

GOING BEYOND BIOLOGY

The Relationships
and Sex Education
that young people
want and need



FOREWORD

FPA and Brook have a proud history of supporting high quality, age-appropriate Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). After years of campaigning we are delighted that all schools in England will be required to teach RSE fit for the 21st century from September 2019.

However, as the Department for Education now looks to formulate new guidance for schools, it is essential that it supports teachers, school nurses and youth workers to deliver high quality programmes, which give children and young people the skills they need to develop happy and equal relationships.

That's why we support the [Sex Education Forum's Statement of Commitment](#), which outlines the values and principles that schools need to follow in order to ensure that their RSE lessons will be appropriate, effective and enjoyable. And we know that's what young people want too.

Over the last year we've been working with a group of dedicated young volunteers (aged 15 – 18) to make sure that their needs and wants are reflected as the Government looks to create RSE guidance.

This report was co-created with young people and includes the 'Young people's manifesto: What we want and need from our Relationships and Sex Education', which outlines their views on the bare minimum they expect from their education. They also helped to select 10 examples of some of the best practice around the country so that the Department for Education, OFSTED and school leaders themselves can see examples of these principles in action.

Young people's voices are central to making sure that RSE is high quality. We hope that policymakers will use this report to shape their ongoing work to promote the very best in RSE delivery.

Natika H Halil, Chief Executive, FPA
Helen Marshall, Chief Executive, Brook

OUR YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

In August 2017, 14 young people from around England met to discuss what high quality RSE meant to them, along with Brook Ambassador & sex positive vlogger, [Hannah Witton](#). The group included four young men, one young non-binary person and nine young women, aged 15 – 18. 50% of the group identified as LGBT+.

The first part of the workshop began with a discussion of what makes good RSE. This was led by Lucy Emmerson, National Coordinator of the Sex Education Forum. Lucy introduced the young people to the evidence that supports the 12-point Statement of Commitment, which has been endorsed by charities including the NSPCC and Barnardo's, as well as Brook and FPA.

The young people then used this evidence as criteria to review 15 case studies, which experts at Brook and FPA had shortlisted from entries that had been submitted through an online form by practitioners (including teachers, youth workers, external practitioners and students). Brook and FPA promoted the call out through social media, articles in the Times Educational Supplement and through the Sex Education Forum's newsletter.

Following a group discussion, small groups of volunteers used the criteria set out in the Statement of Commitment to rank mark each RSE case study. The top ten case studies are featured within this report. The young people's comments throughout demonstrate the elements of each programme that particularly impressed them.

The 'Young people's manifesto: What we want and need from our Relationships and Sex Education' was developed by the workshop attendees using ideas raised throughout the session. The manifesto complements the Sex Education Forum's Statement of Commitment and will be used to articulate to schools and decision makers what young people expect and deserve from RSE, using their own words.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MANIFESTO

WHAT WE WANT AND NEED FROM OUR RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION:

WE NEED RELATIONSHIPS AND SEX EDUCATION (RSE) SO THAT WE HAVE THE BEST CHANCE OF ENJOYING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AS WE GROW UP.



WE'RE REALLY PLEASED THAT ALL SCHOOLS, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY, ARE GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT WE GET THE LESSONS WE DESERVE, AND WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THEY'RE THE BEST THEY CAN BE. WE SUPPORT THE SEX EDUCATION FORUM'S STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT ON THE BASELINE FOR 'GOOD QUALITY' RSE, AND WE WANT TO MAKE SURE OUR SCHOOLS KNOW TOO. THAT'S WHY WE'VE BEEN WORKING WITH BROOK AND FPA, TO WRITE THIS MANIFESTO IN OUR OWN WORDS...

WE WANT AND NEED RSE THAT:

- **Is taught by qualified teachers.**

We know that the best RSE teachers will have had training and we want our school to have a lead teacher, who makes sure that everyone who delivers RSE in our schools learns how to foster open discussions and deliver great lessons. We also want to make sure that we get opportunities from outside organisations to add to our classes.

- **Includes us in lessons.**

We need to be involved in the lessons and we need to feel safe to ask questions. We want to learn how to communicate, and the best way to do that is to be involved.

- **Is on our timetable.**

One lesson a year isn't enough to cover all of the complicated subjects that we need to learn about so that we get all of the information and skills we need. We need regular lessons on our timetable as part of Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE).

