an issue). Time will not be set aside for it in

the curriculum and termly or annual drop down days, which can never hope to deliver either the breadth or depth required, will continue to be the norm. Assessment will go on lacking the rigour afforded to other subjects, resulting in a lack of effective reinforcement and pupil progress. In sum, a maintenance of a status quo in which children and young people are not being suitably equipped to stay healthy, happy, and safe.

If the Government is not willing to take this necessary step, or even if it is, we have made a number of other recommendations that would serve to improve the situation in other ways.

Update the SRE guidance

The official government guidance on SRE in schools has not been updated since the year 2000. This was a time before the internet became ubiquitous, before smartphones, before sexting and cyberbullying, before the widespread availability of internet pornography, before the repeal of section 28, before the legalisation of civil partnerships and same-sex marriage. It was, particularly for young people, an almost entirely different time.

Of course, if the SRE guidance is to be updated, as it needs to be, particularly if

PSHE and SRE are not made compulsory, it must be comprehensive. That means clear directions to schools that children should understand safe sex and sexual health prior to their first sexual experience, that they should be taught about gender-based issues, consent and what constitutes a healthy relationship from an early age, that SRE should be fully LGBT-inclusive both in primary and secondary, and that boys and girls recognise, at the very least, what constitutes inappropriate contact and who to speak to if they experience it.

There is little value in producing guidance that does not cover these things and equally it is no good if not all schools are obliged to have regard to it. The updated guidance must be given full statutory status in all schools, including academies and free schools, and faith schools too.

Inspection framework and handbook to include specific mention of PSHE and SRE

As this report notes, Ofsted's inspection framework and the handbook for inspectors have both been updated recently so as (among other things) to place more emphasis on safeguarding and school performance on personal development, behaviour, and welfare. This means that schools should not be graded outstanding in this area unless 'pupils can explain accurately and confidently how to keep themselves healthy' and 'make informed choice about healthy eating, fitness and their emotional and mental well-being.' They must also 'have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and are confident in staying safe from abuse and exploitation'.

Whilst this new direction should be sufficient to have improved Ofsted's inspection of PSHE and SRE, the findings of this report suggests otherwise. We believe that a simple and effective solution to this problem would be for the school inspection handbook and inspection framework to explicitly mention PSHE, which should include SRE, and to direct

inspectors to assess provision of the topics ordinarily covered as part of PSHE.. This must include guidance on the range of topics that schools should be covering. No school should be awarded either a good or outstanding grade for personal development, behaviour, and welfare if PSHE is not a meaningful part of their curriculum, and that it is must be ensured in every school inspected.

Re-introduce subject specific inspections on PSHE

Throughout this report we have alluded to Ofsted's two previous reports on PSHE, published in 2007 and 2013. Both those reports were incredibly useful in assessing the state of PSHE and SRE in schools around the country and in identifying where improvements need to be made. Their findings may not have led to the level of progress and development required in schools' provision of the subject, but they are vital sources of information and whatever improvement they did provoke is valuable.

Crucially, both these reports required subject-specific visits by inspectors. Such visits were phased out in 2013/14 for PSHE, and they were in many other subjects too, and an important means of assessing PSHE and SRE provision was therefore lost. In 2015, reports detailing examples of good practice in schools were also phased out by Ofsted. Ofsted should resume both PSHE-specific inspections and the publication of good practice reports immediately, and report on its findings at the earliest opportunity. This process should be done regularly to ensure that provision both improves and keeps pace with the ongoing changes and challenges that children are subjected to growing up in modern society.

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