



## Updates from Ofsted and the DFE June 2021

Please click on the links below to access documents.

### **[Ofsted: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rolling update - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-co...)**

[https://www.gov.uk > guidance > ofsted-coronavirus-co...](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-co...)

7 May 2021- Ofsted

On 4 May Ofsted began to restart some on-site inspections under the EIF. These include section 8 monitoring inspections of schools graded 'inadequate', and those graded 'requires improvement' at their last 2 consecutive full inspections.

Ofsted will also inspect 'good' schools that, due to the pandemic, have not had an inspection within the statutory 5-year window. These will be section 8 inspections and follow our usual approach to inspecting good schools, as outlined in the [section 8 school inspection handbook](#).

'Outstanding' schools will also be able to request an inspection.

### **[OFSTED Education inspection framework \(EIF\) - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/edu...)**

[https://www.gov.uk > government > publications > edu...](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/edu...)

**Changes to Ofsted Inspection Handbooks:** <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2021/04/19/our-education-inspection-handbooks-have-changed-whats-new-what-do-you-need-to-know/>

19 April 2021 - Ofsted Sean Harford, National Director of Education

In this blog Sean Harford sets out the main changes Ofsted have made to the handbooks (both section 5 and section 8). This is so that leaders and teachers understand Ofsted's approach and know what to expect for the summer term. They will review the handbooks again over the summer in preparation for the return to their full programme of graded inspection in September.

You can read about the changes to the [early years](#) handbooks in this link.

### **Short 1 minute information Videos from Ofsted**

[Video: What it means to 'know your subject'](#) - Madeleine Gerard, Senior Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), talks about the curriculum and 'knowing your subject'.

Three videos on the curriculum - Mike Sheridan, Ofsted's Regional Director, London, discusses using the [national curriculum](#) as a benchmark, some of the [challenges faced by small primary schools](#), and detail about [deep dives](#). And what this means to subject leaders

### **Ofsted publishes research review on mathematics**

**education ...**[https://www.gov.uk > ... > School curriculum](https://www.gov.uk/.../School-curriculum)

25 May 2021- Ofsted

The following is an excerpt from the blog about the review;

In addition to highlighting approaches that could raise the attainment of all pupils, a core theme of the maths review is how to prevent struggling pupils from falling further behind their peers.

There are a variety of ways that schools can construct and teach a good maths curriculum, and Ofsted recognises that there is no singular way of achieving high-quality education in the subject. However, the review identifies some common features of successful, high-quality curriculum approaches:

- Teachers engineer the best possible start for all pupils by closing the school entry gap in knowledge of basic mathematical facts, concepts, vocabulary and symbols.
- The teaching of maths facts and methods is sequenced to take advantage of the way that knowing those facts helps pupils to learn methods, and vice versa.

- Throughout sequences of learning, pupils benefit from teaching that is systematic and clear.
- The aim is for pupils to attain proficiency. Pupils are then more likely to develop motivation and confidence in the subject.
- Pupils need regular opportunities to rehearse and apply the important mathematical facts, concepts, methods and strategies they have learned.
- Assessment is most useful when it focuses on the component knowledge that pupils have learned. This aids pupils' confidence and makes it easier to analyse and respond to gaps in learning.
- Teachers can support pupils' progression by ensuring written work is of a high quality. This is important because when pupils' calculations are systematic and orderly, they are better able to see the connections of number and to spot errors.
- School leaders can develop teachers' subject and pedagogic knowledge through opportunities to work with and learn from each other.

Ofsted have also released two YouTube videos from Hannah Stoten, HMI and Ofsted's subject lead for mathematics. In these, she discusses [getting better at mathematics](#) and [what makes an effective education in mathematics](#).

## **[Ofsted publishes research review on religious education ...](#)**

<https://www.gov.uk> › ... › [School curriculum](#)

12 May 2021 – Ofsted

The following is an excerpt from the blog about the review;

The review recognises that there is no single way of constructing and teaching a high-quality RE curriculum.

