



Department for Education

2025-0021265

Catherine McKinnell MP
Minister for School Standards

Laura Kyrke-Smith MP
By email: laura.kyrkesmith.mp@parliament.uk

3 July 2025

Dear Laura,

Thank you for your correspondence of 9 June, addressed to the Secretary of State, on behalf of the group Shout Out for SEND in your constituency, regarding special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) education. I am replying as the minister responsible for this policy area.

Thank you for sharing correspondence from Shout Out for SEND on behalf of Buckinghamshire's young SEND community. I would like to thank them for their suggestions for introducing awareness of the experiences of young people with special educational needs and disabilities into the school curriculum. For clarity, I will respond to each of the points raised below.

SEND Provision

I want to assure the group that SEND provision is a priority for the government. The department wants to drive a consistent and inclusive approach to supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. We are working closely with parents and experts and have appointed a strategic advisor for SEND who is playing a key role in convening and engaging with the sector, including leaders, practitioners, children and families. This work forms part of the government's opportunity mission, which will break the unfair link between background and opportunity – starting with giving every child, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, the best start in life.

We will strength accountability on mainstream settings to be inclusive, including through Ofsted, support the mainstream workforce to increase their SEND expertise and encourage schools to set up resourced provision, or special educational needs units to increase capacity in mainstream schools.

Curriculum Review

As you are aware, the government has established an independent Curriculum and Assessment Review covering ages 5 to 18. This is chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE, an expert in education policy including curriculum and social inequality. The Review is specifically considering how to remove existing blocks to progress and ensure good outcomes for children and young people from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and have a special educational need or disability and/or are otherwise vulnerable.

The Review wants to deliver a curriculum that reflects the issues and diversities of our society and represents all children and young people. As well as ensuring that children and young people can see themselves represented in the curriculum, the Review recognises the importance of also ensuring that they encounter other people's perspectives. The Review's final report and recommendations will be published in autumn, at which point the government will respond.

The RSHE Curriculum

You may be interested to know that the relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum encourages all pupils to understand diversity and respect difference to enable them to build healthy, respectful relationships with people from all walks of life.

The RSHE has clear links to the SEND 'preparing for adulthood' outcomes and schools should ensure that, where appropriate, the learning in RSHE is linked to education, health and care plan outcomes – for example, managing healthy relationships, healthy eating, and self-care.

Pupils are taught about all protected characteristics and schools are free to adapt the curriculum to teach about areas that meet the needs of their pupils. Teachers of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities will be used to adapting materials to meet the varied needs of their pupils, including those studying RSHE subjects. However, to build the confidence and expertise needed to deliver the curriculum to those with more complex needs the department worked with experts to develop additional training materials. We have produced a SEND specific RSHE teacher training module, which is available at: tinyurl.com/3V8UUTFF.

The department is currently reviewing the statutory RSHE curriculum for primary and secondary pupils. We are analysing consultation responses, talking to stakeholders, and considering relevant evidence before issuing revised guidance. As part of this process we will consider whether to amend existing content relating to SEND and pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

Thank you for writing. I hope that this response is useful.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catherine".

Catherine McKinnell MP
Minister for School Standards