

The status of Personal Social Health and Economic (PSHE) education: a briefing for school leaders and PSHE education co-ordinators

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PSHE education is a planned programme of learning through which pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to manage their lives now and in the future. As part of a whole school approach, PSHE education helps to keep pupils healthy and safe, supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares them for life and work in modern Britain.

This briefing sets out the position of PSHE education in the national curriculum and outlines how the subject helps schools to fulfil their statutory duties and perform well in Ofsted inspections.

PSHE education in the national curriculum

While PSHE education is a non-statutory subject, section 2.5 of the [National Curriculum framework](#) document states that:

'All schools should make provision for PSHE, drawing on good practice.'

Along with the National Curriculum framework, the DfE also published [guidance on PSHE education](#), which states that the subject is 'an important and necessary part of all pupils' education' and that:

'Schools should seek to use PSHE education to build, where appropriate, on the statutory content already outlined in the national curriculum, the basic school curriculum and in statutory guidance on: drug education, financial education, sex and relationship education (SRE) and the importance of physical activity and diet for a healthy lifestyle.'

PSHE education as a means to fulfilling the statutory duties on schools

[Section 2.1 of the National Curriculum framework](#) states:

'Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which:

- *promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils*
- *prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'*

These duties are set out in the [2002 Education Act](#) (the [2010 Academies Act](#) also refers to the broad and balanced curriculum). Schools also have statutory responsibilities in relation to promoting pupil wellbeing and pupil safeguarding ([Children Act 2004](#)) and community cohesion ([Education Act 2006](#)). The [Equality Act 2010](#) places duties on schools to help to reduce prejudice-based bullying and in doing so to keep protected characteristic groups safe. PSHE education plays an important part in fulfilling these responsibilities.

PSHE education and safeguarding

All schools have responsibilities relating to the safety of children in their care. In Paragraph 41 of statutory guidance on [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), the Department for Education clearly states that safeguarding extends to curriculum approaches such as PSHE education, noting:

"Schools should consider how children may be taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities. This may include covering relevant issues through PSHE ..."

Duties on schools to publish details of their PSHE curriculum

As outlined in [Schedule 4 of the School Information \(England\) Regulations 2012](#), there is a requirement for schools to publish details of their curriculum online. In January 2014, the Department for Education updated its [timeline of mandatory information for schools](#), making it clear that a school's PSHE curriculum should be published under this requirement.

Sex and relationships education

Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) is a requirement for state maintained secondary schools (and must include learning about HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections). When teaching SRE, schools must have regard to [statutory guidance from the Department for Education](#). The DfE has formally recognised [good practice guidance](#) from the PSHE Association, Brook and the Sex Education Forum, which sets out schools' responsibilities on sex and relationships education which vary between primary and secondary schools and between maintained schools and academies/free schools.

The role of Ofsted

PSHE education has a key role in relation to Ofsted success. [Ofsted has identified that outstanding schools almost always have outstanding PSHE education](#), and that [PSHE education contributes to key judgements](#) in its new Framework, particularly in relation to personal development, behaviour and welfare; social, moral, spiritual and cultural development; and safeguarding.

Janet Palmer, Ofsted's lead for PSHE education, has [stated](#):

"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 regarding leadership and management, the quality of teaching and learning, personal development, behaviour and welfare, safeguarding and, ultimately, the overall effectiveness of the school."

Developing your PSHE education provision

As a non-statutory subject, PSHE education does not have a statutory programme of study. However, the PSHE Association has [its own Programme of Study for PSHE education](#) which is freely available to all schools. We have also worked with our partners Brook and the Sex Education Forum to produce [SRE guidance](#) designed to supplement and update [2000 DfE guidance on SRE](#). In planning their PSHE curriculum some schools may also choose to use the QDCA's end of key stage statements for PSHE education:

- [End of Key Stages 1 and 2](#) (Combined with citizenship)
- End of Key Stage 3 [Economic Wellbeing](#) and [Personal Wellbeing](#)
- End of Key Stage 4 [Economic Wellbeing](#) and [Personal Wellbeing](#)

Members of the PSHE Association can attend our regular [CPD sessions](#) on planning their PSHE programme and are able to take telephone, email or face-to-face advice on developing their curriculum.

Conclusion

PSHE education helps schools to meet statutory duties, links closely to national curriculum subjects and is essential to success in Ofsted inspections, as well as being closely linked to [academic success and future employability](#). Longer term, PSHE education prepares pupils to manage many of the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities they will face growing up. The PSHE Association can help you to maximise the effectiveness of your PSHE programme: please [contact us](#) for further details.