
The DofE and excellence in Ofsted inspections

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. They inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages.

Almost 70% of Licensed Organisations which offer DofE are evaluated, monitored and regulated by Ofsted.

The DofE frequently features positively in school inspection reports. As a result, some centres are using DofE to help improve the outcomes of their future inspections.

The new Ofsted framework was introduced in September 2015. More value is being placed on opportunities for experiential learning. With increased

focus on the wider, holistic school environment, employability and extra-curricular activities, the presence of a DofE offer within the school can have a significant impact on the overall assessment.

Participation in a DofE programme accelerates progress and attainment by encouraging independent

learners and enhancing resilience, self-esteem and problem solving abilities.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award can play a key role in supporting schools to maintain their focus on engagement with extra-curricular activities. It can also help to demonstrate a school's commitment to the personal and social development of its pupils.



Ofsted Mapping

The DofE can be mapped against Ofsted criteria. The list below is not exhaustive but gives examples of these synergies.

Assessment area	Ofsted criteria	Links with DofE
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<p>The school supports the formal curriculum with extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding and to improve their skills in a range of artistic, creative and sporting activities.</p>	<p>Participating in a DofE programme encourages young people to undertake a wide and balanced range of extra-curricular activities, encompassing both sporting pursuits and the development of new skills.</p>
	<p>The school prepares pupils positively for life in modern Britain and promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith.</p>	<p>Through the Volunteering section, young people are encouraged to make new connections outside of their social circle, widening their exposure to other backgrounds and points of view.</p> <p>Team working also forms a fundamental part of a DofE programme, particularly during the Expedition section, developing qualities such as democracy, respect and tolerance.</p>
	<p>Leaders and Governors promote all forms of equality and foster greater understanding of and respect for people of all faiths (and those of no faith), races, genders, ages, disability and social orientations through their words, actions and influence within the school and more widely in the community.</p>	<p>A guiding principle of the DofE is that it is achievable by all young people. By instilling the DofE within a school, its leaders and governors are helping to promote cohesion across demographic segments including faith, race and gender as young people from different backgrounds and circumstances are given the opportunity to interact and work towards a common goal. From this level playing field new friendships are formed and interests found, and this cohesion extends to communities through the Volunteering section.</p>
	<p>Leaders use additional funding, including the pupil premium, effectively and for the best impact on outcomes for pupils.</p>	<p>See below for more information regarding the use of pupil premium to support DofE activities.</p>

Assessment area	Ofsted criteria	Links with DofE
<p>Quality of teaching, learning and assessment</p>	<p>Pupils love the challenge of learning and are resilient to failure. They are curious, interested learners who seek out and use new information to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills. They thrive in lessons and also regularly take up opportunities to learn through extra-curricular activities.</p>	<p>Undertaking a DofE programme encourages a positive approach to overcoming challenges; the nature of the Expedition section in particular encourages resilience and determination, whilst participants must also exercise commitment to both developing a skill and volunteering regularly over a set period of time. Undertaking a DofE programme also provides pupils with access to a range of opportunities for learning outside of the classroom, for example through sport or during the course of their Volunteering section, leading to more engaged and curious learners.</p> <p>DofE is widely recognised by teachers, employers and leaders in HE and FE as one of the best models for encouraging and celebrating qualities such as confidence and independence in young people (see United Learning Trust Report).</p>
	<p>Teachers and other staff have consistently high expectations of what each pupil can achieve, including most able and disadvantaged pupils. Equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity are promoted through teaching and learning.</p>	<p>A DofE programme is personal to each individual, making it both inclusive and challenging.</p> <p>The range of activities that may be undertaken mean that those who are less academic are also able to excel, finding themselves on a level playing field with their class mates.</p> <p>Starting at Bronze and working up to Gold level, individuals are often amazed at what they themselves have been able to achieve.</p>

“The importance of the DofE to Bohunt cannot be overstated. At a school level it gives us an aspirational partner to work with; at a staff level it provides a community of people committed to development and excellence; at a student level it provides a wealth of experiences, some new, some hard, all exciting, that help them now and in the future.”

