



STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

THURSDAY, 29 FEBRUARY 2024

**2.00PM – 4.00PM PRIORY, ROOM 2F CENTRE BLOCK, COUNTY HALL, LEWES /
MICROSOFT TEAMS**

MEMBERSHIP

Cllr Roy Galley
Cllr Colin Belsey
Cllr Trevor Webb
Cllr Abul Azad
Cllr Steve Murphy
Peter White

Rosemary Roberts
Dr Norman Williamson
Pameka Hartog
Elizabeth Coleman
Jon Gilbert

Father David Hill
Laura Cooper
Helen Key
Kirsty Eydmann
Samantha Keddle

A G E N D A

Annual General Meeting

1. Declaration of conflicts of Interests
2. Welcome & apologies
3. SACRE Annual Report (*Pages 3 - 12*)
4. Budget update (*Pages 13 - 14*)
5. Development Plan (*Pages 15 - 22*)

Business Meeting

6. Minutes of meeting 17 November 2023 & Matters Arising (*Pages 23 - 26*)
7. Update on Network Meetings
 - Secondary – Sam Keddle
 - Primary – Claire Rivers
 - Special Schools – Kirsty Eydmann
8. Programme of school visits
9. GCSE Full course entries
10. Updates by Claire Ramalli (*Pages 27 - 58*)
 - Ramadan Guidance for schools
 - National Content Standard (draft report proposed by REC)
 - NASACRE Committee nominations
11. Updates by Barry Blakelock (*Pages 59 - 198*)
 - Progress report on Collective Worship
 - NASACRE – Ofsted report
 - Review Code of Conduct

12. Self-evaluation toolkit – Focus on Section 5 (*Pages 199 - 238*)
13. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (Standing Item)
14. Any other business

Next meeting: Tuesday 18 June 2024 at 2.00pm.

PHILIP BAKER
Assistant Chief Executive
County Hall, St Anne's Crescent
LEWES BN7 1UE

21 February 2024

Contact Julie Stevens, Support Officer to Directors and Members,
01273 336672
Email: Julie.Stevens@eastsussex.gov.uk

East Sussex SACRE

Annual Report 2022-23

February 2024



East Sussex
County Council



Annual Report 2022-23

Table of Contents

WORDS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON	3
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION	4
SECTION 2: STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – LOCAL AGREED SYLLABUS	4
SECTION 3: STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – COLLECTIVE WORSHIP	6
SECTION 4: LINKS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS	6
SECTION 5: OTHER AREAS OF SACRE INVOLVEMENT	7
SECTION 6: SACRE ARRANGEMENTS	7
SECTION 7: ADVICE TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	9

Words from the Chairperson

Religious Education has never been more relevant to the children and young people who are educated in our county. Barely a day goes by when religion, faith or belief are not mentioned in the news. Not only does Religious Education give us an understanding of the world's major religions but also an insight into how they influence individuals, families, communities, and cultures. The subject enables pupils to make sense of a constantly changing world whilst affirming their own personal identity and promoting responsible citizenship.

It is a genuine pleasure to be part of East Sussex SACRE. Through our work we get to see the energy and enthusiasm of the great many adults, teachers, leaders, and governors engaged in the delivery of Religious Education and Collective Worship. Both do important work encouraging young people to value themselves and the communities in which they live. So, on behalf of SACRE, thank you for all that you do to provide a rich and rewarding educational experience.

The East Sussex Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, entitled 'Faith and Belief in the 21st Century', continues to engage and excite whether that be in the classroom or through the wide range of training opportunities on offer to professionals. It is this high-level of support that continues to empower teachers to plan a thoughtful curriculum that is clear about expected knowledge, skills, and abilities.

I would also like to thank all those involved with East Sussex SACRE whether a volunteer, professional or public servant. It is through your hard work and dedication that we are improving the quality of Religious Education in our county.

As a record of our work over this past year, I commend this report to you.

Roy Galley

Chairperson of East Sussex SACRE

Section 1: Introduction

This annual report is prepared by East Sussex's Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). It provides a picture of the support given for Religious Education and Collective Worship during 2022-23. SACRE also provides advice to the Local Authority on matters relating to Religious Education and Collective Worship. This report is a public document sent to the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE) and the Department for Education (DFE).

For more information, contact the Clerk to SACRE: julie.stevens@eastsussex.gov.uk

This academic year has been about strengthening what we do: not only have we focused on supporting those responsible for delivery of the new Agreed Syllabus, but we have also made time and space to listen to the voices of those involved in Religious Education across the county. Our primary and secondary subject networks are established and remain an important part of the offer to schools alongside a wealth of resources to make teaching a rich and rewarding experience. As a result, we too are learning more about what is happening in schools and the impact of this vital subject.

Meetings are well-attended by members who are steadfast in their commitment to the development of high-quality Religious Education for all. Council members are knowledgeable about the area they serve as well as the latest issues in the field. Typically, discussions have focused on effective implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus, the importance of Collective Worship and rigorous self-evaluation of our own work. We have taken the time to reflect on our own policies and practices to make sure they are up-to-date and fit for purpose. This has meant meetings are purposeful and the quality of debate satisfying.

Section 2: Statutory Responsibilities – Local Agreed Syllabus

The East Sussex Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, 'Faith and Belief in the 21st Century', is the statutory curriculum for all maintained schools in the county and was first taught from September 2022. It was developed with external advice from RE Today in consultation with school and subject leaders, children, young people, and their families. The curriculum also covers a second resource, 'Understanding Christianity', which is already taught by most of our diocesan schools. This has ensured the syllabus has broad appeal.

The Agreed Syllabus is under licence for five years for all schools in East Sussex. Costs have been met by SACRE and include a programme of professional development for teachers. We are pleased to see the syllabus has also been adopted by several single-academies and smaller multi-academy trusts in the county.

'Faith and Belief in the 21st Century' is up to date and relevant. It focuses on the world's major religions whilst allowing for wider world views and the exploration of thematic, moral, and ethical questions. Teaching, learning and assessment centres on three strands: making sense of beliefs; understanding the impact; and making connections. New schemes of work cover Key Stages 1 to 3 whilst a core

programme of study for Key Stage 4 has been developed by Claire Ramalli, our Specialist RE Advisor, and several local teachers with support from RE Today.

This is the first year of a three-year training programme delivered by RE Today through our Subject Networks. These meetings have maintained their popularity and become an essential part of our offer for specialist or non-specialist teachers alike. Claire Rivers, our Primary Lead, and Sam Keddie, our Secondary Lead, bring considerable expertise to the networks, making them hugely worthwhile. Furthermore, Executive Principal, Kirsty Eydmann shares her experience of adapting the syllabus to meet the needs of her pupils with other professionals working in similar settings. Combined, these meetings provide a high level of support to our colleagues working in schools and allow for ongoing feedback into the continued development of the syllabus and our training offer.

Over the course of the year, Subject Network Meetings have benefited from sessions being led by national experts such as Dr Kate Christopher exploring Islam and Worldviews; Stephen Pett discussing the teaching of Hinduism; and Katie Harrison sharing the benefit of her experience on delivery of Collective Worship. In addition to these regular twilight meetings, an annual conference is held for each phase. This year, the primary conference was held online and led by Lat Blaylock whilst the secondary conference was face-to-face, hosted by Chailey School with 14 schools and SACRE represented.

In a recent survey of teachers attending Primary Subject Network Meetings, all respondents indicated they had engaged with and implemented the new Agreed Syllabus. 92% of respondents were positive about the ease at which the new Agreed Syllabus had been incorporated into their school's long-term planning. 88% of respondents were positive about how they had found implementation of scheme's activities and assessments. They said that pupils had found the materials more challenging yet more engaging than those previously used. Whilst teachers appreciated the quality of the complementary resource 'Understanding Christianity' some also reported that it added an additional layer of complexity.

The picture was similar at secondary with the vast majority of respondents being positive about the syllabus. Whilst teachers valued the materials and support on offer it has been more challenging to engage secondary schools and teachers despite a similar offer that comprises twilight sessions, an annual conference and bespoke support. Whilst secondary respondents enjoy online delivery, they also value face-to-face engagement.

The academic year has seen development of protocols for 'Good Practice Visits' which enable Members to see for themselves the excellent work that goes on in schools and to talk first-hand to those responsible for delivery of the Agreed Syllabus. Good Practice Visits are intended to support universal adoption of the Agreed Syllabus in all maintained schools and more widely; identify expertise and facilitate school-to-school support through the Subject Network Meetings; and recognise and celebrate good practice in delivery of the new Agreed Syllabus.

By making visits, Members can see practice across the county, positively re-enforce the work undertaken by schools and be reassured by network leaders of the support

being offered. Moreover, visits allow Members to further build their own knowledge and skills as well as deepen their understanding of the quality of religious education. So far this year, visits have been made to Willingdon Primary School and Ratton School - secondary academy in Eastbourne. Upcoming visits include Blackboys Church of England Primary School and Grovelands Community Primary School, Hailsham. Even from the limited number of visits so far, it is clear schools are engaging with the new Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and are committed to the developing of a thoughtfully designed curriculum.

Helpfully, the local authority has provided SACRE with entry and attainment data. Members understand outcomes have been unevenly impacted by the pandemic. Having said that, comparing entries for 2018, 2019 and 2022, it is evident that take-up of GCSE Religious Studies (Full Course) has fallen below national average. Conversely, attainment compares favourably being above national average for 9-4 and 9-5. Going forward, East Sussex SACRE will promote an increase in entries to the subject whilst aiming to maintain outcomes above the national average.

Section 3: Statutory Responsibilities – Collective Worship

It is the responsibility of SACRE to monitor schools' statutory responsibility to hold Collective Worship. Whilst there are many schools across the county that offer impactful Collective Worship, there is also some variation in the system. Therefore, this aspect of our work remains a priority and an area we are keen to better understand through our good practice visits. To further support this, in June 2023, Katie Harrison from the Oak National Academy ran a session through the Primary Subject Network on inclusive, invitational, and inspiring practice.

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. Guidance on good practice and protocols for withdrawal are made available to schools; the Specialist RE Advisor can also offer further support if needed. SACRE recognises parents' legal right to withdraw but would like to see all children and young people have access to rich and stimulating Collective Worship.

No complaints were made to SACRE during the year about Collective Worship.

There were no requests for a determination to vary statutory requirements. SACRE's Determinations Policy was updated in line with NASACRE guidance and approved in March 2023. The next date for review is March 2025.

Section 4: Links with other organisations

East Sussex SACRE continues to stay connected with national events and views. Our Chairperson, Roy Galley, is a former member of the NASACRE Executive and continues to play an active role in their discussions. He also maintains helpful links with other national organisations such as the Religious Education Council (REC). Work on the new Agreed Syllabus also renewed our co-operation with the Diocese and Archdiocese.

SACRE Members keep up to date through NASACRE termly briefings and regular attendance to online training. The Chairperson also reports on national, regional,

and local issues. Training accessed this year by Members includes: 'Applying for and gaining a Westhill/NASACRE Award'; 'SACREs – A way forward?'; 'How to effectively use pupil and teacher voice in your SACRE'; 'What's happening to Collective Worship beyond determinations?'; and the enduring 'So, you've joined your local SACRE...'

Our Specialist RE Adviser continues to attend Southeast Central Regional SACRE meetings, engages with good practice from around the region and reports back to the Standing Advisory Council. She is also an executive member of AREIAC and keeps up to date with national reports and research linked to Religion and Worldviews. Through the RE Hub for the Southeast area, she has begun to participate in their work and become more aware of the events they promote.

SACRE continues to work closely with RE Today on implementation of the Agreed Syllabus. We also draw on resources from the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) – the subject's professional association, dedicated to supporting and empowering professionals in the field of Religious Education.

Section 5: Other areas of SACRE involvement

East Sussex SACRE promoted several opportunities across the county including the 'Jewish Living Exhibition' which ran in Brighton for several weeks as well as a visit to the Synagogue in Hove which was taken up by several teachers.

Given our focus on the development of the new Agreed Syllabus, there was no additional training offered to governors this year however we will be restarting this programme with a session on Collective Worship next year.

Our Chairperson engaged with schools through the 'Virtual Schoolbag' (VSB), writing to thank them for their work on making the new Agreed Syllabus such a success and later in the year congratulating them on their GCSE outcomes for Religious Studies.

Section 6: SACRE Arrangements

There were three meetings of SACRE during 2023, held in a hybrid format, allowing in-person or online attendance which enabled all our meetings to be quorate.

Meetings were held:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| • 17 th November 2022 | Attendance: 55% |
| • 2 nd March 2023 | Attendance: 70% |
| • 15 th June 2023 | Attendance: 87% |

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) was also held on 2nd March 2023. Roy Galley was reappointed Chairperson and Peter White appointed Vice Chairperson. All meetings are open to the public and minutes are available online. Two Members stepped down over the course of the year.

Representatives of the Diocese of Chichester and the Archdiocese of Arundel regularly attend meetings. We continue to have fair representation across faiths and

from those of no faith. Representatives include Church of England, Muslim, long-serving Unitarian, Bahai and Jewish Members. Although we are very aware of the importance of expanding our membership to reflect the diversity of faith and belief in the county, recruiting new members remains a considerable challenge. In a similar way, the membership reflects the wide range of schools in the county and includes primary, secondary, diocesan, maintained, academies, and special schools.

An undoubted highlight of each meeting is the opportunity for members to share their belief through a standing item called 'My World, My Faith'. This allows Members to develop a deeper and more personal understanding of faith and belief in the communities they serve. Visiting speakers have included Oliver Stevens, Lead Elder from the King's Church in Eastbourne, who gave an overview of his work and offered to facilitate school visits to the Church. Feedback from the Primary and Secondary Subject Network Meetings as well as Special Schools has also taken on increased importance.

This was the final year of our three-year development plan. Over the lifespan of the plan considerable progress has been made in supporting the quality of RE teaching and learning in all schools alongside a review of the Agreed Syllabus. SACRE has also taken significant steps to improve the effectiveness of our own work through rigorous self-evaluation and robust review of policies, procedures, and protocols.

The next iteration of the development plan is tightly aligned to our self-evaluation and whilst we have actions in each of the five sections, SACRE has identified the 'standards and quality of provision of Religious Education', 'Collective Worship' and 'contribution to promoting cohesion across the community' as main priorities going into the next cycle.

Underpinning this growth will be more good practice visits to schools, continuing support for the Subject Network Meetings and development of SACRE's page on the Local Authority's website through which we aim to provide authoritative and trustworthy resources to schools. Moreover, we will utilise the expertise at our disposal to broaden our training offer and improve the support we provide for the delivery of Collective Worship. Finally, we will continue to encourage visits to SACRE from a diverse range of faith groups from across the county, so they better understand our work and any potential role for them.

Each meeting has a budget update and closes with consideration of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. New role descriptors and a five-year forward plan were considered and adopted in June 2023. All other documents are on a two-year review cycle to ensure they support Members as they discharge their statutory duties.

SACRE continued to receive a budget of £15,000. This has enabled us to maximise our role by securing advice from our Specialist RE Advisor. It has also paid the licence fees for the new Agreed Syllabus and the accompanying support package from RE Today. Furthermore, our funding supports the continued growth of the Subject Network Meetings as well as engagement with NASACRE including attendance to their annual conference. SACRE is supported by Children's Services through provision of a Representative and an experienced Clerk.

Although funding for the next two years has been reduced to £10,000, because the license fees for the new Agreed Syllabus have now been paid, it allows us to maintain all our current activities. This amount is an increase to the budget typically received prior to SACRE's review of the Agreed Syllabus. Having said that, to realise our ambition for an annual student conference, we will seek to gain additional funding from external sources such as professional organisations and charities.

Section 7: Advice to the Local authority

SACRE is legally obliged to produce an Annual Report and it is best practice for this to be considered by the County Council. The following advice is given by SACRE to the Local Authority:

- Support SACRE in understanding how the local authority promotes community cohesion and how we can diversify representation of Members to better reflect the wide range of faith and belief across the county.
- Help strengthen the evaluation of standards and quality of provision for Religious Education in schools by working in partnership with SACRE, providing data when appropriate, and harnessing the potential of the school-led system.

This page is intentionally left blank

Report to:	East Sussex SACRE
Date of meeting:	29 February 2024
By:	Barry Blakelock ESCC Children's Service Representative bblakelock@ryecollege.co.uk
Title:	SACRE Budget Update
Purpose:	To update East Sussex SACRE on the current budget position

Recommendations:

- NOTE the budget spend for the current financial year.
- NOTE the budget projection for the next financial year.

1. Budget 2023/24 – Updated February 2024

The allocation from Children's Services for the work of SACRE has been established at **£10,000** for 23/24 and 24/25 to reflect the implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus.

Area of work	Allocation	Spent
Specialist RE Advisor – 7 days (Claire Ramalli)	£2,800	£1,800
SLE Primary Network – 3 days (Claire Rivers)	£1050	£0
SLE Secondary Network – 3 days (Sam Keddle)	£1050	£0
RE Today CPD Package – Year 2 Reduced rate for 3 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termly webinars (3 x Secondary, 3 x Primary) • Annual conference (1 x Secondary, 1 x Primary) 	£4,842	£4,842
NASACRE Subscription fee	£155	£155
NASACRE conference fess	£60	£0
Sundries	£25	£0
TOTAL	£9,982	£6,797
BALANCE	£18	£3,203

For 2023/24, we have agreed the number of days allocated to both the Specialist RE Advisor and the Primary and Secondary Network Leads. The Specialist RE Advisor is allocated 7 days per year and the Primary and Secondary Network Leads allocated 3 days per year – one day for each termly network meeting they host.

With modest assumptions in other areas, we have a contingency of **£18**.

Pupil Conference – AQUINAS Church of England Education Trust will support this year's pupil conference with a contribution of **£500**.

2. Budget 2024/25 – Projection

The allocation from Children's Services for the work of SACRE is **£10,000**.

Area of work	Allocation	Spent
Specialist RE Advisor – 7 days (Claire Ramalli)	£2,800	£0
SLE Primary Network – 3 days (Claire Rivers)	£1050	£0
SLE Secondary Network – 3 days (Sam Keddie)	£1050	£0
RE Today CPD Package – Year 3 Reduced rate for 3 years <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Termly webinars (3 x Secondary, 3 x Primary)• Annual conference (1 x Secondary, 1 x Primary)	£4,842	£0
NASACRE Subscription fee	£170	£0
NASACRE conference fess	£70	£0
Sundries	£0	£0
TOTAL	£9,982	£0
BALANCE	£18	£10,000

For 2024/25, we have maintained the number of days both the Specialist RE Advisor and the Primary and Secondary Network Leads are allocated each year.

With a commitment to the third (and final) year of CPD support from RE Today and modest assumptions in other areas, we have a surplus of **£18**.

East Sussex SACRE
Development Plan to Summer 2026
June 2023 (Updated February 2024)



Section 1	Management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders				
	How far does the SACRE's partnership with the LA enable it to carry out its responsibilities effectively?				
	Actions	Lead	Timescale/cost	Success criteria	RAG
1A	Improve the use of local, national and subject specific grants to maximise opportunities for children and young people.	RE Advisor	Ongoing (£500 per annum)	Pupil voice activities take place on an annual basis including consideration of a conference.	
1B	Hold meetings at a variety of local places including local places of worship and schools. At least one meeting per year is held face-to-face.	Chairperson	Each Meeting	SACRE Members broaden their experience of faith and education.	
1C	Develop a clear programme of induction and ongoing training for SACRE members drawing on national (NASACRE) and local resources.	Chairperson RE Advisor	Reviewed annually	All SACRE Members are fully trained and fulfil their roles and responsibilities.	
1D	Ensure the development plan is costed, as appropriate. Systematically, review sections of the self-evaluation tool and in turn the development plan at each meeting.	Chairperson CS Rep.	Ongoing	A balanced budget is well-managed. Accurate self-evaluation is ongoing and feeds into the Development Plan.	
1E	Share detailed and well-analysed information about the quality of provision for Religious Education and Collective Worship.	Network Leads	Each meeting	SACRE Members understand the impact and consistency of provision across the county.	
1F	Strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders including NASACRE, RE Hubs, Higher Education...	RE Advisor ALL		Engagement with key stakeholders supports continuous improvement and raising of standards.	
1G	Foster strong relationships with academies through training, support and networking.	RE Advisor Network Leads	Ongoing	Universal engagement with the Agreed Syllabus.	

Section 2	Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education				
	How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, evaluate standards and the quality of provision for RE in schools? How effective are the strategies to improve standards and the quality of provision?				
	Actions	Lead	Timescale/cost	Success criteria	RAG
2A	Widen the number of SACRE members who undertake school visits. Members report to committee on their learning using the agreed format.	ALL RE Advisor Network Leads	Ongoing	Programme of visits planned and agreed. Reports evaluated to identify support needs and actions for schools and SACRE.	
	Provide support that empowers schools to deliver religious education in their context.	RE Advisor Network Leads	Annually	Schools increasingly engage with a variety of models to successfully deliver provision.	
2B	Secure an effective reporting cycle for academic outcomes and entries.	CS Rep.	Annually	SACRE Members have a full understanding of academic performance. LA shares data with SACRE in a timely way to celebrate success.	
	Review a cross section of school websites to ensure the RE curriculum is available.	ALL Clerk		All schools meeting statutory requirements.	
2C	Understanding of strengths and areas for development in quality of provision across the county leads to targeted support through networks and beacon schools.	RE Advisor Network Leads	Ongoing	Support for schools becomes increasingly bespoke and delivered school-to-school.	
2D	Further strengthen networks and ways of communication to support school engagement e.g., development of website, use of VSB, maintenance of a contacts list.	Network Leads	Ongoing	Networks provide SACRE with insight into the delivery of provision across the school-system. Examples of effective practice are shared during network meetings. Attendance record to network meetings and other training is kept and shared with SACRE.	
2E	As 1G				

Section 3	The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus				
	How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, monitor the impact and evaluate the effectiveness of the agreed syllabus in raising standards? How effectively does the ASC, in partnership with SACRE, make decisions about the use of national guidance and exemplar material in a review of the AS?				
	Actions	Lead	Timescale/cost	Success criteria	RAG
3A	Use the networks to further understand the quality of implementation, the strengths and areas for development of the syllabus. Undertake a broader mid-point review of the syllabus across all schools.	RE Advisor Network Leads	Ongoing	SACRE understands the effectiveness of the syllabus and how schools are supporting each other to improve provision. Broader review of syllabus involves wide range of stakeholders and feeds back to RE Today.	
3B	Provide schools with tools to enable them to evaluate the quality of their own curriculum and encourage sharing of strengths and areas for development. Support schools in developing a body of high-quality resources to deliver the syllabus.	RE Advisor Network Leads	Ongoing	Schools openly self-evaluate their own provision and support one another in addressing areas for development. A well-managed resource of high-quality materials is accessible to schools. Consideration is given to how best sharing of some specific resources between schools can take place.	
3C	NA				
3D	NA				
3E	NA				
3F	NA				

Section 4	Collective Worship				
	How effectively does the SACRE fulfil its responsibilities for the provision and practice of Collective Worship?				
	Actions	Lead	Timescale/cost	Success criteria	RAG
4A	Understand the challenges faced by schools in the delivery of Collective Worship through school visits, surveying and networks.	ALL RE Advisor Network Leads	Year 1 and 2	SACRE Members have engaged with a range of schools and can articulate good practice and challenges faced by schools.	
	Monitor provision of collective worship through questionnaires and school visits.		Year 2 and 3	All East Sussex schools meeting statutory requirements for Collective Worship.	
4B	Provide support and guidance for schools experiencing difficulty in delivering pupil entitlement.	ALL RE Advisor Network Leads	Year 1 and 2	Schools can readily access the necessary resources to meet expectations.	
	Broaden the training offer to include access to best quality advice on delivery of Collective Worship.		Year 2 and 3		
4C	Provide SACRE Members with further training on making Determinations as part of their ongoing training.	Chairperson RE Advisor	Year 1	SACRE Members meet requests with a judicious and well-informed appraisal leading to a sound decision communicated clearly to the school.	
	Regularly revisit the Determinations Procedure to ensure SACRE Members are familiar with the framework.	ALL	Ongoing		

Section 5	Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community				
	How effectively does SACRE, in partnership with the Local Authority and the faith communities, contribute to the promoting of cohesion across the community?				
	Actions	Lead	Timescale/cost	Success criteria	RAG
5A	<p>Develop initiatives to ensure diverse representation on the committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to different faith groups • My World, My Faith <p>Co-opt or encourage ad hoc visits from members of a diverse range of faith groups to understand the work of SACRE and their potential role.</p>	Chairperson	Ongoing	<p>Representation of diverse groups increases over time increasingly reflecting the local community.</p> <p>A wide range of different faith groups are given opportunities to attend meetings, share their work and understand the work of SACRE.</p>	
5B	<p>Draw on analysis of demographic data to understand religious character of the county e.g. Census 2021.</p> <p>Take steps to reflect those communities in the make-up of the committee.</p>	<p>RE Advisor ALL</p> <p>Chairperson ALL</p>	Regular revisiting	SACRE Members have a demonstrable understanding of the diversity of faith groups across the county and reach out to them to encourage participation.	
5C	<p>Promote community cohesion through seeking to strengthen engagement with SACRE by faith groups and those with worldviews.</p> <p>Increase SACRE's profile in the community by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing profiles and photos for the SACRE website • Attending governor forums • Regularly communicating with schools through the VSB and CZone 	<p>Chairperson RE Advisor ALL</p>	Annual updates	<p>SACRE Members can clearly articulate how fulfilment of their duties promotes community cohesion in the county.</p> <p>SACRE has a known profile in the education system.</p>	
5D	Take steps to understand how the local authority promotes community cohesion.	Chairperson ALL	Ongoing	SACRE Members are well-informed about how the local authority promotes community cohesion are their role in it.	

Outcomes and take-up 2018 – 2022

School	Cohort			GCSE Full Course Entries RE			GCSE Full Course % Attainment					
							(9-4) / A*-C	(9-5)	(9-4)	(9-5)	(9-4)	(9-5)
	2018	2019	2022	2018	2019	2022	2018	2019	2018	2019	2022	2022
England (All Schools)	583,617	604,907	645,475	213,850	224,970	221,410	71.8	60.3	72.4	61.0	70.1	60.4
England (State Funded Schools)¹	523,626	542,568	587,660	201,505	210,796	207,491	70.5	See note ¹	71.1	59.3	68.8	58.7
East Sussex	4,665	4,784	5,026	1,499	1,219	937	68.2	59.4	68.5	55.8	78.2	65.7

School	Cohort			GCSE Full Course Entries RE			GCSE Full Course % Take up		
	2018	2019	2022	2018	2019	2022	2018	2019	2022
England (All Schools)	583,617	604,907	645,475	213,850	224,970	221,410	36.6	37.2	34.3
England (State Funded Schools)	523,626	542,568	587,660	201,505	210,796	207,491	38.5	38.9	35.3
East Sussex	4,665	4,784	5,026	1,499	1,219	937	32.1	25.5	18.6

This page is intentionally left blank

East Sussex SACRE

Notes of the meeting

Date: Thursday 16 November 2023
Venue: Centre 2F / Microsoft Teams
Chairperson: Councillor Roy Galley
Clerk: Julie Stevens
SACRE members present: Cllr Roy Galley, Cllr Colin Belsey, Cllr Abul Azad, Cllr Trevor Webb, Peter White, Rosemary Roberts, Claire Rivers (CRi), Dr Norman Williamson, Pamela Hartog, Elizabeth Coleman, Jon Gilbert, Laura Cooper, Father David Hill (FDH)
Also present: Barry Blakelock (BB), Claire Ramalli (CRa), Nicola Blake (Observer)
Apologies: Cllr Steve Murphy, Sam Keddle, Kirsty Eydmann, Helen Key (HK)

Item		Action
1	Welcome/ Introductions & Apologies / Minutes of meeting 15 June 2023	
1.1	Cllr Galley welcomed everyone present at the meeting.	
1.2	Apologies were noted.	
1.3	There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.	
1.4	Minutes of last meeting were agreed as accurate. <u>Matters arising:</u> Jon Gilbert updated that SIAMS inspections are now under a new framework; two schools in East Sussex are being inspected next week - St Catherine's College and Sedlescombe. There are schools who would welcome a visit from SACRE members. ACTION: Jon Gilbert will contact Headteachers and confirm regarding visits by SACRE.	JG
2	Network meetings	
2.1	<u>Secondary - Claire Ramalli</u> Network meeting being held today at 4pm. The July session was held at Chailey and was well attended. This was the final launch for the Agreed Syllabus and was a fantastic and informative day. Thank you to Sam Keddle for organising this event. Barry gave some feedback on behalf of Sam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 14 schools attended - Good proportion of responses - A very useful day 	
2.2	Barry confirmed that he had shared the list of secondary school RE Leads with Claire and Sam.	
2.3	<u>Primary - Claire Rivers</u> There was a session held on 22 June, Dr Kate Christopher gave a very stimulating talk and has offered to hold other sessions. A Synagogue visit took place in Hove, thank you to Pamela Hartog. Those that did attend found it a magical experience. Pam has offered virtual visits. The first Network meeting of this academic year was held on 19 October. The positives and challenges of the Agreed Syllabus were discussed. Some schools are trying to do too much but the majority of schools are managing the planning. At future meetings we will focus on the elements of Understanding Christianity. Lois Burton, SLE, is working with two schools and supporting their planning in Understanding Christianity.	

	The date for the Spring conference is to be confirmed. It will be held online and we hope to have Julia Diamond Conway as the speaker.	
2.4	ACTIONS: Jon Gilbert will share Pam Hartog's email with those schools that he supports regarding the Synagogue visits.	JG
2.5	Barry Blakelock will reach out to RE Today re dates for the Spring conference.	BB
2.6	<u>Special Schools</u> No update as Kirsty Eydmann sent apologies.	
3	School Good Practice visits	
3.1	Claire Ramalli and Claire Rivers confirmed that two good practice visits had been confirmed for: Blackboys - 31 January 2024 Grovelands - 6 March 2024	
3.2	It was agreed that Cllr Galley will accompany Claire Ramalli on 31 January and Cllr Belsey will accompany Claire on 6 March.	
3.3	Claire Ramalli will link in with the RE Lead at Gildredge House and try to arrange a visit to offer them some support. It was agreed that Peter White will accompany Claire on this visit when a date has been confirmed. ACTION: Claire Ramalli to contact Gildredge House.	CRa
3.4	Willingdon have agreed to a visit and a date is to be confirmed. It was agreed that Rosemary Roberts will accompany Claire on this visit when the date has been confirmed.	
3.5	Barry Blakelock will reach out to Seahaven and Priory. ACTION: Barry to contact Seahaven and Priory schools.	BB
3.6	It was noted that Father David Hill is in regular contact with the Head of RE at ARK Hastings.	
3.7	Jon Gilbert added that he would contact the RE Lead at St Catherine's College after their SIAMS visit, to arrange a visit. ACTION: Jon to contact St Catherine's College.	JG
3.8	Claire Ramalli requested that anyone who knew of any school inspections by Ofsted to please contact Claire (via Julie). ACTION: SACRE	All
4	Progress Review on Agreed Syllabus	
4.1	Barry Blakelock referred to the paper that had been circulated prior to the meeting. The aim of this review is to reflect on the first year of the new Agreed Syllabus. We will take stock of the progress after each year.	
4.2	Numbers for the take up of the Syllabus is really reassuring. Actions going forward are: (i) Gain stronger understanding of who is attending the network meetings. (ii) Gather together reviews from the annual conference. (iii) Establish which schools have taken up the KS4 optional units.	

	<p>(iv) Get teacher voice via the networks and feed this into the SACRE annual report.</p> <p>(v) Carry out a sift of school websites to see how RE is represented on there and from this develop a toolkit for schools.</p>	
4.3	<p>ACTION: Claire Ramalli will produce a leaflet for schools with guidance for their website.</p> <p>Rosemary suggested sharing out the task of sifting through websites.</p>	CRa
4.4	<p>ACTION: Barry will put together a programme for this piece of work and will present this at the next meeting.</p>	BB
4.5	<p>Jon Gilbert added that there is 100% take up of the agreed syllabus in the Church primary schools.</p>	
5	<p>Self-Evaluation Toolkit - Section 4: Collective Worship</p>	
5.1	<p>Barry Blakelock stated that we need a clear and common understanding of what collective worship is.</p> <p>ACTION: Barry will share the slides from the NASACRE session held in March 2023.</p>	BB
5.2	<p>Claire Rivers suggested we do an audit of schools via the network meetings as to how collective worship is being carried out.</p>	
5.3	<p>Claire Ramalli asked those SACRE members who work with schools for examples of collective worship; it would be helpful to have good practice to share.</p>	
5.4	<p>Cllr Belsey suggested that we could call upon Churches more to support collective worship in schools.</p>	
5.5	<p>Barry added that a lot of good things go on in our primary schools, but we need to support our schools as legislation does say a daily act of worship should take place in a broadly Christian way.</p>	
5.6	<p>Further suggestions were that SACRE members look at collective worship as part of the good practice visits and also, we could look at some training with the local authority around collective worship at the Governor sessions.</p> <p>ACTION: Barry Blakelock will take ideas forward.</p>	BB
6	<p>Review NASACRE Handbook & SACRE Induction Manual</p>	
6.1	<p>Barry Blakelock referred to the Handbook and Manual which were circulated prior to the meeting. The Handbook supports SACRE members in their roles.</p> <p>Feedback from new SACRE Members would be appreciated regarding the checklist in the induction manual.</p> <p>ACTION: New members to complete the induction checklist and give feedback to Barry.</p>	FDH/ HK
6.2	<p>Claire Ramalli asked SACRE to note that there had been a recent judgement resulting in a court ruling concerning the membership of Humanists on Group A of SACRE's; confirming that Humanists should be considered as members as per other religions.</p> <p>ACTION: Claire will circulate the information.</p>	CRa

7	Budget Update	
7.1	Barry confirmed that the annual budget for SACRE had been successfully renegotiated with the local authority to £10K for the next two years. This allows us to achieve everything we want to over the next two years.	
7.2	<p><u>Key points:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The number of days for the Advisors have been increased. (ii) Claire Ramalli will put forward an application for a Westhill Award Grant for the East Sussex SACRE. ACTION: Claire will discuss further with Claire Rivers and Barry Blakelock. (iii) It was agreed to go ahead with planning a smaller student conference for this year with a cost of up to £500. ACTION: Claire Ramalli will take this forward. (iv) Should we be successful in being awarded a Westhill Award Grant we can aim to organise a larger student conference in 2025. 	<p>CRa</p> <p>CRa</p>
8	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (Standing item)	
8.1	Pamela Hartog raised a concern regarding antisemitism in schools. At least 3 parents at her synagogue have approached Pamela to report antisemitism and some shocking behaviour amongst children. This is a real concern and asked for advice from SACRE.	
8.2	It was agreed that Nicola Blake from Children's Services would speak to a senior Officer within the department to see how we can deal with this.	NB
8.3	Claire Ramalli mentioned that an organisation called 'Solutions not sides' hold free events on a Tuesday afternoon and offer support to teachers and students.	
9	AOB	
9.1	Cllr Galley confirmed he would make further attempts at getting new representatives from faiths and churches not currently represented on the East Sussex SACRE.	Cllr G
	<p>Date of next meeting: Thursday 29 February 2024 at 2pm</p> <p>Venue: County Hall & MS Teams</p>	



NATIONAL CONTENT STANDARD FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

JULY 2023

First Edition

National Content Standard for Religious Education

This document sets out a National Content Standard for the subject within the context of National Plan for Religious Education (RE) which would embed the standard into the planning and delivery of the subject in England.

This document draws on The Religious Education Council of England and Wales Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom project, as well as other relevant national publications from the last 5 years. The Draft Resource, published by the RE Council's project, proposes a standard (called a National Entitlement Statement). This document is set out in the style of the National Curriculum and outlines how a National Content Standard for the subject might apply in different types of school. The appendices summarise relevant sources and evidence that have been considered when developing this National Content Standard.

Contents

National Content Standard for Religious Education	0
What is a National Plan for Religious Education?	2
Towards a National Content Standard	3
National Content Standard.....	4
Purpose of study	4
Attainment targets	4
Selecting content	5
Subject content	6
Making good progress	8
Standards for EYFS	8
Standards for Key stage 1	8
Standards for Lower Key stage 2	8
Standards for Upper Key stage 2	9
Standards for Lower Key stage 3	9
Standards for Upper Key stage 3	9
Standards for Key stage 4	10
Standards for Key Stage 5.....	10
How the National Content Standard would be applied in different types of school.	11
Appendix A: Sources and Evidence	13
1. Primary Legislation and Funding Agreements on RE in different types of school	13
A. Introduction: Religious Education in English Schools (2010)	13
B. Primary Legislation on Religious Education.....	14
C. Education Act 2002 Section 80	16
D. Extracts from relevant Case Law (text in bold added for clarity)	17
2. Academy Funding Agreements:	17
3. Summary of a National Statement of Entitlement	19
4. Ofsted Research Review Series: Religious Education	20
5. Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom: developing a worldviews approach. A Draft Resource for curriculum developers	23
6. Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Toledo Guiding Principles	25
7. Statutory requirements for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development and Fundamental British Values.....	27
8. Statutory Guidance: What schools must publish online	28

What is a National Plan for Religious Education?

The proposed National Plan for RE builds on the principles set out in the Commission on RE (2018) and reflects changes that have impacted the education sector since that time, including to initial teacher training and early career development, the expansion of the academy schools programme and a further decline in the level and quality of provision for RE, evidenced for example, in DfE school workforce data and the Ofsted Research Review (2021).

This proposal calls on the government to take action to secure:

1. A refreshed vision for the subject, based on a religion and worldviews approach. So through careful selection of knowledge for the curriculum (see page 6), the subject will explore the nature of religion and worldviews, and the important role that religious³ and non-religious⁴ worldviews play in all human life. This means enabling all pupils to become knowledgeable, open-minded, critical participants in public discourse, who make academically informed judgements about important matters of religion or belief which shape the global landscape. It is a subject for all pupils, whatever their own family background or personal beliefs and practices.
2. high quality teaching for all pupils, in whatever school they attend, planned and delivered by those with a secure knowledge of their curriculum area.

For this reason, it is proposed that:

3. a **National Content Standard** for RE/an education in religion and worldviews be established to set a benchmark for what constitutes high quality in this subject (see page 4)
 - a. Where Academies are free to determine their own curriculum, the Funding Agreement should be amended to specify the nature of the provision required to secure the expected quality of RE/education in religion and worldviews, with the effect that the published syllabus for the subject in these contexts must demonstrate due regard to the National Content Standard.
 - b. systems are established, including through the inspection process, **to hold more effectively to account**, those schools that are failing to have due regard to a National Content Standard.

To support the above two recommendations, a sustained programme of investment in teacher education, linked to the early career framework and ongoing professional development is required. For this reason, is it proposed:

- a. that the proportion of lessons of secondary RE/education in religion and worldviews taught by people who are trained to teach the subject is increased by **reintroducing bursaries and other measures** to recruit trainees
- b. that those training as primary teachers have **sufficient RE/education in religion and worldviews specific training** to feel confident in the classroom
- c. that financial investment is made in **regional RE/education in religion and worldviews hubs** to extend opportunities for schools and teachers to draw upon relevant expertise in their region including through local communities of religion or belief.

Towards a National Content Standard

At the heart of the National Plan for Religious Education is the need to establish a benchmark for what constitutes high quality in the subject – a National Content Standard. Such a benchmark could be used in clarification of regulations about the nature of provision required in Academy schools and may helpfully provide non-statutory guidance for the arms-length curriculum body, Oak National Academy, and its partners, in the upcoming development of a fully resourced curriculum in RE next academic year. Likewise, the National Plan and National Content Standard may support Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education and others with responsibility for RE to play their part in raising standards for all children.

In the first instance, we set out National Content Standard (page 5) drawing upon a range of sources and presented in the style of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. This approach recognises that, whilst the sources set out in the appendices establish that all state funded schools must teach RE, neither primary legislation nor supplementary documents such as academy funding agreements, provide a benchmark for the breadth, depth and level of ambition of the curriculum. Without a National Content Standard therefore, Religious Education lacks parity with the subjects of the National Curriculum despite its statutory place at the core of the basic curriculum (see Education Act 2002 S80 on page 16). This is followed by a reference section setting out the source selection which provides essential material for the creation of this National Content Standard.

Religious Education programmes of study

In the style of the National curriculum in England

NOTE: Whenever the term ‘worldviews’ is used in this document, it means religious and non-religious worldviews.

Purpose of study¹

An education in religion and worldviews should:

- introduce pupils to the rich diversity of religion and non-religion, locally and globally, as a key part of understanding how the world works and what it means to be human
- stimulate pupils’ curiosity about, and interest in, this diversity of worldviews, both religious and non-religious
- expand upon how worldviews work, and how different worldviews, religious and non-religious, influence individuals, communities and society
- develop pupils’ awareness that learning about worldviews involves interpreting the significance and meaning of information they study
- develop pupils’ appreciation of the complexity of worldviews, and sensitivity to the problems of religious language and experience
- induct pupils into the processes and scholarly methods by which we can study religion, religious and non-religious worldviews
- enable pupils, by the end of their studies, to identify positions and presuppositions of different academic disciplines and their implications for understanding
- give pupils opportunities to explore the relationship between religious worldviews and literature, culture and the arts
- include pupils in the enterprise of interrogating the sources of their own developing worldviews and how they may benefit from exploring the rich and complex heritage of humanity
- provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on the relationship between their personal worldviews and the content studied, equipping them to develop their own informed responses in the light of their learning.

Attainment targets

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study.

¹ ¹RE Council Worldviews Project: Draft Resource 2022, page 17

Selecting content

It is vital that syllabus writers and curriculum developers make wise decisions on the selection of knowledge for a curriculum. Time for RE is limited, and the religion and worldviews approach is intended to avoid a proliferation of content, not least because of the impossibility of comprehensive coverage of the diversity of religious and non-religious traditions. The criteria for deciding content include the following:

1. Legal Framework: The relevant legal requirement operates (see page 11), which for most schools and academies without a religious character is that RE 'shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' (Education Act 1996 Section 375). For most schools and academies with a religious character RE is determined by the governors and in their trust deed or equivalent. This primary legislation along with case law, set an expectation that pupils will develop knowledge and understanding of the matters of central importance for the religious and non-religious worldviews studied.

2. Intention: The National Content Standard must frame the intent behind the content selection. The treatment of that content then contributes to the progression of understanding of the elements in the National Content Standard, and the links between them.

3. Inclusive Principle: Best practice in RE, as well as European and domestic legislation, has established the principle that RE in schools without a religious character should be inclusive of both religious and non-religious worldviews. Schools should ensure that the content and delivery of the RE curriculum are inclusive in this respect (noting that this does not imply equal time between religious and non-religious worldviews). All religious and non-religious worldviews studied must have fair and accurate representation.

4. Contextual Factors: Local context is important, including school character, local community character, pupil knowledge and experience, teacher knowledge and experience. Local context also includes the history of local areas, allowing opportunities for local studies that connect teaching and learning with the geographical and historical background.

5. Collectively Enough Principle: Pupils need to gain 'collectively enough' or 'cumulatively sufficient' knowledge (OFSTED 2021), not total coverage. In this context, 'collectively enough' needs to relate to the National Content Standard, with its three broad strands of content, engagement and position.

6. Coherency: Schools should be able to give a clear account of their curriculum choices and carefully consider how they will enable the construction of a coherent curriculum for pupils.

Subject Content

This exemplar content should be read within the context of the legal framework including the primary legislation cited above for different types of school, and case law which together set an expectation that pupils will develop knowledge and understanding of the matters of central importance for the religious and non-religious worldviews studied.

The material below is indicative of the breadth, depth and ambition of the curriculum content about religious and non-religious worldviews, that is required in a curriculum that would meet this National Content Standard. However, schools are not required by law to teach this exemplar content. The standard builds on the legal framework in its assumption that the content of a curriculum in this subject will be age appropriate and focus on religious and non-religious worldviews rather than on content which is the focus of a different curriculum subject. Likewise, for all pupils to have equal access to high quality education in religion and worldviews, the subject must be given adequate time and resources commensurate with its place as a core component of the basic curriculum.

In relation to religion and belief, pupils must be taught:

Content²

- **Nature/formation/expression:** What is meant by worldview and how people's worldviews are formed and expressed through a complex mix of influences and experiences
- **Organised/individual:** How people's individual worldviews relate to wider, organised or institutional worldviews
- **Contexts:** How worldviews have contexts, reflecting time and place, are highly diverse, and feature continuity and change.
- **Meaning and purpose:** How worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions raised by human experience
- **Values, commitments and morality:** How worldviews may provide guidance on how to live a good life
- **Influence and power:** How worldviews influence, and are influenced by, people and societies

Engagement

- **Ways of knowing:** The field of study of worldviews is to be explored using diverse ways of knowing.
- **Lived experience:** The field of study of worldviews is to include a focus on the lived experience of people.

² RE Council Worldviews Project: Draft Resource 2022. Expanded statements in the table on page 19f of this document.

- **Dialogue/interpretation:** The field of study of worldviews is to be shown as a dynamic area of debate

Position

- **Personal worldviews reflexivity:** Pupils will reflect on and potentially develop their personal worldviews and make scholarly judgements in the light of their study in the light of their study of religious and non-religious worldviews.
- **Personal worldviews impact:** Pupils will reflect on how their worldviews affect their learning

Making good progress

NOTE: As was stated on page 5, whenever the term ‘worldviews’ is used in this document, it refers to religious and non-religious worldviews.

The National Content Standard is intended to set a standard and a benchmark for an education in religion and worldviews, although there is no single correct way to deliver it. Religious education is part of the statutory basic curriculum and not the National Curriculum. This means that, unlike the core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum, there is no single descriptor of the subject content which must be followed for schools to which the National Curriculum applies. Furthermore, the legal framework for RE in different types of school, means that responsibility for setting the curriculum content, rests with different authorities.

For all these reasons, the national content standard does not recommend one model for making good progress. Instead, one possible example is offered here which demonstrates the breadth, depth and ambition of subject content around which progression needs to build. Two further examples may be found in the Draft Resource pages 42-45.

Standards for EYFS

4-5 year olds might use photographs to observe home lives of some people from a religious tradition, from at least two different contexts. They notice some things that are the same in the homes and some that are different. They notice that some things in their own homes are the same and some are different, and that not everyone is the same. (a, c, g, h, j)*

Standards for Key stage 1

5-7 year olds might look at some religious artwork from a diverse range of contexts (such as pictures of Jesus from around the world) and connect them with some stories or texts that help to interpret the artwork (e.g. gospel accounts pictured). They notice how the different ways of expressing the stories in art are more or less familiar and think about why (e.g. according to their own contexts). They are introduced to a selection of voices to help them find out that such stories may be important in some people’s lives as part of organised worldviews, and find out why (e.g. they may include important people, and ideas about how to live). They find out that all kinds of different people may see the stories as important, but not everyone, and that sometimes this is to do with belief in God. (a, b, c, g, j)

Standards for Lower Key stage 2

7-9 year olds might ask questions about meaning and purpose in life, expressing their own ideas and saying where these ideas come from. They might explore how religious worldviews help some people make sense of life and affect how they live day to day. For example, they might talk to adherents about what it means to believe there is a God, or to believe in salvation, or submission, or karma and samsara – how these ideas can transform

a person's life. They might examine some texts and stories that illustrate these big concepts and find out ways in which they are interpreted. They may reflect on the difference it makes to these interpretations if someone is an adherent or not, including pupils' own perspectives. (a, c, d, g, h, j)

Standards for Upper Key stage 2

9-11 year olds might ask a question about the difference that context makes to one's worldview. For example, after thinking about their own context, they might use and interrogate data, interviews and visual images to examine the differences it makes to be a Muslim in a Muslim majority country (e.g. Indonesia) and a Muslim minority country (e.g. UK), including opportunities and challenges, and how these shape their lived experience – not just intellectual ideas. They might reflect on whether it is similar if someone is non-religious (e.g. Humanist) in a secular society or a religious society. They might reflect on their own context again and consider how it influences their own worldviews. (a, c, e, g, h, j, k)

Standards for Lower Key stage 3

11-12 year olds might ask a question such as 'what is religion?' They might examine a range of common features of religion and carry out some research into their importance in the lives of members of the school and local community, and reflect on the role any of these features play in their own lives. By analysing these, they get an insight into the flexible role of religion in people's lives and worldviews, including their own responses. Having looked at the diversity of expression of religion in people's lives, they can then analyse and evaluate a range of contested academic definitions of religion, reflecting on the impact of a person's worldview on their understanding of 'religion'. (a, b, c, g, h, i, j, k)

Standards for Upper Key stage 3

12-14 year olds might ask questions about how religions change over time. They might explore how significant concepts developed through the ages (e.g. using theological methods to understand Trinity as expressed in art, or theories of atonement in Christian traditions; or the miraculous nature of the Qur'an in Islamic traditions) and how practices develop in place (e.g. RS methods to explore how the Buddha's teaching was adapted as it spread to, for example, Sri Lanka, China, Tibet and the West, exploring how the importance of the story of the life of the Buddha varies across these contexts). They might use these studies to inform their understanding of how such ideas shape cultures and worldviews and enable them to examine questions of power and influence. They might reflect on which methods were most effective in getting to the heart of the matter, and examining why they think so, reflecting on the impact of their personal worldviews on their choices and responses. (a, c, f, g, j, k)

Standards for Key stage 4

Note: Religious education is statutory for all pupils at key stage 4, unless withdrawn by their parents, whether or not they study a course leading to an accredited qualification in the subject, such as GCSE Religious Studies. This National Content Standard assumes that all pupils will have the opportunity to make progress in RE, just as would be expected if they continued to study any other subject in the curriculum, and that teaching time will be provided commensurate with its status as part of the basic curriculum.

