

# No place for bullying

Preventing and tackling bullying in schools

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# Pupils' experiences



# Pupils' experiences

Bullying was commonly related to:

- appearance
- friendship issues
- sexuality or perceived sexuality
- family name or background
- race
- religion
- disability
- ability
- a combination of any of the above
- any other perceived difference.....



## Pupils' experiences

- 42% of primary school pupils and 59% of secondary school pupils (1060 pupils altogether) responded that they had 'never' been picked on or bullied at their current school.
- 50% per cent of primary pupils and 38% of secondary school pupils responded, 'Yes, but not now'
- 8% of primary and 4% of secondary pupils responded 'Yes, and I still am'.



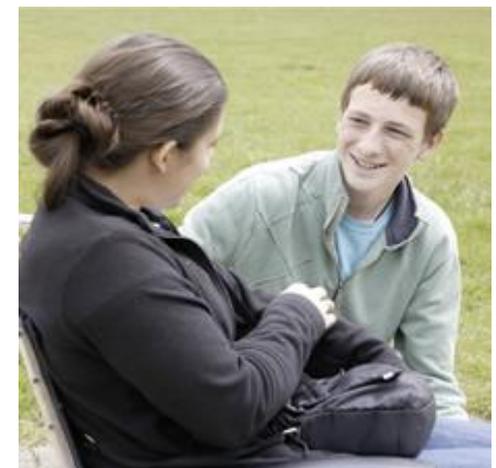
## Pupils' experiences

- 75% of primary school pupils and 83% of secondary school pupils responding to the questionnaire answered that if they told an adult about a problem with bullying, it would stop.
- Nine per cent of secondary school pupils thought that the bullying would carry on and 8% thought it would get worse
- These figures were higher in the primary schools, where 14% of pupils thought it would carry on and 11% thought it would get worse.



# Pupils' experiences

- Pupils in **all of the schools** could give a range of examples of disparaging language that they heard in school. This was related to perceived ability or lack of ability, race, religion, sexuality, appearance or family circumstances, and in secondary schools, to sexual behaviour.
- Language related to **disability or special needs** was frequently mentioned, including 'mong', 'spazzer', 'spaz' and 'retard', and 'special needs' used as a term of derision.
- **Homophobic language** was frequently mentioned, particularly 'gay' used as an insult and 'gay' used to mean 'rubbish' ('this homework is so gay').



## Pupils' experiences

- **In contrast**, at least some of the **staff** interviewed in 24 of the primary schools and seven of the secondary schools **commented that they 'never' heard prejudice-based language**, such as homophobic or racist language, or language related to disability, from pupils.



# Pupils' experiences

- Pupils often indicated that responses from staff to derogatory language was **inconsistent**, for example:
  - 'dinner ladies don't do anything about it'
  - if the teachers think it's banter then they'll just laugh it off'
  - 'if Mr M hears you say 'gay' like that he'll really, really tell you, but no-one else does really.'
- Few schools had a clear stance on the **use of language** or the **boundaries between banter** and behaviour that makes people feel threatened or hurt.



# Effective and ineffective practice in schools



## Effective practice

- The **culture and ethos** in the school were very positive and based on a set of strong, inclusive values.
- The schools' expectations and **rules clearly spelled out how pupils should interact** with each other and respect for individual differences had a high profile.
- Pupils **had empathy**, understood the effect that bullying could have on people, and **took responsibility** for trying to prevent bullying.
- The **curriculum** in these schools **helped a great deal to bring about these positive attitudes** because it gave pupils a wide range of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of diversity and an assortment of strategies to protect themselves from bullying.

## Effective practice

- These schools **recorded bullying incidents** carefully and **analysed them** to look for trends and patterns. They then used this information to plan the next steps.
- The action they took was **firm and often imaginative**. If pupils had been bullied then they felt very confident that action was taken and it stopped promptly.
- **Training for staff had a high profile** and was carefully planned, regular and relevant. The staff were very knowledgeable about the different forms of bullying and were confident about how to tackle different forms of discrimination.
- **Governors were well informed and questioning** about bullying.