Neil Strowger, Headteacher, Bohunt School, Hampshire

Assessment area	Ofsted criteria	Links with DofE
<p>Personal development, behaviour and welfare</p>	<p>Inspectors will visit lessons to gather evidence about teaching, learning and assessment and will consider this first-hand evidence alongside documentary evidence about the quality of teaching and views from leaders, governors, staff, pupils and parents. Inspectors will also include evidence from observing pupils learning in extra-curricular activities. This range of evidence also informs the evaluation of pupils' progress, pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, and the impact of Leaders' and Managers' improvements to teaching and assessment.</p>	<p>DofE participation has a positive impact on the personal development, behaviour and welfare of students.</p> <p>It also provides staff with the opportunity to engage with pupils outside of the classroom, increasing understanding of their students' abilities and improving teacher/pupil relations.</p>
	<p>Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development equips them to be thoughtful, caring and active citizens in school and in wider society.</p> <p>Pupils understand how their education equips them with the behaviours and attitudes necessary for success in their next stage of education, training or employment and for their adult life.</p>	<p>Completing a DofE programme helps reinforce in young people the skills and attributes that they can utilise for success in later life, leading to increased personal awareness through overcoming challenges and meeting goals.</p> <p>United Learning Trust research found the top 12% of employers in the country believed a DofE Award was the most valuable activity a young person could put on their CV outside of formal qualifications.</p>



Assessment area	Ofsted criteria	Links with DofE
<p>Outcomes for children and learners</p>	<p>Throughout the year group and across the curriculum, including in English and mathematics, current pupils make substantial and sustained progress, developing excellent knowledge, understanding and skills, considering their different starting points.</p>	<p>A DofE programme gives all pupils the chance to achieve and develop in a range of areas, regardless of academic background.</p> <p>Overcoming challenges and achieving success outside of academia can lead to renewed confidence and a positive approach to studies; this may have a positive impact on academic performance and predicted grades.</p>
	<p>Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment and have attained relevant qualifications. Compared with the national average for all pupils, higher proportions of pupils and of disadvantaged pupils, progress on to a range of higher and further education establishments, apprenticeships, employment or training. These destinations strongly support their career plans.</p>	<p>DofE activities, in particular the Skills and Volunteering sections, can align personal interests with possible career routes or inspire young people to follow a new path. The DofE can be used to engage and recognise the achievement of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who may not achieve academically.</p> <p>A DofE Award is also looked upon favourably by a range of leading employers for the employability skills it develops, including confidence, resilience and commitment. It can open doors to Higher or Further Education, or employment, by giving young people a demonstrable way to evidence the soft skills they have developed.</p>

“Volunteering for the DofE helps you see the students in a different light. It has helped to strengthen relationships with them because I get to interact with students that I wouldn’t normally teach.”

Chris, DofE Leader

“Since doing my DofE my confidence has grown. It has helped me develop other skills as part of my extended curriculum to put into practice both in and out of school. It’s fun too!”

Shannon, student



Introduction to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

As part of their judgement on a schools' overall effectiveness, Ofsted inspectors are required to consider the extent to which a school's promotion of pupils' moral, spiritual, social and cultural development and their physical well-being enables pupils to thrive.

Spiritual development

Pupils' spiritual development is shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in 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.

The Volunteering section of a DofE programme gives young people the opportunity to engage with new sections of their community; challenging and developing their beliefs and perspectives on life. This, combined with new experiences gained on their expedition, when they have the opportunity to explore and learn about new places and environments, can lead to an increased curiosity about the world around them.

Whilst all the sections of a DofE programme offer the opportunity for experiential learning, the Expedition section in particular allows pupils the opportunity to explore and learn about new places and environments. Giving a presentation after completing their expedition encourages participants to reflect on their experiences.

The process of setting goals and overcoming challenges gives participants the opportunity to learn more about themselves and their capabilities, finding they achieve things they might not have thought possible before.