However, it does identify some common features:

- The curriculum should cover substantive content and concepts collectively (or 'collectively enough'), rather than covering excessive amounts of content superficially. Content is sufficient for pupils to grasp a bigger picture about the place of religion and non-religion in the world.
- What is taught and learned in RE is grounded in what is known about religion or non-religion from academic study. This helps prevent pupils from developing misconceptions about religion and non-religion.
- Pupils study certain areas of the RE curriculum in depth and acquire a range of detailed knowledge of different concepts and ideas, which they remember long term. Drawing on this prior knowledge enables them to consider more complex ideas about religion. Leaders and teachers select this 'depth of study' from contrasting religious and/or non-religious traditions so that pupils avoid developing misrepresentations.
- The curriculum is well sequenced to ensure that pupils learn the knowledge they need for later topics.
- There is a consideration of when pupils should relate the content to their own personal knowledge (for example, their own prior assumptions).
- How the curriculum is taught and assessed focuses pupils' attention squarely on the knowledge they need to learn.
- Adequate curriculum time is given to RE, so that leaders can deliver an ambitious curriculum.
- There is sufficient training and professional development so that teachers have appropriate subject professional knowledge.

The review refers to 3 different types of subject-specific knowledge that pupils learn in RE. Each of these is powerful and should not be confused with 'mere facts'. The first is 'substantive' knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions. The second type is 'ways of knowing', where pupils learn 'how to know' about religion and non-religion. The third type is 'personal knowledge', where pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about what they study. The review suggests that improvement in RE at both primary and secondary level includes knowing more of these 'pillars of progression'. This prepares pupils to engage in a complex, multi-religious and multi-secular world.

**In the spring term of 2022, Ofsted will be publishing a report on the quality of RE curriculums taught in schools. They will gather the evidence for this through subject 'deep dives' during inspections under the EIF.**

Ofsted have also released two YouTube videos from Richard Kueh, HMI and Ofsted's subject lead for RE. In these, he discusses the substance of what pupils learn in the subject, [the curriculum](#), and some of the factors that can influence [the quality of RE in schools](#).

## [Languages in outstanding primary schools - Ofsted blog ...](#)

[https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk > 2021/05/04](https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2021/05/04)

4 May 2021 — Michael Wardle HMI, Ofsted's subject lead for languages

[Ofsted's education blog: Languages in outstanding primary schools](#) - Michael Wardle, HMI and Ofsted's subject lead for languages, discusses our language subject inspections. The following is an excerpt from the blog; Primary schools have had a legal responsibility to teach languages since 2014.

We generally found one of three models operating in primary schools:

- a specialist teacher is brought into school to teach languages
- a teacher in school takes responsibility for its organisation and delivery
- a native speaker member of staff is asked to lead the subject

All three of these models can work. In cases where a specialist teacher visits the school, class teachers practised what has been taught during the week in between languages lessons. In schools where a teacher in school was responsible for organisation and delivery of the languages curriculum, they sometimes used bought packages, recorded sound files and organised good subject-specific continuous professional development; upskilling and supporting staff was seen as essential. In those situations where native speakers lead the subject, they received training linked to understanding and teaching their native language, which was pivotal.

In some schools, there was a misunderstanding of how to make progress in languages, step by step. Rather than focusing on the building blocks of a language (phonics, grammar and vocabulary), some schools were simply increasing pupils' stock of words, through different topics. There was little in the way of linguistic progression. Sometimes, schools had a structure linked to developing listening, speaking, reading and writing. Sometimes, there was a belief in not engaging in written forms of the language at all.

Our inspectors found that assessment tended to be very limited in languages. In addition, the transition from primary to secondary was underdeveloped. The government's ambition is that 90% of pupils study the suite of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) by 2025 (sitting examinations in 2027), which includes an ancient or modern language. That will include pupils in the current Year 5 and below. While we saw some excellent work in our inspections, there wasn't much evidence of a joined-up approach between key stage 2 and 3. Sometimes, there was very limited communication between primary and secondary schools, and little sharing or shaping of grammar, phonics and vocabulary between settings. Clearly, more focus on progression across the key stages would likely support the EBacc ambition.

## [Geography in outstanding primary schools - Ofsted blog ...](#)

[https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk > 2021/05/11](https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2021/05/11)

11 May 2021 — Iain Freeland HMI, Ofsted's subject lead for geography,

[Ofsted's education blog: Geography in outstanding primary schools](#) - Iain Freeland, HMI and Ofsted's subject lead for geography, discusses our geography subject inspections. The following is an excerpt from the blog;

There were strengths in the quality of geography education in many of the schools we went to. Overall, curriculum planning was well thought through, and there was clear organisation to make sure that pupils built on what they had already learned. In a few schools, where subjects were taught discretely, there were sophisticated links across subjects to make sure there was cohesion across the whole curriculum.

