

Dear Ms Spielman,

Relationships organisations met with the Rt Honourable Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for Schools, in August 2018 to welcome the Government's guidance on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). We are writing to you to feed back on the draft education inspection framework. To realise government's ambition to ground RSE 'in a firm understanding and valuing of positive relationships'ⁱ, the standards framework is critically important to hold school practice and decision-making to account.

Implementation of new RSE guidance requires specific standards for schools on delivery of a subject in the 'full curriculum'ⁱⁱ as well as clear and consistent standards on how relationship capabilities and character are developed throughout the school system, beyond specifics of an individual subject. As Ofsted's 2013 PSHE report highlighted, RSE is atypical given the confidence and skill required to deliver sensitive messaging about intimate topics to pupils, parents and teachers, and links to safeguarding issues. As Ofsted is well-aware, relationship skills and expectations develop through experience of relationships in a child's school and non-school environments including norms around, for example, how conflict is handled, commitment and respect demonstrated, and kindness role-modelled.

Overall, we welcome the 'quality of education' judgement in the draft inspection framework. However, how this is interpreted and implemented will significantly influence schools' approaches to relationships education. We recommend the following additions and considerations to strengthen the framework.

1. We welcome the emphasis on 'effective support for those teaching outside their main areas of expertise'ⁱⁱⁱ and resources selected to reflect 'ambitious intentions'^{iv} for the curriculum. Ofsted's review of PSHE demonstrated the importance of high-quality external input where this made a 'valuable contribution...by bringing a wide range of expertise and life experiences'^v. To be effective this must be part of a co-ordinated programme by teachers, supported to deliver the full spectrum of RSE demands and equipped to adapt the curriculum to their school communities. Learners studying the full curriculum and setting exam and test outcomes within a quality of education judgement should mean that Inspections now challenge any neglect of RSE.
2. We recommend Ofsted assesses RSE as a whole school approach as well as a subject. Key performance indicators should include for example, evidence of viewing behaviour as a symptom not just an outcome, use of peer to peer methods, consistent opportunities for diverse parental input, competent management of relationships under strain, communication of a school vision about life readiness in which poverty of ambition applies to relationships as well as academic progress.
3. The skills for strong relationships are learnt from experiencing them. We welcome the aim to 'consider children's experiences and how they are being developed, alongside assessments'^{vi}. We would be concerned if the Inspection Framework's 'quality of education' judgement failed to recognise how relationships are modelled and experienced throughout the school. Further consideration is needed about how the impact on learners of the RSE curriculum and its influence on whole school culture, are captured within the framework and guidance.
4. The draft framework states that inspectors will evaluate the extent to which a child 'develop(s) their character – including their resilience, confidence and independence.' To be effective, specific reference must be made to the role of relationships education in fostering these attributes and qualities, since their development is closely linked to a child's ability to develop and manage constructive relationships with peers and adults. In reference to Personal Development, we recommend the wording is amended to make *particular reference to relationships education* in the development of character and knowledge of how to keep mentally and physically healthy.
5. Our expectation is that 'leadership and management' standards include evidence of a clear relationships vision showing how healthy relationships, inclusive of but not limited to sexual

relationships, are integral to success throughout life. All schools, whatever their foundation, should have the opportunity to evidence outcomes of good Relationships and Sex Education that arise from their vision, values, culture and teaching. This vision, enabled by a move away from the standalone 'outcomes' judgement and extensive performance data, should go beyond supporting individual resilience and focus on how schools work together as communities.

6. The quality of parental engagement has particular importance for RSE given parents' role as primary educators and inspection should be alert to providers' ability to achieve this.
7. We are concerned to ensure that schools are encouraged to focus not only on unhealthy relationship avoidance, but also healthy relationships and their benefits. To be effective, RSE will balance the present with long-term aspirations for healthy, committed relationships as adults, including through marriage and civil partnership and should meet requirements now set out in both law and guidance.
8. While there are merits in distinguishing behaviour and attitudes to education from personal development, inspection narrowly focused on outcomes of disciplined behaviour in class will neglect recognition of work supporting relationships as foundations of behaviour and attitudes.
9. We recommend that Ofsted assess progress *towards* a vision. As inspectors know, stronger relational cultures in schools may result in an increase in safeguarding disclosures, as adults are more responsive and trusted by pupils, an outcome for which schools must not be penalised. Inspectors should expect to find adequate in-school support including referral to counselling if pupils wish to explore uncomfortable feelings triggered through RSE delivery.
10. Given Ofsted's framework applies to all stages of education, we request that Ofsted recommends that relationships education is extended to early years, as relationship behaviours learnt at this stage are proven to significantly impact child and later adult outcomes.

As organisations with expertise in relationships and knowledge of different elements of RSE we would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues further. We confirm our commitment to work with Ofsted and with schools to ensure standards are in place and met that are 'ambitious and... give all learners...the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed'^{vii} in relationships throughout their lives.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Adams, **CLEAR**
John Ashcroft, **Relationships Foundation**
Liv Bauckham, **TwentyTwenty**
Lisa Gagliani, **Explore Relationships**
John Fenna, **Tavistock Relationships**
Katharine Hill, **Care for the Family**
Michelle Hill, **Talk, Listen, Change (TLC)**
Catherine Hine, **Family Stability Network**
Aidan Jones, **Relate**
Penny Mansfield, **OnePlusOne**
Mark Molden, **Marriage Care**
Judith Nemeth, **The Values Foundation**
Hilary Pannack, **Straight Talking**
Mary Santo, **Mothers' Union**
Sarah Smith, **acet UK**
Mary Taylor, **Family Links**
Frank Young, **The Centre for Social Justice**

ⁱ Secretary of State for Education, Damian Hinds, RSE and Health Curriculum Press Release, Gov.Uk, Accessible; <https://dfemedia.blog.gov.uk/2019/02/25/education-in-the-media-monday-25-february-2019/>

ⁱⁱ Ofsted, (2019), *The Education Inspection Framework*: 10

ⁱⁱⁱ Ofsted, (2019), *The Education Inspection Framework*: 10

^{iv} Ofsted, (2019), *The Education Inspection Framework*: 11

^v Ofsted, (2013), *Not Yet Good Enough: Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education in Schools*, Personal, Social and Health Education in English schools in 2012: 21

^{vi} Ofsted, (2019), *Education Inspection framework 2019: Inspecting the Substance of Education, Consultation Document*, p21

^{vii} Ofsted, (2019), *The Education Inspection Framework*: 10