Moral development

Pupils' moral development is shown by their:

- ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, recognise legal boundaries and, in so doing, respect the civil and criminal law of England.
- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions.
- interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues and ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues.

Young people doing their DofE are encouraged to take ownership of their programme, from their choice of activities to the completion of each section. This helps to encourage a sense of independence and responsibility.

Undertaking the Volunteering section in particular encourages participants to meet others outside of their usual circle, exposing them to new viewpoints and experiences, which can help to develop tolerance and understanding.

"The DofE brings numerous benefits in terms of students' confidence, physical development and positive relationships, as well as improving staff bonding and morale."

OFSTED Inspection, South Bromsgrove High School

Social development

Pupils' social development is shown by their:

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, for example working and socialising with other pupils, including those from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.
- willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by volunteering, co-operating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively.
- acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; they develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

A DofE programme encourages participants to develop their social skills in a range of different environments, from meeting new people outside of their social circle during their volunteering activity, to undertaking a challenging expedition as part of a team.

The Expedition section requires effective teamwork under often challenging and unfamiliar circumstances, increasing skills in co-operation and conflict resolution.



Cultural development

Pupils' cultural development is shown by their:

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and those of others.
- understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain.
- knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain.
- willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical, sporting and cultural opportunities.
- interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.

A DofE programme encourages participants to become involved in school life outside of the classroom, leading them to engage with other young people outside of their friendship groups. This can result in a greater understanding of the range of cultures within the school.

A primary purpose of a DofE programme is to encourage young people to undertake a broad and balanced programme of activities outside of the classroom. This includes the development of a skill in an area such as music or art, as well as participation in a sport or physical activity.

This balanced range of activities also encourages interaction with new people and communities, leading to increased understanding and tolerance.



Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium is additional funding for publicly funded schools in England. Its aim is to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers.

Ofsted has been tasked by the Government to record and review the use of Pupil Premium. Ofsted Assessors will look for evidence that Pupil Premium is used effectively and for the best impact on outcomes for pupils.

The use of Pupil Premium for DofE activities has proven to be a popular and cost effective way for schools to achieve the necessary positive outcomes.

Utilising Pupil Premium

- Support staffing.
- Subsidising expeditions and residentials.
- Supporting alternative curriculum programmes.
- Subsidising/providing equipment and resources.
- Small group work intervention.
- Motivational programmes.
- Staff CPD/NGB training.
- Opportunity to monitor and evidence a young person's progress.
- Enhance pupils' progress and reach their potential.

Case Study

"Besides continued provision for mainstream participants, we have also been able to incorporate 'Pupil Premium' funding so as to make the DofE really inclusive.

"Students feel the benefit of achieving their DofE Award for the rest of their lives. It provides a prestigious certificate recognising their achievement and an improved chance of getting into college, university or a job. It gives them the opportunity to create their own individual learning programme and a chance to explore new and unfamiliar environments.

"They develop personal skills including time management, problem solving and initiative. It also improves their interpersonal skills and gives them friendships for life. Besides that, it's fun!"

Adam Wise

DofE Manager,
Stopsley High School, Luton

16-19 Study Programmes

Since September 2013, schools and colleges have been funded per student for a programme of study of around 600 guided learning hours. Institutions have the flexibility to offer non-qualifications based activity as part of their programmes, including work experience.

A Study Programme is defined as participation in activities of value, which do not necessarily lead to qualifications but enable progression to higher levels of study and/or into employment. Study Programmes are designed to complement academic programmes.

Study Programmes are monitored under the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework, contributing to the judgement about the overall effectiveness of the school.

The DofE as part of a Study Programme

The DofE is recognised as an approved Study Programme activity, meeting outcomes such as the development of learners' personal and social skills, as well as demonstrating how a school or college is improving its students' employability skills.

Leyton Sixth Form College currently offers the DofE as an option for students alongside A Levels. The DofE was adopted for the non-qualification element of the Study Programme as it offers an adaptable structure to fit within difficult-to-balance timetables. The DofE offer is fully funded and the college does not have to charge students to take part.