14-16 year olds³ might examine the relationship between institutional and individual religious and non-religious worldviews by exploring ethical issues (e.g. Roman Catholic doctrines on sanctity of life and data on Catholic people's attitudes to birth control), or by considering how religion/non-religion is presented in RE in comparison with lived realities (e.g. textbook presentations of religions alongside sociological data on the diverse adherence and practice of religions in India; data on the permeable boundary between religion and non-religion in the UK). They suggest different explanations for these relationships, reflecting on questions of tradition, continuity, change, power and culture. They select and apply appropriate disciplinary tools to evaluate the explanations, recognising the impact of context. Throughout the unit, they reflect on the sources of their own worldviews in the light of their learning. (b, c, e, f, g, j)

Standards for Key Stage 5

Note: Religious education is statutory for all pupils at key stage 5, whether or not they study a course leading to an accredited qualification in the subject, such as A level Religious Studies. The exception to this rule is that pupils may choose to withdraw themselves from the subject once they reach 18 years of age or parents may withdraw them before this age.

16-19 year olds⁴ might reflect on the legal and political dimensions of worldviews, in relation to religious, ethical and social concerns. They might examine the influence of religious and non-religious traditions on attitudes to the environment, to medical advances, to justice and equality in relation to gender, sex and race, and account for the changes across different contexts, using theological and philosophical methods and applying ethical theories (e.g. changing interpretation and application of ancient texts/ teachings to accommodate technological advances and societal changes; contrasting responses between secular and religious contexts to the growth of Pentecostalism in, for example, the USA, Britain, Africa or East Asia). Students might examine their own worldview assumptions and how they affect their responses to these issues, with a growing awareness of the impact of context on their own and others' worldviews. (b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j)

³ and ⁵ Adapted from RE Council Worldviews Project: Draft Resource 2022, page 44 Note: Three models are provided in the Draft Resource and each serve as an example of what progress might look like using the National Content Standard (NCS).

How the National Content Standard would be applied in different types of school.

Content Standard sets a benchmark for the minimum standard of Religious education that all parents can expect following an education in a state funded school. Schools with the freedom to plan their own syllabus for Religious education would be expected to ensure that their syllabus was similar in breadth, depth and ambition to the national content standard. The following table shows how this Standard would be applied in different types of school.

Type of school	Curriculum Legislation as it relates to Religious Education	Standard		
		Standards set out by their governors and in their trust deed or equivalent.	Church of England Statement of Entitlement on Religious Education, Religious Education Directory (CES) Other entitlement statements for schools with a religious character	National content standard for RE
(a) Community, foundation and VA or VC schools without a religious character that follow an Agreed Syllabus	Statutory	Not applicable	Not applicable	Recommended to the Agreed Syllabus Conference as a benchmark for high quality RE
(b) Academies and Free Schools without a religious character	Statutory	Not applicable	Not applicable	Comparable in breadth, depth and ambition to the NCS
(c) Academies which are former VC or Foundation schools with a religious character that followed an Agreed Syllabus	Statutory	Not applicable	Expected	Comparable in breadth, depth and ambition to the NCS
(d) Academies with a religious character, current and former VA schools with a religious character	Statutory	Statutory	Expected	Comparable in breadth, depth and ambition to the NCS
(e) Foundation and Voluntary Controlled Schools with a religious character that follow an Agreed Syllabus	Statutory	Statutory	Expected	Recommended to the Agreed Syllabus Conference as a benchmark for high quality RE

[End of the National Content Standard]

This page is left intentionally blank

Appendix A: Sources and Evidence

These sources are quoted for reference in their original form, and do not form part of the National Content Standard.

1. Primary Legislation and Funding Agreements on RE in different types of school

A. Introduction: Religious Education in English Schools (2010)

This section is an extract from the most recent government guidance on Religious education.

The RE curriculum in different types of schools

In all maintained schools RE must be taught according to either the locally agreed syllabus or in accordance with the school's designated religion or religious denomination, or in certain cases the trust deed relating to the school.

Community, foundation and voluntary-aided or voluntary-controlled schools without a religious character

RE must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus adopted by the LA by which the school is maintained.

Foundation and voluntary-controlled schools with a religious character

RE provision in foundation and voluntary-controlled schools with a religious character is to be provided in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. However, where the parent of any pupil at the school requests that RE is provided in accordance with provisions of the trust deed relating to the school (or, where there is no provision in the trust deed, in accordance with the religion or denomination mentioned in the order designating the school as having a religious character), then the governors must make arrangements for securing that RE is provided to the pupil in accordance with the relevant religion for up to two periods a week unless they are satisfied that there are special circumstances which would make it unreasonable to do so.²⁶

Voluntary-aided schools with a religious character

In these schools RE is to be determined by the governors and in accordance with the provisions of the trust deed relating to the school or, where there is no provision in the trust deed, with the religion or denomination mentioned in the order designating the school as having a religious character.

However, where parents prefer their children to receive RE in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus, and they cannot reasonably or conveniently send their children to a school where the syllabus is in use, then the governing body must make arrangements for RE to be provided to the children within the school in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus unless they are satisfied that there are special circumstances which would make it unreasonable to do so. If the LA is satisfied that the governing body is unwilling to make such arrangements, the LA must make them instead.²⁷

Academies

Academies are all-ability, state-funded schools managed by independent sponsors, established under Section 482 of the Education Act 1996. Some academies have a religious character.

All academies are required, through their funding agreements (see page 17), to teach RE.

26 Schedule 19(3), School Standards and Framework Act 1998

27 Schedule 19(2), School Standards and Framework Act 1998

B. Primary Legislation on Religious Education

A Education Act 1996, Section 375

(3) Every agreed syllabus shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

B School Standards and Framework Act 1998 Schedule 19

Required provision for religious education.

Introductory

1(1) In this Schedule “the required provision for religious education”, in relation to a school, means the provision for pupils at the school which is required by [F1section 80(1)(a) or 101(1)(a) of the Education Act 2002] to be included in the school’s basic curriculum.

(2) In this Schedule “agreed syllabus” has the meaning given by section 375(2) of [F2the Education Act 1996].

Community schools and foundation and voluntary schools without a religious character

2(1) This paragraph applies to—

(a) any community school; and

(b) any foundation or voluntary school which does not have a religious character.

(2) Subject to sub-paragraph (4), the required provision for religious education in the case of pupils at the school is provision for religious education in accordance with an agreed syllabus adopted for the school or for those pupils.

(3) If the school is a secondary school so situated that arrangements cannot conveniently be made for the withdrawal of pupils from it in accordance with section 71 to receive religious education elsewhere and the [F3local authority] are satisfied—

(a) that the parents of any pupils at the school desire them to receive religious education in the school in accordance with the tenets of a particular religion or religious denomination, and

(b) that satisfactory arrangements have been made for the provision of such education to those pupils in the school, and for securing that the cost of providing such education to those pupils in the school will not fall to be met from the school’s budget share or otherwise by the authority,

the authority shall (unless they are satisfied that because of any special circumstances it would be unreasonable to do so) provide facilities for the carrying out of those arrangements.

(4) If immediately before the appointed day the school was a grant-maintained school (within the meaning of the Education Act 1996), and in relation to the school or any pupils at the school the appropriate agreed syllabus as defined by section 382 of that Act was a syllabus falling within subsection (1)(c) of that section, then until—

(a) the end of such period as the Secretary of State may by order prescribe, or

(b) such earlier date as the governing body may determine,

the required provision for religious education in the case of the school or (as the case may be) those pupils is provision for religious education in accordance with that syllabus.

(5) No agreed syllabus shall provide for religious education to be given to pupils at a school to which this paragraph applies by means of any catechism or formulary which is distinctive of a particular religious denomination (but this is not to be taken as prohibiting provision in such a syllabus for the study of such catechisms or formularies).

Foundation and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character

3(1) This paragraph applies to any foundation or voluntary controlled school which has a religious character.

(2) Subject to sub-paragraph (4), the required provision for religious education in the case of pupils at the school is provision for religious education—

(a) in accordance with any arrangements made under sub-paragraph (3), or

(b) subject to any such arrangements, in accordance with an agreed syllabus adopted for the school or for those pupils.

(3) Where the parents of any pupils at the school request that they may receive religious education—

(a) in accordance with any provisions of the trust deed relating to the school, or

(b) where provision for that purpose is not made by such a deed, in accordance with the tenets of the religion or religious denomination specified in relation to the school under section 69(4),

the foundation governors shall (unless they are satisfied that because of any special circumstances it would be unreasonable to do so) make arrangements for securing that such religious education is given to those pupils in the school during not more than two periods in each week.

(4) If immediately before the appointed day the school was a grant-maintained school (within the meaning of the Education Act 1996), and in relation to the school or any pupils at the school the appropriate agreed syllabus as defined by section 382 of that Act was a syllabus falling within subsection (1)(c) of that section, then until—

(a) the end of such period as the Secretary of State may by order prescribe, or

(b) such earlier date as the governing body may determine,

that syllabus shall be treated for the purposes of sub-paragraph (2)(b) as an agreed syllabus adopted for the school or (as the case may be) those pupils.

Voluntary aided schools with a religious character

4(1) This paragraph applies to any voluntary aided school which has a religious character.

(2) The required provision for religious education in the case of pupils at the school is provision for religious education—

(a) in accordance with any provisions of the trust deed relating to the school, or

(b) where provision for that purpose is not made by such a deed, in accordance with the tenets of the religion or religious denomination specified in relation to the school under section 69(4), or

(c) in accordance with any arrangements made under sub-paragraph (3).

(3) Where the parents of any pupils at the school—

(a) desire them to receive religious education in accordance with any agreed syllabus adopted by the **[F3]local authority**, and

(b) cannot with reasonable convenience cause those pupils to attend a school at which that syllabus is in use,

the governing body shall (unless they are satisfied that because of any special circumstances it would be unreasonable to do so) make arrangements for religious education in accordance with that syllabus to be given to those pupils in the school.

(4) Religious education under any such arrangements shall be given during the times set apart for the giving of religious education in the school in accordance with the provision for that purpose included in the school's basic curriculum by virtue of **[F4]section 80(1)(a) or 101(1)(a) of the Education Act 2002**.

(5) Any arrangements under sub-paragraph (3) shall be made by the governing body, unless the **[F3]local authority** are satisfied that the governing body are unwilling to make them, in which case they shall be made by the authority.

(6) Subject to sub-paragraph (3), the religious education given to pupils at the school shall be under the control of the governing body.

C. Education Act 2002 Section 80

Basic curriculum for every maintained school in England

(1) The curriculum for every maintained school in England shall comprise a basic curriculum which includes—

(a) provision for religious education for all registered pupils at the school (in accordance with such of the provisions of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (c. 31) as apply in relation to the school),

(b) a curriculum for all registered pupils at the school **[F1]who have ceased to be young children for the purposes of Part 1 of the Childcare Act 2006** but are not over compulsory school age (known as "the National Curriculum for England")

D. Extracts from relevant Case Law (text in bold added for clarity)

[Fox versus the Secretary of State for Education \(2015\)](#) and [Bowen versus Kent County Council \(2023\)](#)

A. The key paragraph in **the Fox case** in relation to this document is as follows:

*The Strasbourg jurisprudence shows that the duty of impartiality and neutrality owed by the state do not require equal air-time to be given to all shades of belief or conviction. An RE syllabus can quite properly reflect the relative importance of different viewpoints within the relevant society. The same would seem to follow for a region or locality. The duty might therefore be described as one of “due” impartiality. No criticism can be or is made therefore of s 375(3) of the 1996 Act. In addition, of course, a generous latitude must be allowed to the decision-maker as to how that works out in practical terms. But **the complete exclusion of any study of non-religious beliefs for the whole of Key Stage 4, for which the Subject Content would allow, would not in my judgment be compatible with A2P1.***(74)

B. The Bowen case builds on the Fox judgment and Justice Constable takes Justice Warby’s conclusions a step further. He states:

*“it is plain from Fox that a religious education curriculum must, in order to be compliant with the HRA 1998, cover more than religious faith teaching. **The content of religious education teaching must include, at least to some degree, the teaching of non-religious beliefs (such as humanism)**”* [68].

C. It is important also to note Justice Warby’s description of the application of his judgment as follows:

*“I should make clear, for the avoidance of doubt, that the above conclusions have been arrived at with reference to the position of **schools or academies which do not have a religious character**. Schedule 19 of the 1998 Act makes different provision as to RE in schools that do have a religious character (see paras 3 and 4).”* (82)

2. Academy Funding Agreements:

The Funding Agreement is the contract between the Secretary of State for Education and the academy that sets out the terms on which the academy is funded. The Funding Agreement specifies how the academy is run, its duties and the powers the Secretary of State has over the academy. The model funding agreements up to 2010, included the following statement in relation to RE in Academies that were previously required to follow the local agreed syllabus:

*“subject to clause 27 , the Academy Trust shall ensure that provision shall be made for religious education to be given to all pupils at the Academy in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses in section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph 2(5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, *[and having regard to the requirements of the QCDA’s national framework for religious education in schools]*”*

After the closure of QCDA, the section in italics above was removed, with the consequence that the only expectation on Academy Schools was that they provide RE in each year group but with no definition of what constitutes RE or the standards that should be expected.

Mainstream Supplemental Funding Agreement Curriculum

- 2.U The Academy Trust must provide for the teaching of religious education and a daily act of collective worship at the Academy.
- 2.V The Academy Trust must comply with section 71(1)-(6) and (8) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as if the Academy were a community, foundation or voluntary school, and as if references to “religious education” and “religious worship” in that section were references to the religious education and religious worship provided by the Academy in accordance with clause [2.W]/[2.X]/[2.Y] ***[select as appropriate]***.

[Clauses 2.W – 2.Y reflect the requirements for religious education and daily collective worship – mark the clauses that do not apply as ‘Not used’]

- 2.W **[This clause applies where an academy is designated with a religious character but was not previously a VC school or a foundation school designated with a religious character. Please also use this clause if an academy was previously a VC school but has gone through a significant change process to adopt VA characteristics in parallel with converting to an academy]** Subject to clause 2.V, **where the Academy is designated with a religious character** (in accordance with section 124B of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 or further to section 6(8) of the Academies Act 2010):
- a) provision must be made for religious education to be given to all pupils at the Academy in accordance with the tenets of the Academy’s specified religion or religious denomination. This is subject to paragraph 4 of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which applies as if the Academy were a voluntary aided school with a religious character;
 - b) the Academy Trust must comply with section 70(1) of, and Schedule 20 to, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as if the Academy were a foundation school with a religious character or a voluntary school, and as if references to “the required collective worship” were references to collective worship in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Academy’s specified religion or religious denomination;
 - c) the Academy Trust must ensure that the quality of religious education given to pupils at the Academy and the contents of the Academy’s collective worship given in accordance with the tenets and practices of its specific religion or religious denomination are inspected. The inspection must be conducted by a person chosen by the Academy Trust, and the Academy Trust must ensure that the inspection complies with the statutory provisions and regulations which would apply if the Academy were a foundation or voluntary school designated as having a religious character.
- 2.X Subject to clause 2.V, **where the Academy has not been designated with a religious character** (in accordance with section 124B of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 or further to section 6(8) of the Academies Act 2010):
- a) provision must be made for religious education to be given to all pupils at the Academy in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses in section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph 2(5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998;
 - b) the Academy must comply with section 70(1) of, and Schedule 20 to, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as if it were a community school or foundation school without a religious character, except that paragraph 4 of that Schedule does not apply. The Academy may apply to the Secretary of State for consent to be relieved of the requirement imposed by paragraph 3(2) of that Schedule.
- 2.Y ***[This clause only applies where an academy was previously a VC school or foundation school designated with a religious character. If an academy was previously a VC school but has gone through a significant change process to adopt VA characteristics in parallel with converting to an academy then please use clause 2.W instead]*** Subject to clause 2.V, the requirements for religious education and collective

worship are as follows:

- a) subject to paragraph 3 of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, which will apply as if the Academy were a foundation school or voluntary controlled school with a religious character, provision must be made for religious education to be given to all pupils at the Academy in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses in section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996;
 - b) the Academy Trust must comply with section 70(1) of, and Schedule 20 to, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as if the Academy were a foundation school with a religious character or a voluntary school, and as if references to “the required collective worship” were references to collective worship in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Academy’s specified religion or religious denomination;
 - c) ***[Additional sub-clause to be added if the academy is designated with a denominational religious character - CE etc. rather than ‘Christian’]*** the Academy Trust must ensure that the quality of the religious education given to pupils at the Academy and the contents of the Academy’s collective worship, given in accordance with the tenets and practices of its specific religion or religious denomination, is inspected. The inspection must be conducted by a person chosen by the Academy Trust and the Academy Trust must secure that the inspection complies with statutory provisions and regulations which would apply if the Academy were a foundation or voluntary school designated as having a religious character.
- 2.Z The Academy Trust must comply with paragraph 2A of the Schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 in relation to the provision of Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education.
- 2.AA The Academy Trust must prevent political indoctrination, and secure the balanced treatment of political issues, in line with the requirements for maintained schools set out in the Education Act 1996, and have regard to any Guidance.

3. Summary of a National Statement of Entitlement

The following summary was developed by the Religion Education Council of England and Wales Education Committee and the RE Policy Unit in 2020. It aimed to provide a summary of the Commission on RE (2018) National Statement of Entitlement. It was included in public documentation in what was commonly known as ‘[CoRE on a Page](#)’. It has been used between 2020 and 2022 by teachers, advisers and other stakeholders to explain the basis of a religion and worldviews approach. It has largely been superseded by the Draft Resource (see p.14)

A summary of the proposed National Entitlement to Religion and Worldviews

Pupils are entitled to be taught, by well qualified and resourced teachers, knowledge and understanding about:

- a. what religion is and worldviews are, and how they are studied;
- b. the impact of religion and worldviews on individuals, communities and societies;
- c. the diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews in society;
- d. the concepts, language and ways of knowing that help us organise and make sense of our knowledge and understanding of religion and worldviews;
- e. the human quest for meaning, so that they are prepared for life in a diverse world and have space to recognise, reflect on and take responsibility for the development of their own personal worldview

4. Ofsted Research Review Series: Religious Education

The purpose of this review [published in 2021](#), was to identify factors that contribute to high-quality school RE curriculums, the teaching of the curriculum, assessment and systems. Ofsted stated that it would then use this understanding of subject quality to examine how RE is taught in England's schools where RE falls under Ofsted's inspection remit. Both in terms of evidence-led policy making and the inspection process, this would suggest that, a National Content Standard would need to be informed by the findings set out below.

Summary of features that may be found in high-quality RE according to recent research:

1. Curriculum progression and debates about knowledge in RE

- A consideration of the knowledge that pupils build through the RE curriculum, because accurate knowledge about religion and non-religion can be beneficial for achieving different purposes and aims for RE.
- High expectations about scholarship in the curriculum to guard against pupils' misconceptions. What is taught and learned in RE is grounded in what is known about religion/non-religion from academic study (scholarship).
- Carefully selected and well-sequenced substantive content and concepts.
- 'Ways of knowing' are appropriately taught alongside the substantive content and are not isolated from the content and concepts that pupils learn.
- A consideration of when pupils should relate the content to their own personal knowledge (for example, prior assumptions).

2. Substantive content and concepts in RE

- 'Collectively enough' substantive content and concepts in the RE curriculum to enable pupils to grasp the complexity of a multi-religious, multi-secular world. This substantive knowledge is a representation and reconstruction of religious and non-religious traditions and concepts.
- Representations of religious and non-religious traditions that are as accurate as possible. Leaders and teachers might use scholarship to construct representations so that pupils do not learn misconceptions.
- Depth of study in certain areas of the RE curriculum to provide pupils with detailed content that is connected with the concepts and ideas that they learn. Without this, more complex discussions about religion and non-religion will be superficial. Leaders and teachers can make intelligent selections for depth of study to indicate a range of religious and non-religious ways of living.
- Detailed knowledge of specific religious and non-religious traditions (such as their stories, narratives, texts and testimonies) in the RE curriculum to enable pupils to make useful connections between content.
- A well-sequenced RE curriculum that prepares pupils with the prior knowledge (including content, concepts and vocabulary) they need for subsequent topics. The importance of this is very clear in the case of controversial and sensitive topics. Leaders and teachers might identify the necessary background knowledge that pupils need to learn for a topic and make sure that the curriculum is ordered to accommodate this.

3. 'Ways of knowing' in RE

- A curriculum design that includes 'ways of knowing' as a form of knowledge that pupils build through the RE curriculum. This helps pupils learn about the construction of substantive knowledge, its accuracy, its reliability and how provisional that knowledge is. Pupils are therefore prepared to think in critical and scholarly ways about the representations of religion and non-religion that they learn through the curriculum and encounter in the world beyond.
- A sequenced RE curriculum that includes scholarly methods and tools that pupils learn.

- Subject leaders and teachers who make good decisions about which ‘ways of knowing’ pupils need to learn and who match the ‘ways of knowing’ to the substantive content.
- Curriculum impact that includes pupils recognising the type of specialist discourse they are engaging in when asking questions, using methods and making claims about different content in the RE curriculum. This might have been achieved, for example, because pupils have learned how disciplinary discourses construct knowledge about religion/non-religion or how groups or families of methods explore religious and non-religious traditions.

4. ‘Personal knowledge’ in RE

- An RE curriculum that does not induct pupils into any religious tradition (in settings where the EIF applies to RE).
- A curriculum that builds pupils’ awareness of their own assumptions and values about the content that they study (‘personal knowledge’).
- Precise, detailed and fruitful content (substantive content and concepts) that subject leaders and curriculum designers have selected to build pupils’ ‘personal knowledge’. Not all substantive content is equally appropriate to select as the basis for developing pupils’ ‘personal knowledge’.
- Subject leaders and teachers who adeptly identify specific content for the development of ‘personal knowledge’ because they recognise that some pupils may not otherwise see the immediate value of that content.

5. Interplay, end goals and competencies

- A curriculum that focuses pupils’ learning on ambitious subject-specific end goals, rather than covers excessive amounts of content superficially.
- Curriculum impact that is achieved by pupils building up accurate knowledge about the complexity and diversity of global religion and non-religion. This provides pupils with many of the ingredients for cultural and civic competencies that are important to many RE teachers.
- Clear curriculum content that subject leaders and curriculum designers have planned to illustrate ‘ways of knowing’ and to develop pupils’ ‘personal knowledge’.
- A clear connection between the ‘ways of knowing’ that pupils learn, the ‘personal knowledge’ that pupils develop through the curriculum and the substantive content and concepts on which both depend.
- Subject leaders of RE who are aware of the ways that the RE curriculum can be susceptible to distortion and have ensured that it does not become distorted.

6. Teaching the curriculum

- Leaders and teachers who consider, when they select classroom activities, how the activities will enable pupils to remember the RE curriculum in the long term.
- Teachers whose judgement about classroom activities is informed by insights from cognitive science about learning, as well as subject-specific insights about the nature of the RE content to be learned. These 2 insights are more important than generic concerns about whether activities are superficially ‘engaging’.
- Leaders and teachers of RE who ensure that, in choosing an appropriate classroom activity, they are clear about what pupils are supposed to learn from it (the curriculum object).
- Teachers who recognise that the success of classroom strategies, methods and procedures depends, to an extent, on whether pupils have sufficient prior RE knowledge (from the curriculum) to succeed at the activity.
- Teaching activities that will continue to draw on, and to remind pupils of, parts of the RE curriculum that pupils have already covered. This enables pupils to learn the RE curriculum in the long term.

7. Assessment

- Different types of assessments are used appropriately:

- Formative assessments can help teachers identify which pupils have misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge, and what those specific misconceptions or gaps are. This can inform teachers about common issues, so they can review or adapt the curriculum as necessary. Formative assessments are less useful in making judgements about how much of the whole curriculum has been learned and remembered.
- Where summative assessments are used for accountability purposes, leaders can ensure that they are sufficiently spaced apart to enable pupils to learn the expanding domain of the curriculum.
- The purpose of the test should guide the type of assessment, the format of the task and when the assessment is needed.
- RE assessment needs to relate to the curriculum, which sets out what it means to 'get better' at RE.
- Leaders and teachers can consider whether existing assessment models in RE do in practice treat the curriculum as the progression model.
- Leaders and teachers can design RE assessments that are fit for purpose, in that they are precisely attuned to the knowledge in the RE curriculum that they intend for pupils to learn.
- Leaders who ensure that assessments are not excessively onerous for teachers.
- Professional development opportunities for leaders and teachers to reflect on how different assessment questions and tasks in RE can frame teachers' and pupils' expectations about engaging with religious and non-religious traditions.

8. Systems, culture and policies

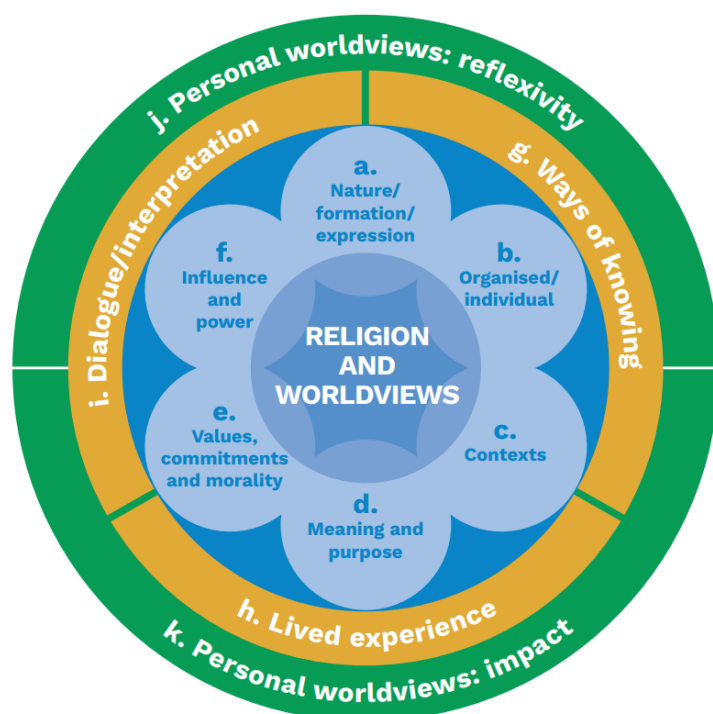
- Sufficient curriculum time allocated to RE in order for leaders to deliver an ambitious RE curriculum.
- Subject-specialist staffing, so that pupils are taught RE by teachers with appropriate subject professional knowledge.
- Access to high-quality in-service training for leaders and teachers of RE to develop their professional subject knowledge.
- Subject leadership that can identify high-quality sources of training (for example, through subject associations and organisations) to further their RE knowledge in policy, subject content, subject pedagogy and RE research.

5. Religion and Worldviews in the Classroom: developing a worldviews approach. A Draft Resource for curriculum developers

The Draft Resource sets out a rationale for a religion and worldviews approach, building on the developments since the 2018 Commission report. It was primarily written to inform three Framework Development Teams, working over 18 months to apply the Handbook guidance to their own contexts. During this process, the Draft Resource is being tested and revised as necessary, before the publication, scheduled for 2024, of a final Handbook, three example frameworks, sample units of work and pupil responses.

At the heart of the Commission on RE final report, was a National Statement of Entitlement indicating that all children in schools are entitled to an education in religion and worldviews. This national statement of entitlement provides a shared vision for the subject that will be interpreted for, and applied in, a variety of different contexts by syllabus writers and curriculum designers.

- reflects the changing religious and secular non-religious diversity of the UK and the world
- is inclusive of, and relevant to, children and young people, whose worldviews may range across the secular religious and non-religious
- approaches the subject from the perspective of worldviews (incorporating religious and non-religious worldviews, personal and communal, individual and organised, plural and diverse) to help pupils navigate the diverse, complex world around them, in relation to religion and belief. The place for this education in religion and worldviews is the subject currently called Religious Education in legislation in England.



To meet this entitlement, pupils must be taught to understand the nature of worldviews, in relation to religion and belief, including:

CONTENT	
<i>Core statements</i>	<i>Expanded statements</i>
a. Nature/formation/expression What is meant by worldview and how people's worldviews are formed and expressed through a complex mix of influences and experiences	The nature and variety of worldviews, and how people's worldviews are formed through a complex mix of influences and experiences, including (for example) rituals, practices, texts, teachings, stories, inspiring individuals, the creative arts, family, tradition, culture, and everyday experiences and actions. How these may also act as ways of expressing and communicating worldviews.
b. Organised/individual How people's individual worldviews relate to wider, organised or institutional worldviews	How people's individual worldviews relate to wider, organised or institutional worldviews (e.g. how individual worldviews may be consciously held or tacit; how individual and organised worldviews are dynamic; how individual worldviews may overlap to a greater or lesser extent with organised worldviews)
c. Contexts How worldviews have contexts, reflecting time and place, are highly diverse, and feature continuity and change.	How worldviews have contexts, reflecting their time and place, shaping and being shaped by these, maintaining continuity and also changing; how they are highly diverse and often develop in interaction with each other. (This applies to organised worldviews as well as to individual worldviews.)
d. Meaning and purpose How worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions raised by human experience	How worldviews may offer responses to fundamental questions raised by human experience, such as questions of existence, meaning, purpose, knowledge, truth, identity and diversity. How worldviews may play different roles in providing people with ways of making sense of existence and/or their lives, including space for mystery, ambiguity and paradox.
e. Values, commitments and morality How worldviews may provide guidance on how to live a good life	How worldviews may provide a vision of, and guidance on, how to be a good person and live a good life, and may offer ideas of justice, right and wrong, value, beauty, truth and goodness. How individuals and communities may express their values through their commitments.
f. Influence and power How worldviews influence, and are influenced by, people and societies	How worldviews influence people (e.g. providing a 'grand narrative' or story for understanding the world) and influence the exercise of power in societies (e.g. on social norms for communities, or in relation to conflict or peace-making). How society and people can also influence and shape worldviews.

ENGAGEMENT	
<i>Core statements</i>	<i>Expanded statements</i>
g. Ways of knowing The field of study of worldviews is to be explored using diverse ways of knowing.	The field of study of worldviews is to be explored using diverse ways of knowing. Questions and methods should be carefully chosen, recognising that there are different understandings of what knowledge is deemed reliable, valid, credible, truthful etc.
h. Lived experience The field of study of worldviews is to include a focus on the lived experience of people.	The field of study of worldviews is to include a focus on the lived experience of people (e.g. religious, non-religious, embodied, diverse, fluid, material, experiential) in relation to local and global contexts, recognising the complex reality of worldviews as they are held, shared and expressed by people in real life.
i. Dialogue/interpretation The field of study of worldviews is to be shown as a dynamic area of debate.	The field of study of worldviews is to be encountered as a dynamic area of dialogue and debate, and one which engages with practices of interpretation and judgement within and between religious and non-religious communities.
POSITION	
<i>Core statements</i>	<i>Expanded statements</i>
j. Personal worldviews: reflexivity Pupils will reflect on and potentially develop their personal worldviews in the light of their study.	Pupils will come to understand their own worldview in greater depth, and how it relates to the worldviews of others, becoming more reflective and reflexive. As they develop this awareness of their positionality in relation to that of others, they will make informed judgements on how (far) this understanding prepares them for life in a diverse world
k. Personal worldviews: impact Pupils will reflect on how their worldviews affect their learning	Pupils will develop their understanding of how their encounters with the subject content of RE are affected and shaped by their worldviews, whether conscious or not, and that this is also true for everyone else. They will reflect on how (far) their learning may have an impact on their worldview.

6. Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Toledo Guiding Principles

The following is taken from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office website:

Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is a human right which has been guaranteed under international law within the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#) since 1966. Article 18 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, states that ‘everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion’.

FoRB is not just the freedom to hold personal thoughts and convictions, but also being able to express them individually or with others, publicly or in private. It includes the freedom to:

- subscribe to different schools of thought within a religion
- change one’s religion or beliefs, including to leave or abandon religions
- hold non-religious beliefs

No-one should experience discrimination for exercising their right to freedom of religion or belief. This right prohibits the use of coercion to make someone hold or change their religion or belief. It also protects a person from being required to state an affiliation with any particular religion or belief.

As with all human rights, FoRB belongs to people, whether alone or as members of a group, and not to the religion or belief itself. This means that it does not protect religions, or religious figures, from criticism.

In July 2022, the FCDO hosted an International Ministerial on FoRB. At this conference a Statement on FoRB and Education was made, of which the UK Government was a signatory. The full statement is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/freedom-of-religion-or-belief-and-education-statement-at-the-international-ministerial-conference-2022/statement-on-freedom-of-religion-or-belief-and-education>

This statement says that signatories will commit to:

- prioritising inclusive curricula and teaching, matched to all students' needs, regardless of their background, that provides foundational skills for all. In addition, curricula should provide positive and accurate information about different faith and belief communities and combat negative stereotypes
- support teaching that promotes the equality of all individuals, regardless of their religion
- protecting education establishments and ensuring all students have access to education regardless of their faith or any other characteristic. This includes ensuring access to safe alternative spaces for education in emergencies and protracted crises
- promoting international efforts to support education reform, emphasising the benefits of pluralism and the importance of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief. Regular evaluation of education materials and practices should be carried out to ensure that these standards are always maintained

In addition, the Toledo Guiding Principles (2007) published by the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe) and ODOHR (Organisation for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights) are relevant in this context. The introduction to the principles states that:

The Guiding Principles are designed to assist not only educators but also legislators, teachers and officials in education ministries, as well as administrators and educators in private or religious schools to ensure that teaching about different religions and beliefs is carried out in a fair and balanced manner.

The Key Guiding Principles set out in the document are:

Whenever teaching about religions and beliefs in public schools is provided in OSCE participating States, the following guiding principles should be considered:

1. Teaching about religions and beliefs must be provided in ways that are fair, accurate and based on sound scholarship. Students should learn about religions and beliefs in an environment respectful of human rights, fundamental freedoms and civic values.
2. Those who teach about religions and beliefs should have a commitment to religious freedom that contributes to a school environment and practices that foster protection of the rights of others in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding among members of the school community.
3. Teaching about religions and beliefs is a major responsibility of schools, but the manner in which this teaching takes place should not undermine or ignore the role of families and religious or belief organizations in transmitting values to successive generations.
4. Efforts should be made to establish advisory bodies at different levels that take an inclusive approach to involving different stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of curricula and in the training of teachers.

5. Where a compulsory programme involving teaching about religions and beliefs is not sufficiently objective, efforts should be made to revise it to make it more balanced and impartial, but where this is not possible, or cannot be accomplished immediately, recognizing opt-out rights may be a satisfactory solution for parents and pupils, provided that the opt-out arrangements are structured in a sensitive and non-discriminatory way.

6. Those who teach about religions and beliefs should be adequately educated to do so. Such teachers need to have the knowledge, attitude and skills to teach about religions and beliefs in a fair and balanced way. Teachers need not only subject-matter competence but pedagogical skills so that they can interact with students and help students interact with each other in sensitive and respectful ways.

7. Preparation of curricula, textbooks and educational materials for teaching about religions and beliefs should take into account religious and non-religious views in a way that is inclusive, fair, and respectful. Care should be taken to avoid inaccurate or prejudicial material, particularly when this reinforces negative stereotypes.

8. Curricula should be developed in accordance with recognised professional standards in order to ensure a balanced approach to study about religions and beliefs. Development and implementation of curricula should also include open and fair procedures that give all interested parties appropriate opportunities to offer comments and advice.

9. Quality curricula in the area of teaching about religions and beliefs can only contribute effectively to the educational aims of the Toledo Guiding Principles if teachers are professionally trained to use the curricula and receive ongoing training to further develop their knowledge and competences regarding this subject matter. Any basic teacher preparation should be framed and developed according to democratic and human rights principles and include insight into cultural and religious diversity in society.

10. Curricula focusing on teaching about religions and beliefs should give attention to key historical and contemporary developments pertaining to religion and belief, and reflect global and local issues. They should be sensitive to different local manifestations of religious and secular plurality found in schools and the communities they serve. Such sensitivities will help address the concerns of students, parents and other stakeholders in education.

7. Statutory requirements for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development and Fundamental British Values.

All maintained schools must meet the requirements set out in section 78 of the Education Act 2002 and promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of their pupils. Through ensuring pupils' SMSC development, schools can also demonstrate they are actively promoting fundamental British values.

Accountability

As part of a section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors must consider pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development when forming a judgement of a school. However this advice should not be read as guidance for inspection purposes. Ofsted publish their inspection framework and handbook, which set out how schools are assessed in relation to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Schools should refer to Ofsted's documents to understand what inspectors look for in assessing this."

[Ofsted](#) **School inspection handbook** [EIF 2022](#) - Updated 11 July 2022

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

299. Inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This is a broad concept that can be seen across the

school's activities, but draws together many of the areas covered by the personal development judgement.

300. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils includes developing their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
- knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences

8. Statutory Guidance: What schools must publish online

This guidance places a responsibility on schools to ensure that parents and carers have access to information about what their children are learning in each subject of the curriculum. The publication of the curriculum can also be accessed by Ofsted inspection teams as an aspect of making judgements about the breadth, balance and ambition of the curriculum or, if concerns are raised, lead to a decision to carry out a section 8 inspection (See extract from the Ofsted Handbook for inspection below.)

The guidance is copied below:

Curriculum

You must publish:

- the content of your school curriculum in each academic year for every subject - this includes mandatory subjects such as religious education, even if it is taught as part of another subject or subjects, or is called something else

Ofsted Handbook for inspection extract

37. As is the case for all schools, a good or outstanding school may still receive an urgent inspection (carried out under section 8) at any time in certain circumstances (see part 4). For example, we may decide that we should inspect a school earlier than its next scheduled inspection if:

- concerns are identified about the breadth and balance of the curriculum (including whether the statutory requirement to publish information to parents is not met).

This page is intentionally left blank

National Content Standard for Religious Education in England

For too many years, the level and quality of provision for RE around England has been reported as inconsistent at best. This means 1000s of pupils in our schools are denied their entitlement, established in law, to high-quality religious education.

The NCS provides clarification about excellence of approach to RE and exemplifies how schools and academies can fulfil current legal and contractual requirements effectively.

Why?

[Read the NCS here](#)

One major barrier to improving this situation is the lack of an agreement about what is meant by 'a high-quality religious education'. Unlike a subject included in the National Curriculum, RE has no national programme of study document to act as a benchmark.

The NCS aims to embed a common standard for RE in all types of state funded school in England to meet the REC's vision for all pupils in all schools to receive high quality provision for the subject..

Aims?

The REC hopes that by establishing the NCS as a benchmark, the document will support a range of stakeholders in RE including:

- SACREs and Academy Trusts
- Initial Teacher Trainers and providers of CPD
- Those making judgements about what constitutes a high-quality curriculum for RE
- Resource providers including Oak National Academy and publishers

Who?

The NCS was developed around extracts from a draft resource for syllabus writers. This resource has been the focus of extensive consultation and scrutiny for the last 12 months and is due to be published in its final form in Spring 2024 alongside three exemplar curriculums. It draws upon relevant publications including the Ofsted Research Review (2021).

Origins?

[Read a blog about the NCS here](#)

Frequently asked questions



Religious
Education
Council
of England and Wales

Indicative

The NCS uses the familiar style of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Unlike the National Curriculum Programmes of study however, it does not prescribe content but instead provides an exemplar for the sort of **breadth, depth and ambition** in a high-quality RE curriculum.

It does not recommend a particular approach to the subject.

What RE is

The exemplar content should be read within the context of the legal framework including the primary legislation cited for different types of school, and case law which together set an expectation that pupils will develop **knowledge and understanding of the matters of central importance** for the religious and non-religious worldviews studied.

...What it is not

The standard **builds on the legal framework** in its assumption that the content of a curriculum in this subject will be **age appropriate** and **focus on religious and non-religious worldviews** rather than on content which is the focus of a **different curriculum subject**.

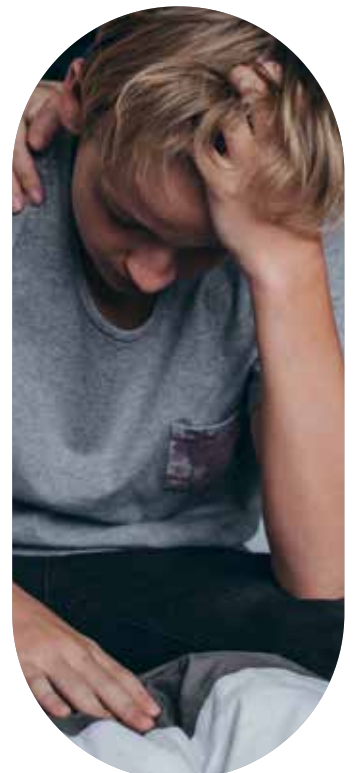
Criteria for selecting content

- Legal Framework
- Intention
- Inclusive Principle
- Contextual Factors
- 'Collectively enough' principle
- Coherency

For all pupils to have equal access to high quality education in religion and worldviews, the subject **must be given adequate time and resources** commensurate with its place as a core component of the basic curriculum.

This page is intentionally left blank

The Annual Report of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2022/23



Ofsted

The Annual Report of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2022/23

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 121
of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on
23 November 2023.



© Crown copyright 2023

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/official-documents.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at **Ofsted, Clive House, 70 Petty France, London SW1H 9EX, telephone 0300 123 1231 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk**.

ISBN 978-1-5286-4542-3

E03014746 11/23

Printed on paper containing 40% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by HH Associates Ltd. on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office

Clive House
70 Petty France,
London
SW1H 9EX

23 November 2023

The Rt Hon. Gillian Keegan MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT



Dear Secretary of State

The Annual Report of His Majesty's Chief Inspector 2022/23

This is my seventh and last Annual Report as Chief Inspector: I am the longest-serving since Ofsted was established, and the only one to have served through system disruption of the kinds experienced since 2020. I am pleased that I can report on much progress in my time, as well as having to record the current challenges. I would like to record my thanks to you, your predecessors and your officials for all the constructive work between our departments.

Looking back at what I set out to do when I took up this role, I believe Ofsted has substantially achieved it.

In social care, we have launched and embedded two strong inspection frameworks, and continue to evolve and strengthen our work in the context of many strands of government reform.

In education, we have:

- built a new evidence-based inspection framework with wide sector support – the conception of quality it embodies is respected and valued
- within the limits of government policy, which gives Ofsted only a diagnostic role, reframed the inspection process with professional dialogue at its centre, to make it valuable and valued at the receiving end
- improved and extended inspector training to build a common platform of up-to-date knowledge of education and understanding of the framework and also recognition of the importance of consistent application of the framework
- reinforced the other quality assurance mechanisms that help bring a high level of consistency to a human judgement process.

We have good evidence of all of these: in all the sectors where we work, post-inspection surveys over time show a strongly positive picture overall. With results once again available to us, the relationship between school inspection outcomes and published results is as strong as it was under the previous framework. At the same time, we are routinely told that inspection now feels collaborative and supportive.

Yet for schools (although not for our other remits), we are also seeing a wave of publicly expressed discontent about issues that Ofsted alone cannot resolve.

Much of this links to how school inspection judgements are used in the government's regulatory system. Government interventions are of course aimed at school improvement, but their linkage to inspection judgements understandably increases sector anxiety about what actions may follow a disappointing inspection outcome. Extending these powers to second RI judgements has intensified anxiety, increasing worry ahead of inspections and making inspections themselves more pressured.

Ofsted's role is also poorly understood. Many people do not recognise that as a matter of government policy, Ofsted's schools work (and funding) has long been limited to the diagnostic function of inspection. Ofsted is not a policy-making department and cannot decide to divert its resources to support work, any more than the driving test agency can decide to switch to giving driving lessons. Yet it is being argued that Ofsted is acting punitively or in bad faith by not doing so. Clarification is needed.

There is also limited school sector understanding of the wider framework of public accountability for public services, where health, adult social care, police forces, fire services and prisons are all inspected with the same or a very similar grading system. The judgement model Ofsted uses in early years, schools, colleges, other post-16 education and children's social care is in fact entirely in line with other inspectorates.

Finally, I have been chief inspector through seven years of intense pressure on public finances, during which our already reduced budget has had to absorb the entire impact of inflation. Relative to school budgets, the current government allocation to school inspection is about a quarter of what it was 20 years ago. To illustrate this, the entirety of our work on state secondary schools (including all training and overheads) now has to be done with the budget of one moderately large secondary school. This means that school inspections are necessarily shorter and more intense; reports are necessarily briefer; and many strands of our work that help build school sector goodwill and reinforce our value to the sector, government and others are having to be progressively curtailed.

Despite all this, Ofsted continues to perform its role fairly, professionally, thoroughly and constructively. We aim to raise standards and improve lives, and I am confident we do that. I firmly believe that our independent scrutiny is of huge benefit to the education and care sectors and to the children and learners we all serve.

As this report shows, much good has been achieved in recent years. The regulatory system, of which inspection is an integral part, plays a vital role. Compromising the regulatory system could undermine progress. My parting hope is therefore that government will recognise and find ways to address the pressures and imbalances described in this letter in its future policy and funding decisions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda Spielman". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Amanda Spielman

His Majesty's Chief Inspector





Contents

HMCI commentary	7
Early years and childcare	17
Schools.....	29
SEND and alternative provision	59
Teacher development.....	69
Further education and skills.....	77
Social care.....	95



HMCI commentary

HMCI commentary

Introduction

This report reviews education and children's social care over the last academic year. But there is also value in considering the changes and challenges of the last seven years, through which I have had the privilege to be His Majesty's Chief Inspector.

The pandemic with all its disruptions has of course overshadowed this period. So it is all the more important to draw out the positive changes that have happened, both in spite of and because of it.

Because while the pandemic caused many problems, exacerbated others and continues to limit progress in various ways, there are still reasons to be optimistic. Recovery is continuing and happening faster than we might have expected. We are seeing real and lasting strength in education: curriculum has improved in nearly all the subjects on which we have reported; the teaching of reading in primary schools is significantly better; well-structured teacher training is yielding results; and some local authorities are making substantial improvements in social care.

This progress should not be underestimated, and the remarkable efforts that have made it possible should be recognised. It's also important that children look forward to the future with confidence. Imbuing children with optimism – that they are prepared for and can rise to the challenges of the future – is a worthwhile end in itself.

But of course, optimism must be tempered by realism. Current realities in education and social care include stubborn gaps in children's learning, recruitment and retention issues, and increasing demands for additional services that are already overstretched. High demand for SEND and mental health services is particularly straining limited resources.

And in education we have seen a troubling shift in attitudes since the pandemic. The social contract that has long bound parents and schools together has been damaged. This unwritten agreement sees parents get their children to school every day and respect the school's policies and approach. In return, schools give children a good education and help prepare them for their next steps in life. It took years to build and consolidate, from when schooling first became compulsory.

Unfortunately, there is ample evidence that this contract has been fractured, both in absenteeism and in behaviour. Restoring this contract is vital to sustaining post-pandemic progress, but is likely to take years to rebuild fully.

Reasons for optimism

Nevertheless, thanks to the incredible work of everyone in education and children's social care, we are seeing more reasons to be optimistic.

During my time as HMCI, I have seen sustainable improvements in education. The effort going into making and teaching better curriculums in schools, colleges and even nurseries is very encouraging. Results are of course extremely important, and it is good that there is now much more attention being paid to how those results are being achieved: are children and learners truly building and sustaining the knowledge and skills that will take them forward in life? This was a deliberate aim when we developed and introduced the education inspection framework (EIF), which has translated effectively into practice.

The [subject reports in our current series](#) show how curriculum thinking has advanced. This is particularly evident when compared to comparable reports from the early 2010s:

- The [maths report that we published in 2012](#) noted that 'very few schools provided curricular guidance for staff', while [this year's report](#) found that 'leaders prioritise creating or adopting a high-quality mathematics curriculum'.
- [2011's geography report](#) found that 'many of the teaching units did not provide a clear and sequential structure which would enable pupils to develop and improve their geographical knowledge.' [This year's report](#) found that 'in most schools, leaders have identified what should be taught and when it should be taught, and they are increasingly considering the best way to teach it.'
- And [our new history subject report](#) found that 'the position of history in schools is much more secure now than it was 12 years ago' and 'there has been significant work done in the large majority of primary and secondary schools to develop a broad and ambitious curriculum.'

There is a similar picture in [our subject reports on music, PE, and science](#), though a rather less positive picture in RE. The English report to be published very shortly will show strong progress in early reading and some other aspects but also room for improvement elsewhere. Nevertheless, the overall picture across national curriculum subjects is strongly positive.