- **Promotes equal, happy relationships.**

It is important that we learn about the positive aspects of relationships and sex, in a way that makes sense for our age. This means that we will have the best chance of having healthy relationships when we're ready.

- **Includes our families.**

We want our schools to make sure our parents, carers and guardians understand RSE and can support us at home. This means that schools should let our families know what is going to be taught and help them to speak to us about relationships and sex.

- **Is based on the facts.**

We don't want to learn about people's opinions about RSE. We want to know the truth, which means we want honest information about our rights, the law and our bodies.

- **Shows us where to go for help.**

We want to be able to leave school knowing where we can go to look after our sexual health and who we can speak to if we need help. This includes linking us to local services and showing us where we can go online for information we can trust.

- **Promotes LGBT+ equality.**

All relationships are equal. We deserve to have lessons that challenge discrimination in school and promote equality for all pupils of all genders and sexualities.

- **Considers all of our needs.**

Our RSE needs to consider all of our different experiences and needs, including special educational needs and disabilities.

- **Helps us to understand influences.**

We want to be encouraged to discuss and taught how to understand the ways in which our friends, the media, religion might shape the way we understand relationships and sex.

- **Reacts to our feedback.**

We need our teachers to address any comments we have. We need RSE that makes sense to the real issues we face, and it needs to be adapted if those needs change.

BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

Challenging the menstruation stigma: [#periodpositive](#)

In 2012, then-Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove MP announced a rewrite of the science curriculum. This inspired Sheffield-based Chella Quint to design a series of lessons and resources to tackle the “the cycle of secrecy, fear and misinformation about menstruation” through [#periodpositive](#). Her resources are free and available online for all schools. They are being regularly delivered across several schools in Sheffield, including Firth Park Academy and Handsworth Grange.

[#periodpositive](#) is aimed at 11 to 14 year olds. It offers a series of lessons and stand-alone activities which teachers can use to supplement a science lesson or deliver several full lessons, providing a comprehensive menstruation education programme. Lessons are designed for all young people of all genders, so that everyone gets the opportunity to challenge the causes of shame and embarrassment about menstruation.

Young people's views

Brook and FPA's young people were particularly impressed with the fact that [#periodpositive](#) resources are so inclusive of trans and non-binary young people and that all of the information Chella uses in her resources are based on extensive research conducted by the Society for Menstrual Cycle Research. They said:

“This is great that it is so inclusive of trans and non-binary people. It makes sure that everyone gets the opportunity to understand not just the science of periods, but also how you manage them, why there's stigma and what period poverty is”

“No gender split removes the taboo of periods, and I like the fact that it talks about all people, including people who don't have periods. I also liked that it helps you to understand the media and how adverts show periods as being a bit wrong or dirty”

People who have been on Chella's training enjoyed the range of activities and how interactive the lessons are. Following her training with Sexpression Sheffield (a student-led relationships and sex education programme), participants said: “The workshop was energetic and fun... creative, lively and original.”

Guidance

On the introduction of new Department for Education guidance, Chella said: “I want to see great training for teachers and school staff members on all topics in relationships and sex education, including menstruation.

“Anyone in a school could take a disclosure from a young person, whether that's about needing tampons, or a relationship they're worried about, and I want the Department of Education to invest in training so that everyone in a school knows how to handle those teachable moments.”

“Girls report that menstruation affects their education, through school policies such as locking toilets during lesson times or being prevented from leaving the exam hall to go to the toilet. That's why I've produced resources that help leaders to create a whole-school approach through the [#periodpositive](#) schools charter”

Chella Quint, founder, [#periodpositive](#)

BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

Integrating access to services into RSE lessons:

Bracknell Forest Council

Bracknell Forest has had the biggest reduction in teenage conception rates since 1998 in the country, dropping 83.7%. Rates are now 64% below the national average. Glen Wiseman, who leads the council's youth programmes, says that this comes from their comprehensive RSE programme, linked with access to sexual health services. Over 4,000 visits were made by young people to school-based sexual health services in 2016-17.

Bracknell Forest Council runs sessions in all six secondary school in the area, as well as the only further education college. All sessions are delivered by trained workers, and this is backed up with a sexual health drop-in and one-on-one information. There is also an anonymous text service so that young people can ask questions confidentially. The sessions flow from year seven - 13 and each student will have the same sessions no matter which school they go to, with knowledge developing year on year.