Teaching geography in the early years was almost universally strong. Teachers were adept at helping pupils to understand their locality, the wider world and phenomena, such as the weather and seasons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were fully included in the provision for geography. Teachers and other adults supported these pupils well so that they could access the same content.

The vast majority of the schools we inspected were significantly revising their curriculum plans for geography. In almost every school, leaders were using the national curriculum as the basis for their planning. However, at the time of the inspections, just under half of the schools did not meet the scope or ambition of the national curriculum. In most cases, the most significant gaps were in key stage 2. However, headteachers were aware of this and, in almost all schools, plans were already in place to improve this.

### Areas for improvement

In some schools, we found that practice was not always as good as it could be. Very few teachers had actually been trained in teaching geography, although some could remember a brief session as part of their initial teacher training. In some cases, this led to teachers not drawing out important geographical concepts or introducing errors. We found that pupils often struggled to recall places they had studied, including the principal cities of the United Kingdom and major world oceans. Very few showed a good appreciation of scale.

Important geographical skills (using maps, atlases, globes and digital mapping, using locational and directional language, using aerial photographs, devising maps, using Ordnance Survey maps and fieldwork) were not taught particularly well. When pupils were constructing their own plans or maps, these often lacked the accuracy or conventions followed by geographers, such as the use of scale. In some schools, teachers were making good use of the plentiful supply of globes, atlases and maps at various scales. In others, this was less common.

Fieldwork is vital to geographical practice, but this was weak in key stage 2 in many of the schools we inspected. That's not to say that pupils did not visit different places, but, when they did, they did not make the observations or collect data that they could analyse and present their findings. Fieldwork was much stronger in the early years and key stage 1.

Very few schools were working with secondary schools (or junior/middle schools in the case of infants schools). This limited the precision with which primary schools set their curriculum goals and make sure pupils are properly prepared for the next phase of education.

## **[Research review series: science - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-science)**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rese...](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-science)

29 Apr 2021 — A review by Ofsted of research into factors that influence the quality of science education in schools in England.

The following is the conclusion from the review.

In this conclusion, we have identified some general principles. Each principle is not restricted to a specific area of science education, such as curriculum, pedagogy, assessment or school systems. Rather, we have chosen them because evidence presented in this review suggests that they play a central role in influencing many aspects of science education that lay the foundation for subject quality.

The first principle concerns the nature of the scientific discipline itself. **A high-quality science education is rooted in an authentic understanding of what science is.** This recognises science as a discipline of enquiry, underpinned by substantive and disciplinary knowledge, that seeks to explain the material world. Importantly, this requires that pupils learn about the differences between each science. This includes learning about the diversity of approaches used to establish knowledge in science and knowing that there is not one scientific method. When the discipline is not well understood, evidence shows that this leads to superficial curriculum thinking and ineffective pedagogical approaches. Often, these focus on developing ill-defined skills. They also confuse scientific enquiry as a curricular goal with enquiry-based teaching approaches. Without a strong sense of the discipline, it is also easy for high-stakes assessment, either through its absence or presence, to distort what is taught.

The second principle extends from the first. It reflects the important status of scientific concepts, and the relationships between them, as building blocks of scientific knowledge. **A high-quality science curriculum prioritises pupils building knowledge of key concepts in a meaningful way that reflects how knowledge**

**is organised in the scientific disciplines.** This starts in the early years. Importantly, this assumes there is enough curriculum time to teach science. Evidence shows that this is not always the case. Historically, science education has looked mainly to pedagogy to address the difficulties pupils face learning science. However, as seen throughout this review, by changing what pupils learn it is possible to prevent some of these difficulties from arising in the first place. For example, the effectiveness of practical work can be increased by making sure that pupils have the necessary prior knowledge to learn from the activity. Similarly, by changing what pupils learn, and when, the likelihood of misconceptions forming can be reduced. The science curriculum is therefore more than a description of the journey towards expertise. It is also the means by which to get there. **This means that science curriculums should be planned to take account of the function of knowledge in relation to future learning.**

Together, these 3 principles show that a high-quality science education carefully balances several competing priorities/tensions. For example:

- pupils learn that science is a body of established knowledge but is also a discipline of enquiry
- complex concepts and procedures must be broken down into simpler parts, but knowledge must not become fragmented or divorced from the subject discipline
- curriculum is distinct from pedagogy, but what you learn is influenced by how you learn it

To navigate these tensions successfully, teachers and subject leaders require in-depth knowledge of science and how to teach it, as well as an understanding of how pupils learn. Building teachers' knowledge is therefore a central plank of high-quality science education. The evidence in this review suggests that this knowledge should be developed in relation to the curriculum that is taught.