This deeper thinking about curriculum undoubtedly helped when the pandemic hit. Schools were able to adapt quickly and bridge their curriculums where required. Along with the other adjustments during and since the pandemic, this has helped to minimise its impact on children's progress. In the immediate wake of lockdown, there was significant debate about catch-up. My view was that for most children, most catch-up would happen in their normal classrooms, with their normal teachers – and that seems to have been the case.

Giving proper time and thought to curriculum has also helped in the early years. This has been particularly important to a generation born into a socially distanced world, who have missed out on some socialisation as well as some early education. There is real value in what children learn in nurseries and with childminders about social interaction: how to relate to adults outside their family, play with other children, take turns, behave in a group. All this has underlined the importance of education in the early years.

With our framework, we have rebalanced early years inspection to give as much weight to early education as to childcare. Our ['Best start in life' research reviews](#) are designed to contribute to the continued development of curriculum understanding for the youngest children.



Reading is another area where there are many positives. In primary schools, the teaching of reading has significantly improved. The quality of the reading curriculum and training for staff are better – though more is needed at secondary level for the weakest readers.

Over the past seven years, there has definitely been a marked increase in interest and policy development around further education. T levels were one innovation and while [our review](#) highlighted the teething problems, the ambition to re-shape further education is clearly there. The skills agenda has re-energised the conversation about post-16 education.

The most recent announcement of a new Advanced British Standard curriculum model and qualification shows that policy thinking continues to develop. The announcement also clearly recognised that funding will be needed to bring the amount of teaching our post-16 learners receive up to internationally competitive levels. That would make a real difference and be a welcome development at a time when workforce skills are a national priority.

Improvements in education have been supported and reinforced by the progress in teacher training. The golden thread from initial teacher training, through the early career framework and on to national professional qualifications (NPQs), creates a path for a high-skilled teacher workforce, with high-quality professional development available through their careers.

In social care, we are also seeing incremental improvements. Having introduced our current inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework in 2018, we have now started returning to local authorities for their second ILACS inspection. Services have continued to improve (from a relatively low base) in difficult conditions, with 60% of all local authorities now rated good or outstanding and many sustaining their progress.

This year, we added a new and distinct judgement into our ILACS looking at the experience and progress of care leavers. Getting the support right for young people as they leave care is of critical importance to their future lives. So far (and with only 26 authorities inspected), the experience of care leavers is lagging slightly behind that of children in care. I hope the additional scrutiny leads to rapid improvements.

In our joint targeted area inspections (JTAs), which look at the multi-agency response to children and families who need help, we are seeing some excellent work at both a strategic and practice level, but it's clear there are significant variations between areas and between partners. And agencies must be able to work with families as soon as they need help, before problems escalate.

All of these elements contribute to a steadily improving picture.

The social contract

In education in particular, improvements are faster and more sustainable when providers (an ugly word, but otherwise I must laboriously repeat a list each time) work in concert with parents. This year, there is evidence to suggest that the attitudes of some parents are falling out of alignment with those of schools in particular. The social contract between parents and schools has been coming under pressure on a number of fronts.

School absence has been a stubborn problem since the pandemic. As so often, it is the children who most need the full benefit of education who are missing the most. Absence is particularly noticeable in secondary schools, but it is a problem for all year groups, all ages, in all demographics and for children with and without special needs. Across society, there is less respect for the principle of a full-time education.

The correlation between levels of absence and educational attainment is well known. Frequent absence also limits the wider benefits of school. There's a great deal that children learn in schools outside classroom lessons. We are also concerned about the increase in pupils on part-time timetables, which can help children adjust to school in the short-term but need to be part of a plan to begin or return to full-time schooling. Left too long, they can compound problems and result in children coming further adrift.

The remarkable flexibility many schools showed during the pandemic, and the adoption of remote education, may have had unintended consequences. The idea that school can be a pick-and-choose exercise needs to be debunked. The benefits of school go well beyond specific lessons and exam results. Only through full participation can children get all the benefits – of social skills, confidence and resilience as well as academic achievement. School is a package deal that cannot be entirely personalised to every child or parent's preferences.

Of course, turning up is only part of the contract. Pupils also need to meet the reasonable expectations of a school and parents need to accept and support the school's policies and culture. Some parents are increasingly willing to challenge, whether by undermining discipline codes or ignoring uniform requirements or other rules.

We have also seen a greater tendency for parents to complain to us. The number of complaints rose in 2022–23, but we aren't seeing an increase in the number that warrant action on our part. We take all complaints seriously, but we must also be proportionate in our response. Most complaints can and should be handled at the school, or local authority or trust, level.

Schools and colleges are in an increasingly tricky position, where a routine decision can lead to prolonged public debate. More school issues – from seemingly straightforward uniform policies to the delicate choices around curriculum for relationships and sex education or the handling of transgender and other identity issues – are left in large part to headteachers, in a historic context that has made headteacher autonomy the general default position. When heads must exercise that autonomy in contentious areas, they can feel isolated and unsupported, and their decisions can be inconsistent.

There needs to be greater central guidance, for several reasons: for more consistent treatment of children and young people in different contexts; to support schools and others under pressure; and to make sure that what is and isn't accepted in schools isn't simply driven by the loudest voices at the expense of quieter ones.



Linked to this is the role schools play in building community cohesion, to use a term that has fallen out of fashion but seems particularly relevant as I write. Schools rightly want to bring context into their curriculum, and to encourage pupils into active civic engagement. But it is important that this does not accidentally bring division and antagonism into classrooms and playgrounds. No child should be afraid to go to school or to express a view in the classroom for fear of what their classmates may say to them or do to them, let alone their teacher. It is worth re-reading the Department for Education's (DfE) impartiality guidance for schools in this context.

Out of sight

At the most serious end of absenteeism are the children who drop completely from sight of the system. There are thousands of these children. This remains one of our biggest concerns and one that I have raised in every one of my annual reports.

This includes children in illegal unregistered schools. It often astonishes people to learn that illegal schools exist. They do – and we have been working to uncover them and prosecute their managers for a number of years. We have frequently found them operating in unsafe premises, led by unsuitable people, and teaching a very limited curriculum without even basic skills. We are still waiting for new legislation that will close loopholes and give us additional powers to close these places down.

As well as illegal schools, there are children in unregistered alternative provision (AP). AP is where children go when they cannot cope in school, or when their behaviour is too disruptive for them to stay in a mainstream school. Currently, not all AP needs to be registered or inspected. This leads to a wide disparity of provision – from excellent, through to places delivering substandard education, with very few safeguards, to some of the most vulnerable children.

Even when AP is registered, the quality of some is concerning. Graded inspection outcomes this year are worse for state-funded AP than for other schools. Tackling substandard unregistered AP and improving registered provision must be priorities.

The continued rise in the numbers of children needing SEND support and education, health and care (EHC) plans is a linked issue. Many local authorities are struggling to meet demands. Many pupils who are awaiting specialist placements are being referred to AP indefinitely or their parents see no option other than home-schooling, which suppresses the real scale of the issue.

Social care – demand and supply

Problems of increasing demand and limited supply are a chronic challenge in the provision of social care – where we continue to see struggles with sufficiency. This is another theme that I have returned to year after year. There does now seem to be greater recognition of the problem, but that needs to turn into action.

There are shortages in children's home places, foster care availability and resources for SEND and mental illness. Frequently, children do not have the right provision available locally, so an increasing number are ending up in unregistered placements, often deprived of liberty or living too far from home. Unregistered homes represent a significant issue. Last year, we identified 370 such premises that were operating illegally. Most closed when they were challenged.

The response of local authorities to homeless children aged 16 and 17 is also very mixed in quality.

And we need to see a better range of options for children currently on deprivation of liberty orders so they experience safe care with no more restrictions on their lives than are properly needed.

We are acutely aware of the challenging position we are in as the regulator of homes, in a market where demand far outstrips supply. Whenever we restrict or close poor provision, we are reducing the supply still further – and perhaps requiring children to uproot and move home, sometimes many miles away. It is right that we act in the interests of children's safety and security, but it's an invidious position to be in and we balance our decision-making very carefully.

This year, concerns have continued about unaccompanied asylum-seeking children placed in inappropriate settings, including hotels. The recent high court rulings have provided some welcome legal clarity around local authority responsibilities and Home Office's powers – but they don't provide a solution to the problem. We are part of a cross-government taskforce and we have accompanied the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) to advise on the inspections of the hotels still being used to house these children.

Workforce

A consistent issue in recent years – and one felt sharply at the moment in both education and social care – is retention and recruitment of staff.

In the early years, providers are being forced to use agency staff and apprentices to maintain the required staff-child ratios. If the staff aren't available, providers are forced to scale down provision, further contributing to a squeeze on places.

In schools, staff shortages are reducing expert teaching, increasing stress, limiting intervention when children struggle, and creating a barrier to teachers accessing training and development.

Social care providers are competing against roles in sectors like hospitality which offer comparable pay but with fewer responsibilities and expectations. And in social work there is an overreliance on agency social workers which undermines the consistency of the support that children experience.

In further education and skills, shortages in key industries are tempting tutors back into the workplace because their skills command a premium.

And staff shortages also affect the professions that support children and families – with a knock-on effect for schools and social care providers. These include speech and language specialists, educational psychologists and health visitors.

Easing staffing pressures, improving funding models and providing more clarity and guidance for providers will all help sustain the positive trends that are beginning to emerge. But the national workforce is clearly constrained. Looking in the round at the workforce requirements of all the different public and voluntary services for children, especially those with SEND and those in care, might help to make sure that finite capacity is directed where it will have most value for children.

Ofsted's work

We are one part of a large and complex accountability system that oversees education and social care. We have limited resources, especially for our work in the school sector. And yet, through our work, we exert real influence on the sectors we inspect and regulate.

As the regulator of social care and early years providers, we have direct powers of intervention. Then there is the influence that comes from the act of inspecting providers. Inspections are not just about judgements but also about professional dialogue with staff and leaders in nurseries, schools, colleges, children's homes, apprenticeship providers, local authorities, prisons and the rest.

Much of our influence arises from our frameworks and the research reviews and reports that sit underneath them. They lay out a well-evidenced conception of quality, around which we have built consensus. We know that these and our handbooks are well-used long before an inspector visits.

Influence also comes from the work we do to aggregate and supplement the insights from inspection, directed at the issues that matter to the sectors we work with, and to publish and communicate them in ways that are useful to practitioners and also to policy makers.

It's important that we use all these levers responsibly and carefully, and that we listen to the people we inspect and regulate as well as drawing on relevant research. This year, there has been a great deal of discussion around our work – in particular our work with schools. Throughout the year, we have listened to all the voices in the debate.

We made some changes in response to what we heard. We are returning more quickly to schools graded inadequate overall only because of ineffective safeguarding, we have already given more information to school leaders about aspects of the inspection process and likely timings of inspections, and we are making some changes to our complaints system.

We believe that these changes are proportionate and will be effective, but of course we will always consider further ways to improve. Most importantly, we will continue to listen to parents and learners, the education and social care sectors, and to a wide range of interested parties, through our full programme of engagement with representative groups and other stakeholders.

Inspection, like any form of scrutiny, may never be entirely comfortable for the recipient. But we try to make it as positive and valuable an experience as it can be – and make sure it is always grounded in the best interests of children and learners. The inspection feedback that we collect regularly and publish in our annual reports consistently shows that in a very high proportion of our work, it lands as it should. It is Ofsted that has to make the tough calls when provision of any kind is not good enough for children, and some contention will always flow from that.

This year, we have also been carrying out an implementation review of the EIF. This review evaluated whether we are carrying out inspection as intended, and the challenges in doing so. It found that the EIF is being implemented largely as intended, and that the framework is flexible across a range of provision types. We have identified some areas where implementation is challenging. For example, although we have sufficient time to come to valid judgements, inspectors recognise that in ungraded school inspections in particular, the limited time they have can restrict the professional dialogue with leaders and others more than is desirable.

As part of our commitment to transparency and accountability, we will shortly publish the main findings of the review. Next year, we will begin an impact evaluation that will give a further opportunity for the sector to feed back views on the EIF.

The results from re-inspections of schools previously graded outstanding and exempted from inspection for many years has already shown what can happen in the absence of regular external inspection. As in so many areas of public service, regular scrutiny of schools helps maintain a focus on standards. When scrutiny is removed, standards can slip simply because there is no perceived need to notice and keep up with what is happening elsewhere.

In social care, there has been a series of reports of troubling cases where cruel and unfit adults have killed or harmed children. The removal of vulnerable children from the sight of so many adult eyes and the absence of some routine services and controls through the pandemic both contributed to some of these. Nevertheless, there have been lessons for us and for others, especially about what is needed to protect children with the most severe special needs, such as those who are non-verbal.

Our inspections are not investigations – we will always rely to some degree on providers being open and honest with us. But we are looking at how we can more quickly identify where this is not happening. In a regulatory system that places significant weight on provider notifications, it is important to make full use of and connect the pieces of information that can signal problems directly or flag a possible loss of integrity. We have improved our inspector training, systems and analysis. And we are deploying more inspectors with specialist knowledge of complex disabilities, as well as discussing with the Care Quality Commission how they can support and assist our teams.

We are also working with DfE to explore new powers that would strengthen regulatory oversight of children's homes. Currently, we can take regulatory action only against individual settings, not at ownership level. This does not reflect the way the children's home market operates today.

Conclusion

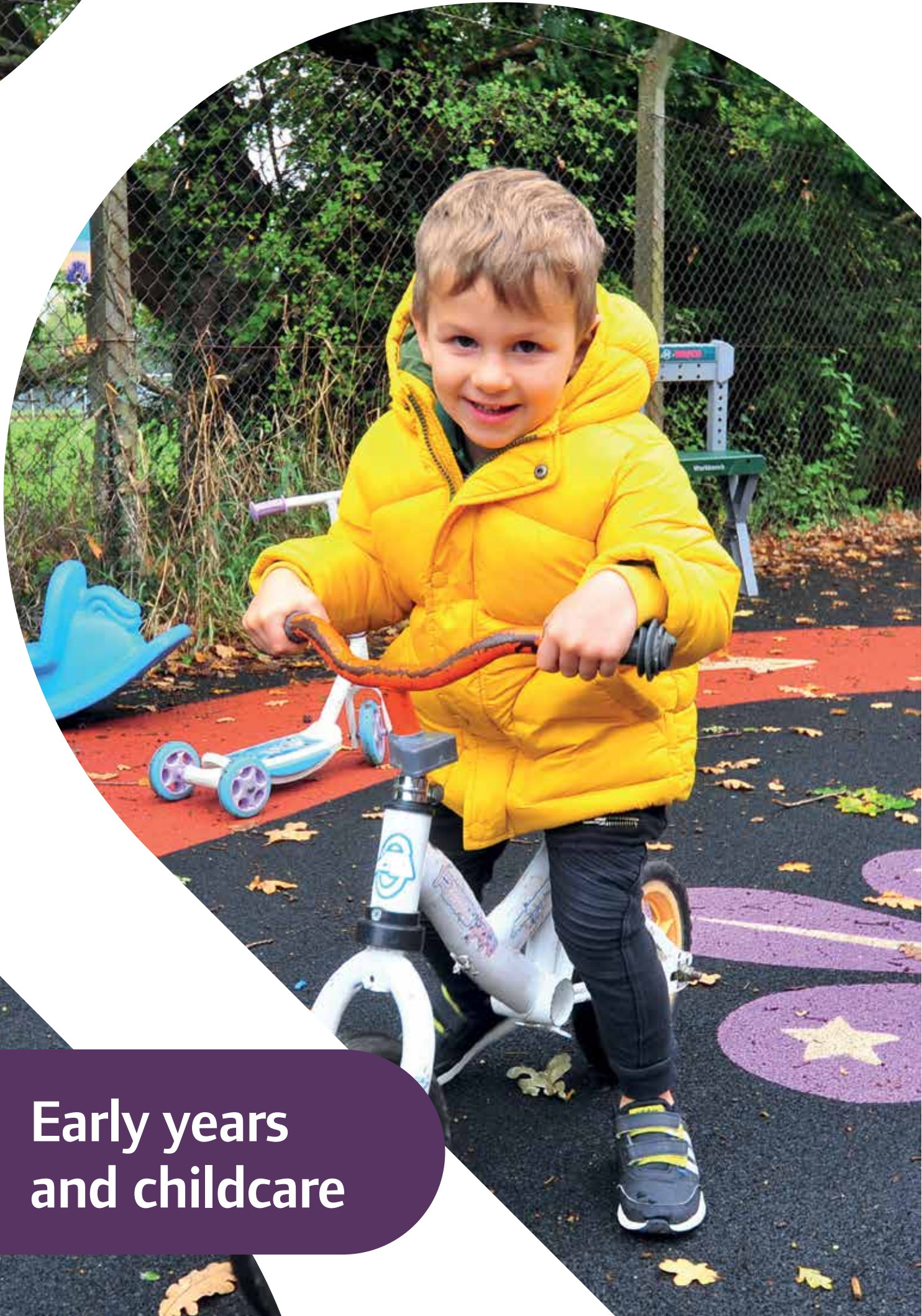
The evidence of this report shows that we can be optimistic about education and care in England. The pandemic has a long tail; significant challenges remain, but they are not intractable.

And optimism is a positive message to give to children at a time when they are assailed on all sides – sometimes prematurely – by the worries and concerns of the adult world. It is vital that children do not see their future as a tarnished inheritance. Children need optimism. They need space to grow and develop; to enjoy childhood; to relish their education; to build resilience and to become confident that they have a part to play as adults in making good lives and contributing to moving the world forward. This is needed before they are loaded with the heavier burdens of adult life.

For that to happen, we need vibrant, successful and positive education and social care sectors, able to attract new talent and continuously improve. The people working in education and care deserve recognition and support, not a narrative of decline. It's not a fair reflection of their work and it's not fair on the children whose lives they help to shape.

This generation of children has lived through difficult and destabilising times. We must make sure they grow up with the curiosity, confidence and passion to pursue their goals – and the education, skills and security to achieve them.





Early years and childcare

Early years and childcare

The quality of a child's experiences in their first five years has a lasting impact on their educational attainment as well as their future health and happiness. This is why our strategic priorities include 'the best start in life'. We want to make sure we have good evidence for and raise awareness of what constitutes a high-quality early education. One of the greatest challenges to high-quality early education is the growing number of unqualified staff working in nurseries and pre-schools.¹ In 2023, one in five staff is unqualified compared with one in seven staff in 2018.²

Ofsted inspects and regulates 62,300 early years and childcare providers.³ These offer 1.26 million Early Years Register (EYR) places. Most providers looking after under-fives must register on the EYR. This includes nurseries, pre-schools, holiday clubs, childminders and other private childcare. Those who care for children aged five to eight are registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register (CR). Providers caring for children over eight, nannies and before- and after-school childcare can register on the voluntary part of the CR.

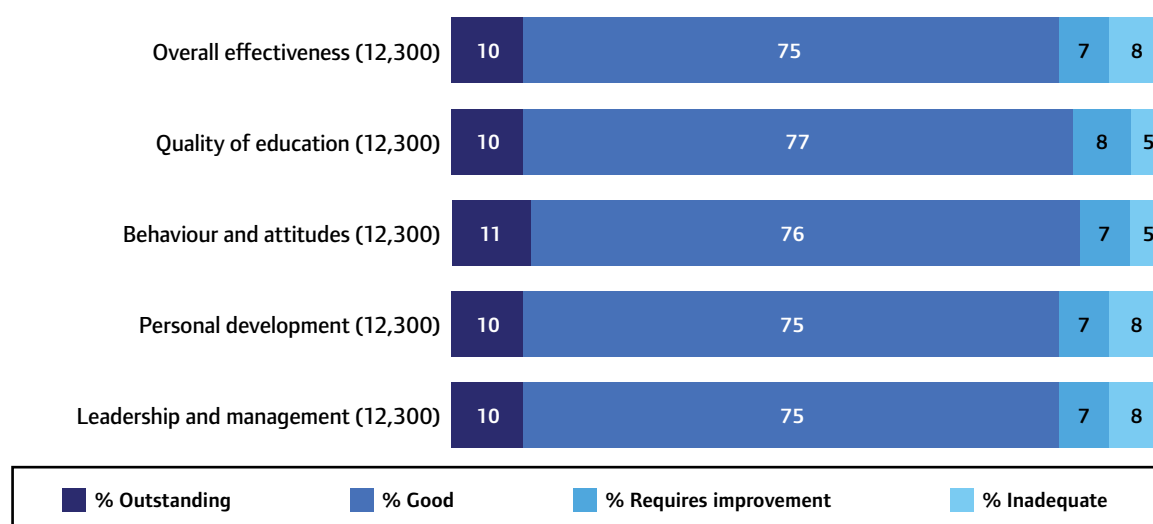
Early years inspection and regulation

What we did this year

This year, we carried out 12,300 full EYR inspections (see annex for data definitions). Eighty-five per cent resulted in a judgement of good or outstanding for overall effectiveness. All of these inspections are good or outstanding for quality of education and behaviour and attitudes. Across all judgements, childminders are more likely to be good or outstanding than nurseries and pre-schools.

Figure 1: Overall effectiveness and key judgements of early years providers, this year

Number of inspections in brackets



Of the inspections carried out this year, 40% previously judged outstanding and 79% previously judged good kept the same grade. However, 8% that were previously judged outstanding declined to requires improvement or inadequate.

1. The term 'nurseries and pre-schools' is used in this report to describe childcare on non-domestic premises.

2. 'Provision for children under 5 in England: January 2023', Department for Education, July 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provision-for-children-under-5-in-england-january-2023>.

3. State-funded nursery schools and school Nursery and Reception classes are covered in the schools chapter.

Table 1: Overall effectiveness of early years providers this year, by previous overall effectiveness

Previous overall effectiveness	Total number of inspections	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
Outstanding	1,250	40	51	4	4
Good	6,930	6	79	6	8
Requires improvement	720	2	79	8	11
Inadequate	850	1	68	19	12
Not previously inspected	2,520	10	76	7	8
Total	12,300	10	75	7	8

Registering and regulating childcare providers are important parts of our work, as well as inspecting. We assess anyone who applies to join the EYR or CR to check whether they are suitable to care for or be in regular contact with children, before granting or refusing registration.

We carried out 2,610 registration visits this year. These were to childminder, nursery and pre-school applicants to the EYR, or to CR applicants where we had concerns about suitability.

We also do regulatory visits and telephone calls to make sure that anyone we register continues to be suitable to provide childcare. We carried out 7,230 regulatory events this year. Ninety-four per cent of these were to childminders or nurseries and pre-schools on the EYR.



State of the nation

At year end, we had given 38,000 providers on the EYR (79%) a full inspection. The proportion of providers judged good or outstanding is the same as last year (96%).

Since the introduction of the education inspection framework (EIF) in 2019, the proportion of early years providers judged outstanding has decreased from 20% to 14%. In the same period, the proportion of providers judged good has increased from 76% to 83%.

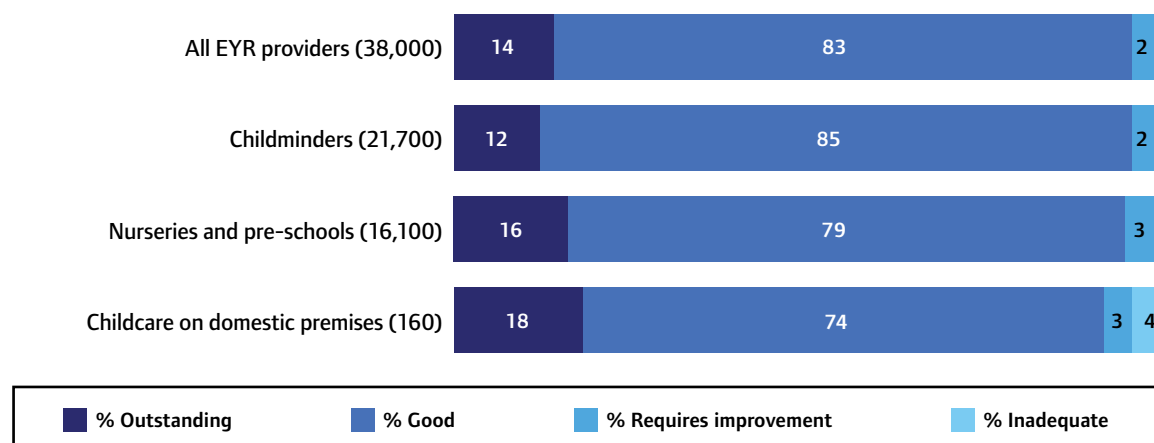
Table 2: Overall effectiveness of early years providers, over time

At year end	Total number inspected	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
2023	38,000	14	83	2	1
2022	39,900	15	82	2	1
2021	40,900	17	80	2	1
2020	43,700	17	79	3	1
2019	49,800	20	76	3	1

Ninety-seven per cent of childminders are good or outstanding compared with 96% of nurseries and pre-schools. However, 16% of nurseries and pre-schools and 18% of childcare on domestic premises are outstanding compared with 12% of childminders.

Figure 2: Overall effectiveness of early years providers, at year end

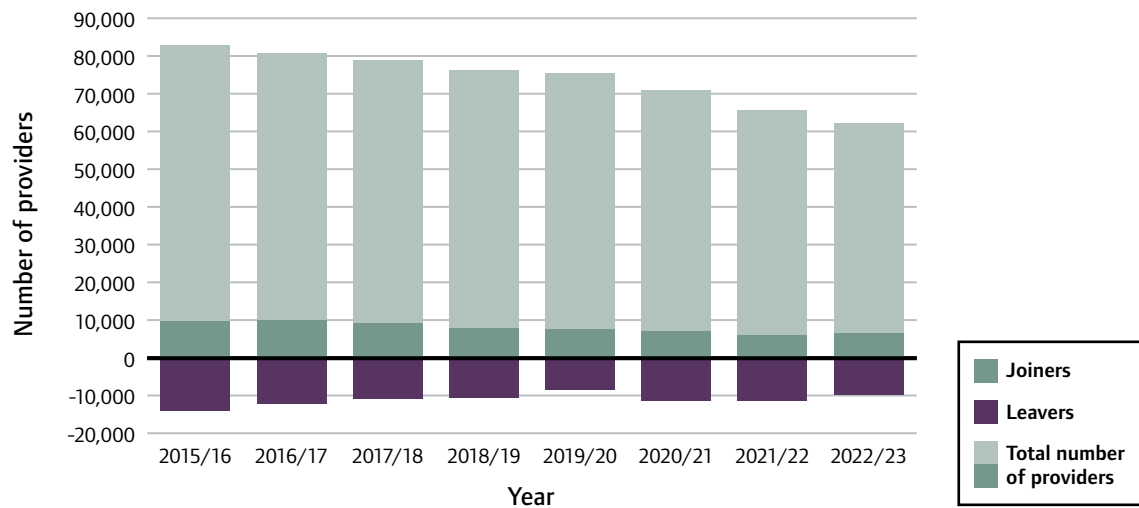
Number of providers in brackets



Childcare providers and places

The number of providers on our registers has been falling steadily since 2016.

Figure 3: Joiners and leavers in the childcare sector, over time



At year end, 1.26 million childcare places were being offered by providers registered on the EYR, down from 1.31 million places in 2019. This decline in places is mostly due to a fall in the number of childminders. On average, childminders offer fewer childcare places than nurseries and pre-schools. This is partly why the number of places has not fallen at the same rate as the number of providers. Alongside this, some nurseries and pre-schools have increased the number of places they offer.

Despite a falling birth rate, there is a shortage of childcare places in many areas, leaving some parents with limited or no childcare.⁴ Local authorities say that the reasons for nursery closures include difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified staff, and rising costs.⁵ Parents also increasingly want weekend, evening and overnight childcare, as well as longer days and greater flexibility. This puts further pressure on places.

The number of local authorities that say that they do not have enough childcare places has increased since 2022. The decline in places has affected sufficiency in different ways. The largest drop in sufficiency was for full-time childcare places. Fewer than half of local authorities say they have enough places for full-time working parents wanting childcare. The number of local authorities with enough places for three- and four-year-olds has also declined significantly for the first time in recent years. The situation for disabled children is even worse, because only 18% of local authorities say they have enough places for disabled children.⁶

4. 'Live births in England and Wales: birth rates down to local authority areas', Office for National Statistics, September 2022; <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/lebirthrates>.

5. 'Research on the nature, impact and drivers of nursery closures in England', Local Government Association, July 2023; <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/research-nature-impact-and-drivers-nursery-closures-england>.

6. 'Childcare Survey 2023', Coram Family and Childcare, March 2023; <https://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/childcare-survey-2023-report-landing-page>.



In 2023, the estimated take-up rate of the 15-hour entitlement for two-year-olds increased to 74%, from 72% last year. This is the highest take-up rate since the scheme was introduced in 2015. The take-up rate of 15 hours for three- and four-year olds has also increased to 94%, from 92% last year.⁷

Childminders

Childminder registration

Childminders offer parents increased choice and flexibility alongside nurseries and pre-schools. We have reviewed the registration process for new childminders and found ways to make it easier and quicker, while still making sure that new childminders are suitable to care for young children. We now pre-book visits with applicants rather than waiting for suitability checks to be complete. Applicants can verify their identity online when doing a Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check and we have simplified the health report provided by GPs. We have also reduced the number of personal references that prospective childminders have to provide. An early review of this streamlined process shows that we have reduced the average time it takes to register.

In some cases, the new registration process may not be any quicker than before. This is usually because of delays in receiving external checks or because information in external checks needs further checking before the registration visit. We are pleased to see that the government understands the need to recruit more childminders and that it is also taking steps to make registration easier.⁸

7. 'Provision for children under 5 in England: January 2023', Department for Education, July 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provision-for-children-under-5-in-england-january-2023>.

8. 'Minister urges social landlords to open the door to childminders', Department for Education, August 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/minister-urges-social-landlords-to-open-the-door-to-childminders>.

Childminder agencies

Childminders can register with Ofsted or with a childminder agency (CMA). CMAs help childminders with training, business support, safeguarding and finding new clients. They set their own registration fees and support for their registered childminders. CMAs must make an annual unannounced quality assurance visit to each childminder.⁹

We register all CMAs. We inspect CMAs that have childminders on roll. There are two possible inspection outcomes: effective and ineffective. At year end, there were seven CMAs and, based on the information they provide, a total of 1,650 childminders registered with them. By year end, we had inspected five CMAs. Four were judged effective. One CMA was judged ineffective due to not meeting its statutory duties.

Childminder characteristics

Childminder numbers have halved in the past 10 years, from 55,300 in 2013 to 27,000 at year end. The number of places offered by childminders has declined, from 238,000 in August 2019 to 166,000 at year end.

For the last decade, the number of childminders registering has been falling and is consistently lower than the number leaving. In 2022–23, 1,700 childminders registered but 5,190 left the profession. The average age of a childminder registering has remained broadly the same across the past five years, at 37 years old. The average age of active childminders has increased, from 46 years old in 2018–19 to 48 years old this year. Childminders who resigned in 2022–23 were registered with Ofsted for an average of 11 years. Of those resigning, 18% left the profession within three years of registration; the majority (58%) were aged under 40.¹⁰

The ageing cohort of childminders and a falling number of providers registering with Ofsted mean that the childminding profession is not being replenished at a sufficient rate to sustain itself. Childminders are only one part of the sector, but they give parents choice and flexibility. Any solution to falling childminder numbers will need to increase the number of childminders registering and increase the time they stay in the profession.

There may be barriers to younger childminders joining the profession. We know that childminders are more likely to operate from owner-occupied housing than rented housing. Some prospective childminders who rent may have trouble registering if landlords impose restrictions on how they can use their homes.

9. New childminders can choose to register with Ofsted directly or to register with a childminder agency (CMA). Those registered with CMAs are a relatively small proportion, which has not changed substantially during the year.

10. 'Research and analysis: A focus on childminders', Ofsted, September 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspections-statistical-commentaries-2022-to-2023/a-focus-on-childminders>.



Oversight of multiple providers

We define a 'multiple provider' as an Ofsted-registered person who owns two or more settings. These settings will also have the same nominated individual. While the number of standalone providers has fallen over time, the number of nurseries and pre-schools that are part of a multiple provider is growing. At year end, 48% of nurseries and pre-schools were owned by a multiple provider.

We inspect and regulate the individual settings multiple providers manage. However, we know that multiple providers strongly influence the education and care in their nurseries and in many cases direct and manage it. Inspection and regulation are most effective and efficient when they take into account how providers operate. This means considering how we might be able to inspect and regulate the structures, systems and processes multiple providers use across their nurseries. This would allow us to hold them to account for the quality of provision across all their settings. This is particularly important when multiple providers acquire new nurseries or pre-schools where there is poor practice. We need to be sure that they have the capacity to maintain quality in their existing settings and to raise the standard of education and care in their new settings.

Safeguarding

Keeping children safe is a vital part of our early years regulation and inspection. This year, 8% of full EYR inspections found safeguarding to be ineffective, compared with 9% last year. Providers judged inadequate or ineffective for safeguarding will be re-inspected within the same year. At year end, there were 24,900 EYR providers that had received a full inspection under the EIF. Of these, 1% were judged ineffective for safeguarding, which is the same proportion of providers judged inadequate overall. The most common reason for an ineffective safeguarding judgement is because staff lack knowledge and understanding of safeguarding policy or procedures, particularly those for reporting and responding to concerns about children.

Building evidence for ‘the best start in life’

We are seeing an impact of the EIF on early years provision, particularly around curriculum intent. Providers are increasingly able to talk confidently about what they want children to know and be able to do. To build on this important progress, and to develop practitioners and leaders’ knowledge and confidence around curriculum even further, we are focused on building evidence for ‘the best start in life.’

This year, we have published two reports that highlight what children need for the best start in life. Our international perspectives on early years report reflects on where England sits in an international early years context.¹¹ Approaches to early education and care, and the age at which children start compulsory school, vary but the report shows there are common challenges and policies that shape the education and care of pre-school children in England and other European nations.

Part two of our early education research review describes what a high-quality early education curriculum looks like.¹² It covers the three early years foundation stage (EYFS) prime areas of learning:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development.

These areas are crucial to children’s early learning and their later success in education and life. They underpin learning in other areas of the early years curriculum and prepare children for the curriculum in primary and secondary schools.

The review highlights the importance of a well-planned and structured curriculum, so that practitioners understand what they want children to know and be able to do. It also emphasises the importance of high-quality interactions between practitioners and children. These are more likely to happen when practitioners recognise what young children know and can do and understand what they want them to learn.

Part three, which we plan to publish later this year, will look at the four specific areas of learning:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design.

11. ‘International perspectives on early years’, Ofsted, June 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-perspectives-on-early-years/international-perspectives-on-early-years>.

12. ‘Best start in life part 2: the 3 prime areas of learning’, Ofsted, September 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/best-start-in-life-a-research-review-for-early-years/best-start-in-life-part-2-the-3-prime-areas-of-learning>.



Workforce challenges

Last year, we described the recruitment and retention challenges facing providers, and we are still seeing a growing shortage of qualified and experienced early years staff. In nurseries and pre-schools, one in five staff has no relevant EY qualification, and the proportion of unqualified staff has increased from 16% in 2020 to 21% this year. This is largely due to a decline in the proportion of staff with relevant EY level 3 qualifications, from 65% in 2021 to 61% in 2023. The proportion with a graduate-level qualification or a relevant EY level 2 has remained stable over the same period.¹³

Our international perspectives report shows that many European nations are facing similar workforce problems.¹⁴ The challenges of recruiting qualified staff before COVID-19 were exacerbated by the pandemic and continue to get worse. There are many reasons why the sector continues to lose experienced staff, including low wages, perceived low status, poor working conditions and limited opportunities for professional development. The early years sector is competing with, and losing out to, higher paid or more flexible employment.

The shortage of experienced and qualified staff can affect the quality of children's learning and the training and support that settings can give to less experienced practitioners. On inspection, we found that providers often have to use agency staff to maintain required ratios. This means that children may not have a consistent key person who knows them and understands their needs. Some providers have scaled down their provision, reducing the number of children they can care for.

The proportion of inspections that resulted in good or outstanding judgements this year shows that many providers are doing a good job of managing the workforce challenges. However, if experienced and qualified staff continue to leave, this may have a detrimental effect on quality in the future.

13. 'Provision for children under 5 in England: January 2023', Department for Education, July 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/provision-for-children-under-5-in-england-january-2023>.

14. 'International perspectives on early years', Ofsted, June 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-perspectives-on-early-years/international-perspectives-on-early-years>.



Early years apprenticeships

Good apprenticeships may be part of the solution to sector recruitment problems. However, this will depend on the number of apprentices and the quality of their training. The quality of training and support for apprentices is not consistent between providers. Apprentices can work in any nursery or pre-school regardless of its quality or inspection grade. This means that they may not always see and learn from good practice.

There are good and outstanding nurseries and pre-schools that value apprentices and support and nurture them. We have seen how good leadership ensures high-quality training and supervision for apprentices. In these providers, apprentices see and learn from good practice. However, in some providers, workforce challenges and financial pressures lead to apprentices being used as key staff to make up ratios, replacing roles previously filled by skilled, experienced staff. We have seen how some settings are employing several apprentices to fill staffing gaps. A high proportion of inexperienced and unqualified staff can have a big impact on the quality of provision.

Apprentices are entitled to 20% off-the-job training, provided by employers or in college. However, many settings are so reliant on apprentices that they do not always release them for college. This can delay or disrupt apprentice training. Using apprentices to fill staffing gaps or make up ratios may seem like a short-term fix, but it cannot be a long-term solution. It is not fair to children or to apprentices. Using apprentices in this way is also against funding rules.

We are pleased to see that revisions to the Early Years Educator (EYE) level 3 assessment criteria include a focus on the importance of the curriculum. The criteria set out the minimum a qualified EYE should know, understand and be able to do. This is the first update to the level 3 criteria since 2013. The revised criteria make sure that practitioners can:

- plan and provide effective early years education that enables children to progress
- support children with SEND
- keep children safe and healthy
- work closely with colleagues and other professionals.

We hope these revisions will help those entering the profession to understand the importance of all children getting the best start. They will be used from September 2024.

SEND in the early years

The number of children under five given a new education, health and care (EHC) plan in 2022 was 16,500, an increase of 15% compared with 2021, on top of an increase of 8% the previous year.¹⁵ Nearly a quarter of all new EHC plans in 2022 were for children under five. On inspection this year, we also saw an increase in demand for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) provision. Settings are adapting their curriculum and providing additional support for more children than in the past. However, staffing issues mean that many settings have practitioners with limited SEND experience or training.

Last year, providers told us about the impact of the pandemic on children's language and communication development. This is a continuing concern – children are still starting in settings behind in this area. Practitioners have noticed that some children know fewer words or lack the confidence to speak.

Children have had to wait longer than pre-pandemic for help from external services such as speech and language therapists and educational psychologists. However, additional early support can help children keep up with their peers rather than fall further behind. Providers are increasingly having to find ways to provide the additional help children need themselves while they wait for external services. This can mean adapting the curriculum to focus more explicitly on communication and language.

Some of the best settings and local authorities are training staff in how to support children who need extra help. Many are introducing additional small group and one-to-one interventions and have a strong curriculum focus on communication. Other providers have recruited SEND practitioners or additional staff to support children with high needs.

However, these types of actions are often only possible for nurseries with big enough budgets and enough staff. We know that many settings are finding it difficult to meet children's needs because of staff shortages, particularly a lack of qualified and experienced staff. Local authorities are also struggling to meet increased demand for support from settings.

Children in the early years learn the social and emotional behaviours that will help them in primary school and beyond. Practitioners tell us they still see the impact of the pandemic on children's behaviour and social skills. We see how some children are still having a real problem with a lack of vocabulary. This can mean they find it hard to express their feelings and needs, which can in turn lead to behaviour issues. It is becoming more common for EY staff to systematically teach children how to share and take turns for example. In settings with a well-structured curriculum for behaviour, carefully planned activities and explicit teaching make sure that children learn how to manage their own behaviour.

15. 'Education, health and care plans – Reporting year 2023', Department for Education, June 2023; <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans>.



Schools

Schools

In 2019, the EIF refocused inspection on a new evidence-based conception of high-quality education. We communicate this through our published research and inspection handbooks. We created a new quality of education judgement that has curriculum at the centre. This included looking at what children have learned and how performance outcomes are being achieved. The EIF also brought in separate judgements for behaviour and attitudes and personal development.

This change of focus is encouraging schools to develop and prioritise their curriculum.

Our research visits this year suggest a broadly improving picture across many subjects. Most schools offer a broad and ambitious curriculum. Foundation subjects, which have previously been given limited attention, are increasingly valued by schools – leaders are giving subjects such as geography, history, art and design more curriculum time. In many schools, the curriculum is building pupils' knowledge and skills carefully over time. The teaching of reading is generally strong.

We remain concerned, however, about behavioural issues. Our research suggests that pupil behaviour has worsened in many schools since the pandemic. Persistent disruptive behaviour can harm learning and the wider school experience for many pupils. In the latest statistics, it accounted for nearly half the reasons recorded for suspensions.

Children's experience of school and their potential future outcomes are also being limited by too many pupils not attending school often enough. Overall absence and persistent and severe absences are all too high. The reasons are complex, and schools are working hard with children and families to overcome the obstacles. Some schools are struggling to cope with these challenges.



State-funded schools

What we did this year

This year, we carried out 7,240 inspections of state-funded schools (see annex for data definitions). This is a substantial increase from 4,670 in 2021/22 and is the highest number of inspections we have completed in the last five years. This is largely because, this year, the DfE gave Ofsted additional funding to catch up on the inspections we missed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to inspect all schools at least once between April 2021 and August 2025. This year, we carried out 3,720 graded inspections, 3,260 ungraded inspections of good and outstanding schools and 260 urgent or monitoring inspections.¹⁶

Of the graded and ungraded inspections, 88% of schools were judged good or outstanding for overall effectiveness. Ninety per cent of previously good schools remained good or improved to outstanding, 75% of schools that previously required improvement improved to good or outstanding and 97% of previously inadequate schools improved.

Table 3: Overall effectiveness of state-funded schools this year, by previous overall effectiveness

Previous overall effectiveness	Total number of inspections	% Outstanding or remains outstanding at an ungraded inspection	% Good or remains good at an ungraded inspection	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
Outstanding	930	51	41	7	1
Good	4,890	2	88	8	2
Requires improvement	760	1	74	22	4
Inadequate	270	1	66	30	3
Not previously inspected	120	19	71	9	1
Total	6,980	9	79	10	2

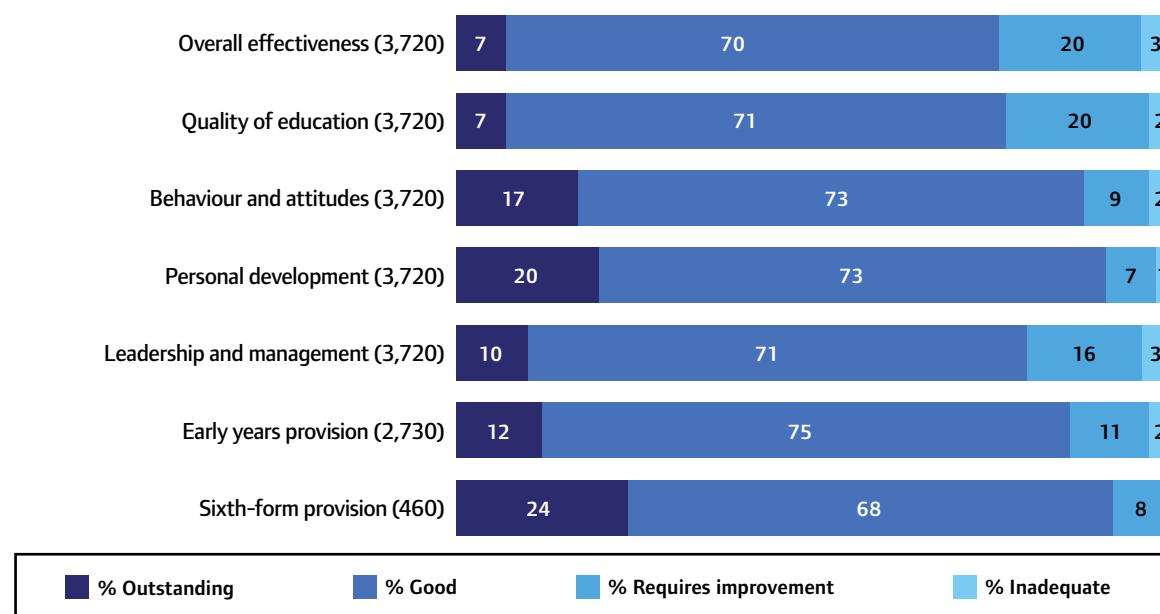
The DfE can intervene in underperforming schools, for example by placing them in a strong multi-academy trust. Since September 2022, this policy applies to all inadequate schools and to schools that require improvement and after having required improvement or been judged inadequate at their previous inspection. The number of schools eligible for intervention has decreased to 1,340 (6% of all schools) at year end from 1,610 at the end of last year.

In graded inspections, we make four key judgements, along with the overall effectiveness judgement. We also judge early years and sixth-form provision where relevant. This year, outcomes for quality of education in these inspections were very similar to those for overall effectiveness. Outcomes for behaviour and attitudes were noticeably more positive. The behaviour and attitudes judgement evaluates a school's work to teach and improve behaviour, and takes into consideration the context and challenges that schools have as well as the strategic plan of action, or track record of improvement that demonstrates leaders' capacity to improve behaviour. However, we recognise post-Covid concerns about pupil behaviour and are carrying out research in this area. This is discussed in more detail in the behaviour section. Outcomes for personal development were also more positive than other judgements this year.

16. There were 39 ungraded inspections which converted to graded inspections immediately. These are counted as graded inspections here and in the analysis of outcomes that follows.

Figure 4: Overall effectiveness, key judgements and provision judgements of state-funded schools at graded inspections, this year

Number of inspections in brackets



As in previous years, primary schools achieved higher grades than secondary schools for all key judgements.¹⁷ The biggest difference between primary and secondary continues to be for behaviour and attitudes (93% good or outstanding in primary, 76% in secondary).

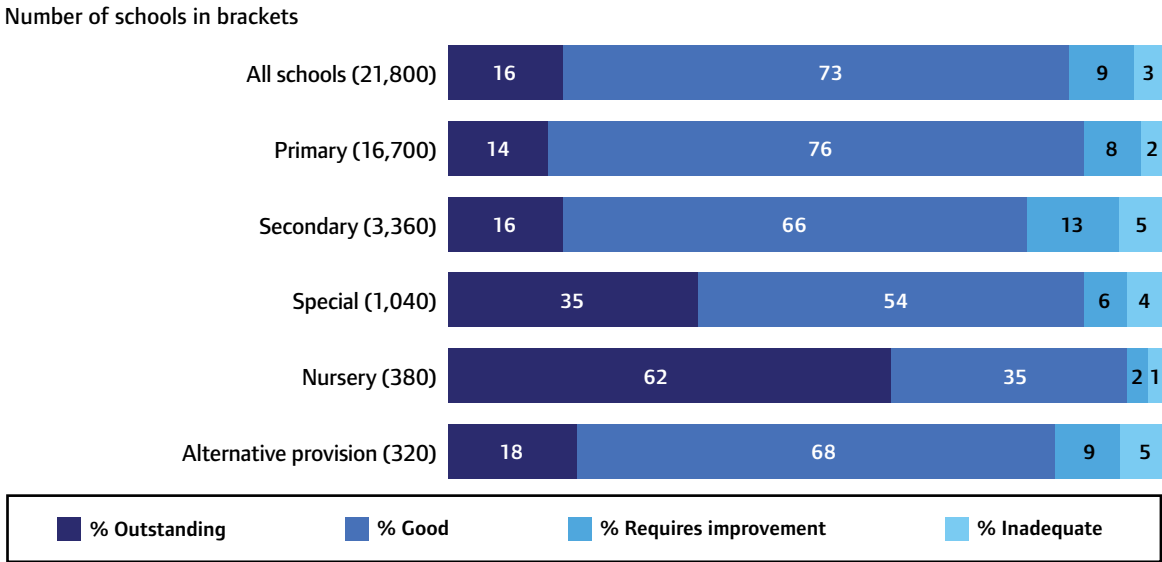
This year, we have continued our analysis of the relationship between school performance data at key stage 2 and key stage 4, and their inspection outcomes.¹⁸ Exam and test results from 2020 and 2021 were withheld by the DfE and so could not be used on inspection, but since October 2022, inspectors have once again had access to the latest performance data in primary schools, and since November 2022 for secondary schools. There continues to be good alignment between the data and the inspection grades.¹⁹

State of the nation

Overall, 89% of schools were judged good or outstanding at their most recent graded inspection. This is a slight increase from 88% last year. Within this, the proportion of schools judged outstanding has decreased from 18% to 16%, whereas the percentage judged good has increased from 70% to 73%. This shift is due to many formerly outstanding schools not retaining that grade when reinspected (see Figure 6).

There have been slight increases in the proportion of good or outstanding in both primary and secondary schools: now 90% and 82%, respectively.