Glen says there are two key elements of the programme that make it such a success - the youth workers are emphasised and respected and there is clear signposting to services. Parents are also involved in feedback and the Council supports parents' evenings at schools so that they can engage with the programme and support RSE in the home.

Young people's views

Our young people liked the range of topics covered by Bracknell Council and the fact that young people's feedback was so important in shaping the service. They said:

"This is good because it takes into account the young person, and their voices shape the programme. I also like that specialist youth workers come into the school and the text service means that you can follow up. You should also get RSE from your school, but this sort of thing can improve what you're learning, because you might not want to ask your teacher certain questions"

"The drop-in contraception service is a great idea. I would love to be able to get these services in my school, or help the people in my school know where to go if they need contraception"

Guidance

Glen said: "It's so important that schools link to clinics – even if young people know they're entitled to get support through clinics, they might not know where to go. It's also important there is real continuity in teaching, so that knowledge builds up so by the time young people are ready, they have all the skills they need to have healthy relationships. All schools need to allow time for relationships and sex education in the curriculum and hopefully the guidance will make sure that lessons are comprehensive."

"As we are a youth service, we focus on the voice of the young person and their feedback shapes our delivery more than any other feedback. Our sessions are delivered by people with vast experience in youth work – engaging young people is their main skill, and they've had supplementary training specifically on sexual health issues. Because the same people deliver lessons across Bracknell Forest's schools, it also means that youth workers get to build a relationship with young people. There is continuity; the person you know from year six comes in and delivers lessons throughout secondary school." Glen Wiseman, youth worker, Bracknell Forest Council

BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

Creating a curriculum that builds on knowledge: [Park High School, Stanmore](#)

Park High School is a coeducational academy based in Stanmore, North West London. Head of PSHE Naomi Barker provides an RSE programme taught once a week through PSHE lessons. Lessons are based on information from a wide range of reputable sources, including Public Health England, the Sex Education Forum, Childline, Stonewall, the NHS and PSHE Association. Park High School also works closely with local charities to provide one-to-one and small group sessions, as well as supplementary assemblies for whole year groups.

The level of knowledge that pupils arrive with in year seven is variable. Park High works with local feeder primary schools to audit provision up to secondary age, ensuring the RSE meets students' needs by building on their existing knowledge. Naomi also uses local authority and Public Health England data on local health issues.

The curriculum is thematic but cyclical, which means that topics are revisited but tailored for maturity as pupils progress through Park High. For example, in year seven lessons look at the qualities that make a good friend, and by year nine pupils look at what this means in terms of romantic relationships.

Students, parents and teachers are fully involved in monitoring the success of Park High's programme. Naomi set up a PSHE advisory body and students can apply for membership to guide the PSHE team on relevant topics. For example, young people raised instances of homophobic or transphobic bullying, which led to the creation of the school's PRIDE youth network. Whilst teaching is done by non-specialists, extensive training is available to support teachers in the delivery of lessons so that they are able to create a safe, secure environment for learning.

Young people's views

FPA and Brook's young volunteers loved the fact that topic in the curriculum are constantly revisited.

"It's good that this case study mentions training for staff – teachers need to know how to deliver RSE and the 'holistic' curriculum is good. I'm glad to see it including health and mental health and it covers a range of other topics." they said.

"It's great that it is LGBT+ inclusive and mentions abortion, which is something you normally only get taught about in RE"

"There's a good variety of topics and training [for teachers]. The issues are integrated into all subjects. I just worry that it starts too late (at 12), but that's because it's a secondary school – I like that they check what the pupils learn at primary and help them catch-up if they need to."

Guidance

On the new guidance, Naomi said: "There is a real need for new guidance, because we're still working with the last edition from 2000, although we do also use the supplementary guidance from the PSHE Association and Brook. As a bare minimum, we need to make sure that issues like consent and abortion are covered by non-biased staff, so that schools provide a full education that equips young people for later life."

"Young people are exposed to lots of external influences, from their friends and the media and they need to develop critical skills. If we don't provide sound PSHE, then we're failing them as adults."

Naomi Barker, PSHE lead, Park High School

BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

Analysing gender stereotypes and confronting harassment: [Solihull School](#)

Solihull School is a coeducational independent school situated near the centre of Solihull, in the West Midlands. Assistant Head of PSHE Daniele Harford has developed a specific programme designed for years 12 and 13, to help young people challenge norms and assumptions underpinning ideas about gender, as part of a wider PSHE curriculum that runs from year seven.

