

News story: London school helps to shape Relationships and Sex education

The City of London Academy in Southwark has been participating in the Department for Education's call for evidence, asking parents, teachers and young people to help shape the new Relationships and Sex education curriculum. Staff and pupils at the school have engaged with age-appropriate content such as mental wellbeing and staying safe online.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb met with teachers and pupils to discuss why the lessons are important and to hear their views on these issues. These steps will help to set guidance for all schools on how to teach these subjects so that it helps young people face the challenges of the modern world.

Academic standards are rising in England, with around 390,000 more London pupils in schools rated good or outstanding than in 2010 and 93 per cent of London schools given this rating at their last inspection.

Making sure young people have the knowledge they need to stay safe and develop healthy relationships is part of the government's drive to raise education standards even further.

Schools Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

It has been a pleasure to meet the teachers at the City of London Academy and to talk to the pupils benefitting from an education that teaches them the importance of healthy and stable relationships.

There are 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 and across the country, schools like the City of London Academy, with 64 per cent of pupils being entered for the EBacc, are raising standards for pupils.

We want to continue to raise the bar and that's why we have committed to update relationships and sex education to meet the needs of young people today. Our call for evidence closes next week and we want as many people as possible to have their say on what the new curriculum should include.

The current statutory guidance for teaching Relationships and Sex education was introduced in 2000. It fails to address risks to children which have grown in prevalence in recent years, including online pornography, sexting and staying safe online. The guidance is being updated after legislation was passed by Parliament earlier this year to make relationships education compulsory in all primary schools and Relationships and Sex education compulsory in all secondary schools.

The eight-week 'call for evidence' has been gathering views from people across England from all backgrounds on the content of this subject. It will establish:

- how parents expect their children to be taught this topic in a safe and age-appropriate way; and
- what teachers think they should be teaching their pupils to help them navigate the modern world they are growing up in;
- what children themselves think they would benefit from understanding the most, and the online risks they are concerned with.

Head of the School Dr Jeffery Quaye said:

I welcome the Department of Education's decision to make Relationship and Sex Education as statutory requirement for schools from 2019/2020. Here at City of London Academy Southwark, we observed that by placing more emphasis on relationship instead of the mechanics of reproduction, we have raised students' awareness of sexting and sexual harassment. Also, our students have developed better understanding of the benefits of healthy relationships, staying safe online and managing emotions. Through balanced curriculum changes and a new framework of teaching students, we have seen noticeable evidence of mutual respect, empathy, self-confidence and wellbeing enhanced amongst our students.

Year 11 pupil, Keana Nicholas Pipe said:

I think learning PSHE is important to help students know what to do if they find themselves in any difficult situations. I think it's important to learn about consent because and through the classes I now feel more confident. I know who to ask for advice and how to make an informed choice.

The move to make Relationships and Sex education compulsory was welcomed by the teaching profession and organisations such as Barnardo's, Stonewall, the Catholic Education Service, NSPCC, Terrence Higgins Trust and the End Violence Against Women coalition.

Teachers, parents and young people are invited to have their say on relationship education in schools [here](#)

The call for evidence closes on Monday 12 February.