

Clive House  
70 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9EX

T 0300 123 1231  
**Textphone** 0161 618 8524  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



28 October 2024

Ms Wera Hobhouse MP  
Member of Parliament for Bath  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

**Sir Martyn Oliver**  
His Majesty's Chief Inspector

Sent by email to: [wera.hobhouse.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:wera.hobhouse.mp@parliament.uk)

Dear Ms Hobhouse

## **PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NUMBER 9521**

*To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to Ofsted's report entitled *Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges*, published on 10 June 2021, what discussions her Department has had with Ofsted on the extent to which it has implemented the recommendations under actions for the inspectorates.*

Your recent Parliamentary Question has been passed to me for response as His Majesty's Chief Inspector for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

Following the publication of our review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges in 2021, we updated our school and further education (FE) and skills handbooks to strengthen requirements for inspectors to assess how well schools and colleges address sexual harassment and abuse.<sup>1,2</sup>

During inspection, inspectors look at how leaders ensure that their school or college's culture addresses harmful sexual behaviour and whether there are appropriate provider-wide policies in place that make it clear that sexual harassment and abuse are unacceptable. Inspectors also review the provider's safeguarding records – which include those relating to sexual abuse – and consider how providers handle allegations of sexual abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. We also expect providers to provide effective pastoral support.

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<sup>1</sup> 'School inspection handbook', Ofsted, September 2024; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif>

<sup>2</sup> 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', Ofsted, September 2024; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-handbook-eif>

On school inspections, inspectors review whether a school's relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum (and wider curriculum) specifically address sexual harassment, online abuse, and sexual violence, as well as safeguarding risks, issues of consent, and what constitutes a healthy relationship – both online and offline. Inspectors must also be given the opportunity to speak with pupils with no other adults present (unless there are exceptional circumstances) and will, where relevant and practical, speak to single-sex groups to give pupils the opportunity to speak more freely about issues such as sexual harassment and abuse.

In September 2021, we provided training for all inspectors across our early years, schools and FE and skills remits on the review's findings, and delivered joint training with the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). This training is embedded in our induction training for new inspectors and we regularly update our training to reflect any changes to the Department for Education's 'Keeping children safe in education' statutory guidance.<sup>3</sup>

We have routinely monitored inspection practice through a programme of themed retrieval to assure that both inspectors and providers are implementing the changes and learning points from the review. The evidence shows that, overall, this is the case.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sir Martyn Oliver". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter 'v'.

**Sir Martyn Oliver**  
His Majesty's Chief Inspector

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<sup>3</sup> 'Keeping children safe in education', Department for Education, September 2024;  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>