The programme, which includes three teacher-led sessions, begins with young people writing every gendered word they can think of on the board. The class then discusses the assumptions that underpin these words, for example – why do lots of words that attack men suggest that they are feminine or gay, and why do the words that attack women focus on their sexuality? This then leads into lessons about images of men and women in the media (including pornography) and a final session on consent. Young people look at a range of case studies and talk about how power dynamics play out in relationships, what consent looks like and the law around sexual relationships.

The sessions allow young people of all genders to understand how stereotypes can impact on behaviour, and give young people the tools they need for self-reflection. Pupil and parent feedback is encouraged and testimonials show that the sessions are really useful for young people.

Young people's views

FPA and Brook's young volunteers selected Solihull School because of the focus on gender equality and fostering the type of attitudes that support young people to have equal relationships in later life.

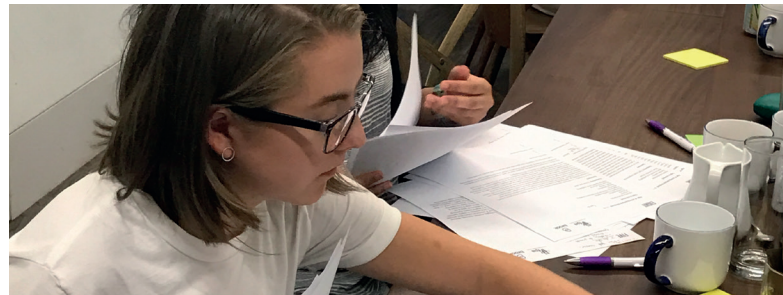
"I like that it talks about gender stereotypes, but I think you need to talk about more topics from an earlier age"

"It's a good size group [15 – 20 students] and I like the debate and discussion, as well as the fact that it aims to be honest to young people."

"This a programme for my age (17) and I like it – we should be encouraged to debate gender more"

Guidance

When talking about upcoming guidance, Daniele agreed with our young volunteers; trained teachers are really important.



"I don't think we have enough conversations about how gender plays into experiences. And I don't think we have open conversations on what consent looks like in a practical way. It is really important that any guidance references the need for fully trained teachers. Universities are being effective in facilitating consent workshops, and we need to do this from an earlier age."

Daniele Harford, PSHE lead, Solihull School

BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

Lessons on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) for young people with learning disabilities: [St Philips School, Kingston](#)

St Philip's School is a special educational needs school for young people aged 11-19 years. All students have Statements or Education and Health Care Plans for moderate learning difficulties. Many students have additional needs such as mild to moderate Autistic Spectrum Disorders, language impairment or emotional issues; a few have sensory or medical needs.

The majority of students come from mainstream Primary Schools where they have been supported one-to-one by an adult, mostly on a full-time basis. The adult to student ratio at St Philip's makes this unnecessary, as classes are between eight-10 students.

Each year at St Philips students receive weekly PSHE lessons, supplemented with enhanced small group study, to ensure they get all the information they need.

"Female Genital Mutilation is such a complex issue that is often missed out in the PSHE curriculum. It requires well-thought out planning and creating of resources that allow this complicated yet vital topic to be accessible to our students. It has been a pleasure to be part of delivering such as successful lesson where we have used videos, visuals and activities to help them learn about it."

Rachel Rebello, PSHE specialist, St Philips School, Kingston

Subjects include pornography, consent and sexting, using specialised resources from organisations including the NSPCC's Pants Rule information, FPA's My Body My Rules leaflet and videos available on TrueTube.

Once or twice a year all pupils will also get a lesson on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). There are around six-10 pupils per lesson and it is a relaxed discussion session rather than 'taught from the front'. Although some children are more at risk of FGM they are not singled out and staff are vigilant to make sure that they are aware of any warning signs.

St Philips takes a consistent approach to ensure that pupils are kept as safe as possible. Training for staff is key so that they are informed and comfortable when delivering lessons.

Young people's views

Brook and FPA's young volunteers liked the fact that this difficult topic was taught in small groups, and that young people were really engaged.