## **[Evaluating the education inspection framework: for schools ...](#)**

<https://www.gov.uk> › [government](#) › [speeches](#) › [evaluati...](#)

21 May 2021 — Chris Jones discusses some of Ofsted's findings from an evaluation of the impact of the education inspection framework (EIF).

The following is an excerpt from this document;

Under the EIF, inspectors use a deep-dive methodology to evaluate the quality of education. This involves looking at the quality of the curriculum through a range of evidence, focusing on different subjects in order to draw conclusions about the overall curriculum.

The 'joined up' nature of the deep dives – an important part of the validity of this methodology – seemed to be something that both leaders and inspectors found valuable. All our inspectors are well versed in the purpose of deep dives. They reported that these had substantially improved inspection methodology from previous frameworks.

## **[Some pupils with SEND missing out on specialist support ...](#)**

<https://www.gov.uk> › [government](#) › [news](#) › [some-pupils-...](#)

13 May 2021 – Ofsted

The following is an excerpt from this document;

The study finds that specialist support from multi-agency services often complements the support offered by schools. Although families and school staff value this external support, it is not always timely or implemented appropriately.

Many of the schools and families participating in the research had experienced long wait times and high levels of bureaucracy in the education, health and care (EHC) plan process. In some instances, families were commissioning or paying for additional services themselves. This suggests that the playing field is not level for pupils from poorer backgrounds.

## **[Every school with Reception class offered early language ...](#)**

<https://www.gov.uk> › [government](#) › [news](#) › [every-scho...](#)

13 May 2021 — DFE

Every state school with a Reception class in England can now apply for training and resources through an early years catch-up programme funded by the Government, to support thousands more pupils with vital communication skills.

Delivered by the Nuffield Foundation and backed by an extra £8 million of investment, recruitment has launched for the second wave of the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI), a programme proven to be effective in raising outcomes in Reception-age children's early language, communication and speech skills – particularly those who need the most support to overcome the disruption of the pandemic.

Schools can find out more information and complete their registration to receive NELI [here](#). Places on the programme are limited and registration is offered on a first come first served basis.

### [The removal of Letters and Sounds 2007 from the Department's list of validated phonics programmes – teachers' questions answered](#)

17 May 2021 – DFE Media Officer

### [As education recovers, let's make sure our new teachers hit ...](#)

<https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk> > 2021/05/19

19 May 2021 — Ofsted

[Ofsted's education blog: As education recovers, let's make sure our new teachers hit the ground running](#)- Amy Finch, Head of Strategic Evaluation and Helen Matthews, Specialist Advisor, Initial Teacher Education, discuss the findings of Ofsted's initial teacher education (ITE) research and why it's the right time for a new inspection approach.

### [Changes to the early years foundation stage \(EYFS ... - GOV.UK](#)

<https://www.gov.uk> > government > publications > cha...

26 Apr 2021 — DFE

Development Matters is the new non-statutory curriculum guidance for the new EYFS framework that everyone can use from September 2021.

This useful document from the DFE lists all the changes.

### **Publications for Church Schools from The Church of England**

The Church of England have now published some Guidance on collective worship, this is effectively a sister document to the Statement of Entitlement for RE. You can find it here [Collective Worship | The Church of England](#) on a new page on the website dedicated to collective worship.

A new document on Courageous Advocacy can be found on the SIAMS inspection page along with the other SIAMS documents [SIAMS School Inspections | The Church of England](#) .

Ofsted have published in their Research and Review Series: a subject report on Religious Education [Research review series: religious education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) Whilst this is focused on Community and VC schools it is still very relevant for Church schools of any status. It provides a really good survey of developments in RE since the last Ofsted report in 2013, outlines expectations around knowledge in Religious Education that are very helpful and makes some strong points about assessment and provision.

### [Four things you may not know about music and arts education](#)

6 May 2021 – DFE Media Officer

**What you need to know about the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme**

20 May 2021 – DFE Media Officer