## Additional elements in the best schools

The schools:

- paid particularly close attention to **pupils' views** about behaviour and experiences of bullying, and **took action in response**
- gave pupils a range of structured opportunities to **take responsibility** for others in the school
- systematically **taught pupils strategies to manage their own relationships with others** and to resolve conflicts.

## Elements of weaker practice

Relative weaknesses related to:

- lack of or **poor quality recording** and reporting
- incidents of bullying recorded but **little or no analysis** of the information
- **ineffective evaluation** of the impact of the curriculum intended to promote pupils' social and moral development on pupils' actual behaviour and attitudes
- the curriculum **not** always focusing systematically enough on **teaching pupils about individual differences**, or lacking clear progression through the year groups

## Elements of weaker practice

Relative weaknesses related to:

- **staff training not being sufficiently focused on staff's needs**, not including all staff, for example missing out support staff, or not focusing clearly on different types of bullying, so staff lacked confidence in tackling
- **not tackling the use of derogatory language** among pupils.

# Discussion

Discuss your thoughts on the survey findings.

How does the culture in your workplace set the right tone and help to prevent bullying and help children and young people feel safe (e.g. the way in which people interact with each other)?

How do you help children and young people to interact positively with each other?



Inspection of schools:  
how do we find out  
about bullying?



# Behaviour and safety

Inspectors should consider:

- types, rates and patterns of **bullying** and the effectiveness of the **school's actions** to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying and harassment – this includes cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to special educational need, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, gender reassignment or disability
- the effectiveness of the school's actions to prevent and tackle **discriminatory and derogatory language** – this includes homophobic and racist language, and language that is derogatory about disabled people
- The school's success in keeping pupils safe.

(School inspection handbook Sept 2013, page 41-42)

# Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Evidence of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be found, for example, where pupils:

- develop **awareness of and respect for diversity** in relation to, for example, gender, race, religion and belief, culture, sexual orientation and disability
- develop and apply **an understanding of right and wrong** in their school life and life outside of school
- develop the **skills and attitudes to enable them to participate fully and positively** in democratic modern Britain.

(School inspection handbook Sept 2013, p27)



## **From the behaviour and safety grade descriptor**

### *Outstanding*

- Pupils are fully aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying, and actively try to prevent it from occurring. Bullying and derogatory or aggressive language in all their forms are rare and dealt with highly effectively.
- All groups of pupils are safe and feel safe at school and at alternative provision placements at all times.

## **From the behaviour and safety grade descriptor**

### *Inadequate*

- Incidents of bullying overall or specific types of bullying are frequent, and/or pupils have little confidence in the school's ability to address bullying successfully.
- Pupils or particular groups of pupils are not safe or do not feel safe at school and/or at alternative placements.

## **From the overall effectiveness grade descriptor**

### *Outstanding*

- The school's thoughtful and wide-ranging promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their physical wellbeing enables them to thrive in a supportive, highly cohesive learning community.

### *Inadequate*

- There are serious weaknesses in the overall promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development or their physical wellbeing.

# During inspection

(Extracts from guidance for inspectors)

- Consider how well schools **analyse their information** about bullying and **use this analysis to plan future actions**.
- Take account of **whether pupils respond** to the action taken or whether incidents of bullying are repeated.
- Consider whether there are any links between **bullying** and pupils' **absence** from school.
- In order to evaluate pupils' attitudes to homophobia and other forms of prejudice, **inspectors should specifically ask pupils about the type of language they hear around the school**. This should be compared to responses from staff in order to test the school's attitudes to such issues.

## During inspection

- Inspectors should explore with a range of staff, including teaching assistants, the **training** they have had about different aspects of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying; how confident they feel as result; **how well supported they are by senior staff when they encounter bullying** and how they promote an understanding of individual differences through the curriculum.
- In particular, **inspectors should consider how pupils are taught about diversity** in subjects such as personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. Where bullying is an issue and staff training and/or the curriculum is weak this should be reflected in the judgement on leadership and management.