"This programme tackles FGM, a subject that is often missed from RSE. It's good that the children who might be at risk aren't singled out and that everyone in the school learns about what it is"

"It's good that the lessons are relaxed and let children ask questions. I like that it is in small groups and discussion-led"

Guidance

Rachel Rebello, PSHE specialist said, "it is really important that LGBT+ inclusivity is referenced in any guidance, because young people of all sexualities deserve to learn about sex and relationships. It's also key that there are resources available for young people with learning disabilities or additional needs and training must be available to staff"

BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

Preparing primary school pupils for puberty: SARAHPSHE Schools, Cornwall

Trained nurse Sarah Le Vien offers a unique series of lessons to primary schools in Cornwall, using dolls to illustrate the changes that bodies go through during puberty. The spiral programme of work begins in reception, starting with lessons about at the importance of keeping ourselves clean. Lessons in years four, five and six about changing bodies and adolescence. All lessons are modelled to fit each school's curriculum.

The dolls offer a unique way of illustrating how internal organs connect to your body. A male and female doll come with a suitcase packed with items connected to puberty, including facial hair and razor equipment for males to groom and breasts for females. Lessons help children to understand there is no such thing as 'normal'.

The dolls are also used to talk about issues such as safe touch, verbal and non-verbal consent and about gender identity, opening up conversations about how certain bodies do not necessarily mean that a person is a certain gender. Sarah's background as a nurse also means that she has a broad base of medical knowledge and can answer a lot of the questions young people have about bodies.

Young people are involved in the evaluation of lessons and parents are supported to help their children's learning through a local FPA Speakeasy course.

Young people's views

Young volunteers were impressed with the age-appropriate messages, interactive classes and emphasis on evidence-based information within Sarah's lessons.

"Using dolls to cover puberty is a good way for this to be interactive and shows how the outside links up to the inside. Also covering hygiene is good, because I think that gets missed off a lot and people don't know how to take care of themselves once you reach puberty"

"Non-verbal consent and verbal consent are both discussed and that's important, because sometimes it's all about saying 'no', which means that some people might think that 'oh well, as long as they don't say no it's OK'"

"Dolls make things more fun for young children and you remember more from fun lessons than ones that are too serious"

Guidance

Speaking about the Department for Education's upcoming guidance, Sarah said: "Although at primary school, 'Relationships Education' is going to be statutory, it is really important that lessons about puberty stay in the curriculum, because it needs to be normalised for young people before it happens."



BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

RSE for young people with profound learning and physical disabilities:

Oak Field School, Nottingham

Oak Field School in Nottingham is an all-age special educational needs school for pupils with severe and profound learning and physical disabilities, and is a previous winner of the Pamela Sheridan Award for high quality relationships and sex education. Headteacher David Stewart OBE DL is passionate that young people with learning disabilities get the same opportunities as their peers, which means that they should never be excluded from RSE and resources should be adapted to address their specific needs. All pupils have regular RSE lessons and each Key Stage has an RSE champion to ensure the curriculum is followed.

"As a member of the Monitoring group over the past 30 years, it has been a privilege to have been able to support the school in its pioneering work on Sex and Relationships education. This is a challenging area of schools and teachers to deal with, but one that is vital for the development and wellbeing of all young people, including those with the most significant learning difficulties. Through the development of suitable materials and appropriate teaching strategies, and through regular observation in classrooms, the Monitoring Group has been able to give support and encouragement to teachers, and reassurance to parents that the work is being carried with skill and sensitivity".

Sue Leyden, member of Oak Field's Sex and Relationship Monitoring group

In David's 32 years leading on RSE at the school, there has only been one instance of a parent withdrawing their child. Parents are supported through regular updates on issues they may not be fully aware of, including social media and online safety. Set up in 1985, the school also operates a Sex and Relationship Monitoring group to produce resources, provide workshops for parents and work with staff to share experiences so that sessions are delivered confidently.

Young people's views

FPA and Brook young volunteers were impressed by the inclusive nature of Oak Field's inclusive approach.

"I like that it is inclusive of people with disabilities and that their feedback is taken into account. It's also good that they talk to parents to make sure they understand what's being taught"

"I like that it's an ongoing programme and isn't limited to just a single session, so you can cover many topics"

Students at Oak Field said that they liked the lessons because it helps them to understand the things that they worry about:

"I like learning about interesting stuff that will help me when I'm older like what you can do in public and in private."

"I enjoy talking to other women about things that I worry about...women's group is my favourite lesson."