Figure 5: Overall effectiveness of state-funded schools by phase, at year end



Looking back over a longer period, the proportion of schools that are good or outstanding now (89%) is slightly higher than before the pandemic and the start of EIF (86% in August 2019).

17. Based on inspections under the EIF in 2019/20, 2021/22 and 2022/23. 2020/21 not included as graded inspections largely paused due to the pandemic.

18. ‘Ofsted Annual Report 2021/22: education, children’s services, and skills’, pp. 38–40, Ofsted, December 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202122-education-childrens-services-and-skills>.

19. ‘Schools commentary: Alignment between inspection grades and headline data measures’, Ofsted, November 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspections-statistical-commentaries-2022-to-2023/schools-commentary-alignment-between-inspection-grades-and-headline-data-measures>.

Inspections of previously exempt outstanding schools

From 2012 to 2020, primary and secondary schools graded outstanding were exempted by law from routine inspection. When the exemption ended, most outstanding schools had not been inspected under either our current framework (with its new key judgements and more emphasis on the curriculum) or our previous inspection framework. This made it difficult to know how much schools changed during the time they were exempt, and when any decline may have happened.

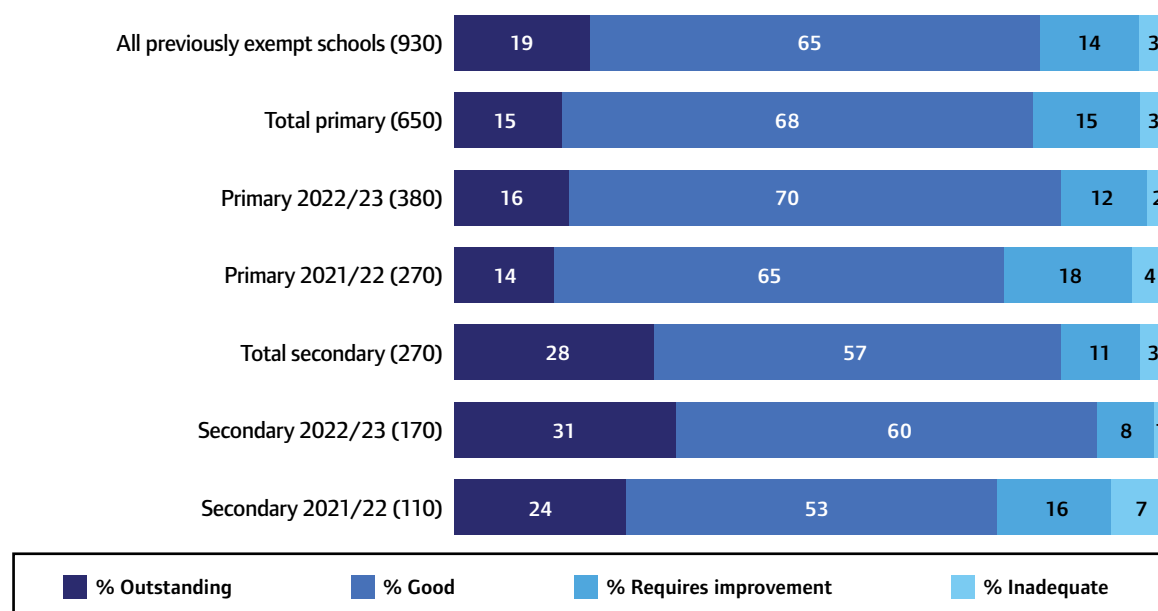
Following the lifting of the exemption, we began re-inspecting these schools in 2021, normally with graded inspections for those last inspected before September 2015 and ungraded inspections for the remainder. Over a third of the schools that were outstanding when the exemption ended have now been inspected.

Thirty-eight per cent of previously outstanding schools retained their outstanding grade at their subsequent graded or an ungraded inspection since September 2021.²⁰ Nineteen per cent of those that had a graded inspection remained outstanding. Twenty-eight per cent of secondary schools remained outstanding, and 15% of primary schools remained outstanding.

This year, the proportion of previously exempt primary schools remaining outstanding at a graded inspection has increased to 16% compared with 14% last year, whereas the proportion of secondary schools remaining outstanding has increased from 24% to 31%.

Figure 6: Overall effectiveness of previously exempt schools at graded inspections by phase, since the lifting of the outstanding exemption

Number of schools in brackets



20. For the previously exempt schools inspected since the exemption was lifted, and for those inspected in 2022/23, the average length of time since their previous graded inspection was 11 years. For the previously exempt schools that have not yet been inspected, the average length of time since their last graded inspected is 10 years.

Ungraded inspections do not change an overall effectiveness grade, but the inspection can conclude that the school might no longer be outstanding if a graded inspection took place (in which case one will follow around a year later).

Since September 2021, we have carried out 290 ungraded inspections of previously exempt schools and concluded that 51% of them may no longer be outstanding (40% of secondary schools, and 54% of primary schools).

Re-inspection of previously exempt schools has led to a net reduction in the overall proportion of outstanding schools, which has fallen from 19% in 2021 to 16%.

Overall, around 760 previously exempt schools are no longer outstanding since the exemption was lifted. On the other hand, in the same period, over 160 schools that were not outstanding when the exemption was lifted have been graded outstanding.

Curriculum

After a gap of some years, we have revived our thematic reports on school curriculum. Along with the curriculum research reviews, these are helping to inform inspector training and supporting school curriculum, teaching and assessment. They are also providing clarity for policymakers about system strengths and weaknesses and informing wider debate.

The breadth of the curriculum

Most schools offer a broad and ambitious curriculum. The research informing the EIF, including findings from our previous subject reports under earlier frameworks, raised concerns about the narrowing of the curriculum.²¹ Our new subject reports this year show a broadly improving picture in most, but not all, subjects:

- schools place a higher value on the subjects in the curriculum beyond English, mathematics and science than was the case at the time of our previous subject reports. The status of many foundation subjects has improved since our previous subject reports. In many cases, leaders ensure more time for teaching subjects such as geography, history and art and design. At the same time, they improve planning for these subjects. They identify what knowledge and skills pupils need and design their curriculums to build these over time. The quality of subject teaching is improving because schools think carefully about what to include in their curriculum
- in most schools, pupils study a wide range of subjects for as long as possible.

However, some subjects still do not receive the attention they deserve:

- in many secondary schools, pupils do not benefit from a broad and ambitious music curriculum. In physical education (PE), pupils typically experience a broad range of activities. However, schools do not always ensure that these contribute enough to developing pupils' knowledge and skills
- in too many primary and secondary schools, the religious education (RE) that pupils receive is of a poor quality and not fit for purpose, leaving pupils ill-equipped for some of the complexities of contemporary society.

21. 'Education inspection framework. Overview of research', Ofsted, January 2019;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework-overview-of-research>.

Curriculum quality

In most schools, the curriculum is effective in developing pupils' knowledge and skills over time.

We found that:

- most schools clearly specify the knowledge and skills that pupils need at each stage of their education
- schools are increasingly aware of the importance of pupils' prior knowledge in deciding what pupils should be able to learn and do
- many schools make sure that pupils' knowledge of important content, concepts and skills is secure so that they can access increasingly complex learning.

In some schools, pupils develop detailed knowledge of the topics studied. They remember this content in the long-term, and this knowledge allows them to learn increasingly complex content. However, the depth and security of pupils' knowledge varies between schools. In some schools, pupils' knowledge is less detailed, less securely remembered or more disconnected.

Typically, pupils' knowledge is weaker in schools where:

- curriculum planning is superficial and does not identify how teaching can build pupils' knowledge and skills sequentially
- teaching does not focus enough on securing the most important knowledge and skills for all pupils
- pupils are asked to complete tasks or answer questions without having secured the knowledge they needed to do this meaningfully
- assessment does not identify important gaps or misconceptions in pupils' knowledge
- schools do not have an accurate understanding of the impact of the curriculum. In too many schools, quality assurance is focused on surface features of curriculum, teaching or assessment. Too often, it does not evaluate how well pupils are learning the curriculum.





Our subject reports identify some weaknesses in areas of the curriculum and in different phases of education. We found that:

- curriculum planning and teaching at key stage 1 does not always lay the foundations for future study as well as it could. Beyond reading and mathematics, schools do not always plan content with a view to how it might be used in future phases of education
- in some schools, external testing continues to drive curriculum decisions in unhelpful ways. For example, at key stage 2, reading comprehension in some schools is narrowly focused on SATS-style questions. Similarly, in some secondary schools, key stage 3 content directly duplicates exam specifications and teaching focuses excessively or prematurely on exam-specific techniques. This is an example of exams influencing curriculum decisions too early
- in all phases of education, support for pupils with SEND is too variable. In some schools, teachers focus too heavily on adapting activities so that pupils can complete the immediate task, for example by providing sentence starters. However, they do not consider how they could address gaps in those pupils' knowledge or skills to enable them to learn increasingly complex content.

Subject education

Our subject reports highlight general improvements in most subjects. Some of our findings are summarised below. Across subjects, we found greater weaknesses in English, music and PE, and extensive weaknesses in RE.

In the coming months, we plan to publish subject reports in English, personal development, RE, art and design, computing and languages.

English

In English, the teaching of reading has improved markedly, but teaching in other areas, such as writing and spoken language, is less effective. We found that:

- schools give pupils a broad reading curriculum that includes a range of genres and styles
- most schools have not developed a well-sequenced curriculum for spoken language and writing
- particularly in writing, pupils are often not given enough time to practise to the point that they are fluent
- schools move too early to complex tasks before teaching pupils the underlying knowledge needed for those tasks and making sure that this knowledge is secure
- assessment is too focused on complex, final tasks and does not identify specific gaps in pupils' knowledge.

To achieve a similar standard to reading, schools would benefit from further guidance and training about how to plan curriculum and teach writing, speaking and listening effectively.

Reading

The teaching of reading is strong. We found that in most schools, pupils learn to read fluently. Reasons for this include that:

- leaders prioritise reading in the curriculum and plan how to develop pupils' love of reading
- schools invest in training staff, so that teaching is high quality
- schools have well-designed curriculums in place to develop pupils' reading.

Successful approaches to teaching reading are particularly well-embedded in primary schools but are also developing in secondary schools. However, in some secondary schools, not enough is done to help weaker readers catch up with their peers:

- not all secondary schools address gaps for the weakest readers. In some cases, schools are too slow to identify these gaps or do not identify them at all
- some secondary schools do not take into account how weaknesses in reading, such as a lack of vocabulary, prevent pupils from accessing the breadth of the school curriculum.

Geography

Geography education has improved, but pupils' knowledge does not connect across topics as much as it should.²² We found that:

- at key stages 1 and 2, schools have not always considered how pupils' knowledge would build between units
- at key stage 3, most schools have carefully selected and sequenced content within, but not between, sections of the curriculum
- in some schools at key stage 4, the breadth of the curriculum is limited to a narrow interpretation of examination specifications
- some schools carefully designed the curriculum so that pupils learn about particular places in different contexts, helping them to develop a rich knowledge of place
- not enough thought has been given to how pupils would be taught explicitly to develop their knowledge of fieldwork.

To improve geography education further, schools should ensure that the curriculum and teaching build pupils' knowledge over time, so that pupils can learn the connections that exist between different parts of the geography curriculum.

22. 'Getting our bearings: geography subject report', Ofsted, September 2023;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-geography/getting-our-bearings-geography-subject-report>.

History

History education has improved significantly over the past 10 years, particularly in primary schools.²³

We found the following strengths:

- schools have given careful thought to the breadth of the curriculum
- teaching is often effective, especially where teachers use stories and examples skilfully to help pupils make sense of content about the past.

We also found some specific areas of weaknesses in history education:

- the quality of assessment varies significantly between schools
- the teaching of disciplinary knowledge is typically weak, and often leaves pupils with misconceptions about the work of historians.

To improve history education further, schools need to make sure that assessment allows teachers to make accurate judgements about the quality of pupils' historical knowledge and to identify and address any gaps. Schools also need further guidance and training, for example from subject associations, on how to develop pupils' disciplinary knowledge in history.

Mathematics

Most schools build pupils' mathematical knowledge effectively over time.²⁴ We found an encouraging picture of mathematics when we visited schools:

- pupils in most schools experience a carefully designed curriculum where learning is broken down into small steps
- teachers generally explain new content clearly and check pupils' understanding regularly, addressing any gaps
- teachers benefit from high-quality support and guidance through professional associations.

Our visits also highlighted two areas in which mathematics needs to improve:

- in some schools, teachers do not give pupils adequate opportunities to practise fluency in their mathematical knowledge
- secondary schools do not always teach problem-solving effectively enough so that pupils' knowledge is secure.

Schools would benefit from further guidance and training in these areas.

23. 'Subject report series: history', Ofsted, July 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-history>.

24. 'Coordinating mathematical success: the mathematics subject report', Ofsted, July 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-maths/coordinating-mathematical-success-the-mathematics-subject-report>.



Music

Music teaching in primary schools has improved.²⁵ Many pupils now have regular opportunities to learn music. However, in many secondary schools, leaders do not ensure enough time for the teaching of high-quality music. We found that:

- in almost all schools, teaching in Reception prepares children well to learn music in key stage 1
- the teaching of singing in primary schools is strong.

However, weaknesses include the following:

- teaching at key stages 1, 2 and 3 often focuses on covering activities, rather than on making sure that pupils have learned content to a high standard
- key stage 3 music is mostly taught in isolated blocks of time and the amount of time allocated to it varies considerably
- the development of pupils' singing and vocal work in secondary schools is far rarer than in primary schools
- the weakest aspect is the development of pupils' composition. Very few schools think about how to build the knowledge that pupils need to learn in order to construct and deconstruct music.

In schools, music often enriches pupils' education beyond timetabled lessons. Many schools reported that COVID-19 and budgetary pressures have had a significant impact on extracurricular music. We found that:

- many schools have a strong extracurricular offer, including instrumental groups and choirs
- the divide between the opportunities for children and young people whose families can afford to pay for music tuition and those who cannot still exists. Many school leaders say that the pressures on school budgets means that they will no longer subsidise instrumental lessons for pupils.

25. 'Striking the right note: the music subject report', Ofsted, September 2023;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-music/striking-the-right-note-the-music-subject-report>.

Personal development, including personal, social, health and economic education and citizenship

Schools are doing a lot of effective work in the area of personal development, but it is, too often, not as coherent as it could be.

We found that schools place a high value on pupils' personal development and have ensured sufficient provision for each of the wide-ranging elements of personal development. In particular, the work to develop pupils' self-esteem, confidence and independence in primary schools is high quality. However:

- in many schools, different parts of the curriculum are too isolated and not as well-connected to other content as they should be. For this reason, pupils' knowledge does not build over time
- in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and citizenship, some schools do not identify what pupils need to know and be able to do
- in secondary schools, pupils have limited opportunities to take on additional responsibilities, such as pupil leadership roles on the school council
- the curriculum offer in citizenship in secondary schools does not typically match the scope and ambition of the national curriculum
- across primary and secondary schools, assessment practices are not fit for purpose
- too many schools do not prioritise this curriculum area enough and give leaders time to fulfil the demands of their roles
- teachers do not receive enough professional development to give them sufficient expertise to teach subjects such as PSHE and citizenship well.

Physical education

The PE curriculum is, too often, a 'buffet' of activities that do not build pupils' knowledge and skills over time.²⁶ We found that:

- most schools make enough time for a broad and ambitious curriculum to be taught
- in some cases, schools carefully consider the knowledge and skills which pupils needed to develop, and prioritise appropriate activities
- in some schools, children in Reception benefit from high-quality support to develop safe, efficient and effective movement.

However, the curriculum in many schools lacks coherence. This is because schools often provide a wide range of activities without considering carefully enough what pupils should learn through them. Too many schools do not make good enough use of the time they have, both outside and inside the classroom, to ensure that pupils develop their expertise in PE, not simply experience an assortment of activities.

In many schools, the curriculum for PE does not match the breadth and ambition of the national curriculum. In a majority of schools, the teaching of dance and adventurous outdoor activity was very limited or ineffective.

26. 'Levelling the playing field: the physical education subject report', Ofsted, September 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-pe/levelling-the-playing-field-the-physical-education-subject-report>.

Religious education

RE in schools is generally of poor quality. Although it is a statutory subject, schools often consider RE as an afterthought. As a subject on the curriculum, it is under-valued. RE is a complex subject, and the lack of clarity and support from government makes schools' job harder.

Some schools steer through these challenges well, but most do not. We found that:

- many schools do not meet the statutory requirement to teach RE at all stages
- pupils are rarely taught enough substance to prepare them to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular society (where religion and non-religion play different parts in different people's lives)
- too often, schools do not teach topics in the RE curriculum deeply enough for pupils to develop a substantial understanding of the subject matter
- non-examined RE is typically not high quality.

All pupils should develop a broad and secure knowledge of the complexity of religious and non-religious traditions. It will take coordinated effort by stakeholders to improve the quality of RE in schools:

- schools need high-quality professional development to teach RE well
- curriculum publishers need to identify clearly what pupils will learn and when, building on knowledge over time, so that pupils develop a deep knowledge of the chosen religious and non-religious traditions
- the government should provide clear expectations about RE provision in schools. Schools should follow these. Current non-statutory guidance for RE should be updated and include clear information for schools about the breadth and depth of the syllabus they are expected to teach.

Science

Science education in schools is typically high-quality, although there is more to do to build pupils' knowledge of 'working scientifically'.²⁷ Through our visits to schools, we found that:

- most pupils experience a broad and ambitious curriculum
- most pupils are taught by teachers with secure knowledge of scientific content
- in some schools, teachers identify and address common misconceptions, although this is not done consistently across schools
- some schools do not think about how pupils' knowledge connects between different phases of their education well enough
- the teaching of knowledge relating to working scientifically is generally weak in both primary and secondary schools.

27. 'Subject report series: science', Ofsted, February 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-science>.



Tutoring

This year, the DfE made changes to simplify the national tutoring programme (NTP). It also commissioned Ofsted research on the quality of tutoring in schools, and on how well schools have integrated tutoring into curriculum planning and delivery.²⁸

Effective tutoring reflects the available research evidence: for example, it has small group sizes and is delivered frequently and consistently. It also links closely with the school curriculum and supports pupils from the earliest stages of education to address learning gaps. However, in most schools, tutoring is used mainly for external tests and exams, for example Year 11 GCSE intervention.

In some schools, there is a fundamental misunderstanding of what tutoring is. Tutors are essentially teaching class content with smaller groups, rather than taking approaches that identify pupils' knowledge gaps.

Tutor quality was an important success factor: schools prefer tutors with qualified teacher (QTS) status over other tutors, and generally tutoring sessions were of higher quality when delivered by tutors with QTS.

Careers

Schools are expected to provide effective careers education, information, advice and guidance. This year, we reviewed careers education to explore how schools are doing this.²⁹

In most schools, careers guidance is a strategic priority. In half of the schools visited, pupils are receiving unbiased guidance from their school, with pupils encouraged to find the most suitable route and provider that is genuinely good for them. However, in schools where practice is weak, this is most often due to a lack of strategic planning.

28. 'Independent review of tutoring in schools: phase 2 findings', Ofsted, October 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-tutoring-in-schools-and-16-to-19-providers/independent-review-of-tutoring-in-schools-phase-2-findings>.

29. 'Independent review of careers guidance in schools and further education and skills providers', Ofsted, September 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-careers-guidance-in-schools-and-further-education-and-skills-providers/independent-review-of-careers-guidance-in-schools-and-further-education-and-skills-providers>.

We found that the main barriers to high-quality careers provision are time and resources. In some schools, there are gaps in teachers' knowledge of apprenticeships and T-levels. Pupils' awareness and understanding of technical and vocational pathways is also generally variable. Staff teaching careers often do not have any specific training in careers education or guidance.

In schools where careers education works well, schools have built the careers programme into curriculum plans and joined up the work of all staff including leaders, careers specialists, PSHE teachers and special educational needs and disabilities coordinators (SENDCos). The careers programmes also builds pupils' knowledge of the world of work and future career options over time.

Attendance

Far too many children are missing school far too often and schools are struggling to reverse this trend. This is likely to have a significant effect on children's progress and outcomes.

The main reason recorded for pupil absences is illness. In autumn 2022, 24% of pupils were persistently absent and missed 10% of sessions. This is a huge increase from 13% in autumn 2019.³⁰ Children whose attendance was worst before the pandemic are most affected, such as those with SEND. Persistent absence is even higher for children with special needs (33% for those with SEN support and 38% for pupils with EHC plans). The proportion of pupils classed as severely absent (missing 50% of sessions) was 1.7%, rising to 3.2% for pupils with SEN support and 5.4% for pupils with EHCs. Pupil anxiety and other mental health problems have increased. Separately, secondary schools are noticing more absences than normal on Mondays and Fridays.

In some cases, the pandemic has led to understandable heightened parental anxiety about whether children should attend school when mildly unwell. We welcome the recent guidance from the Chief Medical Officer as to when children should and should not be in school, in his recent letter to schools:³¹

'It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with...general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. However, children should not be sent to school if they have a temperature of 38°C or above.'

Schools should use this guidance as a basis to continue to have strong communication and collaboration with parents and with pupils about the importance of attendance. This includes:

- honest and supportive conversations with families
- helping pupils overcome obstacles that prevent their attendance, such as anxieties
- repeating positively framed messages in assemblies and newsletters.³²

30. 'Pupil absence in schools in England', Department for Education, July 2023; <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england>. Out of the 7.5% possible sessions recorded as absence in the autumn term 2022/23, 4.5% were due to illness.

31. 'Correspondence - Letter to school leaders on mild illness and school attendance', Department for Education, September 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-school-leaders-on-mild-illness-and-school-attendance/letter-to-school-leaders-on-mild-illness-and-school-attendance>.

32. 'Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence', Ofsted, February 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/securing-good-attendance-and-tackling-persistent-absence/securing-good-attendance-and-tackling-persistent-absence> and 'Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance', Department for Education, September 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance/toolkit-for-schools-communicating-with-families-to-support-attendance>.

Schools operate in different contexts, and we always take account of that. Reversing some of the impact that the pandemic has had on attendance will take time. Inspectors are therefore focusing on what it is that schools are doing, not just the levels of attendance they are achieving. Where attendance is a high priority and improvements are being secured and sustained, inspectors are recognising the effective work of schools.

Part-time timetables

Inspections are showing more and more pupils spending part of their week outside education, and the list of reasons for part-time timetables is lengthening. Schools are using part-time timetables for medical reasons while waiting for child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) assessments due to 'school refusal' or 'emotionally based school avoidance' or due to a pupil's SEND.

Some of this practice is contrary to DfE attendance guidance, which states that part-time timetables should only be used in exceptional circumstances. They should never be used as a sanction for poor behaviour, and only ever on a strictly temporary basis. The more education a child misses, the harder it is for them to catch up. For this reason, we are concerned about the increase in part-time timetables.

Pupil movement

One function of inspection is to highlight when schools are making decisions that are not in the best interest of pupils. Since 2018, we expressed concern about exceptional levels of pupil movement. This may be an indication that the school is 'off-rolling' pupils, which we investigate on inspection.³³ While this is still a concern, the number of schools with exceptional levels of pupil movements between Years 10 and 11 has declined, with 110 schools identified compared with 160 in 2021 and 320 in 2020. Off-rolling has not been a significant issue in our inspections this year either.

However, the pandemic has confused the picture around pupil movements. While the measures we use to identify concerns about off-rolling have moved in the right direction, this does not necessarily mean the problem has gone away. If schools are off-rolling fewer pupils than before, this may be because pupils are attending school less.

Behaviour

Since the pandemic, pupils and teachers are seeing more disruptive behaviour in school. This is affecting both their experience of school and their ability to learn or teach. This is especially true of persistent low-level disruption in class, such as pupils refusing to do as they are told, talking back to teachers or using social media in class. Some kinds of poor behaviour happen more in secondary schools, such as internal truancy, vandalism of school property, bullying, harassment or derogatory language and behaviours.

33. For a school to be identified by Ofsted as having exceptional levels of pupil movement, a minimum of five pupils and 5% of pupils must have moved between Years 10 and 11; the number of moves must be significantly high (as identified by our statistical model that takes account of pupil characteristics), and the school must have met both criteria for two consecutive years. Based on data from the DfE school census each January.



The top three reasons for both suspensions and permanent exclusions³⁴ in secondary schools are:³⁵

- persistent disruptive behaviour
- physical assault against a pupil
- verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult.

Together, these account for three quarters of reasons given for suspensions and two thirds of all exclusions.³⁶

The DfE's national behaviour survey³⁷ reported that teachers in primary and secondary schools lost around one fifth of teaching time to managing behaviour.

We have a research strand on behaviour which we will be reporting on early next year. Preliminary findings from work to date show that the main barriers to schools achieving consistently positive behaviour are:

- lack of parental support and, in particular, less parental support than before the pandemic
- the ongoing legacy of the pandemic, including the impact of children's limited interaction with others. This can present schools with different types of challenges, including dealing with lower academic achievement, as well as personal challenges for pupils such as loneliness
- poor curriculum provision that is inappropriately adjusted to what pupils know and can do. This includes failing to identify pupils' special educational needs or, having identified them, failing to take these into account
- not teaching, modelling and reinforcing what positive behaviour looks like and/or low expectations of pupils' behaviour
- failing to manage ordinary pupil anxiety or, more rarely, not helping pupils to access support for more serious mental health needs
- lack of access to other external services or support.

34. A permanent exclusion is the permanent removal of a pupil from a school roll, whereas suspension is temporarily not allowing them to come to school.

35. 'Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England', Department for Education, July 2023; <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england>.

36. Schools can list up to three reasons for each suspension or exclusion.

37. 'National behaviour survey: findings from academic year 2021/22', Department for Education, June 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-behaviour-survey-reports>. Data combines the opinions of school teachers from mainstream primary and secondary schools.

Schools are, however, taking steps to improve behaviour. Our research highlights a number of effective strategies, including:

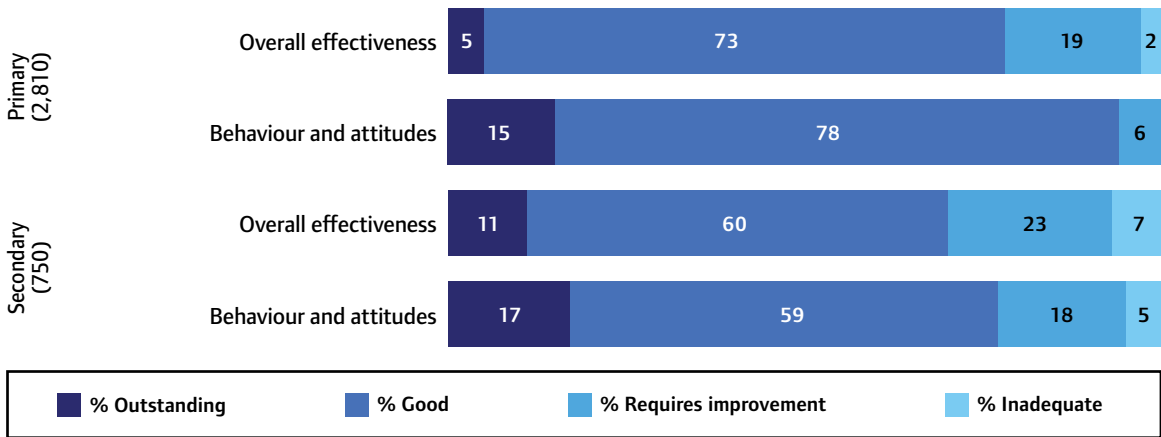
- explicit teaching of desired behaviours
- high consistency across the school in managing behaviour
- making sure that parents and pupils understand the school’s culture and expectations, as well as specific rules for behaviour.

Even though schools report deteriorating pupil behaviour since the pandemic, inspection judgements for behaviour and attitudes show a largely positive picture in schools: of the 3,720 schools given a graded inspection this year, 73% were judged good and 17% outstanding on behaviour and attitudes (see Figure 4). This shows that many schools are rising to the challenges they are facing. We recognise the context and the challenges and take schools’ actions to address these challenges into account on inspection.

However, the picture is very different between primary and secondary schools. Ninety-three per cent of primary schools were judged good or outstanding for behaviour and attitudes compared with 76% of secondary schools. To an extent, this reflects the higher grades seen in primary schools more generally and across all judgements. However, it is striking that in primary schools, behaviour and attitudes is often judged more positively than overall effectiveness, whereas in secondary schools the two judgements are more often aligned.

Figure 7: Comparison of the overall effectiveness and behaviour and attitudes judgements of state-funded schools at graded inspections, this year

Number of inspections in brackets





Safeguarding

Keeping children safe is a critical part of what schools do. The vast majority of schools do it well: of all schools we inspected this year, 99% had effective arrangements for safeguarding.³⁸

Safeguarding is sometimes mis-characterised as an exercise in paperwork – but it is so much more than that. It is about the culture a school creates to keep its pupils safe so that they can benefit fully from all that schooling offers. A positive and open safeguarding culture puts pupils’ interests first. Everyone who works with children is vigilant in identifying risks and reporting concerns. It is also about working openly and transparently with parents, local authorities and other stakeholders to protect pupils from serious harm, both online and offline and about taking prompt and proportionate action.

This relies on schools making sure that staff who work with children benefit from continued training, communicate effectively about safeguarding matters and cross-check each other’s work. All staff should feel empowered to act if they have concerns.

It is rare that schools have ineffective safeguarding without having other significant problems. Only six state-funded schools inspected this year had ineffective safeguarding but no other significant issues. Nearly all schools with ineffective safeguarding would have been judged requires improvement or inadequate even if safeguarding had not been ineffective.³⁹

In the rare cases where schools are judged inadequate only because of ineffective safeguarding, they are often able, through focused work, to deal with the issues relatively quickly. We have recently announced that we will return to all schools judged inadequate due to safeguarding alone within 3 months of publishing their inspection report.

This year, we carried out 110 graded inspections of schools that had ineffective safeguarding at their previous inspection. All but one of these schools have now been found to have effective safeguarding.

38. Effective safeguarding means having no serious and/or widespread issues with safeguarding practice that put children at risk from harm, but could mean there are minor issues, such as technicalities in paperwork, that do not put children at risk. 99% of the school inspections we carried out this year (graded and ungraded combined) judged schools to have effective safeguarding.

39. This year, 64 schools were judged ineffective for safeguarding. This usually results in an overall effectiveness and leadership and management grade of inadequate, with the other judgements not affected. Out of these 64 schools, 58 were graded requires improvement or inadequate for at least one of the other key judgements (quality of education, personal development, behaviour and attitudes). The other six were graded good or outstanding for these key judgements. Ungraded inspections do not have key judgements, but would usually convert to a graded inspection if there were safeguarding concerns.



Academy trusts

Nearly half (47%) of schools are now academies and free schools, including 41% of primary schools and 81% of secondary schools. The number of schools that are part of a multi-academy trust (MAT) has increased from 7,680 to 9,100 in the past three years.⁴⁰ The typical MAT has grown from seven schools to eight.

Multi-academy trust summary evaluations

The trust landscape has evolved greatly, especially in the last five years, and continues to be a developing picture. Around half of all pupils in England now attend a school that is part of a MAT.

As a result of this rapid expansion, we know that decisions about children's education are increasingly being made at trust level. While we continue to try to reflect the increasing role that trusts play in education (through, for example, engagement with trust leaders in our schools inspections), Ofsted's inspection system does not now fit how the school sector operates and this can cause frustration for trusts. However, we look to provide transparency and accountability on how decisions are made at trust level wherever possible, and the impact they have on their schools, and to give better information to parents about the way trusts operate.

Our recent research supports this ambition.⁴¹ We found that trust leaders agreed that inspection only of individual schools neither sufficiently credits trusts for their work nor holds the trust sufficiently accountable when things are not right. We intend to continue to work to maximise our knowledge and understanding of the sector.

We do evaluate some trusts through our multi-academy trust summary evaluations (MATSEs), but we are only able to carry out a limited number of MATSEs each year. MATSEs are visits undertaken with the cooperation and consent of the trust. They do not result in graded judgements. The MATSEs draw on EIF themes to look at a MAT's strengths and areas for improvement.

40. A MAT is defined by its legal status rather than the number of schools it has. There are a number of trusts with MAT status that only have one school. These are excluded from these numbers as they are in effect a single academy trust, despite technically legally being a MAT.

41. 'How multi-academy trusts are involved in school inspections', Ofsted, April 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-multi-academy-trusts-are-involved-in-school-inspections>.

This year we carried out 12 MATSEs.⁴² The findings have been broadly positive, showing common themes and the different approaches trusts take to secure improvement in their academies.

Many trusts have a centrally planned curriculum and/or a centralised approach to some policies such as behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and human resources. Other trusts offer school leaders some discretion to adapt curriculums and some policies to the local context.

We found that safeguarding was a strength in all the trusts visited this year. Trust leaders, trustees and local governors rightly prioritise safeguarding and maintain effective oversight to assure themselves of safeguarding arrangements within their schools.

Other strengths identified included trusts having strong and well-established leadership, a vision and strategy for their schools and an ambition for all pupils to receive a high-quality education and secure the best outcomes they can.

We saw evidence of trusts reflecting and finding new ways to improve, for example by working with other trusts to share good practice.

There were some common themes for improvement, including making sure that local governing bodies (LGBs) understand their delegated roles and responsibilities. This included the need for clear lines of delegation and training.

In some trusts, further work is needed to monitor and improve pupil behaviour and attendance.

Non-association independent schools

There are around 2,420 independent schools in England. About half of these belong to an association and are inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). Ofsted inspects the remaining (non-association) independent schools. In this section, we refer to them as 'independent schools' for simplicity.

We inspect around 1,150 independent schools, which can be broadly divided into three groups:

- independent special schools, which make up nearly three-fifths of the independent schools Ofsted inspects⁴³
- independent faith schools, which make up a fifth⁴⁴
- other independent schools (that is, independent schools that have no declared religious character or ethos and are not special schools).

42. To see the 12 reports go to <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>, select the category of 'Education and training', the sub category of 'Multi academy trusts', and publication dates between September 2022 and September 2023.

43. A small number of special schools also identify themselves as faith schools. For the purposes of our data we have grouped these schools with special schools and not faith schools.

44. The faith of a school is defined by whether the school has declared a religious character or ethos on the DfE's Get Information about Schools site: <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk>. If the school does not declare a religious character or ethos, it is categorised in our statistics as 'non-faith', although it is possible that some of these schools also operate as faith schools.

Independent schools are inspected against the independent school standards (ISS). We carry out standard inspections on a three-year inspection cycle.⁴⁵ In a standard inspection, we also make a graded judgement under the EIF. The DfE commissions several kinds of additional inspections, including emergency inspections and progress monitoring inspections.

What we did this year

This year, we carried out around 820 inspections that comprised 410 standard inspections and 410 additional inspections (see annex for data definitions). We also evaluated around 200 independent school action plans at the DfE's request.

Of the standard inspections:

- 88 were of schools that have not previously been inspected
- 330 were of schools that had a previous inspection
- 40 were previously judged outstanding. Of these, 22 remained outstanding, 14 were judged good, two were judged requires improvement and two were judged inadequate.

Of the additional inspections:

- 140 were progress monitoring inspections of schools that had previously not met one or more of the ISS. Of these, just over half failed to meet the standards that were checked
- 28 were emergency inspections to follow up complaints or concerns about a school. Of these, 11 schools failed to meet the standards that were checked
- the remaining were for pre-registration and material changes to the registration.

Table 4: Overall effectiveness of non-association independent schools this year, by previous overall effectiveness

Previous overall effectiveness	Total number of inspections	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
Outstanding	40	55	35	5	5
Good	190	6	63	16	14
Requires improvement	68	1	60	25	13
Inadequate	31	0	35	35	29
Not previously inspected	88	5	64	19	13
Total	410	9	58	19	14

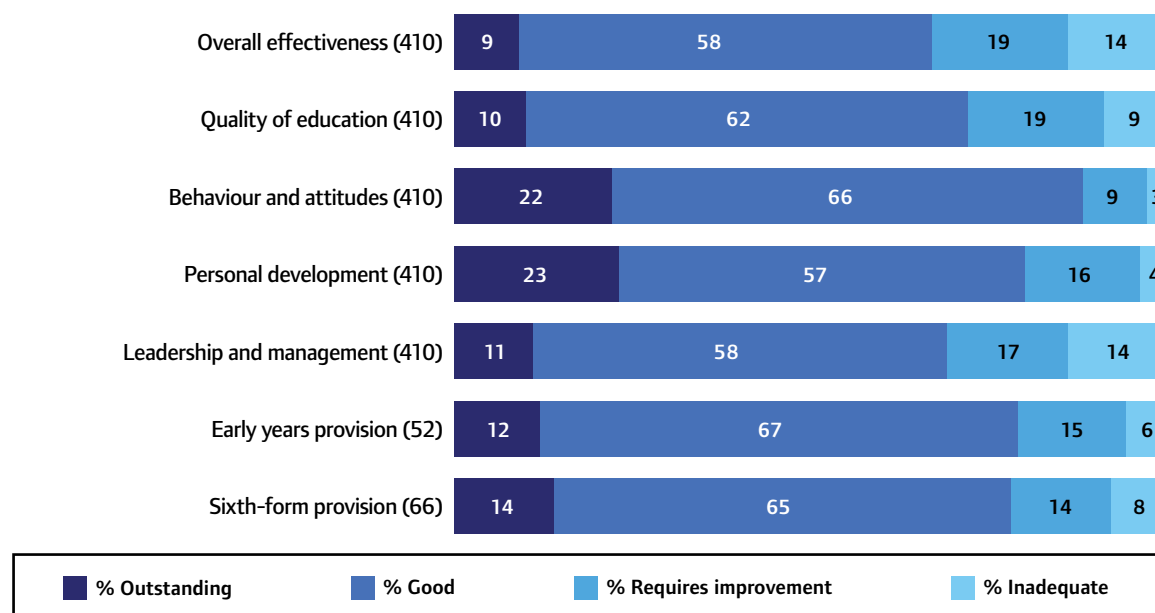
Overall, 68% of independent schools inspected this year were judged good or outstanding, eight percentage points higher than last year. Outcomes for quality of education and leadership and management were eight percentage points higher, whereas outcomes for behaviour and attitudes and personal development were similar to last year.

45. The new inspection cycle for independent schools started in January 2023.



Figure 8: Overall effectiveness, key judgements and provision judgements of non-association independent schools, this year

Number of inspections in brackets



State of the nation

Overall, 75% of independent schools were judged good or outstanding at their most recent standard inspection. Special schools have the highest proportion of good or outstanding judgements (82%), followed by other independent schools (70%) and independent faith schools (61%).

At their most recent standard inspection, 83% of independent schools were judged to have met the ISS. Again, special schools have the highest proportion of schools that met the ISS (90%), followed by other independent schools (78%) and independent faith schools (69%).

It is possible for independent schools to meet the ISS and yet be judged requires improvement for overall effectiveness. Of the 165 (16%) independent schools judged as requires improvement, 56% met the ISS and 44% did not.

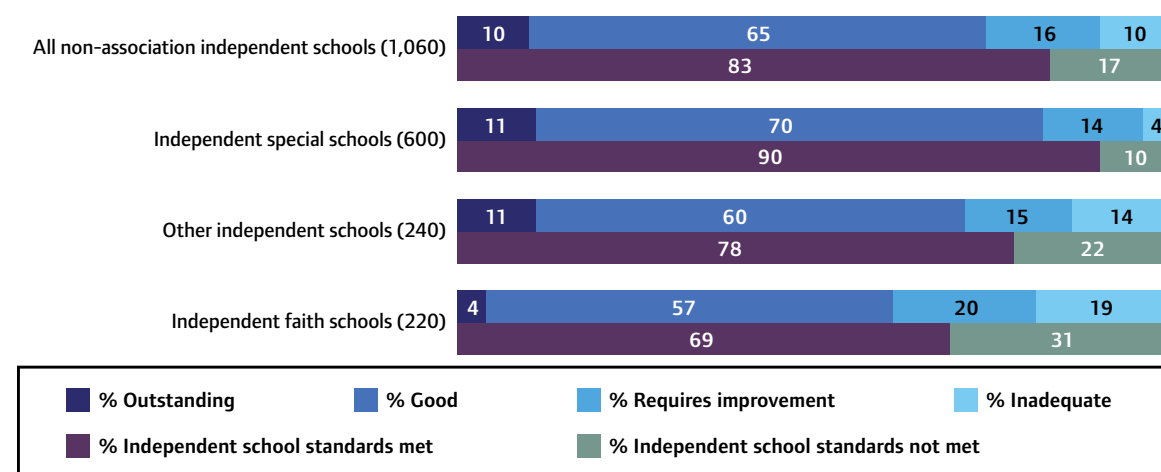
Where schools do not meet the ISS at a standard inspection, the DfE will request that the provider submits a school action plan, which is often followed by a progress monitoring inspection (PMI).

Schools that have had at least one successful additional inspection (for example, the school met the ISS at a PMI or had an acceptable action plan) are more likely to improve to good or outstanding at their next standard inspection than schools that did not meet the ISS at any additional inspections.

Of the schools that received an inadequate judgement since September 2015, just over half improved to good or outstanding where we had evaluated their school action plan, conducted a PMI and then subsequently re-inspected. This increased to 65% if there was an acceptable action plan before a successful PMI.

Figure 9: Overall effectiveness and compliance with the independent school standards of non-association independent schools by school type, at year end

Number of schools in brackets



1. Special faith schools are grouped with special schools.

Overall, the proportion of independent schools judged good or outstanding stayed the same as last year, at 75%. The proportion of schools judged outstanding has decreased from 11% to 10%.

The percentage of independent schools judged inadequate has increased from 8% to 10% since 31 August 2022. Only 4% of independent special schools are inadequate compared with 19% of independent faith schools and 14% of other independent schools. Independent faith schools are far more likely to be judged inadequate than other types of independent school. More detail on the causes of poor inspection outcomes for these schools can be found in the faith schools section below.

The two main reasons why independent schools are judged inadequate under the EIF are leadership and management (which includes safeguarding concerns) and quality of education.

Almost all inadequate schools have been judged inadequate for leadership and management. Safeguarding is also ineffective in 64% of inadequate schools. When safeguarding is ineffective, this is likely to lead to a judgement of inadequate for leadership and management. Of the schools with ineffective safeguarding, 61% have also been judged inadequate in one or more of the other key judgements.



Sixty-three per cent of the inadequate schools provide an inadequate quality of education. Inadequate quality of education is often a result of an incoherent or unambitious curriculum and weaknesses in how the school is implementing this curriculum, leading to poor pupil progress.

Faith schools

Almost a third (31%) of the 23,200 schools that Ofsted inspects are faith schools. This includes both state-funded schools with a religious character and non-association independent faith schools.

Faith schools in the independent sector are a more varied group than in the state-funded sector. The faith schools in the table below include 25 independent faith schools also classed as special schools (19 Christian, five Jewish and one Muslim) and five state-funded special schools (four Christian and one Jewish). These schools are not included in Figure 10 because they are grouped with special schools.

Table 5: Number and proportion of non-association independent and state-funded schools by faith grouping, at year end

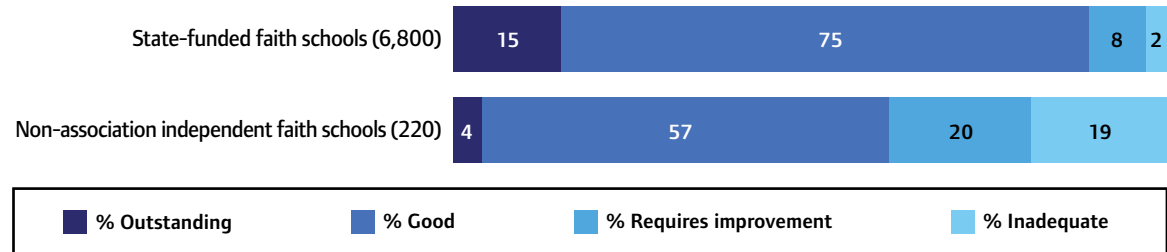
Faith Groups	Non-association independent faith schools		State-funded faith schools	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Christian	66	26	6,720	98
Jewish	72	29	52	1
Muslim	110	44	34	<1
Other faith	2	<1	21	<1
Total faith schools	250		6,830	

1. Due to the small number of other faith schools, percentages should be treated with caution.

It is clear that independent faith schools have relatively poor inspection outcomes compared with either faith schools in the state sector or with other independent schools. Of the independent faith schools we inspect, 39% are judged less than good, including 19% judged inadequate.

Figure 10: Overall effectiveness of faith schools, at year end

Number of schools in brackets

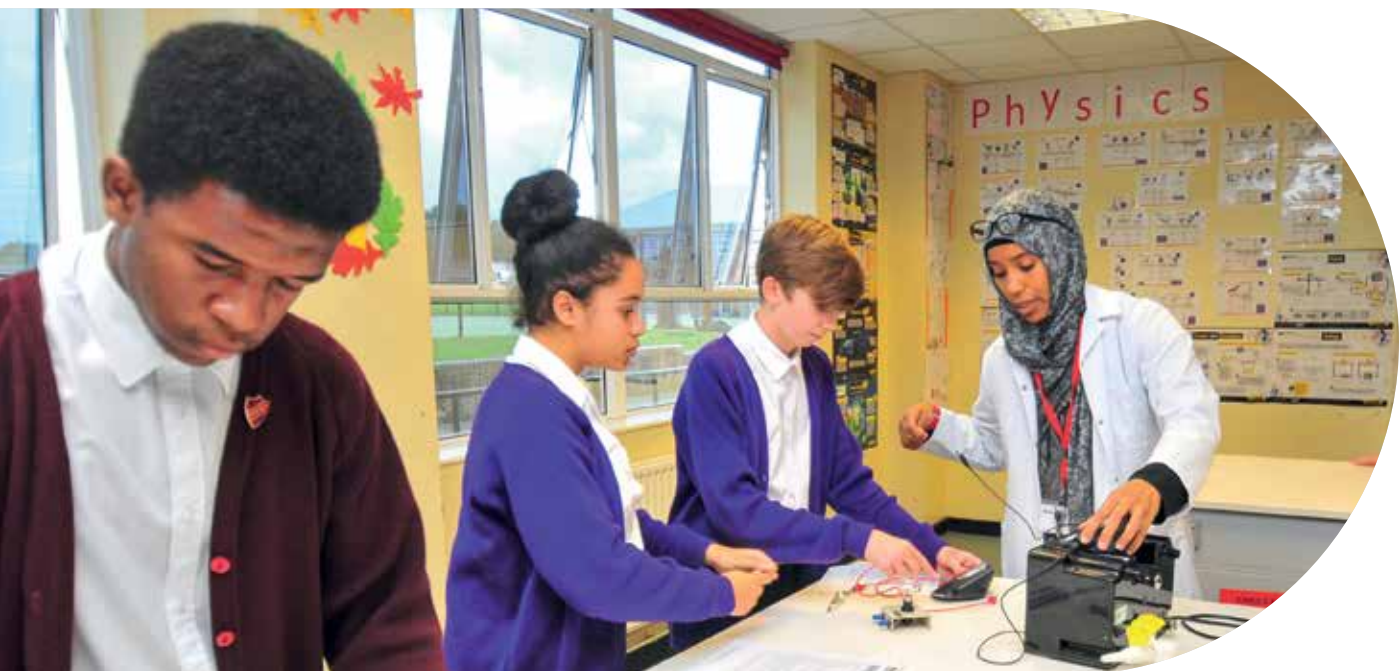


1. Faith schools are defined here as not a special school and with a stated religious character or ethos as declared to the DfE. There are a small number of special schools with a religious character or ethos which are not included in this chart.

As we have previously reported, there are several distinct strands that contribute to these disappointing outcomes.

First, independent faith schools are often small and poorly resourced. As a consequence, they find it hard to keep up with good practice in many aspects of education and safeguarding.

Second, some of these schools limit the curriculum in areas that are seen to conflict directly with their religion, for example in science, humanities and other subjects where they deem that the national curriculum or exam specification content conflict directly with religious teaching. Some aspects of relationships, sex and health education are also seen to conflict with religious principles. However, these issues are almost never found in state-funded faith schools.





Third, some schools serve communities that want children's education only to prepare them for life within that community. This means that those schools restrict knowledge about the wider world. For example, some schools give very limited time to the secular curriculum. Some do not teach about fundamental British values, particularly around mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Again, these issues are almost never found in state-funded faith schools.

Inspection can contribute to helping these schools do better in relation to the first strand. The modest improvements seen in inspection outcomes for these schools in recent years may reflect this. We have seen many schools making real progress in improving the education they offer.

However, in relation to the second and third strands, inspection can only draw attention to the real tension that exists in the most conservative faith communities between education and equalities law, regulations and guidance on the one hand, and religious conviction on the other.

Children we are particularly concerned about

Unregistered schools

It is a criminal offence to run an unregistered school in England. Since 2016, when the unregistered schools team in Ofsted was set up, we have carried out over 1,190 investigations of nearly 1,120 suspected unregistered schools. This has resulted in around 770 inspections,⁴⁶ 180 warning notices and six successful prosecutions. This year, we opened 190 investigations into suspected illegal schools, conducted 110 inspections, and issued 25 warning notices to settings that appeared to be breaking the law.

