

OFSTED – PSHE EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Ofsted have published their report on [PSHE education in schools](#) today, much of what they have to say is extremely positive, starting with the finding that teaching was good or outstanding in 3 in 4 schools visited, and that in those schools, where they chose to use them, external contributors were making a valuable contribution – one of our members, Coram Life Education, is particularly picked out.

The report emphasises that programmes of PSHE education which link to other activities were amongst the best models, while delivery through tutorials and drop down days were less successful.

In schools that didn't provide time in the curriculum for PSHE Ofsted say:

Lack of discrete curriculum time in a quarter of the schools visited, particularly the secondary schools, meant that programmes of study were not covered in full. The areas that suffered included aspects of sex and relationships education; education about drugs, including alcohol; and mental health issues that were not covered at all or were dealt with superficially.

Worryingly the report suggests that drug education remains one of the weaker areas of PSHE education.

They note that in 31 of the 91 primary schools inspectors visited "pupils' achievement in developing a healthy and safer lifestyle was no better than satisfactory". They suggest that knowledge about volatile substances was particularly patchy amongst younger pupils. For older primary pupils they say:

their understanding about the reasons for and dangers of drug misuse was more inconsistent. The dangers of alcohol were not as well understood, often because, in the schools visited, the topic was not covered at all or was left to Year 6.

When they turn to secondary schools Ofsted says that in over half the schools they visited the pupils had a good knowledge about drugs and a basic knowledge about the harms they might cause. However, in 20% of the schools factual knowledge of drugs (including alcohol and tobacco) was described as "inadequate". Ofsted do not describe any secondary schools as being outstanding in their drug education, although they do point to some good practice.

The inspectors also note that schools struggle to find ways to engage parents with PSHE education, though they are able to point to examples of what they considered outstanding practice (none of which explicitly includes drug education).

The report makes the following recommendations to the DfE:

- support work to ensure that all trainee teachers understand the role of PSHE education in the National Curriculum, develop routes for initial teacher education in PSHE education, and promote the take-up of continuing professional development in PSHE education
- with other government departments, such as the Department of Health, support schools to implement systematically the revised guidance on sex and relationships education and drugs education
- support the development of good practice in assessing PSHE education, and publicise this widely to schools.

They make recommendations to local authorities to consider their roles in supporting the development of effective programmes by providing continuing professional development opportunities and by publicising good practice to schools.

Ofsted's recommendations to schools are that they should:

- ensure that the timetable is organised so PSHE education is coherent, comprehensive and of high quality
- meet the needs of pupils for timely and appropriate teaching about high-risk areas such as sex and relationships, drugs and mental health issues
- focus on pedagogy to make lessons active, compelling and relevant, and ensure that teachers have the specialist knowledge, training and skills they need to teach PSHE education successfully
- implement systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in PSHE education
- involve and consult parents more in developing and implementing the PSHE curriculum, so they are aware of the topics being covered.