Guidance

David says: "Inappropriate behaviours need to be tackled early, to protect young people with disabilities. If we can start early, it lays the foundations for later on in life, which is why primary school education is so important. Involving young people with disabilities is essential, to make sure that all young people are empowered by their RSE"

BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

Age-appropriate lessons in primary school: BigTalk Education

Founded in North Lincolnshire, BigTalk Education now delivers lessons to over 120 schools across the country, including 86 primary schools. BigTalk's team of specialist facilitators train teachers and parents, and the programme includes ongoing evaluation which helps facilitators to adapt the programme in the future.

All of the specially designed resources BigTalk Education uses are age-appropriate and autism friendly, aiming to increase children's knowledge and confidence and keep them protected from abuse. The programme in primary starts at reception, and uses child-friendly resources to help children to identify happy situations and those that may be risky. This helps them to understand who they can talk to if they're worried and importantly gives them the vocabulary. In year four lessons cover family relationships (including different types of families, with same sex parents and foster parents), gender identity, coping with emotions, puberty changes and an age-appropriate introduction to reproduction.

In year five and six, children build on this learning, and an 'Ask it Basket' session is used, giving young people the opportunity to have their anonymous questions answered by a trained professional. Because it is delivered year on year the subject becomes normalised for both children and their parents, who are also learning how to handle conversations. This approach lays sound foundations for the more complex issues that are introduced in the secondary school RSE curriculum.

Young people's views

FPA's young volunteers liked the whole-school approach, and that BigTalk encourage and support schools to start teaching from primary.

"It's good that there are resources for people with additional needs and it's aimed at primary school"

"It's good that there is a session for school staff and parents, so that everyone understands what RSE for primary school is. Sometimes I think that adults are worried because they think it'll be teaching the wrong things too early but this example is right for children"

Guidance

Lynnette Smith, Founder of BigTalk said: "Adults tend to think about sex in an adult way, but RSE for primary school is done in an age-appropriate way for primary school, and this needs to be reflected in the guidance. By being LGBT+ inclusive from reception, children will learn to challenge attitudes at older ages and feel confident enough to be themselves.

"Our facilitators are experiencing increasing numbers of disclosures from children about pornography. We need to make sure that technology is addressed through high quality, comprehensive education so that children understand what they're seeing and know where to get help from if they need it"



BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

Teaching RSE enhanced by mindfulness and emotional literacy: [Jigsaw PSHE](#)

Jigsaw brings together Personal, Social, Health and Economic education, emotional literacy, social skills and spiritual development in an innovative lesson-a-week programme.

Designed as a whole school approach, Jigsaw PSHE provides a comprehensive scheme of learning for Reception to year six, with the secondary programme (years seven-11) being trialled ready for launch in 2018.

Jigsaw provides well-structured, progressive lesson plans with all the teaching resources included. The programmes are underpinned by mindfulness philosophy and practice so that young people have the self-esteem, confidence and skills they need to have positive healthy relationships and to speak up if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Sensitive issues are managed using Jigsaw Friends (jigsaw-shaped soft toys) who distance the learning safely for children.

There are many examples of Jigsaw's impact across the nearly 2,000 primary schools currently using it. The first three schools to use Jigsaw (Wimborne First and Kingsleigh Junior in Bournemouth and Crabtree Infants in Harpenden) successfully used Jigsaw PSHE to provide the whole school ethos, with RSE embedded into the curriculum.

The Jigsaw Primary Programme is also supported by the Jigsaw Families Programme, which trains and supports schools to work with parents and carers.

Young people's views

Young volunteers at FPA and Brook liked the fact that the curriculum encouraged consistent lessons that build on what children have already learned:

"I like the fact that the programme starts at the right age – primary. It builds on what young people know and the focus on mindfulness and emotional literacy is great. It's great that it is LGBT+ inclusive and mentions abortion, which is something you normally only get taught about in RE"

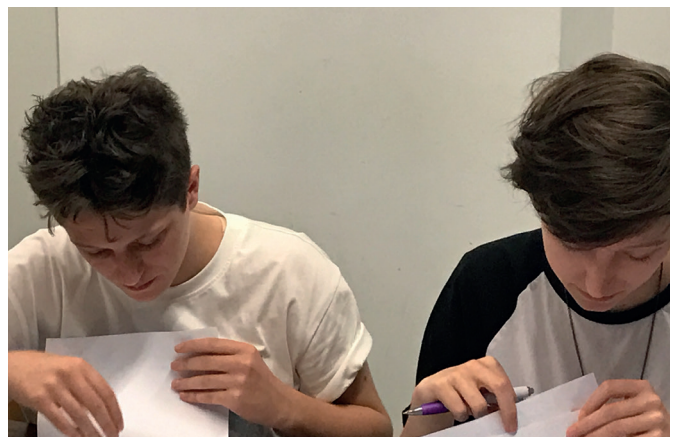
"It's good that they work with parents and carers so that they understand why RSE is good for us."