The Schools Bill was intended to close loopholes in the registration system and to strengthen Ofsted's powers to investigate unregistered schools. However, it was unfortunately dropped in December 2022. The weaknesses in the legal framework that were publicised during debates on the Bill are now common knowledge. These weaknesses continue to hamper our efforts to investigate unregistered schools and prosecute offenders.

46. Inspectors from Ofsted have powers to inspect suspected unregistered independent schools under section 97 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

This is a real concern because thousands of children across England are being educated in unregistered settings, some of which are putting children at risk of harm. We have regularly found:

- unregistered schools operating from unsafe and inappropriate premises
- unregistered providers led by profoundly unsuitable people, including some with criminal convictions
- children receiving an extremely limited curriculum, without coverage of basic skills such as English or mathematics.

These issues are not confined to settings operating illegally. They are also widespread in unregistered alternative provision (AP), which we also visit as part of our work. Ofsted does not have the power to make formal judgements of the quality of education in unregistered AP. However, we have seen far too many providers that are clearly substandard:

- some keep no attendance records
- some have no qualified staff
- some do not check that their staff are suitable to work with children
- many offer a very limited curriculum.

Too often, schools and local authorities are sending vulnerable pupils to these providers for most or all their education.

As we note in the SEND and AP chapter of this report, the solution to these problems lies in regulation of unregistered AP. While these settings remain unregulated, the suitability, safety and quality of many remains in doubt.

Elective home education

This year, the DfE published statistics on home education for the first time.⁴⁷ They show that the number of home-educated children is high and rising, with an estimated 116,000 children home educated at some point in 2021/22.⁴⁸ The reasons parents gave for home educating suggest that some are not doing so by choice but due to dissatisfaction with their child's school, bullying, the risk of school exclusion or failure to secure a place at their preferred school.

47. 'Elective home education', Department for Education, May 2023;
<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/elective-home-education>.

48. Data was collected from local authorities by the Association of Directors of Children's Services until 2021 and then by DfE from autumn 2021 onwards. While data is not fully comparable between these different data collections, the substantial rise in the numbers still suggest a considerable rise since the pandemic. The most recent full year of data available is for 2021/22.



These findings are concerning. Home education can work very well for both families and children but only when it is a positive choice and when parents have the necessary skills to educate their children. Sometimes, children who are nominally in home education are actually in illegal schools. In a significant number of cases, the government does not know why parents are deciding to home educate.⁴⁹ While the experience of remote education during the pandemic may have had an influence, numbers of home-educated children were already increasing in the years before the pandemic.⁵⁰ Legislation for a register of children not in school (CNIS) is now needed to improve information – locally and nationally – and to introduce new safeguards so that no child misses out on a suitable education.

Online education accreditation scheme

The online education services sector for children in England has grown in recent years. The DfE has introduced an online education accreditation scheme (OEAS), which is a route for online providers to be accredited by the DfE following quality assurance from Ofsted. Our quality assurance consists of suitability checks on proprietors and an accreditation visit to check compliance with the DfE's online education standards. The OEAS is non-statutory, but DfE encourages eligible providers to apply.

Since the scheme opened in March this year, we have begun quality assurance activity but have not carried out any accreditation visits. We will report on the insights and key findings from visits in next year's Annual Report.

49. DfE data on the reasons for home educating is from the autumn 2022 census rather than the 2021/22 data quoted earlier.

50. 'Elective home education survey 2019', Association of Directors of Children's Services, November 2019; https://adcs.org.uk/assets/documentation/ADCS_Elective_Home_Education_Survey_Analysis_FINAL.pdf.



SEND and alternative provision

SEND and alternative provision

This year, pressure on the SEND system has increased due to rising numbers of children and young people in this category. Many children, young people and families are experiencing delays in access to services, particularly to wider health and therapeutic services, such as speech and language therapy and mental health services. Local authorities are struggling to meet demand for assessments and follow-on services. These delays are harming the quality of specialist educational provision, which relies on external professional expertise and services to support its pupils.

Given growing pressures on special school capacity, the complexity and range of needs that mainstream schools are having to cater for is continuing to increase. The shortage of special school places also means that alternative provision (AP) is sometimes used as a shadow SEND system. Pupils are being referred to AP while they wait for a suitable placement at a specialist school. As a result, some pupils are spending long periods of time in provision that is not resourced to meet their needs. As a result, their progress is hindered. The government has plans as part of the SEND and AP action plan to address these system-wide shortfalls.

Information on learners with high needs in further education colleges and independent specialist colleges can be found in the further education and skills chapter.

Special schools

Children with SEND

The number of children and young people with SEND continues to increase. We have reported elsewhere on educational delays created as a result of pandemic lockdowns and reduced socialisation. Therefore, some of this increase could be due to children not having the wider input and support as early as they need. This year, the percentage with an EHC plan has risen from 4.0% to 4.3%, and the proportion accessing SEN support has risen from 12.6% to 13%.⁵¹ This has been a continuing trend: the number of pupils with an EHC plan has risen by 64% and the number with SEN support by 19% since 2015/16.

Most children and young people with SEND are educated in mainstream schools. Around 8% of pupils with SEND are educated in independent schools.

Table 6: Number of pupils in all schools by type of SEN provision, 2022/23

Type of school	EHC plan	SEN support/ SEN without an EHC plan
State-funded nursery	670	6,380
State-funded primary	118,000	629,000
State-funded secondary	87,200	449,000
State-funded special school	147,000	1,440
Non-maintained special school	4,000	57
Independent school (including independent special schools)	28,700	89,800
State-funded AP school	3,370	7,520
Total	389,000	1,180,000

Source: Department for Education

51. 'Special educational needs in England', Department for Education, June 2023;
<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>.

The most common type of need in children and young people with EHC plans is autistic spectrum disorder. For those with SEN support, it is speech, language and communication needs, closely followed by social, emotional and mental health needs and moderate learning difficulties.⁵² This has been a consistent picture since 2015/16.

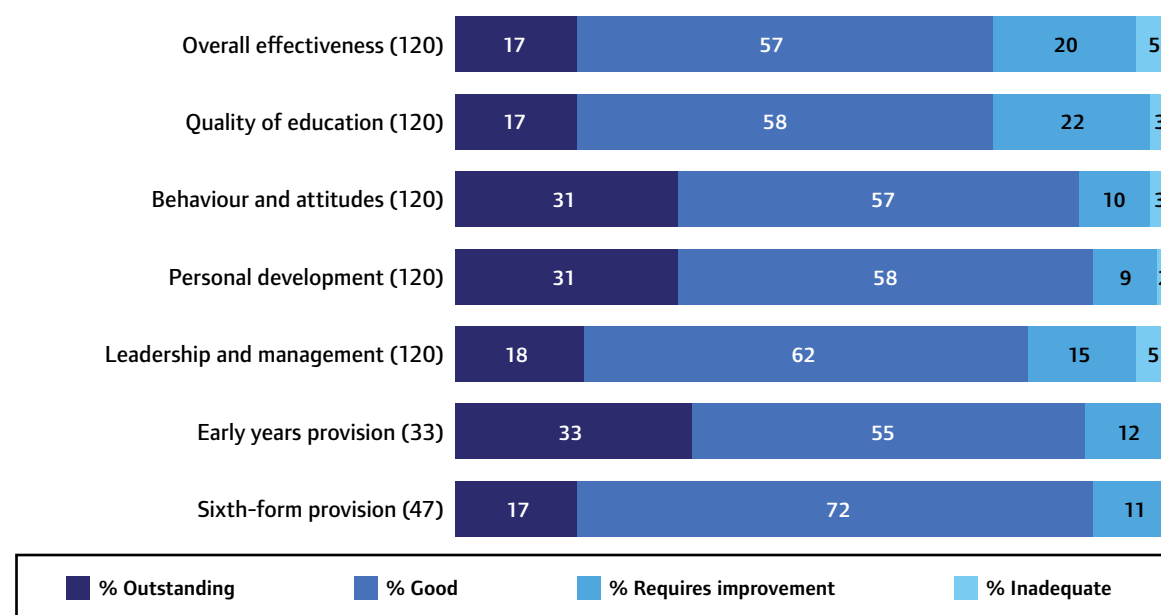
What we did this year

State-funded special schools

This year, we carried out 120 graded inspections of state-funded special schools (see annex for data definitions). Seventy-five per cent of these schools were judged good or outstanding overall. Judgements for quality of education were very similar to those for overall effectiveness. Outcomes for behaviour and attitudes and personal development were notably more positive. This mirrors the outcomes for state-funded mainstream schools.

Figure 11: Overall effectiveness, key judgements and provision judgements of state-funded special schools at graded inspections, this year

Number of inspections in brackets



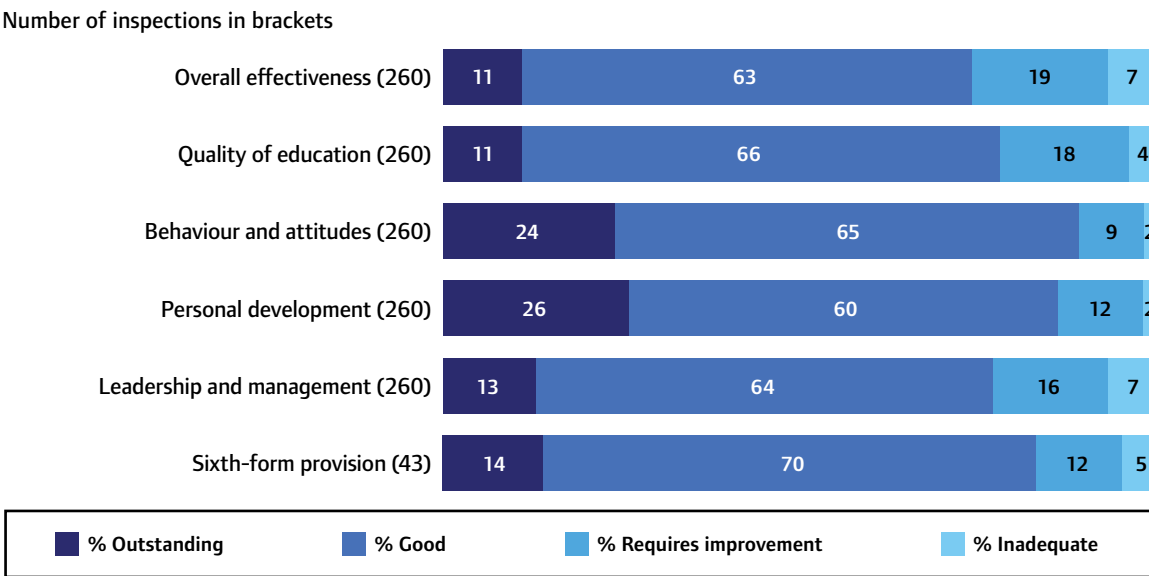
Ninety-nine per cent of the state-funded special schools that had a graded or ungraded inspection this year had effective safeguarding.

52. 'Special educational needs in England', Department for Education, June 2023; <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>.

Non-association independent special schools

We inspected nearly 260 independent special schools this year. Seventy-five per cent of these schools were judged good or outstanding overall. The proportion of good and outstanding judgements for behaviour and attitudes and personal development were nine to 12 percentage points higher than judgements for quality of education and leadership and management.

Figure 12: Overall effectiveness, key judgements and provision judgements of non-association independent special schools, this year



1. Early years provision was judged on four inspections, two graded outstanding and two graded good.

Eighty-five per cent of independent special schools met the ISS compared with 63% of non-special independent schools. This difference in independent special and non-special schools meeting the ISS is consistent with last year.



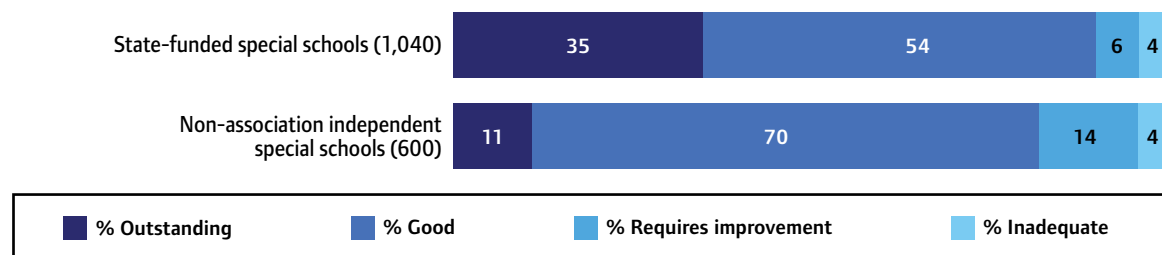
State of the nation

At year end, there were 1,760 special schools. Of these, 1,040 were state-funded, 670 were non-association independent schools and 53 were other non-maintained special schools.

The proportion of good or outstanding special schools has remained relatively stable since last year, for both state-funded schools and independent schools.

Figure 13: Overall effectiveness of special schools, at year end

Number of schools in brackets



1. State-funded special schools includes non-maintained special schools.

The growing number of pupils with SEND has put added pressure on both mainstream and specialist schools. There are children who need a special school place but are not getting what they need while they wait for one, either in mainstream schools or while temporarily out of education. Schools are using part-time timetables for some of these children, often for those with behavioural needs. These part-time timetables are not always in the child's best interests. Schools are not always monitoring the appropriateness and impact of such arrangements. Therefore, pupils can remain on these timetables for extended and indefinite periods, during which they will not be getting a full and suitable education.

Area SEND inspections

In January this year, we and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) jointly launched a new framework for the inspection of local area arrangements for children and young people with SEND.⁵³ These inspections are known as area SEND inspections. The new framework represents a significant change of approach. For the first time, we are deploying social care inspectors alongside education and health inspectors. By taking a collaborative approach, we are gaining a holistic understanding of the impact of SEND services. This approach reflects working arrangements in local areas.

The other main changes include:

- placing more emphasis on the impact that local area partnerships are having on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people
- establishing an ongoing cycle of inspection that supports continuous improvement
- assessing how well local authorities plan for, commission and oversee AP in their local area
- introducing monitoring inspections for areas required to produce a priority action plan
- introducing thematic visits that investigate a particular aspect of the SEND system in depth.

53. 'Area SEND inspections: framework and handbook', Ofsted, November 2022;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/area-send-framework-and-handbook/area-send-inspections-framework-and-handbook>.



These inspections provide an independent, external evaluation of the effectiveness of local area partnerships and whether they are fulfilling their legal duties to make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people with SEND. In addition, and where appropriate, they recommend what is needed to improve arrangements.

What we did this year

Between January and August 2023, Ofsted and CQC inspected 16 local area partnerships. In five local area partnerships, SEND arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people. In six, SEND arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes. Five areas were found to have widespread and/or systemic failings.

Inspections under the new framework are showing many of the same concerns as under the previous framework. Most significantly, families continue to experience long waiting times for some assessments and support, such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), educational psychology and speech and language therapy. The increase in EHC plans is having a negative impact on health and education services. The DfE has reported that services such as educational psychology are struggling to deal with the volume of EHC plan referrals, which is delaying access to other essential services. Educational psychologists are suggesting that better early interventions could reduce the need for EHC plans and the pressure on health and education services.⁵⁴

In some areas, the pace of creating and reviewing EHC plans remains slow. Inspections show that plans are also often of poor quality. Better-quality EHC plans are often the result of better partnership working between children and young people and their families and professionals in a broad range of services in health, social care and education. These plans tend to be more timely, have clear needs analyses and shared with all relevant professionals and providers. The experiences of children and young people with high-quality plans are better.

54. 'Educational psychology services: workforce insights and impact', Department for Education, June 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/educational-psychology-services-workforce-insights-and-impact>.



A common weakness across local area partnerships is how they use data. Some local areas are not collecting enough or the right information about the needs and outcomes of children and young people. Others do but are not sharing it well across the partnership. Even some local areas that do share information appropriately are not analysing or using data effectively to measure impact, develop or adapt strategies, or inform future decision making.

This year, we have also seen good practice. This is particularly true in terms of the support for children in early years. Partners are identifying and addressing the needs of younger children earlier than they have previously. We have also seen partners working together effectively, and including children and their families (co-production) to design, commission and deliver services around the child. In some instances, we found that the commissioning and oversight of children placed in residential special schools, by children's social care was improving multi-agency monitoring.

The new framework draws evidence more directly from children and young people, their families and the practitioners who work with them, about their experiences and outcomes. We are also using new point-of-inspection surveys to gather their views. We are very pleased with levels of participation during the first 16 inspections, having received over 23,000 survey responses. This is improving our understanding of the experiences of SEND service users and providers, and of the impact of local area partnership actions.

In autumn 2022, we carried out 13 revisits under the 2016–22 inspection framework, completing that programme. At these revisits, six local areas had made sufficient progress in addressing all significant weaknesses; six had made sufficient progress in addressing some significant weaknesses; and one had made insufficient progress in addressing any significant weaknesses.

Alternative provision

AP is commissioned by schools or local authorities for pupils who have been excluded or cannot attend mainstream school, for example due to medical needs. It is a diverse and complex sector that includes pupil referral units, hospital schools, state-funded AP schools, independent schools and other providers not registered as schools or further education colleges. The size of AP settings is very variable. Some independent schools only have one or two AP placements whereas state-funded AP schools have more. Seventy-two per cent of non-association independent schools with AP placements are special schools. These placements are often the school that is agreed and listed on the child's EHC plan, so the DfE considers these to be special rather than AP placements (though they are recorded and published as part of the AP census).

We inspect AP in a variety of ways. We inspect registered full-time providers as schools. Those operating part time do not have to register as schools. The small number of providers that are full-time but have fewer than 5 pupils, none of whom have an EHC plan or are looked after by a local authority, do not have to register either. Both of these groups of settings are only inspected either indirectly, through inspection of commissioning schools and local SEND services or by the inspections of the unregistered schools team. However, Ofsted has no power to investigate the quality of education in suspected illegal schools or AP.

The number of placements in AP has increased by 13% from 59,900 in January 2022 to 67,600 in January 2023 across state-funded, all independent and unregistered providers.⁵⁵ The breakdown of increases in AP placements is:

- 10% increase in state-funded schools, to 25,100
- 13% in independent schools,⁵⁶ to 31,000
- 19% in unregistered⁵⁷ AP, to 11,600.

This continues the trend of placements in the independent and unregistered sectors growing at a faster rate than the state-funded sector.⁵⁸

The number and the proportion of younger children in AP is also rising.⁵⁹ Twenty-one per cent of pupils attending AP this year were aged under 11, an increase from 15% from last year.

We know that the complexity and range of needs that AP is catering for have also increased. The most common needs are social, emotional and mental health.

55. Based on pupil-level data from the DfE's school and AP censuses, and refers to actual rather than planned placements. Some children may have multiple part-time placements at different providers.

56. 'Independent schools' includes independent special schools, other independent schools and non-maintained special schools. These are not registered as AP providers; pupils are sent there for AP places funded by the local authority.

57. Unregistered provision includes any provision not registered as a school in England, such as further education providers, providers in Wales, prisons, secure units, one-to-one tuition, work-based placements and other unregistered providers, and provision attended by pupils because it is the placement named in their education, health and care plan.

58. See Figure 22 of last year's report for a chart showing the detail of AP placements between 2010 and 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202122-education-childrens-services-and-skills>. This analysis combines data from the AP census (pupils placed by LAs) and the school census (pupils in state-funded schools). It does not include pupils placed by schools.

59. This is the total number of pupils attending state-funded AP as their main registration, plus the number of pupils attending local authority funded AP. 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics', Department for Education, June 2023; <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>.



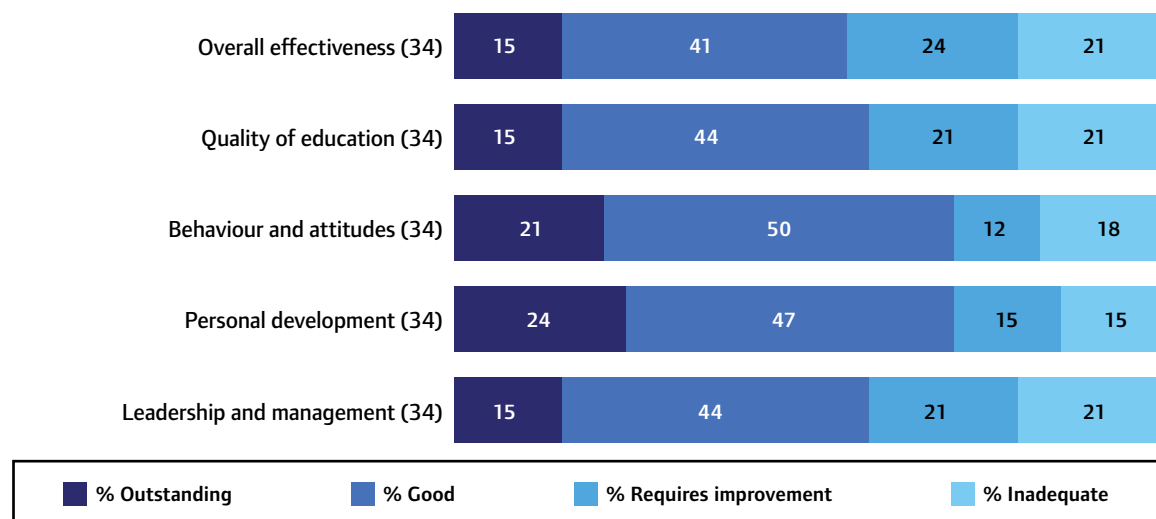
What we did this year

Inspection outcomes continue to be worse for state-funded alternative provision (AP) than for other state-funded schools. This year, 83% of APs inspected were judged good or outstanding at a graded or ungraded inspection compared with 88% of all schools (see annex for data definitions). The most positive judgements in AP schools were for behaviour and attitudes and personal development (71% good or outstanding).

This year, we carried out 53 ungraded inspections of good and outstanding APs, with concerns identified in 30% of these (16 inspections) compared with 16% of ungraded inspections in all schools.

Figure 14: Overall effectiveness and key judgements of state-funded alternative provision at graded inspections, this year

Number of inspections in brackets



1. Sixth-form provision was judged on two inspections, one graded outstanding and one graded good.

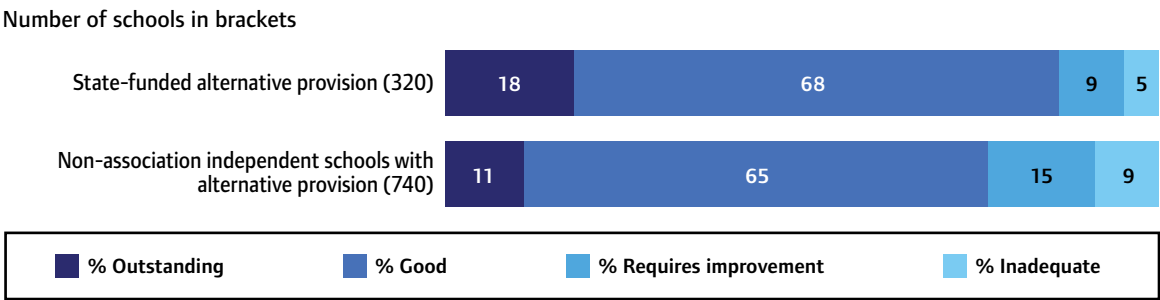
Eighty-three out of the 87 state-funded APs that had a graded or ungraded inspection this year had effective safeguarding.

Some schools are using AP as a last resort, with many using AP for crisis management rather than as a suitable long-term placement for a child. There is a lack of understanding and clarity across the sector around how AP is commissioned. Some schools think it is the responsibility of the local authority rather than the school. Some schools do not commission AP with enough rigour or ambition for the child. This means that they often then lack oversight of curriculum and quality of education.

State of the nation

Overall, 85% of state-funded AP was judged good or outstanding overall compared with 76% of non-association independent schools.^{60, 61}

Figure 15: Overall effectiveness of alternative provision, at year end



Many AP settings offer a lifeline to children in difficult circumstances. These providers work hard to change pupils’ attitudes to learning, improve their attendance and make up for gaps in their learning. However, this year’s outcomes for state-funded AP, particularly in the critical area of quality of education, are disappointing. Some of this may be due to increasing number of pupils. Eighty per cent of pupils attending a state-funded AP have a SEND diagnosis.

The issue of quality is not confined to state-funded AP. This year, 57% of unregistered school inspections were of AP providers. This has increased from 33% between January and September 2016 when our unregistered schools team was first set up. As set out in the unregistered schools section, many unregistered providers offer a sub-standard education (though educational quality is not the main focus of unregistered school inspections). With this part of the sector continuing to grow, it is unlikely that quality of education will improve without a new system of regulation and inspection.

This year, we carried out AP thematic visits, working with partners in local areas to review how they work together to commission and deliver AP. We will be sharing our insights from inspections and thematic reviews as part of our contribution to the improvement of AP and AP commissioning practices. We will also increase scrutiny of the misuse of AP.

60. Number of placements is taken from the Department for Education’s alternative provision census, January 2022. The number of placements may vary across the year and over time.

61. An independent school is counted as having AP if they have at least one AP placement in the school (recorded in the DfE’s AP census). This includes specific AP schools and other mainstream schools, both of which are included in the non-association independent schools section of the schools chapter of this report. This data is only collected annually and will not reflect movement in pupils with AP within cohorts.



Teacher development

Teacher development

Teachers’ professional development is crucial to a high-quality education system. When teachers base their everyday practice on an up-to-date, coherent and integrated professional knowledge base, this benefits all pupils and learners.

Recruiting and retaining the very best teachers in our classrooms needs high-quality professional development and training throughout a teacher’s career. The DfE has developed a ‘golden thread’ of professional development that connects initial teacher education (ITE), a framework for early career teachers (ECTs) and national professional qualifications (NPQs).

Our inspections of ITE providers and of the lead providers of the ECF and NPQ programmes give an independent, external judgement of effectiveness. Our frameworks evaluate how well providers prepare teachers in subjects, phases and professional contexts. Where appropriate, we highlight areas for improvement.

Initial teacher education

The current ITE framework was introduced in September 2020 and intentionally raised the bar for ITE providers. It focuses on the quality of the ITE curriculum and emphasises the importance of trainees’ subject- and phase-specific knowledge. The framework also recognises the importance of using up-to-date and relevant evidence, including research specified in the DfE core content framework (CCF).

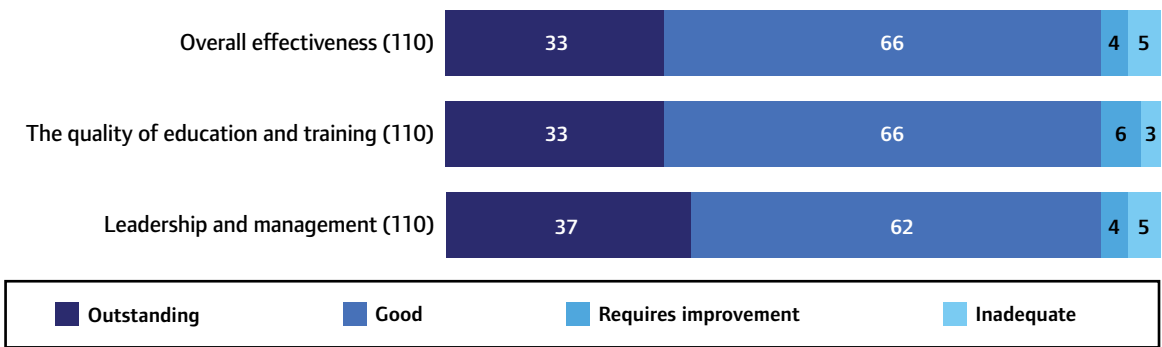
What we did this year

This year, we inspected 110 age-phase ITE providers, 99 of which are good or outstanding overall (see annex for data definitions). We re-inspected 15 providers that were less than good. All 15 are now good.

By August 2024, all registered ITE providers will have been inspected under the current framework.

Figure 16: Overall effectiveness and key judgements of ITE age phase partnerships, this year

Number of inspections in brackets



In early years, primary and secondary ITE, providers judged good or outstanding have high-quality training curriculums that are ambitious and well-sequenced. These providers typically incorporate the expert knowledge, skills and professional behaviours needed by teachers at each phase – and subject-level into their curriculums. They also include the theory that underpins this. They also make sure that mentors give feedback and practical advice to trainees as they develop their teaching practice.

In the best examples, providers consider trainees' starting points so that they pitch training at the appropriate level for them, and revisit core principles regularly to embed trainees' understanding. Providers establish strong mentoring programmes that provide support and guidance to trainees' mentors too. Good and outstanding providers also use purposeful and proportionate quality assurance processes. This ensures that the ITE curriculum is being implemented effectively and mentoring is of high quality and consistently applied across different types and sizes of providers.

Generally, we found that the DfE's CCF⁶² is sufficiently covered in the early years, primary and secondary phases.

In the four primary and secondary phase providers judged less than good, areas for improvement include:

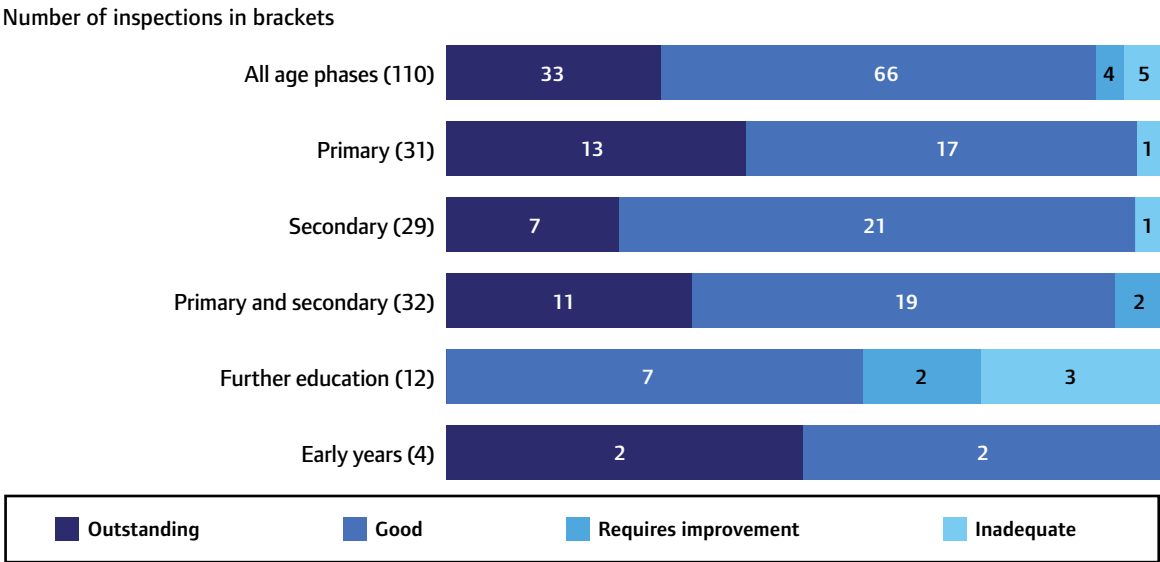
- initial assessment of trainees' subject knowledge
- consistency and assurance of the mentoring programme
- specificity in trainees' formative assessment
- opportunities to plan, teach and assess pupils' learning of the foundation subjects in primary ITE routes
- preparing trainees on secondary ITE routes to teach post-16 pupils
- preparing trainees on primary ITE routes to teach children in the early years.



62. 'Initial teacher training (ITT) core content framework', Department for Education, November 2019; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-itt-core-content-framework>.

ITE provision for further education trainees remains the poorest performing age phase. However, standards have improved since last year. For instance, three providers that were previously less than good improved to good this year.

Figure 17: Overall effectiveness of ITE age phases, this year



Good further education ITE providers develop research-informed curriculums. This focuses on introducing trainees to highly effective teaching strategies and ensures that they are supported well by their mentors to apply what they learn. They also teach trainees about the breadth of the further education sector. This is to make sure that trainees are well-prepared for the realities of teaching.

Issues in further education ITE providers that are less than good included:

- disjointed curriculums that lacked detailed content or consideration of when content would be taught and re-visited through the course
- too few mentors receiving suitable training, information and support to carry out their role effectively
- trainees not being taught how to adapt to the needs of all their learners.

Commissioned further education ITE inspections

This year, the DfE commissioned us to inspect two previously uninspected providers, with high numbers of trainees studying the Diploma in Education and Training (DET). Both were judged inadequate. We are deeply concerned that trainees were left poorly prepared, and by the findings, which include:

- staff wrongly informing trainees that these qualifications would allow them to teach in primary and secondary schools
- lack of research-informed curriculums
- trainees not having access to suitable teaching placements
- staff not having a clear enough understanding of the further education and skills sector.

The DfE’s commission to inspect DET providers will continue into next year.

State of the nation

At year end, there were around 350 age-phase ITE providers including higher education institutions, school-centred initial teacher training providers, and colleges.

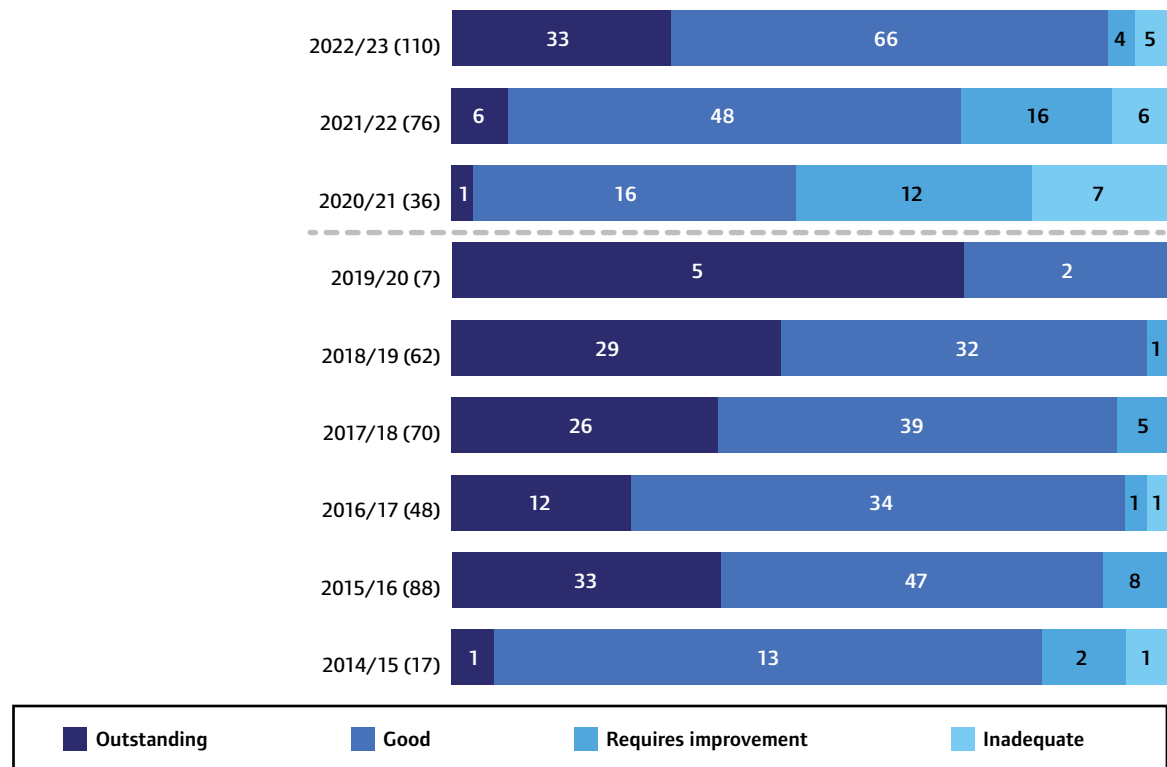
Ninety-six per cent of all age-phase partnerships are currently judged good or outstanding. This proportion is two percentage points higher than a year ago but has fallen since the introduction of the new framework, from 100% at year end 2020. Just over half of the age phase providers inspected have been inspected under the current framework. A provider's grade under the previous framework may not be the grade they will get when inspected under the new framework.

Inspection outcomes since the start of the 2020 ITE framework

The new framework intentionally raised expectations. Of 220 ITE age-phase partnerships inspected since the introduction of the ITE framework in 2020, 77% have been judged good or outstanding overall, much lower than the 93% under the previous framework. Similarly, fewer providers are outstanding under the new framework: 18% of providers compared with 36% under the previous framework.

Figure 18: Overall effectiveness of ITE age phase partnerships inspected, over time

Number of inspections in brackets



Outcomes have improved this year compared with the first two years of the new framework, with around nine in 10 providers judged good or outstanding compared with only six in 10 previously. Most of the outstanding judgements received under the new framework have been made this year.

These improved outcomes indicate that more providers are rising to the high expectations of the framework. Many providers have reflected on and revised their ITE curriculum, incorporating the CCF and improving coherence between what is taught and what the trainees practice while on placement.

Early career framework and national professional qualifications

We introduced our ECF and NPQ inspection framework in March 2022. Lead providers are contracted by the DfE to deliver the ECF and NPQ programmes. Inspections of lead providers find out how well they ensure the delivery of high-quality training and professional development through a national network of delivery partners. At year end, there were 11 ECF and/or NPQ lead providers in total. These are made up of 10 NPQ providers and six ECF providers (five of which also deliver NPQ).

What we did this year

This year, we carried out six full inspections of ECF lead providers (see annex for data definitions). Four were judged outstanding and two good.

All six lead providers inspected adhere to the requirements of their contracts by delivering the ECF as it is intended. They take careful account of what ECTs already know from their initial teacher education and use this to inform programme delivery. Lead providers emphasise and remind ECTs of the importance of revisiting key teaching principles so that they can continually deepen their knowledge and practice over time.

The outstanding providers enable delivery partners and mentors to bring the ECF to life, which helps ECTs to build and apply their knowledge over time. They work closely with delivery partners and mentors to exemplify the universal ECF training. This means that ECTs can see how it might look in their subject, setting or phase. Some of these providers group ECTs in similar subjects or specialisms so that they can learn together and share best practice. Outstanding providers also make sure that mentors receive high-quality training. This allows the mentors to understand the starting points of their ECTs and to tailor support appropriately.

Most ECTs we spoke to have a positive experience of their training. They say they are getting the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to progress in teaching in their specific phases.

Lead providers deliver the ECF programme nationally through a network of delivery partners. Our monitoring visits last year found that some lead providers needed to improve their quality assurance processes so that training was of high quality irrespective of where an ECT was receiving it. This year's inspections found that this had improved.

The outstanding providers prioritise strong collaboration and communication across the delivery partner network. This results in a cohesive and consistent approach to large-scale training delivery, with minimal regional differences. These lead providers communicate regularly and closely with delivery partners through a variety of channels. This helps them to check standards effectively. Furthermore, the open dialogue this creates allows improvements to be explored in partnership. Many lead providers and delivery partners share a focus on continual improvement.



Outstanding providers have clear, transparent and collaborative quality assurance processes and have a clear understanding of what is expected of all parties. This means that delivery partners adapt quickly to programme enhancements and, in some cases, share learning with one another. These providers collect a range of data and feedback to shape training delivery and subject specific materials.

We will start carrying out full inspections of NPQ lead providers in spring 2024.

Findings from year one of the teacher development review

We recently published the findings of the first year of our teacher development review, commissioned by the DfE.⁶³ We surveyed approximately 1,950 teachers and leaders and made 44 research visits to primary and secondary schools for views on their recent training and development, including but not limited to ECF and NPQ.⁶⁴

The review showed that workload pressures were often a barrier to teachers accessing development opportunities. In particular, high levels of staff absence and the need for lesson cover sometimes prevented teachers from attending planned face-to-face training.

The training and development opportunities staff have received are wide-ranging and it is encouraging that many schools have prioritised training and development around the curriculum. However, in some schools visited, staff understanding of planning and designing a curriculum remained limited, even though they had received training. In several cases, teachers had done courses narrowly focused on preparing for inspection instead of addressing a lack of knowledge.

Schools have also focused heavily on mental health and well-being training. It remains unclear whether this is improving how schools address pupils' wider personal, behavioural and social needs, including how they join up with other agencies supporting children.

Leaders and teachers were often unimpressed with the quality of their recent training and development. Generally, ECTs and staff taking NPQs were more positive about their development experiences than other teachers, in terms of relevance and quality. Only a minority of ECTs said that the ECF and NPQ content can be generic and not implemented consistently.

We are continuing our review for a second year, which will include a focus on special schools.

63. 'Terms of reference: Ofsted's independent review of teachers' professional development', Ofsted, September 2021; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsteds-independent-review-of-teachers-professional-development/terms-of-reference-ofsteds-independent-review-of-teachers-professional-development>.

64. 'Teachers' professional development in schools: phase 1 findings', Ofsted, May 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-professional-development-in-schools-phase-1-findings>.



Specific themes across teacher development

Training to teach pupils with SEND

Our review of teacher development found that many new and experienced teachers want more training on how to teach pupils with SEND. Given the increase in SEND identification and the shortage of special school places, this is not surprising.

On ECF lead provider inspections, we found that ECTs are taught how to adapt teaching for pupils of all abilities. In the most successful cases, learning how to adapt teaching well is linked to ECTs' subject and phase.

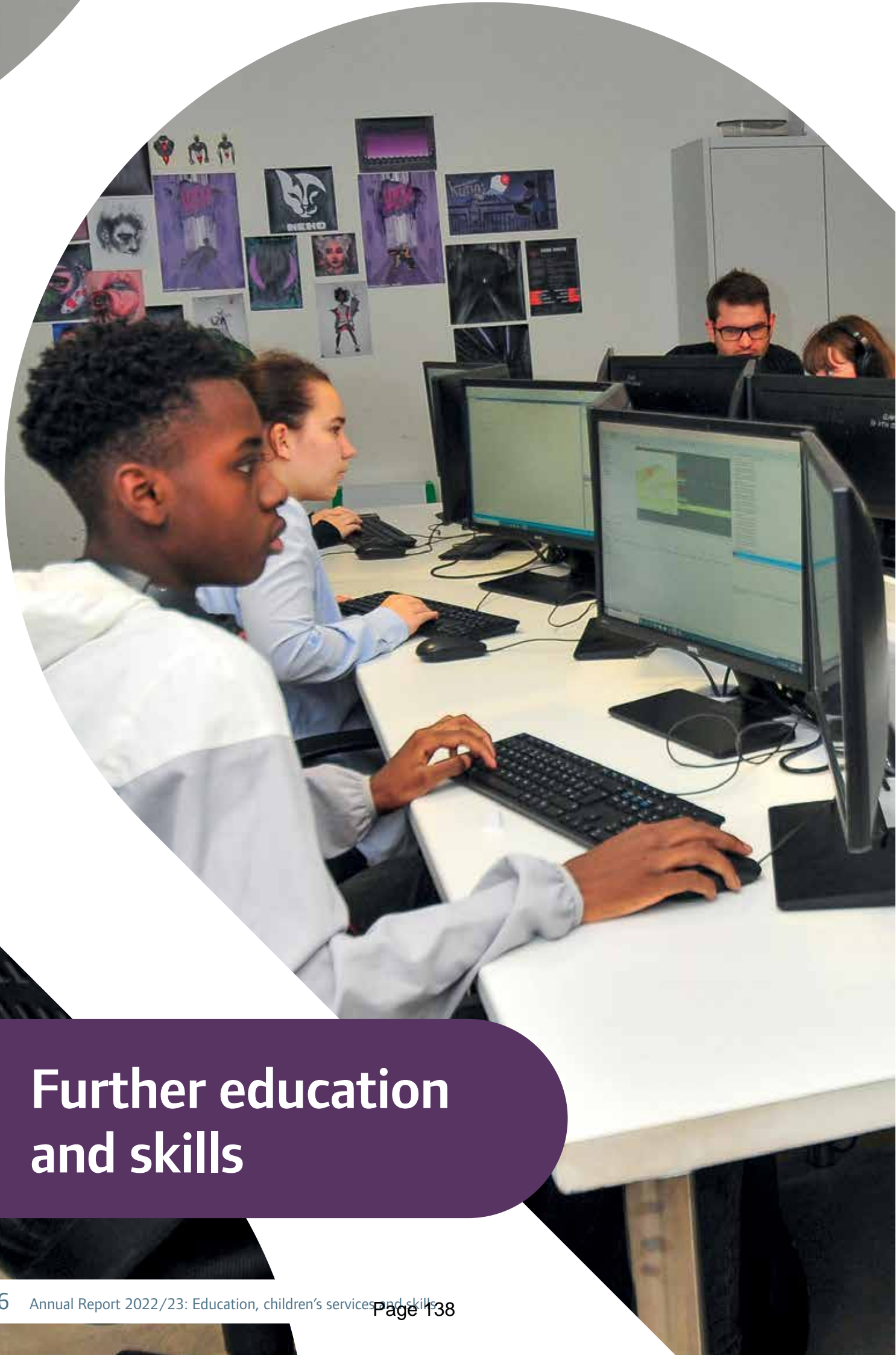
In ITE, the picture is more variable. Some providers are highly effective at teaching trainees how to identify pupils' needs, to adapt teaching accordingly and to bring in support when needed. These providers are also more likely to seek opportunities for trainees to visit special schools to see this teaching in practice. However, in some cases, training is limited to one-off sessions on SEND, with no opportunity to consolidate any learning in special school settings. The DfE has recently published guidance on how to involve special schools and alternative provision in ITE. This may increase this type of opportunity for trainees.

Training in early reading

In early years and primary ITE, more providers are now teaching trainees how to teach early reading, including the use of systematic, synthetic phonics (SSP).

Trainees on secondary ITE routes are also being better prepared to support weaker readers, irrespective of the subject they are training in. This means that far more trainees are becoming confident and competent in teaching new or struggling readers.

These improvements in ITE are being reinforced by ECF lead providers, whose work to help ECTs practice and refine the skill of teaching early reading is highly effective.



Further education and skills



Further education and skills

The further education (FE) and skills sector teaches learners aged 16 and over. Different types of providers offer a wide variety of education, training and apprenticeships to prepare learners for further study, employment or greater independence.

Over three-quarters of FE and skills providers were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. There is variation by provider type but for most types there has been little change in overall effectiveness from last year.

Most colleges are judged good or outstanding overall. This year, we started reporting on how they are meeting skills needs through enhanced skills inspections. Most colleges are making strong or reasonable contributions to meeting local skills needs.

We completed our review of the early implementation of T levels this year. This has shown that providers still have much to do to improve the quality and effectiveness of these programmes.

As reported in previous years, the overall effectiveness of education, skills and work provision in prisons is poor. We continued our research into reading education in prisons this year and made recommendations on how prisons can improve this aspect of education.

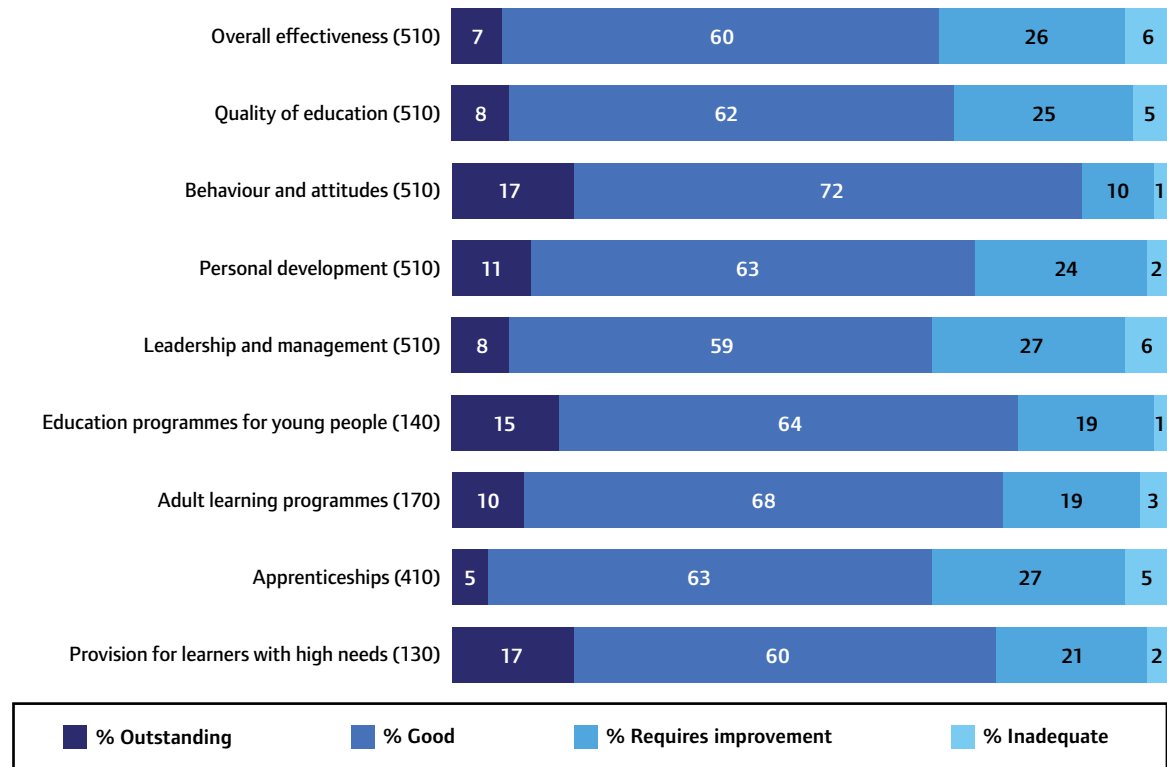
What we did this year

This year, we carried out 510 full inspections, 33 short inspections and 160 new provider monitoring visits (NPMVs) (see annex for data definitions).

