

17 July 2026

Mr Rupert Lowe MP
Member of Parliament for Great Yarmouth
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0PW

Sir Martyn Oliver
His Majesty's Chief Inspector

Sent by email to: Rupert.lowe.mp@parliament.uk

Dear Mr Lowe

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NUMBER 17876

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what role Ofsted plays, if any, in assessing schools' compliance with statutory guidance on relationships, sex and health education (RSHE).

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.

As the regulator, the Department for Education (DfE) sets the statutory and non-statutory requirements for schools, including about relationships and sex education and health education (RSHE) and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education.^{1,2}

Ofsted's role as an inspectorate is to ensure that organisations providing education, training and care services in England do so to a high standard for pupils and learners of all ages, and report on the findings accordingly. During inspection, inspectors determine whether the school has regard to the DfE's statutory guidance on RSHE. Where a school has departed from any applicable element of this guidance, they will need to explain their rationale for doing this.

¹ 'Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education', Department for Education, December 2025; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>.

² 'Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education', Department for Education, September 2021; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-social-health-and-economic-education-pshe/personal-social-health-and-economic-pshe-education>.

Compliance with the duties and the extent to which the school has had regard to the DfE's guidance will inform the inspectors' evaluation and grading across leadership and governance and the personal development and wellbeing evaluation areas of the toolkit.

Our 'School inspection: toolkit, operating guides and information' guidance sets out how we inspect and evaluate schools.³ When evaluating a school's personal development programme, inspectors will gather evidence on how the school is developing pupils' age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships through relationships and sex education.

In gathering evidence about the strategic leadership of curriculum and teaching, inspectors consider the extent to which the curriculum (whether adopted, adapted or constructed) covers the statutory requirements set out in the basic curriculum (which includes the national curriculum, and relationships, sex and health education, and religious education). They also consider whether it is at least as ambitious in breadth and depth as the national curriculum.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Oliver'.

Sir Martyn Oliver

His Majesty's Chief Inspector

³ 'School inspection: toolkit, operating guides and information', Ofsted, June 2026;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-toolkit-operating-guide-and-information>.