"The spiral [curriculum] is good. I couldn't write an essay without knowing how to spell – RSE needs to start with the basics too."

"Speaking to parents and carers means that adults get the chance for an education too"

Guidance

Jayne Wright, London and Eastern Region Consultant said: "Good RSE needs to have a positive, healthy way to balance messages about risk to help young people understand who they are and how valuable they are, and this needs to underpin everything. The guidance needs to have a strong emphasis on mental health and personal development, with signposting to national support agencies and local services. Jigsaw embodies this approach throughout its spiral curriculum."



BEST PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

Relationships, resilience and risk: [Spectrum CIC](#) sexual health education in Wakefield and Barnsley

Spectrum Community Health CIC is a social enterprise that delivers a range of community and offender healthcare services on behalf of the NHS, Local Authority Public Health services and other partners. This includes the delivery of a bespoke course provided to high schools across Wakefield and Barnsley. The rolling programme gives young people a chance to reflect and consolidate learning as the year goes on.

Developed by Andi Cope, the lessons build on feedback from pupils, teachers and families. The RSE programme covers contraception and sexual health, as well as relationships, risk, and substance misuse. In 2015-16, 63% of 4,046 Wakefield students who received lessons from Spectrum said that they 'knew loads' about sex and relationships, but 92% could not name a single service they could visit in order to get help with their sexual health. Additionally they couldn't name common methods of birth control or identify basic information about STIs and HIV. Following Spectrum lessons 96% could correctly answer these questions and point to local support services. Spectrum works closely with local partners including the Terrence Higgins Trust and Yorkshire MESMAC to share information and improve services.

Young people's views

FPA and Brook young volunteers liked the fact that young people are consulted and their feedback incorporated into Spectrum's RSE:

"It's good that young people are central to the design of this programme. It encourages discussion"

Guidance

Andi said: "I back the DfE Policy Statement which outlines clear themes for RSE and updated statutory guidance for teaching RSE which focuses on healthy and unhealthy relationships and recognising behaviours of both. I also agree that consent, respect, tolerance, boundaries, sexual health and sexuality should be key themes as these are topics that I am regularly asked questions about and discuss with young people as things they are concerned about and want more information on.

"It would really be a step forward if it also tackled issues including consent, online safety, pornography and self-esteem, through a 'sex positive' approach."

"Young people are co-authors of what we cover and how we cover it, and this gives the students real ownership of and investment in the programme. Young people want to hear from RSE specialists but they also value the opportunity to ask questions and engage in discussions in an informal and non-judgemental setting. Over the past 10 years, we have delivered approximately 8000 lessons and no two lessons are entirely the same because our delivery involves peer-led activities, feedback and questions. Every lesson has a clear set of outcomes and objectives, and the relative flexibility of delivery is always guided by the ultimate goal of moving students towards meeting these. Regular evaluation of the programme tells us that we are being successful in improving the understanding and knowledge of relationships and sexual health in our students."

Andi Cope, Relationships and Sex Education Lead, Spectrum

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Brook and FPA would like to thank the Sex Education Forum, especially Lucy Emmerson, Lisa Hallgarten, and Advisory Group member Alice Hoyle, for their support with this report.

The report was fully funded by [DO...](#), a Durex-funded programme developed by RSE experts (including Brook and FPA), which provides free, tailored PSHE Association-accredited materials to schools.

All of the case studies within this report align with DO...’s principles of high quality RSE, and independent experts on DO...’s steering committee (including the RSE Hub’s Alice Hoyle) have contributed.

Durex has not had editorial input or control over the contents of this report. Brook and FPA have retained complete editorial control.



committed to RSE in schools



GOING BEYOND BIOLOGY

The Relationships
and Sex Education
that young people
want and need