Seventy per cent of full or short inspections resulted in overall judgements of good or outstanding. In all full inspections that resulted in an overall judgement of good or outstanding this year, the quality of education was also judged good or outstanding. The relationship between overall effectiveness and the key judgements was similar to previous years, with behaviour and attitudes being judged good or outstanding most often, followed by personal development.

Figure 19: Overall effectiveness, key judgements and provision judgements of FE and skills providers at full inspections, this year

Number of inspections in brackets



Over two thirds of the full inspections this year were of independent learning providers or employer providers. Of these, 63% were judged good or outstanding.

We carried out 64 full inspections of colleges, which included 11 colleges inspected for the first time since merging. Overall, 78% were judged good or outstanding. Of the 11 colleges inspected for the first time, one was judged outstanding, five good, four requires improvement and one inadequate.

Common areas for improvement in the colleges that were requires improvement or inadequate at first inspection are that they should:

- ensure that all learners benefit from a high quality and ambitious curriculum
- set higher standards for students' attendance and punctuality
- give all apprentices effective careers advice and guidance that supports them with their next steps.



Table 7: FE and skills providers judged good or outstanding at full inspections by judgement and provider group, this year

Provider group	Total number of inspections	Overall effectiveness % good or outstanding	Quality of education % good or outstanding	Behaviour and attitudes % good or outstanding	Personal development % good or outstanding	Leadership and management % good or outstanding
All FE and skills providers	510	68	71	89	74	67
Independent learning providers	360	63	65	87	69	62
Colleges	64	78	81	88	84	80
Other providers	87	79	84	95	87	79

1. 'Independent learning providers' includes employer providers.

2. 'Colleges' includes general FE colleges, sixth-form colleges and specialist FE colleges.

This year, the safeguarding arrangements in seven providers were judged to be ineffective. Safeguarding is ineffective where there are serious or widespread failures in the provider's safeguarding arrangements. We found:

- leaders unable to identify actions that have been taken following referrals
- weak recording of safeguarding concerns
- learners lacking understanding of safeguarding risks, how to keep themselves safe and how to report concerns
- insufficient safeguarding training for staff.

This year, of the 40 providers inspected that were previously judged outstanding, 18 remained outstanding, 18 were judged good and 4 were judged requires improvement. Sixty-four per cent of the 250 providers having their first full inspection were judged good or outstanding.

Table 8: Overall effectiveness of FE and skills providers this year, by previous overall effectiveness

Previous overall effectiveness	Total number of inspections	% Outstanding or remains outstanding at short inspection	% Good or remains good at short inspection	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
Outstanding	40	45	45	10	0
Good	210	3	70	23	4
Requires improvement	44	0	70	23	7
Inadequate	5	0	20	60	20
Not previously inspected	250	6	58	28	8
Total	540	7	62	25	6

1. Due to the small number of previously inadequate providers inspected, percentages should be treated with caution.

State of the nation

At year end, there were 1,970 publicly funded FE and skills providers offering education, training and/or apprenticeships, 75 fewer than on 31 August 2022.

Overall, 78% of FE and skills providers have had a full inspection and a further 15% have had an NPMV. Eight per cent are yet to be inspected.

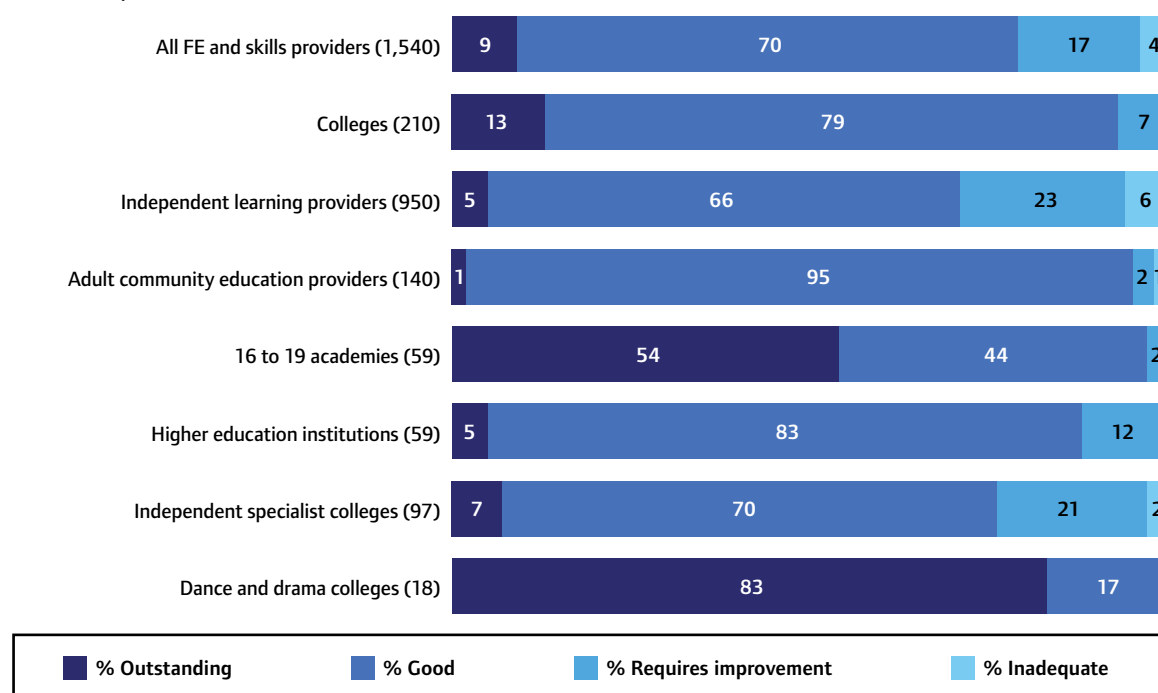
At year end, 79% of FE and skills providers were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection, two percentage points less than last year.





Figure 20: Overall effectiveness of FE and skills providers, at year end

Number of providers in brackets



1. 'Independent learning providers' includes employer providers.

2. 'Colleges' includes general FE colleges, sixth-form colleges and specialist FE colleges.

Although the overall proportion of providers judged good or outstanding has decreased, it has increased for some provider groups. At year end, 92% of colleges were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. This is an increase of one percentage point compared with last year. This increase follows several merged colleges being inspected for the first time, which was covered in more detail in our statistical commentary earlier this year.⁶⁵

65. 'How mergers have changed the number of colleges we inspect and their inspection outcomes', Ofsted, June 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspections-statistical-commentaries-2022-to-2023/how-mergers-have-changed-the-number-of-colleges-we-inspect-and-their-inspection-outcomes>.



T levels

T levels are a two-year vocational course taken after GCSEs that are broadly equivalent to three A levels. T levels combine practical and knowledge-based learning with an industry placement. They were introduced in 2020.

The DfE commissioned us to review the early implementation of T levels in 2022. In spring 2023, we returned to providers for the second phase of the review. This looked at T levels in construction, digital, education, and health and science. We also reviewed implementation of the T level transition programme (TLTP).

Our review shows that there is considerable work still to do to improve the quality and effectiveness of T levels and TLTPs.⁶⁶ The best providers engage employers as part of a well-considered curriculum planning process. However, learners' experiences of the programmes vary substantially. Many prospective learners, parents and school staff are not aware of or do not understand what the qualification entails.

A common weakness is in how providers carry out initial assessments of learners' abilities and what they do with the information. By not doing this thoroughly enough, providers are not identifying learners' starting points or using the information to inform curricular planning.

66. 'T-level thematic review: final report', Ofsted, July 2023;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-level-thematic-review-final-report>.

While the teaching of practical aspects of T-level courses is generally good, some vocational teachers struggle to teach theoretical content in enough depth. Likewise, learners have access to good physical resources, such as tools on construction courses. Yet teaching resources for T levels and TLTPs, such as specimen assessment and examination materials, are limited.

Many providers struggle to find suitable industry placements for learners. Employers are also often poorly informed by providers about the content and structure of courses. In these cases, placement activities are not well aligned with the T-level course content. When appropriate work placements are made, they provide beneficial opportunities for learners to develop relevant knowledge and skills.

Most learners who stay on their course achieve the qualification and move on to employment, apprenticeships or higher-level study. However, learner progression from the first to the second year of the course is low in many providers. Many learners do not complete the course.

The TLTP is a one-year, level 2, 16 to 19 study programme that provides a route into T levels for learners who are not ready to enrol on it straight away. Our review found that the number of learners who progress to T levels from TLTPs is low. In many cases, learners do not want to move on to a T level or do not understand what a T level is. We found some learners had been automatically enrolled following their GCSE results or a lack of appropriate level 2 alternative.

We found that the quality and effectiveness of the curriculums on TLTPs has generally improved. On the most effective programmes, learners benefit from tailored work placements. However, the least effective programmes do not include work experience and do not result in any meaningful outcome for learners after a year on the programme.



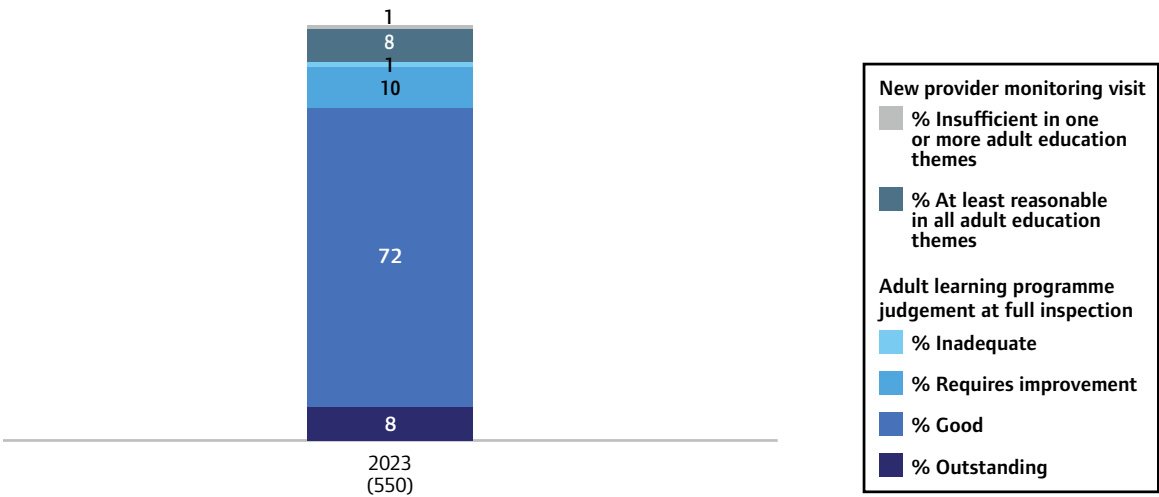
Adult learning

Since September 2019, funding for adult learning in England has been partially devolved. It is now divided between the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), mayoral combined authorities (MCAs) and the Greater London Authority (GLA). Each MCA and the GLA has a responsibility to fund adult learning in its area, to fit their local skills and community priorities. The ESFA continues to fund areas outside an MCA. Ofsted inspects all learning funded through the adult education budget, whether or not it is devolved (along with learning funded through some other routes).

At year end, 740 FE and skills providers were delivering adult education. Three quarters of these providers had been judged on the quality of adult education provision at their most recent full inspection or NPMV. Of those inspected, 88% were judged good or outstanding or to be making at least reasonable progress in an NPMV.

Figure 21: Quality of adult education provision, at year end

Number of providers in brackets



Skills Bootcamps

Skills Bootcamps are short, flexible programmes for adults, designed to meet employer skills needs. They enable employees and self-employed and unemployed adults to learn new skills. They aim to help people move into skilled jobs in sectors with skills shortages, such as digital, engineering, construction, manufacturing, and green and other new technologies.

We began inspecting Skills Bootcamps in April 2023. Between April and August 2023, we inspected a range of provision. This was usually in providers that already delivered other adult and apprenticeship provision and had been inspected before. We saw a number of examples of good and outstanding provision with strong teaching and assessment and learners that make good progress. We also found examples of weaknesses. In many cases, for example, the quality of teaching and support is not consistent enough, and too many learners are leaving without completing their courses.



In 2022, we published a Skills Bootcamp thematic review.⁶⁷ Some of the weaknesses seen in our recent inspections were apparent in that review.

We found that trainers generally have relevant industrial experience and good technical skills and curriculum knowledge in their specialist areas. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to develop pedagogical skills, such as in online training.

Providers make good use of regional partnerships and insight into labour markets to provide courses that meet identified skills needs. Nevertheless, some providers need to improve engagement with employers. In other cases, the purpose of the programmes is unclear.

Most providers sequence their curriculums appropriately and use good-quality learning resources. Most help learners to develop both personally and professionally and gain a range of skills, alongside vocational learning. However, the quality of teaching is not consistently high across providers and in many, assessment practice is too weak. Providers' arrangements for quality assuring Skills Bootcamps need to be more effective, particularly when the training is provided by subcontractors.

Learners who do enrol tend to remain until the end. Most learners were satisfied with the content and quality of their training. However, many of those who are taught entirely online have poor experiences. The help that providers give learners to find work varies substantially. Providers usually support learners with SEND well, although a few providers do not have clear strategies in place or provide specialist support.

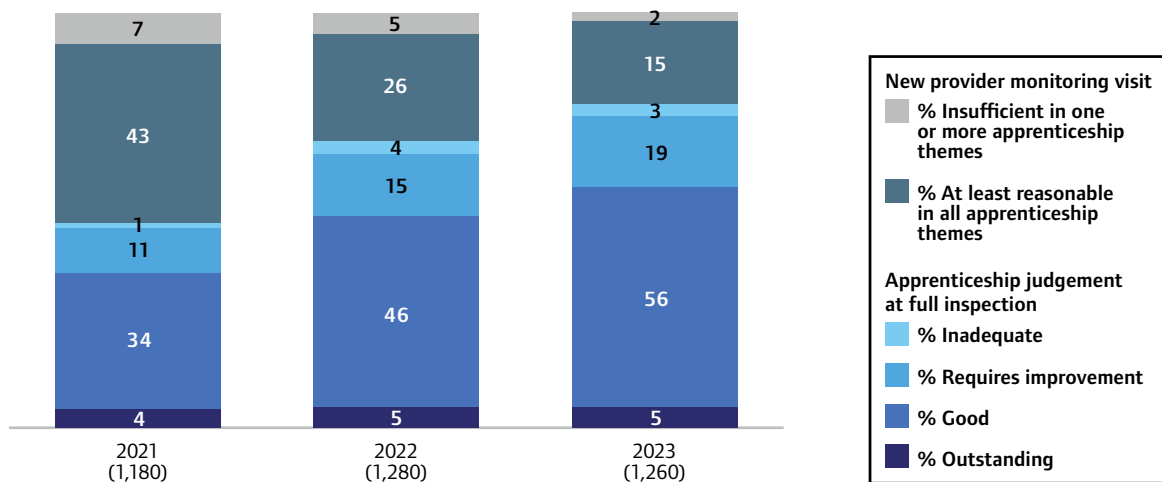
67. 'Skills Bootcamps thematic survey', Ofsted, November 2022;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-bootcamps-thematic-survey>.

Apprenticeships

At year end, 1,390 FE and skills providers were offering apprenticeships. Of those inspected, 76% were judged good or outstanding or to be making at least reasonable progress in an NPMV. Providers that deliver apprenticeships can vary greatly in size but all are inspected in their own right.

Figure 22: Quality of apprenticeship provision, at year end over time

Number of providers in brackets



This year, we graded apprenticeship provision on 120 NPMVs and 410 full inspections. At full inspection, apprenticeships remain the poorest performing provision type this year. Of the apprenticeship providers that had their first full inspection this year, nearly two-thirds are good or outstanding for apprenticeships. This leaves a third that are requires improvement or inadequate.

The strongest providers offer apprenticeships with well-constructed and taught training plans that link on- and off-the job training coherently. Apprentices develop substantial new knowledge and skills as a result, along with good professional behaviours and attitudes. There are some common features of good and outstanding provision, including:

- providers appropriately assess apprentices' abilities at the start of the apprenticeship to inform the training plan
- employers are committed to using apprenticeships effectively to improve the skills of their workforce
- trainers are experts in their subject and providers train them to be good teachers
- trainers and employers give apprentices appropriate information and guidance about the role of their apprenticeship in their employer's business, and for their wider, longer-term career
- leaders and managers have thorough oversight of apprenticeship provision and intervene swiftly when they identify areas for improvement
- trainers prepare apprentices well for their end point assessment, making sure that the apprentices get feedback that helps them to improve
- providers make sure that English and mathematics training is relevant to the individual and their industry.

Weaker providers do not take into account learners' prior knowledge or experience in planning, and teaching is often poor. English and mathematics training is not linked closely enough to relevant industry needs, instead tending to focus on achievement of functional skills qualifications. Providers do not offer enough or appropriate off-the-job training. When they do offer off-the-job training, it is insufficiently linked to on-the-job training. Weaker providers do not involve employers enough in planning or reviewing apprentices' training. Leaders and managers often do not know the weaknesses in their provision, as they do not have systems in place to evaluate it.

Levels 6 and 7 apprenticeships are mainly taught by higher education institutions and independent learning providers. Ofsted continues to inspect this provision, including providers new to apprenticeships and existing providers who have expanded their range of apprenticeships to include levels 6 and/or 7. We found the same strengths and areas for improvement at these levels as for apprenticeships at levels 2 to 5.

The number of people starting an apprenticeship in 2021/22 increased by 9% from the previous year. Despite this increase, at just under 350,000, this is still 31% fewer apprenticeship starts than in 2015/16. The reduction is particularly acute for levels 2 and 3 apprenticeships, with starts falling by 50% since 2015/16. In the same period, apprenticeship starts at levels 4 to 7 increased in areas such as senior leader, accountancy and taxation.⁶⁸

Provisional data published by the DfE indicates that overall apprenticeship starts have decreased in 2022/23, with a similar pattern of declines in starts at levels 2 and 3 and increases at levels 4 to 7.⁶⁹ This year, providers have told us about factors contributing to reduced starts at lower levels. Some are narrowing their offer because of challenges recruiting and retaining high-quality trainers, or because costs have risen ahead of funding rates for some apprenticeships. Employers are choosing to improve the skills of existing staff through higher level apprenticeships.

Nearly half (47%) of apprenticeship starters are aged 25 or over. Thirty per cent of apprenticeship starters are aged 19 to 24 and 22% are aged 16 to 18.⁷⁰

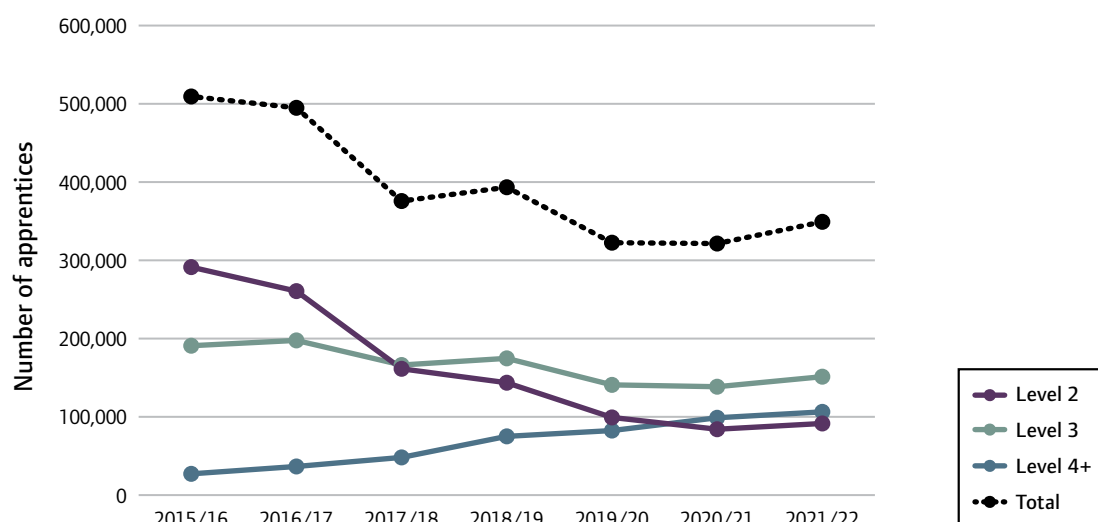
68. 'Achievement rates learner characteristics – volumes and rates by level, age, sex, LLDD, Ethnicity', Department for Education, <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-catalogue/apprenticeships-and-traineeships/2022-23>.

69. 'Latest Apprenticeships in year data', Department for Education, <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships#dataBlock-c52dddec-dd8f-4530-aa58-835bd4710aa5-tables>.

70. 'Headline Full year - Starts, Achievements, Participation by Level, Levy, Age, Region, Provider type', Department for Education, <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-catalogue/apprenticeships-and-traineeships/2022-23>.



Figure 23: Apprenticeship starts by level, over time



Source: Department for Education

Along with a reduction in apprenticeship starts, the proportion of apprentices leaving apprenticeships early has increased. In 2021/22, 45%⁷¹ of apprentices left an apprenticeship early, a four percentage point increase compared with the previous year.

Poor-quality training can lead to apprentices leaving. Some providers do not offer enough taught content and are over-reliant on independent learning, or use solely online teaching where it is not appropriate or relevant to the industry. A lack of information and guidance can lead to false expectations among apprentices and employers. This is because they are unaware of the level of commitment and time an apprenticeship can take to complete.

In sectors such as retail and hospitality, apprentices are leaving early for better paid but unqualified roles. Recruitment and retention of training staff continues to be a challenge for some providers and in some sectors, particularly in care, early years and education.

71. 'Achievement Rates Learner Characteristics - Volumes and Rates by Level, Age, Sex, LLDD, Ethnicity', Department for Education, <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-catalogue/apprenticeships-and-traineeships/2022-23>.

Provision for learners with high needs

This section looks at provision for learners with high needs in FE and skills providers. For discussion about school-aged children with SEND, see the SEND and alternative provision chapter.

We inspect ESFA-funded provision for learners with high needs in general FE colleges and other provider types. Independent specialist colleges provide education and training for learners with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There were nearly 47,000 post-16 high needs place allocations this year, an increase of 8% since last year.⁷² This year, we judged the quality of high needs provision at 51 general FE colleges, 29 independent specialist colleges and 46 other providers.

Overall, we judged 76% of high needs provision as good or outstanding. However, rates varied between provider types. Seventy-six per cent of general FE colleges were judged good or outstanding compared with 66% of independent specialist colleges.

Independent specialist colleges judged good or outstanding this year offer an appropriate curriculum that supports learners to develop personal skills and independent life skills, including English and mathematics. Common features included:

- providers focusing on developing learners' confidence and self-esteem so that they are well prepared for adulthood and employment
- managers who are ambitious for learners with high needs and plan their curriculum well
- support from specialist and therapeutic staff that enables learners with multiple and complex needs to access the curriculum and enrichment activities.

In independent specialist colleges that require improvement, the curriculum is not sufficiently ambitious. For example, they do not support learners' transition to their further learning or employment destinations, or not everything in the curriculum is purposeful or contributes to learners' preparation for independence. In some cases, tutors set work for learners that is too easy and too many learners are not being challenged to complete work to the best of their abilities. Consequently, their progress is slow and they stay at the college longer than they need to.

Most learners with high needs who attend general FE colleges also have appropriate curriculums that help them to develop a wide range of personal, social, sporting and employability skills. In some cases, the colleges had designed their curriculums with a strong link to community groups and local employers, preparing learners well for employment.

General FE colleges that required improvement share some weaknesses. They do not support learners with high needs who study on vocational and academic programmes promptly or effectively enough, such as by putting in place appropriate specialist support. For example, learners who would benefit from assistive technologies to promote their independence are not always encouraged to use them.

72. 'High needs: allocated place numbers', Education and Skills Funding Agency, July 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-allocated-place-numbers>.



Enhanced skills inspections

FE colleges, sixth-form colleges and designated institutions⁷³ have a new duty to review their contribution to meeting skills needs. In September 2022, we introduced enhanced inspections for these providers in which we make a sub-judgement on their contribution to meeting skills needs.

Inspectors meet senior leaders and governors to discuss their skills strategy. They meet a broad range of representatives from relevant civic, community, education and employer groups. They also meet curriculum managers to discuss how their subject and curriculum areas link with employers and other stakeholders.

This year, we carried out enhanced inspections of 68 providers. Of these, 31% are making a strong contribution to meeting skills needs, 63% are making a reasonable contribution and 6% a limited contribution.

Providers making a strong contribution have some similarities in their approach. They have clear skills strategies, established through close discussion and liaison with a range of employer and other stakeholders. In all the best cases, these skills strategies align closely to existing and emerging local, regional and/or national skills needs. Staff at all levels maintain strong relationships with a range of local and regional stakeholders, which they used to identify new and emerging skills needs. Senior leaders in these providers use their extensive range of contacts to broaden the curriculum and enhance learners' skills and understanding. Learners and apprentices are taught up-to-date knowledge and skills. In some cases, leaders have very strong relationships with national stakeholders who specialise in a particular subject or field. Curriculum leaders and/or subject heads also maintain good relationships with key stakeholders. They use these to review the curriculum, making sure it is up to date and that it takes account of skills needs in their field. They also work hard to keep staff skills up to date so that teaching gave learners the latest relevant skills in their field.

73. Designated institutions have specially designated educational status under section 28 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

Providers making a limited or reasonable contribution share some common areas for improvement. Frequently, these providers have no skills strategy in place or have only just begun work in this area. In these cases, strategic links with stakeholders are not yet in place, or are too new to be able to see their impact. Curriculum leaders and subject heads do not always seek the information or involvement from stakeholders that would make sure that teaching is current, relevant and most useful to learners or that the training they provide meets the needs of learners, employers, and sector stakeholders. In most of the colleges making a limited contribution to meeting skills needs, curriculum links with employers and other stakeholders are missing, underdeveloped or partial across a number of subject or sector areas.

Careers guidance

This year, the DfE commissioned us to review careers provision in schools and FE and skills providers.⁷⁴ We found that most FE and skills providers are aware of the importance of an effective career guidance programme. However, many report that time and resource limit their careers programme.

Overall, there is senior oversight of career guidance. The role of careers leader is well embedded. Providers understand the importance of appropriately qualified careers advisers. A few providers struggle to recruit qualified careers advisers and are training internal staff. In the majority of colleges, staff are receiving training to deliver careers guidance. They are positive about the training opportunities on offer.

All providers engage a wide range of employers in their careers programmes. In general, independent learning providers (ILPs) are more focused on working with their apprentices' employers and engage less with additional employers or higher education providers.

Providers have mixed views on whether schools promoted technical and vocational routes well enough. Some ILPs and colleges say that apprenticeships are not understood or promoted well enough by schools. A few providers say that schools do not tell learners and parents enough about T levels.

Work experience or industry placements are very important in deciding future career paths. We saw many examples of effective practice. However, in a small number of providers, these are limited or irrelevant to learners' interests. Some providers cite the pandemic as a reason for this. However, many have adapted quickly to changes in working practices, such as home working, since the pandemic. For example, some offer hybrid work placements.

74. 'Independent review of careers guidance in schools and further education and skills providers', Ofsted, September 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-careers-guidance-in-schools-and-further-education-and-skills-providers>.

Prisons

We inspect education, skills and work in prisons and in young offender institutions (YOIs) as part of inspections made by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP).

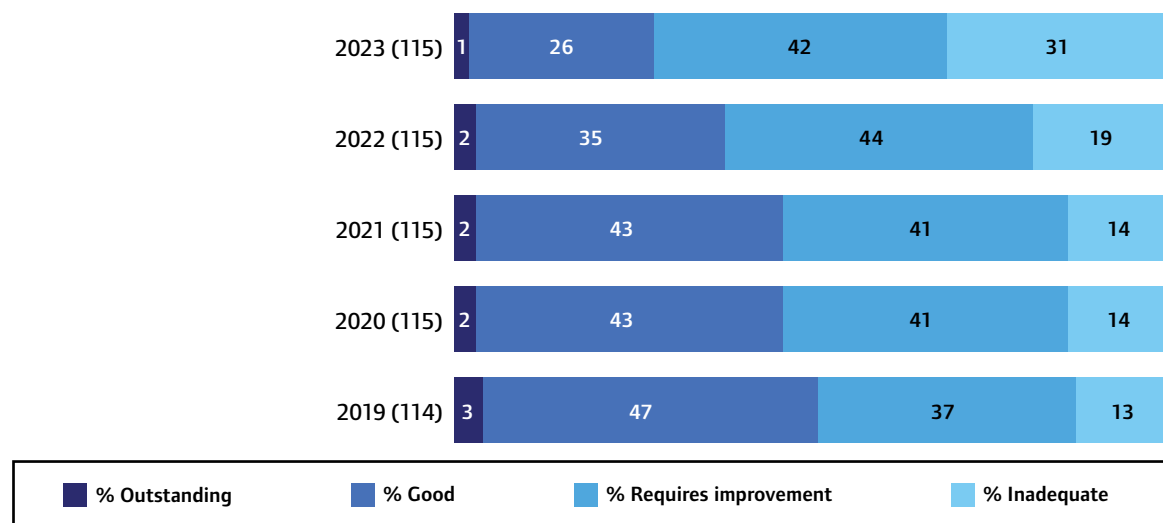
As reported in previous years, the overall effectiveness of education, skills and work provision in prisons is poor and continues to decline. This year, regimes in many prisons continue to be unstable and highly variable so that the provision of education, skills and work has been unpredictable. Staff shortages across much of the year affect the ability of prisons to offer a full range of purposeful activities.

This year, we contributed judgements to 43 prison and YOI inspections. Of these, only four were judged good overall, 20 were judged requires improvement and 19 were judged inadequate. No prison was judged outstanding during this period. Only one prison or YOI of the 43 improved on its previous inspection outcome. Nineteen prisons received the same judgement and 23 declined.

At year end, 27% of prisons and YOIs were judged good or outstanding. This is 10 percentage points less than last year.

Figure 24: Overall effectiveness of education, skills and work provision in prisons and YOIs, at year end over time

Number of prisons and YOIs in brackets





The quality of reading education in prisons: one year on

In June 2023,⁷⁵ we published a follow-up to our 2022 joint report with HMIP on reading education in prisons.⁷⁶ It considers the progress that prisons have made in prioritising reading education.

We are encouraged to see that many prisons have acknowledged the importance of reading and have developed reading strategies. However, in most cases, there is still substantial work to do. We recognise the continued challenges the prison sector has faced since the pandemic, and the effect of significant recruitment issues that have limited progress in some prisons.

Shortages of qualified English teachers limit more than half of the inspected prisons' ability to provide effective reading education. Most prisons have committed to teaching reading beyond formal education and have adopted reading strategies that prioritise non-readers and emerging readers. However, their action plans lack detail. Prisons do not use appropriate assessment to identify the reading-related knowledge and skills that prisoners are missing or need to improve. There are not enough courses for non-readers and emerging readers, nor do prisons set clear pathways to help prisoners learn.

There has been some progress in training staff but too few prisons have trained their staff on how to use phonics to teach reading. A lack of specialist training has a negative impact on the quality of teaching and choice of curriculum content. Prison leaders continue to provide libraries in all prisons but access is limited for too many prisoners. Progress in teaching reading to prisoners who speak English as an additional language is slow.

Our review made recommendations for improvement. For example, leaders should make sure that prisoners' reading skills are properly assessed and should increase the number of teachers who can use phonics. We will continue to focus on this vital aspect of prison education in our inspections.

75. 'The quality of reading education in prisons: one year on', Ofsted, June 2023;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-quality-of-reading-education-in-prisons-one-year-on>.

76. 'Prison education: a review of reading education in prisons', Ofsted, March 2022;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prison-education-a-review-of-reading-education-in-prisons>.



Social care

Social care

We regulate and inspect children's social care providers using the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) and local authority children's services under the inspecting local authority children's services (ILACS) framework. Across England, local authorities support around 713,000 children (classified as 'children in need') each year.⁷⁷ Over 82,000 of these children are in care.⁷⁸

By the end of 2022, we had inspected all local authorities under the ILACS framework. We are now returning for second ILACS judgement inspections. Local authority children's services have continued to improve in difficult conditions. This year, we added a separate care leaver judgement, which has highlighted differences between the experiences of care leavers and children currently in care.

For other social care providers, especially children's homes, little has changed in overall effectiveness from last year. Issues with workforce recruitment and retention continue to challenge all social care providers and local authorities.

In April 2022, we began our amended approach to joint targeted area inspections (JTAs). These now include inspections of the multi-agency response to identifying need and risk, and a programme of thematic deep dives.

In April, new regulations for supported accommodation came into force. These require providers who accommodate children in care or care leavers aged 16 and 17 to register with Ofsted. We began accepting applications in April. We have also been consulting on proposals for inspections of supported accommodation, which will begin in April 2024.



77. 'Characteristics of children in need', Department for Education, October 2023; <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/characteristics-of-children-in-need>.

78. 'Children looked after in England including adoptions', Department for Education, November 2022; <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions>.

Local authority children's services

State of the nation

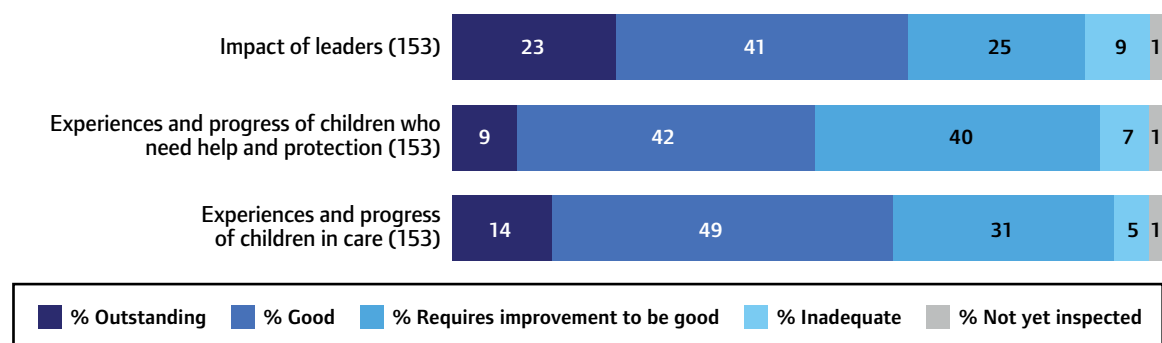
We inspect all 153 local authority children's services in England. Our ILACS inspections look at the overall effectiveness of children's services, including how they help and protect children, the experiences and progress of children in care and of care leavers, and the impact of leaders. The ILACS framework includes inspections (short and standard) that result in judgements, and activities (such as monitoring visits and focused visits) that do not result in judgements.

At year end, 60% of local authorities were judged to be good or outstanding. This is a slight increase from 56% last year (see annex for data definitions).

Almost all local authorities have grades for the three original ILACS key judgements.

Figure 25: Local authority key judgements, at year end

Number of local authorities in brackets



What we did this year

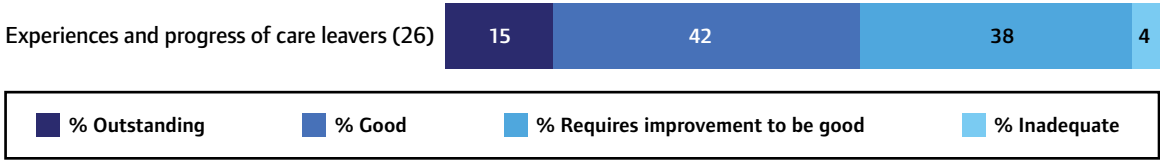
This year, we carried out 33 standard and 11 short ILACS inspections in 44 local authorities. We also gave 32 authorities focused visits, where we evaluate an aspect of service, a theme or the experiences of a cohort of children. We carried out 21 monitoring visits in local authorities that had been judged inadequate. These visits focus on the areas that the local authority needs to improve. Six local authorities received more than one monitoring visit this year.

Care leavers judgement

In January 2023, we introduced a fourth judgement: experiences and progress of care leavers. Since then, 26 local authorities have been graded on this judgement. The experiences of care leavers were previously captured in judgements about the experiences of all children in care.

Figure 26: Experiences and progress of care leavers key judgement, at year end

Number of local authorities in brackets



Of these 26 ILACS inspections, 13 resulted in different judgements for care leavers than for children in care. These differences in quality were less visible under the previous combined judgement. We are now more easily able to highlight good and poor practice for these distinct groups and make more targeted recommendations.

The separate judgement has also raised the profile of care leavers in our inspections. Inspectors have been able to review in greater depth the things that matter most for these young people. This includes access to education or employment, relationships, and whether the local authority engages care leavers themselves in decisions about available services. The greater depth of evidence we now gather has highlighted uneven offers for care leavers between local authority areas.

Findings from first cycle of ILACS

ILACS is a risk-based and proportionate inspection system. The length and type of inspection vary according to the information we hold about the authority. As well as the standard and short inspection every three to four years, ILACS includes non-inspection activity (a self-evaluation and annual engagement meetings) and focused visits.



After a first ILACS inspection, just over half (55%) of local authorities were graded good or better. By contrast, after a first inspection under the previous framework (single inspection framework – SIF), only 36% of local authorities were graded good or better. Fewer local authorities were graded inadequate after a first ILACS inspection (13%) than after a first SIF inspection (22%).

There is no one reason for this change in profile, but we do see:

- local authorities investing in strengths-based models of social work with families
- leaders working across local authority boundaries in and out of regions
- leaders setting clear direction for their social work teams and engaged in strong multi-agency partnerships.

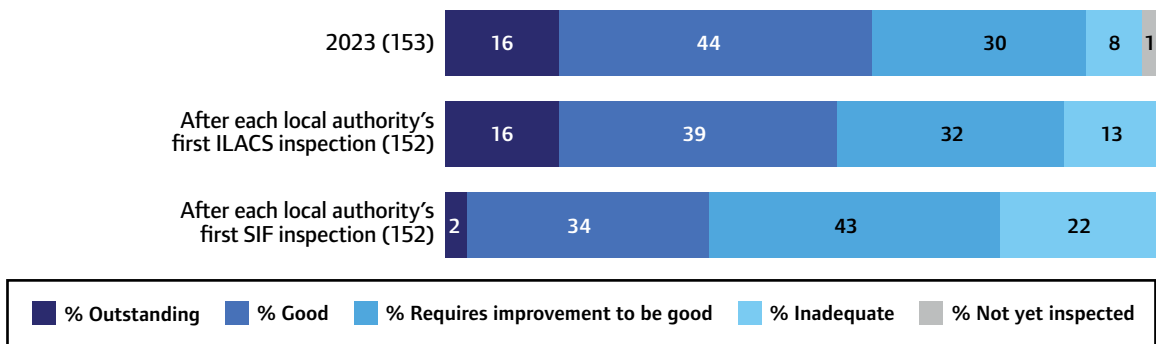
This is alongside an inspection regime that was designed to support improvement better.

This year, we started to return to local authorities for a second ILACS judgement inspection. This is the first time that local authorities are being inspected under the same framework for successive inspections, which allows us to make further comparisons. At year end, 43 local authorities had received a second ILACS inspection.

Most (37) either retained the same grade (19) or improved (18). Five local authorities improved by two grades, all from inadequate to good. The remaining six declined to inadequate, from either good or requires improvement to be good.

Figure 27: Local authority overall inspection outcomes by framework, at year end

Number of local authorities in brackets





Regulated social care

What we did this year

Registration

This year, we received 630 applications to register children's homes (2,000 places), an increase of around 40% from last year. This is a continuing trend but a much larger increase than previous years' increases of around 10%. We do not yet know whether the new regulation of supported accommodation has prompted decisions to register as a children's home. Extending regulation to all provision means that existing providers are deciding whether to register children's homes or as a supported accommodation provider.

We registered 370 applicants (59%) with 1,220 places. The average number of places in newly approved children's homes has been steady in the last few years, at three to four places, in line with all homes. However, we know that many children's homes do not operate at capacity, with some having only one resident child. Around four-fifths of the remaining applications were still in progress at year end. The rest had been withdrawn.

This year, we also received 65 applications to register other social care providers. Residential family centres (39) and independent fostering agencies (21) remain the most common other types of applicant.

Just under half of applications from other provider types were approved (29). The remainder were still in progress at year end (25) or had been withdrawn.

Inspection outcomes for children's homes receiving first full inspection this year

This year, 410 children's homes received a first full inspection. The majority of these (74%) were judged good or outstanding. A further 19% were judged requires improvement to be good, and the remaining 7% were judged inadequate. This was similar to previous years.



We reviewed all children's homes judged inadequate at their first inspection to see if registration decision-making can be improved and to gather insights into sector challenges. The main reasons for children's homes being rated inadequate at first inspection were:

- failures by leadership to oversee and monitor homes to make sure that they are developing and delivering high-quality, safe care for children
- staff who do not have the skills, experience or knowledge to effectively support and safeguard children
- poor assessment and management of risk.

These reasons were common across all regions and provider group sizes, including standalone children's homes.⁷⁹

State of the nation

At year end, there were around 4,000 social care providers across a variety of services, including residential care, and fostering and adoption services. Most are children's homes (3,290).

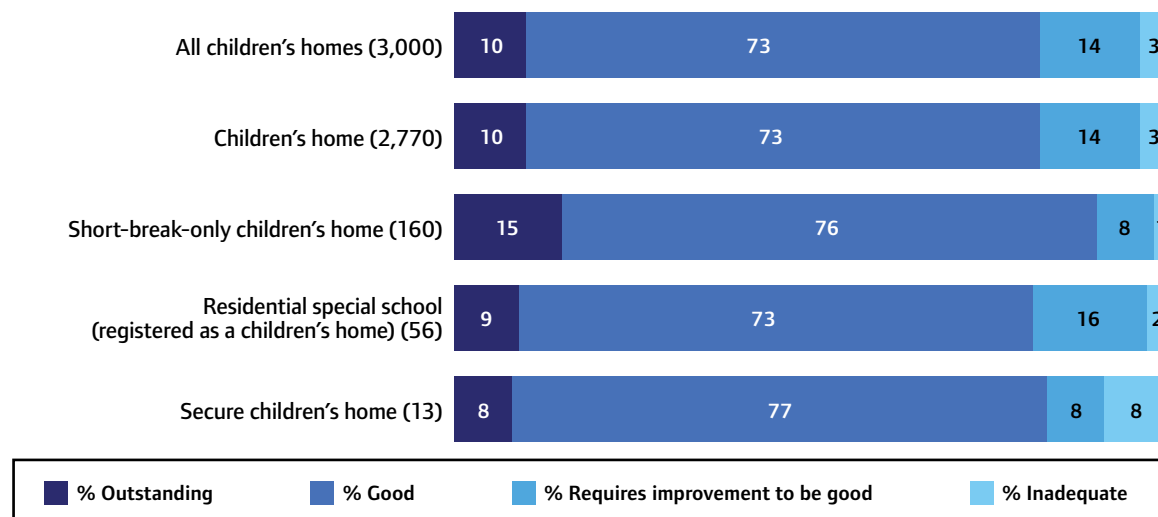
This year, there was an 11% increase in the number of children's homes, continuing a year-on-year increase since 2015. Last year, we introduced multi-building registration of children's homes. This means that a provider can apply to register a single home where care and accommodation are provided in more than one building. So far, we have received 11 applications for multi-building children's homes, six of which have been approved. Of the remainder, two withdrew their application and three are still in progress.

This year, we carried out around 3,120 full inspections of children's homes. Of these, 2,410 resulted in one or more requirements. The two most common reasons for requirements were leadership and management (around 1,140) and protection of children (around 1,050).

79. The review of children's homes inadequate at first inspection refers to the 2022-23 financial year.

Figure 28: Overall effectiveness of children's homes, at year end

Number of children's homes in brackets



1. Due to the small number of secure children's homes, percentages should be treated with caution.

Eighty-three per cent of children's homes were judged good or outstanding this year. This is slightly higher than last year (80%).

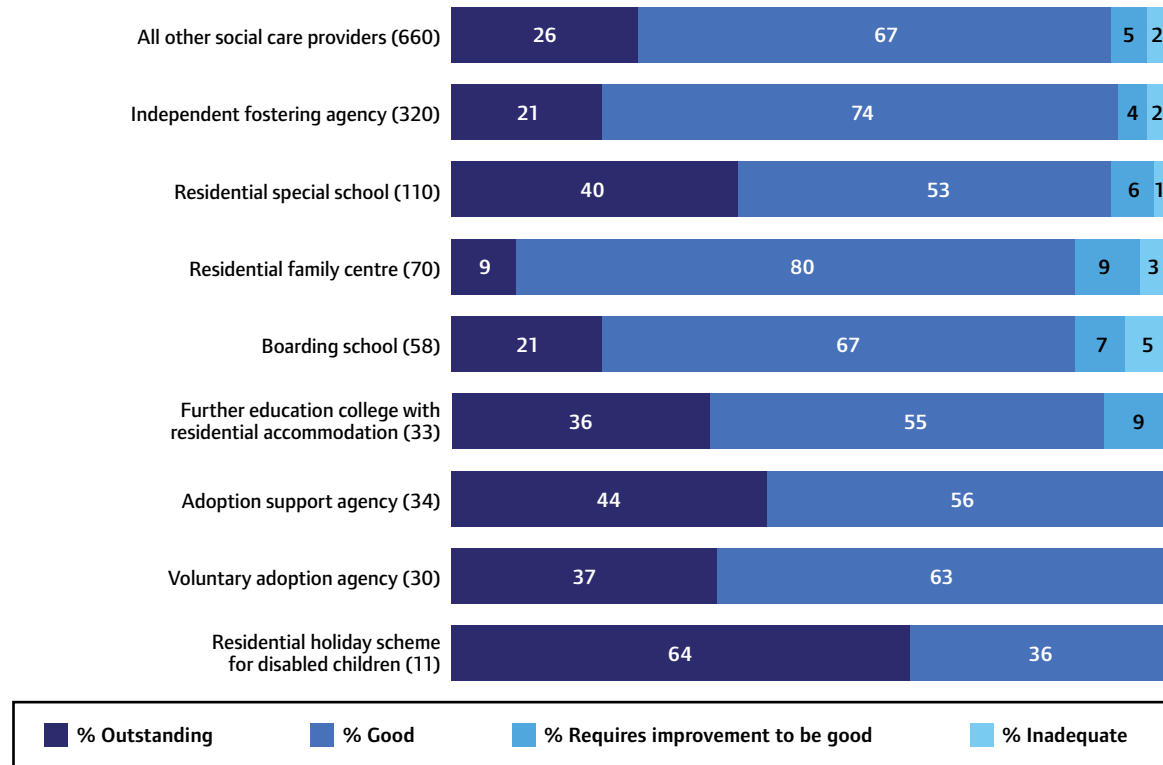
Table 9: Overall effectiveness of children's homes this year, by previous overall effectiveness

Previous overall effectiveness	Total number of inspections	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement to be good	% Inadequate
Outstanding	290	46	51	2	1
Good	1,520	8	80	10	2
Requires improvement to be good	280	1	66	28	4
Inadequate	78	1	65	28	5
Not yet inspected	420	4	76	16	4
Total	2,580	11	74	13	3

This year, we also conducted around 330 full inspections of other social care providers, most commonly independent fostering agencies. The majority of children in care (70%) live with foster carers, who are not overseen directly by Ofsted but are registered and overseen by independent fostering agencies and local authorities.

Figure 29: Overall effectiveness of all other social care providers, at year end

Number of social care providers in brackets



1. The secure training centre is not included in this chart.

2. Due to the small number of residential holiday schemes for disabled children, percentages should be treated with caution.

Of the 660 other social care providers, 93% are currently judged good or outstanding, an increase from last year (91%). Nearly half of these providers are independent fostering agencies, of which 95% are good or outstanding.

Table 10: Overall effectiveness of other social care providers this year, by previous overall effectiveness

Previous overall effectiveness	Total number of inspections	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement to be good	% Inadequate
Outstanding	110	68	28	4	1
Good	150	16	74	8	2
Requires improvement to be good	25	0	76	16	8
Inadequate	6	0	33	33	33
Not yet inspected	46	9	76	9	7
Total	330	30	59	8	3

1. Due to the small number of previously inadequate providers inspected, percentages should be treated with caution.

Ownership of social care provision

In August 2023, the 10 largest providers owned 30% of private children's homes and 31% of private children's homes places (2,760 places). This was similar to previous years. These 10 providers owned from 37 to 210 homes, and from 120 to 680 places.

Because of the risks associated with this concentration of ownership, the DfE intends to implement a financial oversight scheme. We are working with them on this.

More information on providers of children's homes is available in a separate Ofsted report.⁸⁰

Complaints, compliance and enforcement

In regulating children's social care, we receive and act on information from a variety of sources.

Settings must provide monthly reports (regulation 44 reports) from their independent visitor. They must also notify us about serious incidents relating to children and what they have done in response, and about some matters that do not typically require further action (such as child illness). These are known as safeguarding notifications.

