**Sex education is poor quality and out of touch, say experts**

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**Schools are delivering poor quality sex education, with some struggling to accept that young people are sexually active, experts have said.**

A review of studies carried out mainly in the UK found that sex and relationships education (SRE) is often “out of touch with many young people’s lives”.

Researchers found that young people dislike having their own teachers deliver sex education, and said specialist teachers should be brought in to conduct the classes.

Writing in the journal BMJ Open, they said: “Unless we get the delivery right, young people will continue to disengage from SRE and opportunities for safeguarding young people and improving their sexual health will be reduced.”

The review was made up of 55 publications, mainly from the UK, but also from countries including the US, New Zealand, Canada and Sweden.

Focusing on the views of young people, it found SRE often portrayed sex in a negative way and there was too much focus on abstinence.

SRE was also found to be taught by poorly trained, embarrassed teachers, while mixed-sex classes could be disrupted by young men who were trying to hide their anxieties.

Young people also criticised the overly “scientific” approach to sex, which ignored pleasure and desire, while men were portrayed as predatory, and there was little or no discussion of gay, bisexual, or transgender sex.

Many young people also felt that SRE should be taught at an earlier age, the review found.

A spokesman for the sexual health charity Brook, which delivers 10 per cent of sex education in schools, said the findings were not surprising.

He added: “In order to develop healthy relationships, Brook believes that young people should be taught about consent, pleasure, respect and kindness.

“Brook also believes that relationships and sex education should be delivered within a wider context so that sex and relationships are linked to other lifestyle issues such as alcohol and drugs.”