We also receive complaints and child protection concerns about children's social care settings. These can be from parents or guardians, members of the public or staff in a whistle-blowing capacity. Child protection concerns are usually serious alerts about a child's welfare. An inspector reviews all the information we receive from any of these sources, and decides our next steps, including the focus and timing of an inspection.

We may take enforcement action in response to complaints and child protection notifications, safeguarding notifications from settings, or concerns identified during inspections and visits. Our actions include:

- compliance notice: setting out what a home must do to comply with the law
- restricting accommodation: the home is not allowed to have any more children until the restriction is lifted
- suspending providers: no more children can move into the home, and children already living there have to be moved elsewhere until the suspension is lifted
- cancelling providers: the home is closed permanently and all children living there have to be moved elsewhere.

In most cases, we act because of serious concerns about children's safety or about the quality of leadership and management. Given the disruption these acts can have on children's lives, we do not take these steps lightly. In cases where we restrict, suspend or cancel, the provider has the right to appeal the decision to a tribunal.

80. 'Largest national providers of private and voluntary social care (March 2023)', Ofsted, July 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspection-outcomes-of-the-largest-childrens-social-care-providers/largest-national-providers-of-private-and-voluntary-social-care-march-2023>.

Complaints and child protection concerns

This year, we received 1,370 complaints and child protection concerns about 920 social care settings, which is similar to the previous year.

Of these complaints and concerns, 1,100 (81%) had one or more actions recorded at year end. The other cases were still open. The mix of actions was very similar to last year.

Table 11: Number and type of actions taken, this year

Action taken	Number taken
Key line of enquiry for next inspection	480
Continued monitoring by allocated inspector	370
Provider-led investigation	300
Inspection brought forward	210
Monitoring visit	77
Referred to child protection team in the relevant local authority	71
Compliance and enforcement action	61
Referred to another agency	28
Other action taken not included in other categories	280
Total actions taken	1,880

1. One case can have multiple actions.

‘Other action’ includes any action that does not fall under one of the named categories, for example a complaint about a possible unregistered children’s home.

Enforcement action

This year, we issued 560 compliance notices to around 180 providers (5%), which is a similar number of providers to last year.

We also restricted accommodation in 78 providers and suspended the registration of 24 providers. We issued notices of proposal to cancel registration to 15 providers, with most of these resulting in the provider either resigning voluntarily or resolving the concerns before cancellation became necessary. Only one home had its registration cancelled, because of poor leadership and management, serious safeguarding concerns and ongoing failure to meet regulations. In some cases, providers remained suspended or unable to accept any more children while they were working to resolve the concerns. In others, the concerns were fully resolved and all enforcement action ended. Resolution of concerns often included appointment of new managers, and in some cases was demonstrated during visits or inspections.

Some homes that had been subject to regulatory enforcement action chose to resign. Of 180 resignations this year, 35% (62 homes) had been subject to regulatory enforcement activity before resigning. This is an increase from 28% last year.

Number and type of notifications

This year, we received around 36,100 regulation 44 reports from children's homes. Inspectors review all reports, and they inform inspection lines of enquiry and timing.

In addition, we require children's homes and independent fostering agencies to provide us with their self-evaluation reports into the quality of their services. This gives inspectors insight into the quality and impact of leaders and managers' oversight.

This year, we received 39,200 safeguarding notifications. Most were from children's homes, which form the majority of all social care providers, with an average of five notifications per child living in a children's home. This was, in part, because of the generally greater needs of children in children's homes compared with fostered children. Not all provider types are required to make safeguarding notifications to Ofsted, particularly local authority fostering agencies. This year, around two-thirds of children in foster care lived with local authority foster carers.

We have grouped notifications by reason. Around two-fifths of notifications were made under the 'other serious incidents' category, which settings use for events that do not fit into any of the other categories. These could include, for example, a fire in the home or the death of a carer.

In many cases, we take no further action as a result of a notification because the setting's response was appropriate. Inspectors review the overall pattern of notifications as part of our ongoing assessment of risk. This affects the timing of inspections. Other actions can include further investigation or including the notification as a key line of enquiry for the next inspection.

Table 12: Number of notifications and providers by notification reason, this year

Notification reason	Number of notifications	Percentage of notifications	Number of providers
Incident requiring police involvement*	10,200	26	2,360
Allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there~	4,200	11	1,630
Serious illness or accident*	1,840	5	440
Child protection inquiry outcome*	1,750	4	420
Serious concerns over a missing child	1,270	3	570
Serious complaint about a carer or member of staff*	1,010	3	240
Involvement or suspected involvement in sexual exploitation*	840	2	450
Child protection inquiry instigated*	730	2	470
Serious incident of self-harm by a child	340	1	220
Section 35 referral of an adult or provision of information to DBS*	180	<0.5	140
Child has been a perpetrator/victim of serious assault	140	<0.5	110
Outbreak of infectious disease*	130	<0.5	71
Death of a child*	37	<0.5	30
Other incident relating to a child that the registered person considers to be serious~	16,600	42	2,850

1. This may include duplicate notifications about the same event. Each notification can be counted under multiple reasons.

2. * against a notification reason indicates it is required for most provider types; ~ indicates it is required for children's homes only.

Notification reasons with no marker are not required by law.

3. Notification reasons have been created for summary purposes only therefore do not directly correspond with categories in regulations.

Special educational needs among children in care

The rates of special educational needs (SEN) among children in care are much higher than among the general population of children. This is true across all types of social care provision that we regulate, although the rates do differ substantially between the provider types. We only know the SEN status of children in care if we can match them to a child in the school census. From this matching, we know the SEN status for the majority (68%) of children who are living in Ofsted-registered provision.

Of the children whose SEN status we know, just over half (56%) had SEN, and 44% did not. This was split equally between children who receive SEN support and those who had an EHC plan, which is a higher level of support.

As we would expect, rates of SEN were highest in residential special schools, where almost all children had an EHC plan. These schools are for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Eighty-four per cent of children living in children's homes had some form of SEN support, with most having an EHC plan. We reported last year that 43% of children's homes offer care for children with learning difficulties.⁸¹

Rates are lower but still high among children living in foster care, where half of children had some form of SEN support though fewer have an EHC plan. As fostering households provide a family environment, carers are not always able to support the higher levels of SEN that residential provision can meet.

Despite the high rates of SEND among children in care, the overlap between the two has not always been fully recognised in local strategy or government policy. As the social care and SEND reforms are being made at the same time, there is a real opportunity to align policy and practice for these children.



81. 'What types of needs do children's homes offer care for?', Ofsted, July 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-types-of-needs-do-childrens-homes-offer-care-for/what-types-of-needs-do-childrens-homes-offer-care-for>.



Children we are particularly concerned about

Social care providers help and care for the most vulnerable children. In the wake of lockdowns, with increasing numbers of unaccompanied immigrant children (22% rise in the last five years)⁸² and with the rising cost of living, local authorities are looking after more children. The number of children in care has increased by 9% in the last five years. Additionally, some children are coming into care with more complex needs, and we are particularly worried about these children. For example, demand for mental health support is so high that many children in care are not getting help promptly.

Our concern for other children stems from them being out of sight of many services. These are, for example, children living in unregistered children's homes or those not attending school regularly.

Lack of joined-up working between agencies and local authorities can also limit oversight and risks children falling through gaps between services. This affects children who live away from their home local authority (around 40% of looked after children)⁸³ and those who need services from multiple agencies. This includes children who are homeless, involved in serious youth violence, or being exploited. These children need effective working between a large number of services, including children's social care, health, housing, youth justice, and the police, for their circumstances to improve.

Recognising the need for more integrated working between agencies, the government has made multi-agency working a focus of its social care reforms. This includes a commitment to improve clarity around the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

Our concerns for children who are out of sight of services also extend to children who are living in closed cultures. These environments can develop when children are away from family for long periods of time, such as when they are living, receiving healthcare and being educated in the same setting. Risks of closed environments increase when children have communication difficulties and are therefore less able to complain about poor treatment or negative experiences.

82. 'Children looked after in England including adoptions', Department for Education, November 2022; <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions/2022>.

83. 'Children looked after in England including adoptions', Department for Education, November 2022; <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions/2022>.

Children's mental health

Demand for children's mental health services has increased in recent years.⁸⁴ Many children experience delays in accessing external support, most notably from children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). There are shortages of experienced staff in children's homes, and of foster carers able to care for children with complex mental health needs. Providers report increased staff anxiety because staff are not confident about responding to mental health needs without timely CAMHS support.

Some local authorities are introducing temporary arrangements in the face of these delays. These include purchasing private mental health services, training staff in therapeutic approaches, and providing their own services to support carers, residential workers and social workers. Others are expanding access points to mental health services for children, such as making them available through early help services. We have seen some instances of local authorities and health services working together to combine budgets to build or commission specialist provision for children with complex mental health problems.

Children's homes are also adapting their approach to children's mental health. Examples include hiring in-house mental health services for children and increasing staff training to build confidence and skills in helping children with these needs. In some homes, staff form relationships with their local CAMHS team for guidance on providing therapeutic support. But this is not always enough for children with the most acute needs.

We are pleased to see that the government's reforms recognise the need to upskill staff in this area.⁸⁵ They commit to building social workers' and other practitioners' understanding of children's mental health needs and their skills to respond to them.

84. 'Yearly referrals to young people's mental health services have risen by 53% since 2019', Young Minds, June 2023; <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/yearly-referrals-to-young-people-s-mental-health-services-have-risen-by-53-since-2019/>.

85. 'Stable Homes, Built on Love: strategy and consultation', p. 20, Department for Education, February 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/childrens-social-care-stable-homes-built-on-love>.



Homeless children aged 16 or 17

When children aged 16 or 17 present as homeless, the local authority should make a joint social work and housing needs assessment. Children should be offered either their own tenancy, where this is appropriate, or a place as a child in care.⁸⁶

The support these children receive is mixed. In many local authorities, children are offered joint assessments that give genuine options for children to exercise their rights and entitlements. In a minority of authorities, however, this is not the case. We have seen confusion around the legal status of these children, poor communication of their rights, and a lack of robust data collection. Where these children are not monitored effectively, they can fall out of sight of services. Some authorities are improving services, but there are still local authorities that fail to respond effectively.

Some two-tier authorities⁸⁷ continue to struggle to work in partnership with district councils. This is the case even for high-performing authorities, where the service for children aged 16 or 17 presenting as homeless too often needs to improve.

86. 'Provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation', Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Department for Education, and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, April 2010; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provision-of-accommodation-for-16-and-17-year-olds-who-may-be-homeless-and-or-require-accommodation>.

87. In two tier local authorities, each county council area is subdivided into districts. Each district has an independent district council.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children

In the past year, the number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children entering the country has continued to place significant pressure on local authority children's social care. At points, there have been several hundred children in Home Office-commissioned hotels. There were reports of children being removed by organised crime groups.

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) inspected the four hotels in use in April 2022. This was in response to concerns raised with the ICIBI by stakeholders and from its own intelligence-gathering activities. Ofsted accompanied ICIBI to help evaluate children's experiences. The inspections identified serious concerns in the quality of care and the safeguarding of children.

His Majesty's Chief Inspector has consistently expressed concerns about the use of unregulated hotels to accommodate lone vulnerable children. Ofsted is a member of the cross-government taskforce working to find alternatives. We have advised on how regulatory frameworks for children's homes and new arrangements for supported accommodation could provide better alternatives to hotels. In July 2023, the High Court ruled that systematic and routine use of hotels to accommodate unaccompanied asylum-seeking children is unlawful. This ruling, along with outcomes from other court cases in the last year, has provided legal clarity around local authorities' responsibilities to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and the Home Office's powers to accommodate them. This clarity had been missing over the previous few years, despite the increase in children entering the country over that period. In September, Ofsted accompanied ICIBI to advise and assist them in their inspection of the remaining two hotels still being used to accommodate children temporarily.

Hotels are being used to accommodate children in Kent before they move to another local authority area under the national transfer scheme (NTS). The scheme was mandated in 2021, to reflect the fact that supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children is a UK-wide responsibility and to address the strain on local authorities that are points of entry to the UK. It is expected that local authorities accept transfers until unaccompanied asylum-seeking children make up 0.1% or more of their general child population. The threshold was increased from 0.07% in August 2022 in response to continuing demand on port authorities.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children must be looked after by the responsible local authority which owes them the same duties as all other children in care, including permanence planning. Plans should ensure that children have a secure, stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond.

The Illegal Migration Act 2023 gained Royal Assent in July 2023. Currently, some aspects of the Act have commenced, but not all. The commencement of the remaining aspects is likely to be ongoing and iterative. The Act introduced provision that could result in some unaccompanied young people being removed from the UK after they turn 18. This creates potentially conflicting expectations and practice standards for asylum-seeking children. Social workers currently help asylum-seeking children plan for their futures while they apply to be allowed to remain. The Illegal Migration Act will require children to be prepared for contingencies such as detention or removal to another country. The DfE's expectations for the care of these children will need to be clearly defined, so that local authorities can meet them, and we can judge what this means for children's best interests at inspection. This will be more complicated if there are different entitlements for children in different contexts.



Pressures in social care

For many years, social care services have been under considerable pressure due to high demand, problems with staff recruitment and retention, and insufficient places for children to live. Lockdowns and their aftermath, along with the increased cost of living, have compounded these and other pressures. Local authorities report higher numbers of children having contact with front door children's services.

The best performing local authorities and providers have mitigated these issues, to provide continually good, and sometimes improved, practice for children and their families. However, there is still too much national disparity in the services and support children receive.

Ongoing challenges for Cafcass and the family court

Demand for Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) services remains extremely high as pandemic backlogs in the family court are worked through. Longer case durations and high numbers of new cases, which are outside Cafcass's control, have exacerbated the problem. To understand how Cafcass is managing in this context, we did a focused visit in January 2023.⁸⁸ At that time, there were approximately 6,600 (14%) more children with cases open to Cafcass than before the pandemic. Around 5,000 children had been in court proceedings for over 52 weeks. Eight hundred and thirty-five children had been in public law proceedings and 3,500 in private law proceedings for over 100 weeks.⁸⁹ The government's social care reforms recognise the need to tackle court delays.⁹⁰

Despite the high demand, Cafcass has sustained and improved the focus on children's safety and welfare. It has led and developed creative and highly effective strategies in collaboration with national and regional partners to maintain high-quality services to children, families and the family court. Senior leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the pressures in the family justice system, and what the associated delays mean for the children involved.

In a challenging context, senior leaders have pushed forward with national and regional improvement priorities. As a result, Cafcass continues to meet its statutory responsibilities for children, the quality of social work practice remains strong and, overall, continues to improve.

88. Focused visits look at a specific area of service or a specific cohort of children. They do not result in an inspection judgement. Our published reports of focused visits to Cafcass can be found here: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/12/1027080>.

89. Figures from the self-evaluation submitted by Cafcass for its annual engagement meeting in May 2023.

90. 'Stable Homes, Built on Love: strategy and consultation', p. 20, Department for Education, February 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/childrens-social-care-stable-homes-built-on-love>.



Workforce vacancy rates and qualifications

Staffing challenges are still significant in the social care sector. The problems with recruiting and retaining workers are particularly apparent in children's homes. At year end, 12% of children's homes did not have a registered manager in post. Of those with a registered manager, 40% had a manager who had been in post for less than a year. A further 2% of children's homes did not have a responsible individual in post. This was similar to last year. This leaves a significant gap in oversight of what is happening for children.

In 2022–23, 35% of permanent care staff in children's homes left their role and 42% were newly hired. Although these rates are similar to previous years, local authorities and providers report that many staff, particularly those in roles that require low or no qualifications, are leaving for better paid jobs in other industries. Those with more qualifications are moving to agency work that offers higher pay. Very high turnover creates instability for children and reduces the chances of building the relationships that are important for children's well-being and sense of belonging.

Permanent staff in children's homes are required to gain one of three level 3 qualifications within two years of starting work. We collect data on these qualifications. Our latest data shows around half of children's homes staff held a required level 3 qualification (54%), down from 61% four years ago. Just under two thirds (64%) of registered managers held the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for residential childcare. This proportion has increased over the last few years, from 50% in 2018–19.

Managers have up to three years to gain the level 5 diploma and so many start in post with level 4 (leadership and management for care services). In total, 77% of registered managers had at least the level 4 diploma. This has increased over the last few years, from 71% in 2018–19. Many registered managers without these diplomas may hold other equivalent qualifications.

Movement of children with the highest needs

The reduction in mental health in-patient beds and care means that there are now more children who have complex needs or who are a significant risk to themselves or others but who cannot find a suitable home in the community. This means that children's social care services are finding and funding provision for children who might otherwise have been in health facilities. These children fall into one or more of the following categories:

- they do not meet the criteria for a secure accommodation order
- they cannot live in a secure children's home (SCH) because of placement shortages
- they would not get their needs met in an SCH even if there was space available.

At the same time, the shortage of places for children with more complex needs has meant that providers know they are almost guaranteed to fill places. Many are therefore more selective about the children they accept, often preferring those with simpler needs. This leaves local authorities ‘chasing’ homes for children and children living too far away from their family or in a home that cannot fully meet their needs, or both.

Carers for children with complex needs need a broad skillset and input from multiple partner agencies. We surveyed local authorities this year about their experience of finding homes for children with complex needs. Ninety-one per cent said they ‘often’ or ‘always’ experience difficulties, particularly when children’s primary needs relate to behaviour or mental health.⁹¹ Competition for places for these children pushed up placement costs.

Shortage of secure children’s homes

There is, as there has been for the last few years, a shortage of secure children’s homes places in England. There were 13 secure children’s homes at year end. Of these, 12 are run by local authorities and one by a voluntary organisation. They offer a total of 224 places, of which:

- 123 are for children whom the courts consider to be a significant risk to themselves or others and cannot be kept safe by any other placement
- 101 are commissioned by the Youth Custody Service for children who have been remanded in custody by the courts or are serving a custodial sentence.

On an average day, around 140 children are living in secure children’s homes (around 75 in places for children considered a risk by courts, and around 65 in custody places). Around 50 children each day are waiting for a place and around 10 are placed by English local authorities in Scottish secure units due to the lack of available places in England. As well as the shortage of secure children’s homes places, there is also a lack of in-patient mental health provision. For some children, the kind of provision they need simply does not exist. Local authorities are left creating bespoke arrangements as a result, some of which sit outside any regulatory regime. The distribution of secure homes is uneven across the country, with none in London or the West Midlands, heightening the problem in some areas.

As well as factors affecting the whole children’s social care sector, secure children’s homes’ capacity is limited by some children’s increasingly complex needs and some ageing buildings. As a result, secure children’s homes are often operating at reduced capacity. One is currently closed but expected to reopen.

The difficulties that local authorities face in finding secure accommodation have contributed to the growing numbers of children subject to deprivation of liberty orders. Between July 2022 and May 2023, applications were made for 1,140 children,⁹² which is almost double the level of two years before.⁹³ These higher numbers are particularly concerning because many of these children are placed in unregistered settings. Ofsted does not always know where these children are living or under what restrictions.

91. ‘Children with complex needs in children’s homes’, Ofsted, May 2023;

<https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/05/23/children-with-complex-needs-in-childrens-homes/>.

92. ‘National deprivation of liberty court: Latest data trends – May 2023’, Nuffield Family Justice Observatory, May 2023;

<https://www.nuffieldfjo.org.uk/resource/national-deprivation-of-liberty-court-latest-data-trends-may-2023>.

93. ‘What do we know about children and young people deprived of their liberty in England and Wales? An evidence review’, Nuffield Family Justice Observatory, February 2022; <https://www.nuffieldfjo.org.uk/resource/children-and-young-people-deprived-of-their-liberty-england-and-wales>.

Use of unregistered children's homes

As well as being used for children subject to deprivation of liberty orders, unregistered children's homes are being used as a 'stop-gap' for children for whom local authorities cannot find suitable placements. Although these homes are often a last resort and intended to be temporary, the national shortage of placements for children with complex needs means some particularly vulnerable children live in these settings for long periods.

Alongside our regulatory work, we receive and investigate notifications about possible unregistered children's homes. This year, we completed investigations into 530 possible unregistered settings. Of these:

- 370 settings (70%) should have been registered. In most cases, we sent warning letters to the home, and also to all local authorities to make them aware of the risks. A small number have since applied to register and most of the remainder have ceased operating
- 110 settings (20%) did not need to be registered or were used for very short-term temporary placements that had ended by the time of investigation. These settings were fairly evenly split between providers of supported accommodation and similar unregulated placements, and temporary placements that had since ended
- the remaining 10% were situations that included incorrect notifications and notifications that we were unable to follow up.

As well as the 530 completed investigations, some investigations were still open at the end of the year.

Most of our work (83%) on possible unregistered children's homes followed a notification of the placement by the placing local authority. Most placements were made because the local authority was unable to find a suitable regulated option (78%). The next most common source of notification (4%) was Ofsted identifying a potentially unregistered children's home during inspection.

Sufficiency of care places

There are continuing issues with the availability of suitable places in the right location.

Overall, the number of children's homes and of children's homes places has increased since last year. The number of children's homes increased by 9%, and places by 5%. Despite this, local authorities are still struggling to find the right homes for children in their care.⁹⁴ In part, this is because homes, and particularly specialist homes, are not evenly spread across the country. Homes continue to open disproportionately in the regions where numbers are already the highest. The North West accounts for a quarter of all children's homes and almost a quarter of all places. The distribution of homes, including new home openings, does not reflect the distribution of need.

94. 'How local authorities plan for sufficiency: children in care and care leavers', Ofsted, November 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-local-authorities-plan-for-sufficiency-children-in-care-and-care-leavers>.

The number of registered places also does not reflect the number of places available. More homes are operating below their registered capacity. This can be because the complexity of a child's needs means that a solo placement is commissioned, so other places are blocked. While solo placements might be right for some children, we remain concerned at the continuing rise in children living alone and with very high staffing numbers. In some cases, the home charges the local authority for all the places, despite caring for only one child. In other examples, homes are caring for fewer children because they cannot recruit enough staff.

These factors are resulting in poor experiences for some children. More are living in homes that cannot fully meet their needs, in unregistered places or in places that are far from their previous home. Moving away from their local area can disrupt children's access to services and education, as well as their contact with friends and family. A report we published last year⁹⁵ shows the number of homes in England that can care for children with different types of needs. It highlighted the unequal regional distribution of homes, as well as the limited numbers of homes able to provide some specialised types of care.

With placements being made based on availability rather than suitability, placement breakdowns are more likely. Moving to a new placement brings further instability for children.

Local authority approaches to addressing sufficiency issues vary a lot.⁹⁶ Some of the better examples focus on:

- investing in 'edge of care' and reunification work
- partnership working and joint-commissioning agreements between local authorities or with charities
- improving the fostering offer and recruitment strategies to attract carers.

Sufficiency of fostering places was highlighted as an issue in the care review.⁹⁷ The review stated that 9,000 foster carers need to be recruited over the next three years to provide for children in care, including some children in children's homes, who would be better suited to living in a family environment with a foster carer. The government's proposed reforms commit to investing in this area, to boost approvals of new carers in locations where demand is highest and to increase support for foster carers, enabling them to continue fostering.

There are currently just over 35,000 mainstream⁹⁸ fostering households in England, down 6% over the past five years.

95. 'What types of needs do children's homes offer care for?', Ofsted, July 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-types-of-needs-do-childrens-homes-offer-care-for/what-types-of-needs-do-childrens-homes-offer-care-for#distance-from-home-before-coming-into-care>.

96. 'How local authorities plan for sufficiency: children in care and care leavers', Ofsted, November 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-local-authorities-plan-for-sufficiency-children-in-care-and-care-leavers>.

97. 'The independent review of children's social care', Josh MacAlister, May 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/independent-review-of-childrens-social-care>.

98. 'Mainstream' fostering households refers to fostering arrangements where the carer is not a friend or family member of the fostered child.

In March 2023, there were 72,800 mainstream fostering places, down 7% from five years ago. Of these, 61% were filled (44,600), 17% were vacant (12,100) and the rest were not available (for example, due to the needs of children in placement, carers taking a break or the specific type of care the carers were approved to provide). The proportion of vacant places has fallen from 22% in March 2018. This may make it more difficult for local authorities to find suitable placements to meet a child's needs around, for example, location, other children in the household and experience level of carers.

In addition to investing in residential care and fostering, the government's reforms emphasise kinship care. Seen as a way of keeping more children within families, the government has committed to developing a kinship care strategy and to fund and support training for kinship carers. Currently, 19% of foster households are providing kinship care, an increase from 14% five years ago. This equates to around 14% of all fostering places – again, an increase from 10% five years ago. More information on kinship foster care is available in the fostering in England 2023 national statistics.⁹⁹

Multi-agency child protection work

In April 2022, we introduced a revised approach to our multi-agency inspections. We replaced single joint targeted area inspections (JTAI) with two models. These are:

- inspections of the multi-agency response to identifying initial need and risk (sometimes referred to as 'the front door')
- a programme of thematic deep dives.

Early help JTAI

We carried out thematic joint targeted area inspections in five local areas between December 2022 and March 2023, looking at the multi-agency response to children and families who need help.¹⁰⁰ Inspectors reviewed the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements that identify families and deliver support.

During these JTAs, we saw some excellent work at both a strategic and a practice level. However, the most striking finding was the variability in early help between local areas. This was in relation to both what was available to children and families and how support was provided. This includes different understanding in different local authorities about the role of early help, significant variation in strategy and practice, and differing capacity across geographical areas and across partners.

We saw well-trained and knowledgeable early help workers undertaking effective work with children and families, to meet their needs and reduce risk. However, achieving the full vision of the government reforms is likely to be inhibited by a lack of capacity across agencies. More investment and priority will need to be given to early help at all levels and across all agencies. This would maximise what already exists and build more capacity into the system. There needs to be more emphasis on statutory partners to make sure that there is effective oversight of early help, including evaluation of the impact. Critically, schools need to be involved with partners at both a strategic and a practice level.

99. 'Fostering in England 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023', Ofsted, November 2023;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fostering-in-england-1-april-2022-to-31-march-2023>.

100. 'The multi-agency response to children and families who need help', Ofsted, November 2023;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-multi-agency-response-to-children-and-families-who-need-help>.

Resource pressures made it hard for all areas to prioritise early help. We found that strategic oversight and evaluation of partnership arrangements, including information sharing and communication, are critical to successful early help services. These services work well when partners know their communities well. Services can then be tailored to meet local need, making them more accessible. Families need access to the right help at the right time, which in some cases will mean quickly stepping up to statutory social care. Consistent workers through these transitions can improve the experience for families.

The specific weaknesses that we found in some of the local areas we visited included:

- a lack of prioritisation and oversight
- weak processes, such as no identified lead professional, assessment, or plan
- lack of multi-agency working
- children's needs and risks not always being matched to lead professionals with sufficient skills, experience and knowledge.

Front door JTAI

The multi-agency response at the front door is critical in ensuring that children get the right help at the right time. There is a lot to celebrate in the areas that we have inspected so far. We have seen a strong focus on improving the multi-agency response to children, with professionals from different agencies working well together. They understand their roles well. We saw joint-working with some effective systems and in supportive cultures. The best partnerships are committed to a learning culture and work together towards shared priorities; accountability is clear and challenge is welcome.

The areas for improvement remain similar to those seen on previous JTAs. Better information-sharing and communication are needed. Strategy meetings do not always consider all the relevant information in decision making and outcomes are not consistently shared in a timely way. Children's voices and experiences are not always gathered and recorded. In some areas, limited capacity across health, police and children's services creates challenges and, despite some mitigation, leads to delays in responding to children. As reported previously, the local safeguarding children's partnership has a critical role in quality assurance and scrutiny. In examples where this partnership was working well, they were able to identify and act on where improvement is needed. Where oversight is strong, children and families benefit.

Serious youth violence JTAI

We are conducting a series of joint targeted area inspections looking at multi-agency responses to children impacted by serious youth violence.¹⁰¹ These are looking at how partnership responses are made at a strategic and practice level. We are focusing on children's experiences to look at how partners work together to improve outcomes for children and meet their needs for protection and support. We are also looking at partnership interventions in places and spaces such as local neighbourhoods, schools and parks, to prevent serious youth violence and make communities safer for all children and families.

101. 'Joint targeted area inspections of the multi-agency response to serious youth violence', Ofsted, August 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-targeted-area-inspections-of-the-multi-agency-response-to-serious-youth-violence>.

Looking forward

Government social care reforms

This year, the government published its strategy for the reform of children's social care, called 'stable homes, built on love'.¹⁰² We welcome the review, because many of the reforms reflect issues that we have previously raised. We have responded formally.¹⁰³ The review's focus on families is positive. For most children, the family setting is where they will do best. We also welcome the intended review of the regulatory system. We have long said that the Care Standards Act is out of date.

As with any major reform programme, there are areas where reforms could have unintended consequences. Part of the value of inspection is as a system lever that can help mitigate these. We see benefits in a system that brings targeted early help and child in need work together. Managing risk carefully and making sure that the system does not become overwhelmed will require careful work and good oversight, especially given that the workforce is already stretched.

For children with very specialist and multiple needs, the concept of regional care cooperatives (RCCs) is intended to help local authorities work together to find solutions. We have been asked to look thematically at the work of regional adoption agencies and hope this can inform thinking about regional care cooperatives.

We hope that the reform's focus on social workers will help to develop a bigger pipeline of high-quality leaders in children's services, to address the national shortage. The reforms would also benefit from extending to the wider workforce, such as those in residential care.

We will continue to offer our best advice to government as the reforms develop. Our ILACS inspections of local authority children's services will support the changes that occur through reforms, iterating carefully and informed by sector engagement. Our SCCIF inspections will continue to focus on children's progress and experiences.

We regulate and inspect proportionately and with great care in a time of change. We expect the reforms, if properly resourced and well implemented, to improve both. We will keep children and families front and centre and continue to work collaboratively with local authorities and providers to improve outcomes for children.

102. 'Children's social care: Stable Homes, Built on Love', Department for Education, February 2023;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/childrens-social-care-stable-homes-built-on-love>.

103. 'Ofsted's response to the Stable Homes, Built on Love consultation', Ofsted, July 2023;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsteds-response-to-the-stable-homes-built-on-love-consultation>.



Supported accommodation

This year, the government published regulations for supported accommodation for children in care and care leavers aged 16 and 17. We began accepting applications to register providers of supported accommodation in April 2023. All providers were required to apply by 28 October, when the regulations came into force. By the application deadline, there were 680 proposed or active providers, operating a total of 5,930 premises.

Meanwhile, we have consulted on how we propose to inspect this provision, which will begin in April 2024. We have also worked closely with care-experienced people to inform our proposals and consultation. Their experiences and insight are helping us focus on what matters most to children in supported accommodation. We have also had extensive discussions with other interested parties, including local authorities, providers and children's advocacy charities. The views of users and stakeholders, combined with a review of the available research, will provide a firm evidence base for our inspection methodology. We will publish our consultation response and inspection guidance for providers and inspectors in February 2024.

There is broad agreement in children's social care that independent oversight of supported accommodation is necessary and long overdue. This is despite the pressure that increased regulation undoubtedly brings to a sector that is challenged by wider sufficiency issues. In particular, the oversight will give much-needed extra intelligence about the extent of unregistered residential provision and will help us to take action when necessary to safeguard children and young people.

The launch of the secure academy and secure children's home

We welcome the development of the secure academy. Described by government as 'a school inside the prison walls', the project is based on international, peer-reviewed research. This shows that small settings that offer high-quality education and healthcare, provided by specialised teachers and youth workers, are valuable in rehabilitating young people in custody.

We have been advising the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Youth Custody Service (YCS) on its regulation as the government redevelops a former secure training centre. The academy opening date is planned for March 2024. We will continue to advise MoJ and YCS on this dual status provision (16–19 academy and secure children's home) and how it can operate within the regulatory frameworks.

Annex

Reference to ‘this year’ or 2022/23 includes inspections that took place between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023 and with a report published by 30 September 2023. The exceptions are area SEND and prisons. The reports for area SEND inspections were published by 10 November 2023. Prisons includes all inspections published between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023. Some settings or schools or providers can be inspected more than once within the year. The figures show the number of inspections that took place during the year.

Reference to ‘at year end’ includes the latest inspection grades for all settings, schools, providers or local authorities on 31 August 2023 and with a report published by 30 September 2023. The exception is prisons – the reports for these inspections were published by 31 August 2023.

Numbers over 100 have been rounded, with the exception of prisons in Figure 24 and local authorities in Figures 25 and 27, where rounding has not been applied.

On charts and tables, percentages have been rounded and may not add to 100.

Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Further information on how inspection data is counted and calculated can be found in the methodology documents that accompany our official statistics:

Early years: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-providers-and-inspections-as-at-31-august-2023/methodology-childcare-providers-and-inspections-as-at-31-august-2023>.

State-funded schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/state-funded-schools-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2023/methodology-state-funded-schools-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2023>.

Independent schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/non-association-independent-schools-inspections-and-outcomes-in-england-august-2023/methodology-non-association-independent-schools-inspections-and-outcomes-in-england>.

Children’s social care: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childrens-social-care-data-in-england-2023/methodology-report-childrens-social-care-in-england-2022-to-2023>.

Initial teacher education: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/initial-teacher-education-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2023/methodology-initial-teacher-education-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2023>.

Further education and skills: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2023/methodology-further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-31-august-2023>.

Bibliography: Ofsted's publications this year

A list of Ofsted publications published on GOV.UK in this Annual Report's reporting period, 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023.

Research and analysis

'A review of the quality of T-level courses: interim report', 24 October 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-review-of-the-quality-of-t-level-courses-interim-report>.

'Independent review of tutoring in schools and 16 to 19 providers', 26 October 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-tutoring-in-schools-and-16-to-19-providers>.

'“Now the whole school is reading”: supporting struggling readers in secondary school', 31 October 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/now-the-whole-school-is-reading-supporting-struggling-readers-in-secondary-school>.

'Alternative provision for primary-age pupils in England: a long-term “destination” or a “temporary solution”?', 8 November 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision-for-primary-age-pupils-in-england-a-long-term-destination-or-a-temporary-solution>.

'Ofsted's thematic review of careers guidance: terms of reference', 9 November 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsteds-thematic-review-of-careers-guidance-terms-of-reference>.

'Skills Bootcamps thematic survey', 9 November 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skills-bootcamps-thematic-survey>.

'Best start in life part 1: setting the scene', 14 November 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/best-start-in-life-a-research-review-for-early-years>.

'How local authorities plan for sufficiency: children in care and care leavers', 18 November 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-local-authorities-plan-for-sufficiency-children-in-care-and-care-leavers>.

'A return to inspection: the story (so far) for previously exempt outstanding schools', 22 November 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspections-statistical-commentaries-2021-to-2022/a-return-to-inspection-the-story-so-far-of-previously-exempt-outstanding-schools>.

'Ofsted: gender pay gap report and data 2022', 24 November 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-gender-pay-gap-report-and-data-2022>.

'Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI): annual Ofsted report letters', 1 December 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-schools-inspectorate-isi-annual-ofsted-report-letters>.

‘Inspectorates of British schools overseas: annual Ofsted report letters’, 1 December 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspectorates-of-british-schools-overseas-annual-ofsted-report-letters>.

‘Ofsted Annual Report 2021/22: education, children’s services and skills’, 13 December 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202122-education-childrens-services-and-skills>.

‘Children’s social care questionnaires 2022: what children and young people told Ofsted’, 22 December 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-social-care-questionnaires-2022-what-children-and-young-people-told-ofsted>.

‘Ofsted’s equality objectives 2023 to 2027’, 11 January 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsteds-equality-objectives-2023-to-2027>.

‘The emerging picture from 2022/23 inspections’, 17 January 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspections-statistical-commentaries-2022-to-2023/schools-commentary-the-emerging-picture-from-202223-inspections>.

‘Subject report series: science’, 2 February 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-science>.

‘A focus on inadequate early years providers’, 7 February 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspections-statistical-commentaries-2022-to-2023/a-focus-on-inadequate-early-years-providers>.

‘A focus on inadequate independent schools’, 7 February 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-schools-inspections-statistical-commentaries-2022-to-2023/a-focus-on-inadequate-independent-schools>.

‘Research review series: art and design’, 22 February 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-art-and-design>.

‘How multi-academy trusts are involved in school inspections’, 25 April 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-multi-academy-trusts-are-involved-in-school-inspections>.

‘Teachers’ professional development in schools: phase 1 findings’, 10 May 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-professional-development-in-schools-phase-1-findings>.

‘How mergers have changed the number of colleges we inspect and their inspection outcomes’, 15 June 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspections-statistical-commentaries-2022-to-2023/how-mergers-have-changed-the-number-of-colleges-we-inspect-and-their-inspection-outcomes>.

‘International perspectives on early years’, 20 June 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-perspectives-on-early-years>.

‘The quality of reading education in prisons: one year on’, 30 June 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-quality-of-reading-education-in-prisons-one-year-on>.

‘Five-Year Ofsted Inspection Data’, 12 July 2023;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/five-year-ofsted-inspection-data>.

‘Subject report series: history’, 13 July 2023;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-report-series-history>.

‘Deep dives in school inspections’, 18 July 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspections-statistical-commentaries-2022-to-2023/schools-commentary-deep-dives-in-school-inspections>.

‘T-level thematic review: final report’, 20 July 2023;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/t-level-thematic-review-final-report>.

‘Largest national providers of private and voluntary social care (March 2023)’, 27 July 2023;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspection-outcomes-of-the-largest-childrens-social-care-providers/largest-national-providers-of-private-and-voluntary-social-care-march-2023>.

‘Ofsted review into Start for Life services: terms of reference’, 28 July 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-review-into-start-for-life-services-terms-of-reference>.

‘Evaluating the education inspection framework’, 22 August 2023;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluating-the-education-inspection-framework>.

‘Welfare and duty of care in Armed Forces initial training’, 23 August 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welfare-and-duty-of-care-in-armed-forces-initial-training>.

Commentaries

‘HMCI commentary: publishing our new area SEND framework’, 29 November 2022;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hmci-commentary-publishing-our-new-area-send-framework>.

‘HMCI commentary: improving how we work’, 21 April 2023;
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hmci-commentary-improving-how-we-work>.

Blogs

Early years

‘Registering to become a childminder with Ofsted – what to expect’, 30 September 2022;
<https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2022/09/30/registering-to-become-a-childminder-with-ofsted-what-to-expect/>.

‘The difference between registering with Ofsted or a childminder agency’, 30 September 2022;
<https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2022/09/30/the-difference-between-registering-with-ofsted-or-a-childminder-agency/>.

‘Committee-run childcare – what you need to know’, 30 September 2022;
<https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2022/09/30/committee-run-childcare-what-you-need-to-know/>.

‘Giving children the best start in life’, 4 November 2022;
<https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2022/11/04/giving-children-the-best-start-in-life/>.

‘Ofsted-registered nannies – What you need to know’, 10 November 2022;
<https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2022/11/10/ofsted-registered-nannies-what-you-need-to-know/>.

‘Streamlining the early years registration process’, 25 November 2022;
<https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2022/11/25/streamlining-the-early-years-registration-process/>.

“‘What do I need to do to prepare for my early years inspection?’”, 25 January 2023;
<https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2023/01/25/what-do-i-need-to-do-to-prepare-for-my-early-years-inspection/>.

‘Ofsted’s 2023 priorities for early years’, 2 February 2023;
<https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2023/02/02/ofsteds-2023-priorities-for-early-years/>.

‘How staff-to-child ratios work’, 20 April 2023;
<https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2023/04/20/how-staff-to-child-ratios-work/>.

‘Our early years curriculum roadshows on the education inspection framework (EIF)’, 24 May 2023;
<https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2023/05/24/our-early-years-curriculum-roadshows-on-the-education-inspection-framework-eif/>.

‘Expanding our pilot to streamline early years registration’, 28 July 2023; <https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2023/07/28/expanding-our-pilot-to-streamline-early-years-registration/>.

‘Early years resources, information and updates’, 22 August 2023;
<https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2023/08/22/early-years-resources-information-and-updates/>.

Schools and further education and skills

‘Thousands of year 7s struggle with reading’, 5 September 2022;
<https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2022/09/05/thousands-of-year-7s-struggle-with-reading/>.

‘Ofsted webinars for schools – responses to questions and new webinars’, 7 September 2022;
<https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2022/09/07/ofsted-webinars-for-schools-responses-to-questions-and-new-webinars/>.

‘A new early years blog’, 30 September 2022;
<https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2022/09/30/a-new-early-years-blog/>.

‘Education for prisoners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities’, 11 November 2022;
<https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2022/11/11/education-for-prisoners-with-learning-difficulties-and-or-disabilities/>.

‘Inspection outcomes for further education and skills (FE and skills) initial teacher education programmes in the current ITE inspection cycle’, 29 November 2022; <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2022/11/29/inspection-outcomes-for-further-education-and-skills-fe-and-skills-initial-teacher-education-programmes-in-the-current-ite-inspection-cycle/>.

‘Inspecting the initial stages of the early career framework and national professional qualifications’, 7 December 2022; <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2022/12/07/inspecting-the-initial-stages-of-the-early-career-framework-and-national-professional-qualifications/>.

‘Ofsted’s 2023 priorities for schools and further education and skills’, 1 February 2023; <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/02/01/ofsteds-2023-priorities-for-schools-and-further-education-and-skills/>.

‘Ofsted’s webinars for schools – spring season’, 9 February 2023; <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/02/09/ofsteds-webinars-for-schools-spring-season/>.

‘What does high-quality curriculum and teaching look like in further education and skills?’, 16 February 2023; <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/02/16/what-does-high-quality-curriculum-and-teaching-look-like-in-further-education-and-skills/>.

‘Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who have fallen behind with reading’, 2 March 2023; <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/03/02/pupils-with-special-educational-needs-and-or-disabilities-who-have-fallen-behind-with-reading/>.

‘Teachers’ professional development remains a work in progress’, 18 May 2023; <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/05/18/teachers-professional-development-remains-a-work-in-progress/>.

‘Ofsted’s webinars for schools – summer season’, 8 June 2023; <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/06/08/ofsteds-webinars-for-schools-summer-season/>.

‘When will my school be inspected?’, 12 June 2023; <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/06/12/when-will-my-school-be-inspected/>.

‘Insights from our first full inspections of lead providers of the new early career framework (ECF)’, 13 July 2023; <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/07/13/insights-from-our-first-full-inspections-of-lead-providers-of-the-new-early-career-framework-ecf/>.

‘Insights from the inspection of initial teacher education (ITE) providers’, 17 July 2023; <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/07/17/insights-from-the-inspection-of-initial-teacher-education-ite-providers/>.

‘More parental complaints don’t mean more inspections’, 30 August 2023; <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/08/30/more-parental-complaints-dont-mean-more-inspections/>.

‘Getting all pupils reading’, 30 August 2023; <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/08/30/getting-all-pupils-reading/>.

Social care

‘Piloting Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) in social care’, 23 September 2022;

<https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2022/09/23/piloting-ofsted-inspectors-ois-in-social-care/>.

‘Children’s homes need strong leadership and a stable workforce’, 24 November 2022;

<https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2022/11/24/childrens-homes-need-strong-leadership-and-a-stable-workforce/>.

‘Looking after children with complex needs: Dispelling myths about inspections and the need for suitable homes’, 28 November 2022; <https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2022/11/28/looking-after-children-with-complex-needs-dispelling-myths-about-inspections-and-the-need-for-suitable-homes/>.

‘Getting ready to regulate supported accommodation’, 6 January 2023; <https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/01/06/getting-ready-to-regulate-supported-accommodation/>.

‘Ofsted’s 2023 priorities for social care’, 1 February 2023;

<https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/02/01/ofsteds-2023-priorities-for-social-care/>.

‘How we use the children’s social care point-in-time surveys results’, 28 February 2023;

<https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/02/28/how-we-use-the-childrens-social-care-point-in-time-surveys-results/>.

‘Secure training centres – introducing assurance inspections’, 10 March 2023;

<https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/03/10/secure-training-centres-introducing-assurance-inspections/>.

‘Foster Care Fortnight 2023’, 15 May 2023;

<https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/05/15/foster-care-fortnight-2023/>.

‘Children with complex needs in children’s homes’, 23 May 2023; <https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/05/23/children-with-complex-needs-in-childrens-homes/>.

‘Ofsted’s response to Stable Homes, Built on Love’, 6 July 2023; <https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/07/06/ofsteds-response-to-stable-homes-built-on-love/>.

‘Registering children’s homes – principles and hints and tips’, 10 August 2023;

<https://socialcareinspection.blog.gov.uk/2023/08/10/registering-childrens-homes-principles-and-hints-and-tips/>.

Official statistics and management information

'Area SEND statistics'; <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/area-send-statistics>.

'Children's social care statistics';

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/childrens-social-care-statistics>.

'Early years and childcare statistics';

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-statistics>.

'Further education and skills statistics';

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-inspection-outcomes>.

'Initial teacher education: inspections and outcomes';

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/initial-teacher-education-inspections-and-outcomes>.

'Non-association independent schools statistics';

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/independent-schools-inspections-and-outcomes>.

'State-funded schools statistics'; <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/maintained-schools-and-academies-inspections-and-outcomes-official-statistics>.

'Unregistered schools management information';

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/unregistered-schools-management-information>.

Speeches

'Amanda Spielman's speech at the 2022 National Children and Adult Services conference', 3 November 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/amanda-spielmans-speech-at-the-2022-national-children-and-adult-services-conference>.

'Amanda Spielman's speech to the University of Oxford's department of education', 16 January 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/amanda-spielmans-speech-to-the-university-of-oxfords-department-of-education>.

'Amanda Spielman's speech at the Big Conversation 2023', 30 January 2023;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/amanda-spielmans-speech-at-the-big-conversation-2023>.

'Amanda Spielman launches the art and design research review', 22 February 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/amanda-spielman-launches-the-art-and-design-research-review>.

'Amanda Spielman at the Annual Apprenticeship Conference 2023', 14 March 2023;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/amanda-spielman-at-the-annual-apprenticeship-conference-2023>.

'Amanda Spielman's speech to the Festival of Education 2023', 6 July 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/amanda-spielmans-last-speech-at-the-wellington-festival-of-education>.

Correspondence (published for transparency and information)

‘Yvette Stanley letter to the Chair of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel’, 26 October 2022; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/yvette-stanley-letter-to-the-chair-of-the-child-safeguarding-practice-review-panel>.

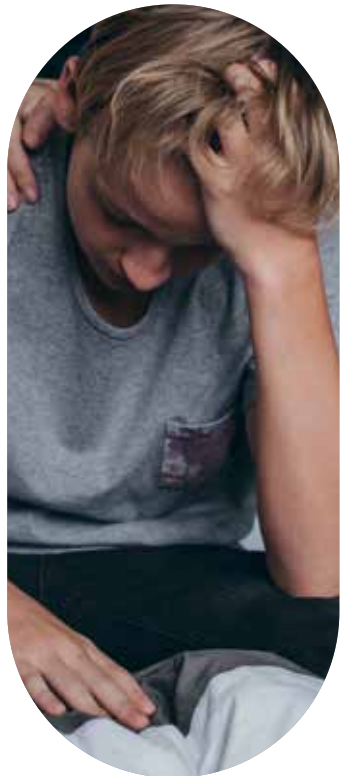
‘Ofsted’s response to regulating supported accommodation’, 26 January 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsteds-response-to-regulating-supported-accommodation>.

‘Letter from Minister for Women and Equalities, to the Ofsted Chief Inspector’, 22 June 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-from-minister-for-women-and-equalities-to-the-ofsted-chief-inspector>.

‘Ofsted’s response to the Stable Homes, Built on Love consultation’, 6 July 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsteds-response-to-the-stable-homes-built-on-love-consultation>.

‘Ofsted’s response to the children’s social care national framework and dashboard’, 6 July 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsteds-response-to-the-childrens-social-care-national-framework-and-dashboard>.

‘Ofsted’s response to the child and family social worker workforce consultation’, 6 July 2023; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsteds-response-to-the-child-and-family-social-worker-workforce-consultation>.



East Sussex SACRE
Code of Conduct
March 2022



East Sussex
County Council



Code of Conduct

Guidelines for attendance at meetings

East Sussex SACRE encourages all its Members to:

- Attend all SACRE meetings and take a full and active part in its work.
- Read papers before the meetings.
- Participate in and review the work of SACRE for the benefit of the whole community.
- Respect the faith, belief, and practice of those present.
- Listen to what other people have to say; everyone's contribution is relevant.
- Comments should be addressed through the chair.
- Wait for someone to finish speaking before you begin and give people a chance to respond.
- Be assertive but respectful of others.
- Accept differences of opinion and respect each other's views.
- Do not use abusive or discriminatory language or say things that could hurt others.
- Actively challenge and resist stereotyping.
- Try to encourage everyone in the group to participate fully by giving them a chance to speak and by making them to feel comfortable and supported.
- Maintain confidentiality when requested so that people may speak openly.
- Be clear when you speak, avoid using jargon if you can and be sure to explain any initials and terminology so that others feel included.
- Aim to have a discussion, share ideas, ask question and follow on from what others are saying rather than making a speech.
- Be aware of and be courteous to people around you.
- Keep mobile phones on silent unless in an emergency.
- Recognise that all present have a right to respect for their individual beliefs.
- If anyone deliberately misrepresents or disparages other people's beliefs and practices they will be asked to leave the meeting.
- Individual members not adhering to these guidelines may, at the discretion of the chair, be asked to leave the meeting.
- A member of SACRE may be removed from office if it is the opinion of SACRE that the member has persistently breached the guidance.
- If it is in the collective opinion of SACRE that a committee member does not adhere to the guidance for meetings SACRE will inform the nominating body and SACRE has the right to request a replacement representative member.
- Always assume that other members of SACRE are honourable and concerned with the best interests of SACRE.
- Seek reasoned consensus where views diverge and never disrespect the views of other SACRE members or seek to convert them to a different belief stance
- Actively consult with, and report back to, the membership body which they represent so that debate is fully informed.

Remember that the central aim for the SACRE is to improve the quality of provision in RE and collective worship for all pupils in East Sussex.

Visiting schools

From time to time, SACRE members may have the opportunity to visit schools.

SACRE Members should remember that it is a privilege to visit a school. They are there as invited guests, not to make judgements about the school or to “inspect” RE and collective worship.

Members should:

- Only visit a school when invited.
- Inform the Clerk of SACRE and the Children’s Service Representative of any invitation received and visits made.
- Ensure that you do not say or do anything, which could be viewed as denigrating any religion or ethical belief system.
- Avoid being critical of others or imposing their own views.
- Any confidential information disclosed should not be passed on but along with any possible concerns or confusions about what may have been seen should be discussed with the Specialist RE Advisor and Children’s Services Representative before being reported back to SACRE.

Visiting schools as a representative of a faith community

Some faith community representatives may be more regular visitors to schools and invited to support RE or collective worship.

Visitors should be well-supported by the class teacher who should always be present, taking an active role in question-and-answer sessions, and ensuring visitors are well-briefed before a visit.

SACRE members visiting a school to share their beliefs, values and experiences should:

- Have a clear, mutually agreed understanding of the purpose of the visit before it takes place.
- Appreciate that they are not there to convert or proselytise, avoiding being critical of others or imposing their own views.
- Be familiar with the school’s aims, ethos, and policies in RE and Collective Worship.
- Understand where the lesson will fit into the unit of work from the Agreed Syllabus and the learning objectives.
- Use a variety of teaching and learning methods and approaches, but at no time touch pupils or behave favourably towards pupils of particular faiths, ethnic groups, or genders.

- Ensure pupils understand the visitor is representing a particular faith view and their own personal interpretation of it and therefore that others from the same faith may not always interpret ideas in the same ways.
- Ensure that they do not say or do anything, which could be viewed as denigrating.
- Communicate at an appropriate level for the age group concerned.



SACRE self-assessment tool



East Sussex SACRE

Introduction

This tool has been created to help SACREs in their essential role to advise the Local Authority (LA) in meeting the entitlement of pupils across the LA to engage in high quality Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship (CW) and to support the LA to reflect on its practice. In an educational context where standards and accountability are at the top of the agenda, a SACRE's work has become increasingly challenging and diverse, but also more rewarding and stimulating. Good SACREs will therefore tackle their responsibilities as opportunities, with enthusiasm, whilst recognising the need for realistic and ongoing appraisal and self-review.

In many ways, SACREs reflect the work of governing bodies in schools, in so far as they act as critical friends to the LA on matters of RE and CW. Like school governors, members are unpaid volunteers who give up their time to support RE and CW locally.

This toolkit is an amended version of the 2015 document. It takes account of changes in inspection arrangements and in the role of LAs, and of the development of maintained schools independent of their LA. It is designed to help individual SACREs evaluate their effectiveness, including considering their impact on pupils' educational experience and learning. It also helps SACREs review their organisational patterns and structures, and their partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders.

The toolkit highlights five key dimensions of SACRE's work and provides exemplification of good practice. A SACRE that uses this self-evaluation guidance should gain a clear picture of its strengths, identify areas for further development, and establish key priorities for action.

The DCSF publication "Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance" (2010) ("the Guidance") remains the most recent official statement in this field: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010>. The Guidance sets out the responsibilities of SACREs and LAs as well as those of other stakeholders in RE. Key summaries from the Guidance are included in the Annex to this document.

Rationale

The SACRE self-evaluation toolkit focuses on the following five aspects of the work of SACREs:

1. Management of the SACRE and building the partnership between the SACRE, the LA and other key stakeholders
2. Promoting improvement in the standards, the quality of teaching, and provision in RE
3. Evaluating the effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus
4. Promoting improvement in the provision and quality of collective worship
5. Contributing to cohesion across the community and the promotion of social and racial harmony.

Each aspect forms a section within the toolkit and each section is divided into focus questions to help SACREs explore their provision. Descriptors for 'Requires improvement/struggling', 'Developing', 'Established' and 'Advanced' practice will enable SACREs to evaluate their standing within each focus question.

In the final column, SACREs may wish to identify any issues and action points within that focus, as appropriate. Key priorities can then be identified at the end of each section to inform the development of an action plan.

The intention is that, over time, exemplars of good practice from different SACREs will be made available on an open website, together with annual reports, as a way of adding further support to SACREs and LAs. Clearly the capacity of any SACRE to make the most of this will be dependent on the extent of the support it receives from, and the quality of its relationship with the LA.

SACREs are invited to use the format of this evaluation in conjunction with their annual report.

Section 1: Management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders

How far does the SACRE's partnership with the LA enable it to carry out its responsibilities effectively?

(Taken from 2010 DfE Checklist for an effective partnership between an LA and its SACRE/ASC)

- Does the LA and the SACRE/ASC carry out their statutory duties?
- Is SACRE/ASC properly resourced and well supported by subject specialist advice and training?
- Do members of the SACRE/ASC have a shared vision and understanding of their aims and purpose, seeking to sustain their positive work in the light of changing needs and priorities?
- Are SACRE/ASC meetings purposeful and focused on the major priorities of improving the quality of RE (and CW) in schools?
- Is the SACRE/ASC well informed about the quality of RE in schools and about wider LA and national priorities and developments affecting the subject?
- Has the LA adopted a high-quality agreed syllabus that provides a good grounding for planning, teaching and learning in RE and enables the schools to deliver RE as part of a coherent curriculum?
- Is there an effective process of reviewing, revising, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the locally agreed syllabus?
- How far does the SACRE's partnership with the LA enable it to help teachers and schools raise standards in RE and the quality of RE teaching?
- How far does the SACRE contribute effectively to the community cohesion agenda by supporting inclusion in schools and improving engagement within the community?

LAs must adequately fund SACREs to enable them to carry out their statutory duties and to support high quality RE and collective worship in schools.¹ We consider 2% of the CSSB to be a reasonable spend to enable this. LAs must set aside sufficient money to ensure the Agreed Syllabus review can be effective every five years. We reiterate that as a minimum expectation, LAs must provide the following:

- a clerk
- a professional officer who has expertise in RE curriculum design
- a publicly accessible place to meet
- the reasonable expenses of members
- publishing the agreed syllabus and other SACRE materials (including agendas and minutes), most usually on the LA website
- NASACRE subscription and AGM attendance.

1. The Minister for School Standards, Nick Gibb MP, included this statement in response to a parliamentary question from Stephen Timms MP: "If the Department is informed that an individual SACRE or ASC is experiencing difficulties in fulfilling its statutory duties, the Department will contact the local authority to remind them of their duty to support their activities satisfactorily."

2021HC Deb, 28 March 2018, cW <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2018-03-28/134697>

¹ *ibid.*, page 11

The relationship between a Local Authority and its SACRE is essentially one of partnership and collaboration, with mutual obligations and statutory responsibilities. So that a SACRE can advise and act effectively for the LA in the field of Religious Education and Collective Worship, the LA must ensure not only that there is a local SACRE, but also that it is able to fulfil its functions. The extent to which a SACRE is supported by funding and personnel, will determine how well individuals and committees can work together. Where a SACRE is valued by the LA, it is more likely that members of the SACRE will be able to contribute both to SACRE's work and to the LA's wider strategic objectives.

By bringing together many local stakeholders (faith/belief communities, teachers, local politicians and co-optees such as universities and parents) into a statutory body, SACREs can act positively for LAs as a sounding board on their core business of RE and CW, and also on wider strategic educational objectives such as raising standards, narrowing the gap and promoting community cohesion, as well as community matters related to interfaith collaboration and wellbeing. Core and value-added functions work best when the SACRE is appropriately supported, resourced and managed, and when channels of communication with the LA are good.

The potential for SACREs to contribute more widely is dependent on SACRE members feeling that the meetings are outward looking, focused on pupil needs, purposeful and enjoyable. This can be achieved, for example, by meeting in different locations (schools, places of worship, cultural centres and council meeting rooms) and by ensuring that all members feel they are equal partners whose views and experiences are sought, listened to and valued.

Alongside this, SACRE has the power to develop structural relationships with academies, etc. by exploring ways in which an academy "presence" can be incorporated into SACRE, e.g., by co-options (non-voting), through additional places in Group C (teacher organisations), or by creating a non-voting notional "Group E" (as had been envisaged in the Grant Maintained era). Similar considerations apply to the ASC. Although the legal framework would currently not allow voting rights to any distinct academy representation, SACREs and ASCs would surely not wish to proceed with decisions which were clearly not acceptable to the academy sector represented in their wider membership.

Key Area: 1a – Funding: Professional and financial support <i>How well supported and resourced is SACRE, by the LA exercising its statutory responsibilities?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	have no financial or management support to help SACRE to meet and operate. Members are unable to communicate with each other. There is no professional support.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have financial and management support to allow it to exist. Representatives of the LA receive papers and/or attend meetings but there is limited subject specialist advice available. There are resources for basic SACRE functions (such as a place to meet and a minute taker) but there is no specific budget for the SACRE and little opportunity for the SACRE to take initiatives requiring funding.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	access to some subject specialist advice and is informed of local and national initiatives. The LA is represented at meetings and can provide a means of communication with the wider LA. The SACRE has a modest budget which enables it to fund some initiatives. Meetings are clerked and the clerk maintains communication with the Chair and other members between meetings as needed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	be well supported by a subject specialist who provides effective advice and is well informed about the provision and quality of RE in the LA and about national developments. Representatives of the LA attend meetings and the SACRE is also attended by a lead officer from the LA who can provide a strong link between the work of the SACRE and the wider LA. SACRE's plans are linked to other local work and projects. SACRE has a strategic, costed development plan. SACRE has access to funds to enable it to make decisions about its priorities and ensure these can be properly resourced.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist RE adviser in post and attends area meetings and is a member of NATRE. Well-grounded in the school context and strong links with schools and the LA. Primary, secondary and specialist school network leads in place to support training and professional development across the county. Children's Services Representative new in post to support SACRE in carrying out its statutory duties. Modest budget allocation of £15k a year which funds some training for schools as well as local networks for RE leaders alongside the licenses for the new syllabus. Some support in kind in addition to the budget from children's services education department. Strong clerk in place who supports all meetings and preparation and actions in between meetings. 	

Key Area: 1b – SACRE meetings <i>How purposeful, inclusive, representative and effective are SACRE meetings?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not hold regular meetings, if they meet at all. Any meeting held is purely to demonstrate that the LA has allowed SACRE to meet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	hold meetings regularly with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • routine administrative arrangements • appropriate distribution of agendas and papers Business is dealt with in a prompt and orderly way. There is limited opportunity for SACRE members to contribute to the work apart from attending meetings. Business tends to be focused solely on routine statutory requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have good attendance where all four committees are well represented and meetings are quorate. Agendas and papers are distributed well in advance ensuring all members have time to consider them carefully, consulting when relevant their representing/sponsoring bodies. There are some opportunities for teachers and representatives of faith and worldview communities to be invited to share their work. Meetings are well managed with strong contributions from a wide range of members. Meetings move beyond routine matters to consider wider issues about the quality of RE and CW.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have SACRE members contributing to the development of the agenda and strategic development plan. Meetings will be lively and purposeful with a wide variety of contributions focused on the major priorities for improvement in schools. Teachers and representatives of faith and worldview communities regularly attend and participate fully in meetings, sharing their experience and insights. Meetings are held in a variety of venues , including council venues, local places of worship and schools . <i>Procedures have been put in place so that meaningful contact can be made with and between members outside of SACRE meetings.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposeful meetings with a focus on improving the quality of curriculum, teaching and assessment in RE and supporting schools in all contexts to meet their statutory duties in relation to RE and collective worship. • Agendas and papers published in advance through member services to meet requirements of public meetings and circulated to all SACRE members. • Members arrive at the meetings having read papers, informed and prepared to actively contribute to the meetings. • Representation improving and agreement to have a slot on 'my faith my belief' to draw in wider representation. 	

Key Area: 1c – Membership and training <i>To what extent is the membership of SACRE able to fulfil SACRE's purpose?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	have no membership list. SACREs constitution is not fit for purpose and needs revision. The Local Authority struggles to fill all places on SACRE, SACRE members have no regular training provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a membership that fulfils the basic statutory obligations. Arrangements to fill vacancies are not always pursued effectively. There are limited induction and training opportunities for SACRE members.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have an active membership that strongly reflects the diversity of the wider religious/worldview and professional community . There is regular induction training and processes for new members . There are good opportunities for SACRE members to participate in training activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	make good use of co-option to ensure membership of the SACRE is well informed and is highly representative of the diversity of the local community. There is a strong and co-ordinated programme of induction, and training opportunities for SACRE members. There are robust systems in place for succession planning for members and SACRE roles.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 4 groups are actively represented and school representation has strengthened. • Recruitment of new members has been more active recently and membership is developing but there is more to do ensure wider representation that actively represents local demographics. • We take advantage of the induction sessions provided by NASACRE but need to develop local induction to support new members. • Training for SACRE members is available through NASACRE but again could develop a more local flavour. • Handbook needs updating to reflect the new Agreed Syllabus. 	

Key Area: 1d – Improvement/development planning <i>How effective are the priorities and actions identified by SACRE in improving the experience of pupils in schools?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	have no development plan to focus future work. There is no knowledge of areas where the priorities of the LA's development / improvement plan potentially could link to the work of the SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little overt linkage between the priorities of the LA's development / improvement plan and the work of the SACRE. SACRE has limited awareness of national projects or initiatives related to the work of SACRE and so is unable to plan any work or request funding to initiate new work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have a costed development plan which is reviewed regularly and updated on an annual basis. This provides an effective focus for the SACRE's work. There is some attempt to link the plan to the wider LA priorities. SACRE has awareness of national projects or initiatives related to the work of SACRE and so is able to plan work or request funding to update and review their development plan. The SACRE is regularly represented at national events relevant to its work; for example, NASACRE.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a well-defined development plan with clear objectives and success criteria. Resource implications are clearly defined and funding negotiated with the LA or outside funding streams. There is a clear link between the plan and the wider objectives of the LA and also to national innovations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development plan in place but needs to be costed. • Does link to national and local priorities. • Do request additional funding for special projects on occasion – such as the student conference on Holocaust Memorial Day. • Chair is part of NASACRE Executive. • Children's Services Representative and Specialist Adviser join SE SACRE meetings to join up work across the region and learn from practice in other LAs. 	

Key Area: 1e - Information and advice <i>How well informed is SACRE in order to be able to advise the LA appropriately?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not be supported to gather information (exam results, data, links to schools) or to link with national initiatives including membership of NASACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	receive limited information about public examination data from the LA. Limited information is provided about wider national and local developments. The SACRE tends to receive information from the LA when the LA wishes to give it rather than ask questions of the LA or receive answers to its request. There is little opportunity to be a critical friend.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be regularly provided with clear information relevant to the quality and provision for RE and CW in local schools and given a context within which any school is working. The SACRE receives the information in a way that enables it to act as a critical friend and question the LA's work.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	receive detailed and well-analysed information about the quality and provision for RE and CW. As a result, SACRE uses this information effectively to give advice to the LA which leads to strategic action and/or partnership work to improve standards. This can include advice related to the review of the AS. The SACRE has a strong partnership with the LA and plays an active role in promoting ideas and initiatives.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular reports and updates on quality of curriculum, teaching and assessment, provision and pupil outcomes are presented to SACRE – this has been more limited during Covid. GCSE/GCE Outcomes data is lagging. Member visits have been suspended but are due to restart in Autumn 2022. Reports back from primary and secondary network meetings, focus groups information and schools working group feed into SACRE discussions. Information is clearly presented and robust discussions interrogate the papers with actions and agreements on key issues. Further work on establishing quality of Agreed syllabus and collective worship required. Implementation of determination policy. 	

Key Area: 1f - Partnerships with key stakeholders <i>What partnerships does the SACRE have with key local and national stakeholders, and what quality are these?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	be unaware of local or national agencies. SACRE has no links with sponsoring bodies in their location.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little contact with or awareness of other local agencies (e.g. interfaith groups, dioceses), and rarely hears from pupils/students.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be well informed about other key stakeholders supporting RE and have some meaningful contact with the groups involved. SACRE members are supported at a national level by their sponsoring body. SACRE members attend the annual NASACRE conference and other training opportunities. Hear from pupils/students as part of their work around high-quality RE and CW.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	build its activities effectively on local networks. Links with other bodies, such as local interfaith groups, are positive and able to support raising standards and developing community cohesion. The SACRE has opportunities to hear the views and experience of pupils about RE. Representatives of key support networks and higher education providers are regularly involved with the SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some SACRE members attend NASACRE events and the annual conference, online events have worked well and enabled wider representation. Some links exist with other agencies. RE Today has supported the review of the new Agreed Syllabus. The Specialist Adviser is a member of NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE) and AREIAC (Association for RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants). Specialist Advisor has completed stage 1 of Culham St.Gabriel's leadership programme and presented at RExChange 2022, making links to national organisations, research and practice. Partnership with Barnet SACRE to share best practice within the KS4 core programme. Need to develop pupil voice and wider connections to organisations promoting RE and CW. 	

Key Area: 1g – Relations with the Academies sector <i>How effectively is SACRE encouraging academies etc to see themselves also as stakeholders in their local area, specifically by devising ways in which an academies presence is incorporated into SACRE itself?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	have no opportunity to network with local academies.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have nothing formal in place. Little encouragement, if any, is extended to academies to relate to the SACRE's proceedings, and there are no channels through which academies can contribute.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have made attempts to include academies on SACRE, but these have been hampered by e.g. lack of confidence or vision on the part of SACRE, or by confusion over what is legally valid and possible, or what is possible between academies in an area.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced SACRE with advanced practice would:	have established the place of academies on SACRE. SACRE has considered systematically the legal and structural options, and established a permanent and sustainable academy presence on SACRE. A high proportion of academies in the area regard themselves as stakeholders and partner with SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academies are well represented and are fully included in the work of SACRE. • Engagement with academies has improved considerably over the last two years. • SACRE has paid for new Agreed Syllabus licenses for all academies and community schools in the LA. 	

Section 1: Management of the SACRE and partnership with the LA and other key stakeholders

Successes/ What are we good at?

SACRE is well attended by a committed group of individuals that are broadly reflective of the local area. Through connections to local and national organisations they are well-informed and read papers in advance of meetings. More recently, meetings focus on the quality of the new Agreed Syllabus and have raised questions about understanding the quality of collective worship.

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE:**
 - SACRE needs to be more representative of minority groups and worldviews across the local authority.
 - The handbook and induction processes need to be updated to reflect the new Agreed Syllabus.
 - Systems need to be embedded that allow members to deepen their understanding of the quality of practice.
 - **More established pupil voice activities should provide greater insight for SACRE.**
- **For the LA**
 - Greater security in long term financial planning to support SACRE's activities going forward.

Date of review: November 2022

Date of next review: June 2024

Section 2. Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education

***How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, evaluate standards and the quality of provision for RE in schools?
How effective are the strategies to improve standards and the quality of provision?***

In principle, every pupil is entitled to RE of the highest quality. At its best, RE will be one of the most popular, relevant, stimulating and truly educative elements in the curriculum. This potential gives SACREs both a benchmark for aspiration and a spur for action.

A core duty of a SACRE is to gain an overview of the quality of the RE provision in local authority maintained schools and to develop effective strategies to promote the highest standards. SACREs may also request information from academies, academy chains and free schools where they educate pupils from the LA which appointed SACRE. In the light of the current inspection culture of partnership and self-evaluation, SACREs will need to adopt an astute and sensitive approach to achieve this overview.

Information to assist SACRE in carrying out its role is likely to come from a range of sources, which may include:

- public examination results
- reports from School Improvement Partners
- analysing questionnaires
- sharing of information from subject self-evaluation forms as appropriate, and in agreement with schools
- feedback from professional development activities
- presentations to SACRE from local teachers

The Guidance offers analysis and advice to support SACREs in reviewing their own effectiveness, their patterns of partnership, and their strategies in relation to enhancing the quality of RE provision in local authority maintained schools. In addition, in the light of the development of academies and other non-LA maintained schools, SACREs also need to take note of and respond appropriately to this new diversified scenario. (In the ensuing pages, the phrase “academies etc” is used as shorthand to refer to all non-LA maintained schools within a particular LA area.

Key Area: 2a - RE provision across the LA. <i>How effectively does the SACRE gain information about RE provision in schools and put in place strategies to support the delivery of pupil entitlement?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	have no routes by which SACRE can gain information about RE provision in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little knowledge of which schools are fulfilling pupil entitlement in RE because local processes are insufficient to gather such information (e.g. a website trawl)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have some knowledge of which schools are providing adequate time for effective learning in RE and have a scheme of work that enables them to deliver the AS. SACRE's process for acquiring this information is adequate but lacks coherence. Have limited opportunities to implement strategies in support of pupil entitlement. Ofsted reports are read and any comments on RE noted and brought to SACRE.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	build upon a strong relationship with the LA, whereby the LA shares its information and from this SACRE gains an overview of RE provision within the LA. It works effectively with the LA to support and promote pupil entitlement. Examples of different models for fulfilling pupil entitlement within local schools will be shared with all schools so that schools can have a menu from which to adapt an approach that delivers pupil entitlement whilst meeting the specific needs and priorities of their schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing and understanding the provision in schools for high quality RE has been more problematic over the last two years in some respects but online engagement has been strong and more information has been forthcoming through this route. Ofsted research review for RE has been discussed in detail and shared with schools, Ofsted reports are read but so far few, if any comments on RE in recent reports to share with SACRE. Need more systematic approaches to monitoring over the coming year. 	

Key Area: 2b – Standards of achievement and public examination entries <i>How does SACRE use information about standards and examinations to target support and training for schools?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not be given any data to work from, and has no professional support to investigate this at a local and national level.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have limited knowledge of standards in primary and secondary schools including examination entries. The SACRE has no clear strategy to address this and the local authority does not adequately invest in professional support for this. Analysis would be limited as would strategies to address issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have some process in place to find out how well learners are doing in KS 1-3, (e.g. by meeting teachers, pupils and through the LA). SACRE will be provided with adequate information about examination entries and standards in examinations in secondary schools and how these relate to national figures.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have robust processes with the LA whereby SACRE can gain accurate information about standards in schools and examination entries in all secondary schools, with useful analysis that enables it to address issues effectively in partnership with the LA.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When public exams were available these were analysed for discussion at SACRE. Comparisons with national data are included in the analysis. Discussions of strategies to engage wider groups of pupils and schools are a part of the evaluation. There is a lag in national data hampered this year by limitations to data usage. Networks establishing good working relationships with schools in the context of data transparency set by the LA. 	

Key Area: 2c - Quality of learning and teaching. <i>How well does SACRE use knowledge of quality of learning and teaching to target support appropriately?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have any knowledge of quality of learning and teaching to target support from the LA and professional support/adviser.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little knowledge of the quality of learning and teaching in the LA schools and therefore is unable to provide appropriate challenge and support to the schools. The SACRE has no means to offer or recommend support to schools as there is little or no professional support in the LA working with the SACRE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have some information regarding the quality of learning and teaching from a range of sources including contact with teachers and pupils. Limited analysis of this information is undertaken; however, this means that SACRE's attempts to improve learning and teaching have limited effect. Be able to circulate information about national courses and support mechanisms to schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a robust relationship with schools and the LA to gather meaningful information about the quality of learning and teaching in RE. This information is analysed to identify trends, areas of strength and areas for development and SACRE draws on expertise in effective schools to support all schools in the LA. Advise the LA on the support that is needed and have access to professional support, linked to schools in need.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions with schools and teachers through network meetings and the schools working group have been very valuable in gathering qualitative information about the teaching of RE. Previously SACRE meetings have been held in schools on occasion to allow that school to showcase their work. Training is targeted to improve the quality of learning and teaching across the board linked to the new syllabus. <p>The next step for training is to be more targeted to those schools that might need support.</p>	

Key Area: 2d Quality of interaction and communication with leadership and management of RE in schools <i>To what extent does SACRE have and pass on information that supports high quality RE in schools</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not engage in communication with schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have little communication with schools. It occasionally contacts schools with resources for RE and attends Headteachers meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have RE key messages communicated regularly into schools. Sends regular updates and information to schools, headteachers and governors. SACRE discussions are used to enhance leadership and management of RE in schools.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a constructive relationship with senior leaders and subject managers in schools to develop the subject.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular information has been shared with schools through the VSB (Virtual School Bag) through emails to Headteachers and through the RE networks. Communication is an ongoing challenge and developing multiple ways of communicating with teachers and school leaders always need to be considered. There is an East Sussex RE Facebook page which teachers and others can contribute to and share good practice. Headteachers/senior leaders have engaged with the process of a new Agreed Syllabus. 	

Key Area: 2e – Relations with academies and other non-LA maintained schools. <i>To what extent has a SACRE developed a proactive strategy in relation to academies and other non-LA maintained schools in its area?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have the mechanisms and not have the knowledge of making contact.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have haphazard information about the RE situation in local academies etc, and little or no established relationships and liaison with them. No serious attempt has been made to develop an overall strategy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have made some effort to establish liaison with each academy etc and to keep updated SACRE's information about their RE situation and share their advice to these schools. By and large, academies co-operate with SACRE at this level. SACRE keeps under review the ongoing situation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a proactive policy of liaison with all academies, etc. and of sustaining a wider professional RE network within the area. While the independence of academies, etc. is genuinely respected by SACRE, many academies value this network and look to SACRE for ongoing advice and leadership in RE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academies are included with all communication to all schools and are not treated separately. There has been renewed interest in engagement from academies with the launch of the new Agreed Syllabus. 	

Section 2. Standards and quality of provision of Religious Education

Successes/ What are we good at?

SACRE was bold in the development and launch of a new Agreed Syllabus. It is well supported and funded through RE Today which offers a range of resources and thoughtful schemes or work. A range of communication methods have been utilised to support the launch of the Agreed Syllabus which has renewed engagement with headteachers, senior leaders and subject leaders. Furthermore, the syllabus has served to engage academies in the delivery of high-quality religious education.

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE**
 - Systems for monitoring and evaluation need to be more embedded so SACRE has detailed information across a broad range of issues.
 - Systematic analysis of information needs to be undertaken leading to more targeted training and support for schools.
 - Further ways of communicating need to be embedded across the county to maintain the momentum of the new Agreed syllabus.
 - Develop better relationship with governor services.
 - Obtain exam results information from the Local Authority.
 - Introduce 'View from the Classroom' slot at SACRE meetings by inviting teachers.
- **For the LA**

Date of review: March 2023

Date of next review: November 2024

Section 3: The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus

How effectively does the SACRE, in partnership with the LA, monitor the impact and evaluate the effectiveness of the agreed syllabus in raising standards? How effectively does the Agreed Syllabus Conference in partnership with SACRE make decisions about the use of national guidance and exemplar material in a review of the agreed syllabus?

The locally agreed syllabus (AS) is the bedrock on which schools will build robust sequences of effective learning experiences in RE. A good, recent AS will support both the delivery of high quality RE in schools and RE's contribution to the schools' wider curriculum aims and impact.

The major factors to be considered in creating or revising an AS include statutory requirements, non-statutory guidance and exemplar material, developments in the school curriculum generally, and local circumstances. Key advice on producing an AS is given in the Guidance. SACREs and ASCs are recommended to take note of this advice in their work on the AS.

LAs are required to review their AS at least every five years. This cycle of reviewing, revising, re-launching and re-implementing the AS gives SACREs and ASCs opportunities for ongoing development and improvement of their effectiveness in providing schools with an AS that is truly "fit for purpose".

While the ASC holds the legal responsibility for revising the AS, in practice much of the preparatory and supplementary work will be carried by the SACRE within its routine business. Moreover, in most LAs the membership of SACRE and ASC overlap substantially or are identical. This can contribute to greater inclusivity and coherence, but good practice will ensure that it is always clear at any time which body is in place at a meeting, and that it is the ASC which is in session when decisions about the AS are considered.

Academies, etc. are, in principle, free to choose their own RE syllabus. In practice, however, many may well continue to use their local AS. There are some sound reasons for SACRE and the LA to encourage this where possible, and to enable academies, etc. to have some involvement in the process of revising the AS or of devising a new AS. Relationships between SACREs and academies will necessarily be entirely voluntary and not covered by legislation or guidance. SACREs should therefore approach such relationships in a spirit of mutual respect and collegiality. These issues have not been incorporated into the matrix below, but see Section 4.

Key Area: 3a – The review process <i>How does the SACRE review the success of the existing agreed syllabus?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have any way of contacting schools to carry out a review of the existing syllabus. It will not be supported by the LA or professional support.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have limited arrangements in place to monitor the impact of the AS, particularly in raising standards, providing little or no opportunity to review the effectiveness of the AS. Not know the views of teachers and have had no systematic evaluation of the strengths/weaknesses of the syllabus. Unclear how to proceed with the five-yearly syllabus review and there is little or no budget allocation from the LA. Have little knowledge of wider recent RE national guidance, research and developments.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have reviewed the opinions of schools and RE teachers in several ways and have a good idea of the strengths/areas of weakness of the current AS. Have devised a costed action plan in partnership with the LA, and been allocated a sufficient budget for the AS review and relaunch.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a clear and systematic process for monitoring the effectiveness of the AS built into its development plan. Reviewing the AS includes full consultation with schools and other key stakeholders, including faith communities and academics. Issues that have arisen have been discussed and addressed in planning for a review. An ASC budget has been planned and allocated in partnership with the LA to include consultation meetings, administrative support and design/distribution costs. There is a strong sense of shared ownership of the prospective AS review, with clear targets for what needs to be achieved.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review of the agreed syllabus over the last 2 years has been a success story with good engagement from a high proportion of schools and academies. • Feedback from schools was considered and presentations made to consult with faith groups, schools and governors all of which was considered when planning and preparing the new syllabus. • Launch event for the new syllabus was attended by most schools and academies. • Need now to review plans for monitoring the implementation of the new syllabus. • Attendance registers required at network meetings and a systematic logging of which school have adopted the new agreed syllabus. 	

Key Area: 3b – The quality of the local Agreed Syllabus <i>How well does the locally Agreed Syllabus promote effective learning & teaching in RE? Is it “fit for purpose”?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have knowledge of other agreed syllabi nationally. Not have access to professional support with a national knowledge of high-quality teaching and learning in RE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	ensure that the AS sets out what is to be learnt at each Key Stage. Progression in RE is stated, but this does not link directly to the learning and there is no clear expectation of quality learning in the AS.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	ensure that the AS provides a clear framework for and expectations of learning in RE. Make clear the value of RE in school, both in terms of learning and of wider issues. Ensure that the AS development has involved teachers and meets their needs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	ensure that the AS provides a thoroughly professional and inspirational framework for effective learning in RE which is proactively supported and promoted by the LA. Have set out clear expectations of the role of the LA and school leadership in ensuring adequate resources and provision in schools. References latest RE research that is relevant to help pupils make good progress in RE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Agreed Syllabus is in place and has been very well received by schools. It is well resourced through provision of planning and resources through schemes of work. • Fit for purpose and well supported by approaches to teaching and learning and a framework for implementation. 	

Key Area: 3c – Launching and implementing the Agreed Syllabus <i>How well does SACRE promote the AS and provide training to prepare teachers to use it effectively?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have a launch for the new syllabus. Not have any in-service training for teachers/schools for implementing the new AS. Not have the mechanisms to advertise, promote and share the syllabus with local schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	provide for no special launch or other publicity, so that schools are unaware of the significance of the syllabus revisions for learning and teaching in RE. Have little training provision for implementing the revised syllabus. Be prevented from providing any significant additional guidance or extended training on using the AS by a shortage of financial and human resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	use other forms of communication (for example the LA website) to promote the launch. Have clear arrangements for training teachers on implementing the syllabus provided by the LA; this training is well supported and managed. Provides additional guidance or extended training on using the AS over its life.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	Involve the wider community and use strong media coverage, to give the AS a high profile as an important development in the work of the LA and local community. The launch event includes high quality presentations from a range of local religious and worldviews groups, schools and professional LA officers/councillors. Provides effective training on implementing the AS, which is supported by all schools, leads to teachers being clear about standards and expectations in the AS and the implications for teaching and learning. Provides clear guidance about ways in which schools might begin the process of reviewing their own provision for RE in the light of the revised syllabus.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch event attended by 91% of all schools and academies in East Sussex. • Programme of training and support through RE Today funded through the LA. 	

Key Area: 3d – Membership and training of the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) <i>To what extent is the membership of ASC able to fulfil its purpose?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have the structures in place to convene an ASC. Not have any admin and advisory support for its work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a membership that fulfils basic statutory requirements. Limited induction and training opportunities; members are unclear of their roles, or how an AS can be structured. Particular faith or belief groups or teachers from different phases do not attend. Provide clerking, admin and advisory support for only a very limited amount of time or range of work. Routine admin arrangements are in place. Agendas and papers are distributed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have a membership that strongly reflects the diversity of the wider religious/worldview and professional community. Some opportunities for members' training and the purpose and action plan for the work of the ASC are clear. Have all four committees well represented at meetings. Agendas and papers are distributed well in advance so all members have time to consider them carefully. Meetings are well managed with strong contributions from a wide range of members.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a membership that is well informed and highly representative of the diversity of the local community. Where particular faith or belief expertise is missing locally there are arrangements to work with consultants to ensure this voice is added into the process. There is a strong, co-ordinated programme of induction and training opportunities for members. Have lively and purposeful meetings with a wide variety of contributions. Members of all 4 groups regularly attend and participate fully in meetings, sharing their experience, expertise and insights. Provide effective admin to support the process	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agendas and papers distributed in advance of meetings and members arrive informed and actively contribute to discussions. Trying to widen membership and have a strategy in place for allowing some people to join for a meeting to contribute to a slot identified as 'my faith, my world view'. 	

Key Area: 3e - Developing the revised agreed syllabus <i>How robust are the processes for producing a strong educational Agreed Syllabus?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have an agreed plan linked to finance for developing their AS. Have met the five-year review deadline of revising and publishing a new AS.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have no clear structure for developing a new AS. It does not undertake a thorough revision, tending to add material rather haphazardly to the existing syllabus, leading to lack of coherence in the final outcome. There is little or no consultation during the development of a new AS with teachers, SACRE members and the local religious/worldview communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have clear objectives for the revision and involve a wide range of local expertise in its construction. The LA and the ASC in partnership ensure that strong direction is provided to design an AS which is coherent, clear and accessible. Working parties and consultations are reasonably managed and supported.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	ensure that high quality advice is sought to review and advise on the revisions as they develop. The ASC in partnership with the LA holds well attended consultation meetings and briefings to ensure teachers are fully involved in, and have a sense of ownership of, the revision process. The AS has a clear framework for progression and challenging learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Agreed Syllabus involved wide consultation with all stakeholders and an open process for developing the new syllabus working in partnership with RE Today. • Working mainly online has been positive for boosting engagement with the process. • Clear direction of travel and regular networks help to maintain momentum around the revision of the Agreed Syllabus. 	

Key Area: 3f – Making best use of National Guidance		
How does the Agreed Syllabus Conference make choices relating to the use of national documentation? (See footnote*)		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not be aware of national documentation in relation to the AS review process and are therefore unable to use this guidance appropriately.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a limited awareness and understanding of national documentation in relation to the AS review process and are unable to use national guidance in a coherent way. Have members not fully understanding the broader curriculum and how this is organised and have no opportunity for training to give them the skills to understand how RE might best play a part in the holistic education of the child.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be aware of national documentation and some of its implications for the AS review process, but does not ensure its use reflects local circumstances. Have ASC members who take note of the broader curriculum picture but do not link the AS to it systematically or appreciate how teachers will be able to make use of it to link to the wider curriculum in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	take full account of national documentation in the construction of the revised AS, while ensuring their work reflects local circumstances. The syllabus is devised so that RE fits appropriately with other curriculum areas at all key stages and guidance about how to make the best links is given to schools.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of national reports and links to national organisations are in place.• Chair is a member of NASACRE.• Specialist adviser is a member of AREIAC.• Use and review reports and research to inform our thinking – e.g. Ofsted subject reports.	
*Documentation includes: the Non-Statutory National Framework in RE; the Programmes of Learning in RE (Primary) and Programmes of Study in RE (Secondary), the new Primary and Secondary Curriculums, and “Religious Education in English schools: “Non-statutory guidance 2010”; CoRE; Big Ideas in RE publication 1 & 2; Ofsted RE literature review		

Section 3: The effectiveness of the locally agreed syllabus

Successes/ What are we good at?

SACRE consulted widely on the introduction of a new Agreed Syllabus. New Agreed Syllabus is well resourced through provision of planning and resources through RE Today. The launch of the new Agreed Syllabus was well-attended and a funded high-quality training programme is planned to support with embedding. Networks maintain high levels of engagement and begin the process of teacher input into the ongoing development process. Key members of SACRE are engaged in national organisations and regularly review key documentation to ensure they are informed about best practice around the Agreed Syllabus.

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE**
 - Monitoring of the effectiveness of the new Agreed Syllabus needs to be embedded.
 - Provision to enable schools to monitor the quality of their own provision for RE to be developed.
 - Ensure new Agreed Syllabus has broad ownership so revisions reflect the views of schools and RE specialists.
 - **Take a register of schools attending the Subject Network Meetings.**
- **For the LA**

Date of review: June 2023

Date of next review: March 2025

Section 4. Collective Worship

How effectively does the SACRE fulfil its responsibilities for the provision and practice of Collective Worship?

Maintained schools are required to provide a daily act of Collective Worship for every pupil. In community schools not having a religious foundation, the acts of CW should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, without being distinctive of any particular denomination. Part of a SACRE’s role is to support the effective provision of CW in community schools and to advise the LA on issues related to provision and quality. It must also consider applications from headteachers in community schools that the requirement for CW to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character be disapplied for some or all of the pupils in that school. SACRE ‘determines’ the appropriateness of that application and grants a ‘determination’ to those schools where the application is judged to be in the best interests of the pupils. All pupils in schools with determinations continue to have an entitlement to daily CW.

CW can be a rich and rewarding element of the curriculum as a whole and SACREs have the opportunity to enhance its quality by offering appropriate guidance and support.

Key Area:4a – Supporting pupil entitlement <i>What strategies are in place to enable the SACRE to support the delivery of pupil entitlement in the LA's schools?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have any knowledge regarding the provision of CW nor have any mechanism in place to gain such knowledge.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	be unaware of the issues facing schools in providing CW as part of the pupil entitlement. Provide little advice or support towards fulfilling pupil entitlement to CW.	✓
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	understand local issues of delivering pupil entitlement and of the challenges schools face in providing CW. Provide some advice in support of delivering pupil entitlement. Seek to ensure that schools had access to, and advice on, appropriate resources for the delivery of CW.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a balanced and realistic overview of provision and its challenges across the LA. Provide or arrange for systematic support and guidance for schools experiencing difficulty in delivering pupil entitlement. Obtain feedback from schools to evaluate the impact of advice and support. Periodically review its strategies for supporting pupil entitlement.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considering the impact of the pandemic, renewed work in understanding the issues facing schools in the delivery of effective collective worship needs to be undertaken. 	

Key Area: 4b – Enhancing the quality of provision of collective worship <i>How does SACRE seek to influence the quality of collective worship in the LA's schools?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not be able to influence the quality of CW due to lack of support either from the LA or CW/RE professional. Have no knowledge of what good quality CW in schools looks like.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	not be adequately supported by the LA / RE professional to promote quality provision of CW. Have agenda items about CW dominated by the issue of how SACRE obtains data. Have little understanding of the nature and potential of CW and of what effective provision in each school might be.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have occasional agenda items on CW, with some insight into how it is being delivered in the LA's schools. Understand what effective provision is, but SACRE members have little 'hands-on' experience of CW. Promote in-service support for teachers with responsibility for CW. Advise on enhancing quality of provision.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have a good overview of quality of provision across the LA, with information from the LA and from presentations by schools. Have first-hand experience of CW in schools. Disseminate good practice in consultation with schools and teachers. Sponsor an ongoing programme of in-service development, and assist schools in evaluating and enhancing the quality of their provision.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SACRE understands some of the challenges facing schools in delivery of collective worship but recognises more work in this area needs to be done post-pandemic. Need to develop support, training and resources in this area. 	

Key Area: 4c – Responding to requests for determinations <i>How robust are SACRE's procedures for responding to requests from schools for a determination?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	not have any understanding of what a determination is. Have no documentation for schools to use to make application for a determination.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have had little or no experience of any requests for a determination, and have given at most only minimal attention as to how it might respond to such a request, due to a lack of support provided to SACRE by the LA via a professional officer. Found unprepared and at risk of making an unsound decision or giving erroneous advice by a request for a determination.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be aware that schools have the option of requesting a determination, and that SACRE has a major role in this process. Have provided some training to its members regarding determinations, either directly through working on earlier requests, or through specific elements in developmental sessions. Responds in an adequate but piecemeal fashion, when requested for a determination, without a systematic overview of this area of work.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	be fully equipped for responding to requests for determinations, with a good understanding of SACRE's responsibilities. Have a well-established and effective framework for responding to requests, with which members are familiar and comfortable. Meet a request with a judicious and well-informed appraisal of the request by SACRE, leading to a sound decision communicated clearly to the school in a context of ongoing advisory support. Periodically review all existing determinations together with keeping the guidance from the RE professional.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision in place though rarely tested. • Determination policy in place. 	

Section 4. Collective Worship

Successes/ What are we good at?

SACRE is aware that on the back of the launch of the new Agreed Syllabus, further support, training and resources needs to be given over to Collective worship.

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE**
 - Better understanding of where schools are in relation to deliver of Collective worship
 - Support, training and resources needs to be given over to Collective worship.
 - Audit provision of schools through the Subject Network Meetings.
 - Provide training for governors on how to fulfil their responsibilities (March 2024).
 - Collect information on how schools are delivering Collective Worship through Good Practice Visits.

- **For the LA**

Date of review: November 2023

Date of next review: June 2025

Section 5: Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community

How effectively does SACRE, in partnership with the Local Authority and the faith communities, contribute to the promoting of cohesion across the community?

“By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community”².

Schools play a major role in helping to shape the future of our society, and the duty laid on each school to promote community cohesion is a significant part of that role. One of the most obvious and effective contributors to the community cohesion agenda is Religious Education. SACREs should take every opportunity to promote the contribution of RE to the community cohesion programmes in local schools. Where properly supported by the LA, SACREs themselves can act as powerful vehicles for promoting community cohesion in schools, in education more widely, and in the local community. SACREs should exemplify good practice in their internal relations and in the ways in which they go about their business. Advice on the contribution of SACREs and RE to community cohesion is given in the Guidance.

² Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, speaking in Parliament on 2 November 2006. Based on the Government and the Local Government Association’s definition first published in Guidance on Community Cohesion, LGA, 2002 and resulting from the Cattle Report in 2001.

Key Area: 5a – SACRE's membership <i>How representative is SACRE's membership of the local community?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	rarely meet and its membership will include many vacancies. The LA needs to review its membership and constitution in partnership with the SACRE and fulfil its obligations to convene an appropriately diverse SACRE	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a membership that is not necessarily strongly representative of the religious diversity of the local community. Membership needs to be reviewed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have membership that broadly reflects the religious diversity of the local community. This is regularly reviewed by the SACRE in partnership with the LA particularly where there is a high mobility of communities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have strong representation from all major local religious communities including different groups within the same religious tradition (e.g. different Muslim or Christian communities). Endeavours to include representation from small local faith communities and/or have links with national bodies that can broker advice from those communities elsewhere in the UK.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SACRE is broadly representative but faces challenges in terms of recruitment. Current membership is loyal, but SACRE is attracting fewer representatives from diverse communities in the county. 	

Key Area: 5b SACRE's understanding of the local area <i>How much do SACRE members know and understand the local community in its religious, cultural and ethnic dimensions?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	meet rarely and this aspect of membership would not be an agenda item when they meet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have limited knowledge about the religious, cultural and ethnic diversity in the local area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be provided with a detailed analysis of the religious and cultural diversity within the LA and therefore be well aware of different groups representing the diversity within the local area. Know about and have a relationship with local interfaith groups and the work that they do in the locality.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	have detailed knowledge of the nature of the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity in the local area. Take active steps to inform itself further about the distinctive needs and opportunities created by this diversity. SACRE would have good liaison and seek to develop initiatives with local interfaith groups. Be aware of the impact of this local context on schools and on the provision for RE and CW in those schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater insight into the diversity of the local authority to take steps to reflect those communities in the make-up of the committee. SACRE to analyse census data (once published) on religious groups in local area. 	

Key Area: 5c – SACRE's engagement with the community cohesion agenda. <i>How much does SACRE understand the contribution which RE/CW can make to a schools' provision for community cohesion?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	have little or no grasp of what community cohesion means and little understanding of the contribution which RE can make to the community cohesion agenda. Have no opportunity to promote RE's contribution to cohesion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	have a basic grasp of what community cohesion means and therefore a limited understanding of the contribution which RE can make to the community cohesion agenda. Have little opportunity to promote RE's contribution to cohesion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	have an understanding of what community cohesion means and the duty on schools to promote this. Understand and have a clear commitment to the part RE can play in promoting community cohesion and seek to promote this throughout its work.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	understand what community cohesion means and be clear about the duty on schools and the LA to promote this. SACRE members appreciate their key role in promoting RE's contribution to the community cohesion offer of its schools. SACRE would ensure this is explicit in the local AS and related guidance.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership means that importance of community cohesion is understood. Members committed to seeing this reflected in their work. • Equalities/diversity a standing item on the agenda. 	

Key Area: 5d – SACRE’s role within wider LA initiatives on community cohesion <i>How well is SACRE linked to or consulted about LA initiatives promoting community cohesion?</i>		
Requires improvement/struggling A SACRE in this position would:	be given no information about, or contact with, wider LA initiatives linked to the promotion of community cohesion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing A SACRE with developing practice would:	be given little information about, or contact with, wider LA initiatives linked to the promotion of community cohesion.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Established A SACRE with established practice would:	be aware of some LA initiatives promoting community cohesion and have opportunity to discuss and contribute to this work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced A SACRE with advanced practice would:	be a key partner and stakeholder in the work of the local authority in this area. Aware of local interfaith groups and in regular communication with them to ensure opportunities to support high quality RE/CW in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where are we and where do we find evidence to support this?		

Section 5: Contribution of SACRE to promoting cohesion across the community

Successes/ What are we good at?

Membership understands the importance of community cohesion and are committed to seeing this reflected in the work of SACRE.

Areas for development/ Action points:

- **For the SACRE**
 - Be provided with a detailed analysis of the religious and cultural diversity within the LA and takes steps to ensure good representation on the committee.
- **For the LA**

Date of review: March 2024

Date of next review: November 2025

ANNEX

The responsibilities of a Local Authority

The detailed rights and responsibilities of local authorities can be seen in full in *RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010*.

This can be found at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects/re/guidance/>

In brief, local authorities are legally required to:

- establish a SACRE and appoint representatives to each of the four committees
- establish an occasional body called an agreed syllabus conference (ASC)
- institute a review of its locally agreed syllabus every five years
- appoint members of the committees represented on the ASC
- ensure that membership of Group/Committee A on the SACRE and ASC is broadly representative of the local area
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that SACRE and ASC membership is representative

The responsibilities of a SACRE

The detailed rights and responsibilities of SACREs can be seen in full in *RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010*.

This can be found at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects/re/guidance/>

In brief, SACREs are legally required to:

- advise the local authority on RE and collective worship
- publish an annual report on their work
- send the annual report to QCDA (or its successor body)
- meet in public, unless confidential information is to be disclosed
- make their minutes available to the local authority and make provision for public access to their agenda and reports

The Guidance also indicates that SACREs should, as a matter of good practice:

- Monitor the provision for both RE and Collective Worship
- Provide advice and support on RE and Collective Worship to schools
- In partnership with the local authority, keep the locally agreed syllabus and provision in schools under review
- Offer advice to the local authority

In addition, SACREs may:

- Require their local authority to review the locally agreed syllabus
- Decide to advise their local authority
- Co-opt members who are not members of any of the four groups.

The Guidance also makes it clear that SACREs can and should make a strong contribution to the promotion of community cohesion in schools and in the local community through their promotion of good quality RE and through their operation as a SACRE.

This page is intentionally left blank