# During inspection

Inspectors may also wish to use or adapt the following evidence gathering strategies when investigating bullying.

- **Tour the school site** with a group of pupils to identify areas where they do not feel safe. Talk about behaviour, bullying, and staff expectations.
- **Revisit**, during break and lunchtime, **any areas of the school mentioned by pupils as being unsafe**, such as the playground or toilets.
- Meet a group of **pupils who joined the school at times other than the start** of the academic year.
- Meet with other groups and **give pupils time to talk** before responding to questions about behaviour and bullying.

How can you find out more about how safe your pupils feel and how safe they are?



## Gathering information about your pupils' experiences

### **Arrival at school**

- Go outside; go off site slightly in secondary, observe interactions between pupils. Staff on duty? Where? Active?
- Vulnerability in playground (do pupils have to wait around? Are they in full sight of school or are there hidden corners)
- What are the interactions between pupils like at the start of the day – pleasant, aggressive? Ask pupils about their trip to school.
- In special schools and PRUs, observe as they get off taxis and minibuses; ask them about trip (bullying can easily take place in these situations).
- Do different groups of pupils look comfortable together? Any tensions?
- If staff are out at start of day, with parents, how do they greet, speak, etc? Good modelling?

# Gathering information about your pupils' experiences

## In corridors

- What are interactions like – pupils, and staff and pupils?
- Greetings? Tone? Positive? Again, consider staff as role models – how good?
- Do pupils respect each others' physical space? Jostling, 'accidental' nudging or tipping bags off backs etc?
- What is it like if you are a small pupil?  
A disabled pupil?



## Gathering information about your pupils' experiences

### **Break time**

- How are pupils grouped? Any tensions or excluding people? Talk to pupils by themselves, about bullying, what they do to seek help, how they feel about break times.
- Look at the structure of your break times. Any organised games in primary schools – are pupils being systematically taught to play and interact well together?
- Toilets, especially in secondary schools – intimidating? Supervised? ASK groups of pupils in different areas of the school about bullying, language, support etc. Go to far reaches of the playground and field. Supervised? Spaces where bullying could easily occur?

## Gathering information about your pupils' experiences

### **Lunchtimes**

- As for breaktimes, but also consider issues such as dinner money – does it get stolen?
- Consider - do FSM pupils have a different payment system to others? If so, does this mark them out as different?
- ASK the lunchtime staff about bullying – what they see, how they help to prevent it.

## Gathering information about your pupils' experiences

### **In lessons**

- How well do pupils interact? Are they confident with each other in groups? How sensitively are pupils grouped? SEND pupils included or excluded?
- Casual comments in lessons – what do you hear? Supportive of each other? Derogatory language? How is this dealt with?
- Any opportunities taken to teach about diversity?
- Displays – behaviour expectations? Displayed? Clear? Do they concentrate on 'rules' or do they emphasise treatment of other people?

## Gathering information about your pupils' experiences

### **In lessons**

- How well do staff help pupils to interact positively with each other – do they model, talk about how we respect each other, tolerate or ignore put-downs or tackle them?
- Ask pupils some questions about relationships or bullying as the opportunity arises in lessons.

## What would I see if.....

- ...I came into your playground at breaktime?
- 'If you came into our playground you would see pupils asking to join in games and other people would let them.'
  - 'People would be using the friendship bench and others would be coming to play with them so no one is on their own.'
  - 'Pupils saying sorry to each other.'
  - 'You wouldn't see fighting or arguments because we are too busy with the equipment.'
  - 'And because we don't want to be told off, we don't want to move out of the green zone.'
  - 'And we would feel guilty.'
  - 'Sometimes people make a mistake and there is some silliness, but it doesn't last because we sort it out.'



# Discussion

Consider how, in your role, you could use the questions 'what would I see if...'; 'what would I hear if...'; 'what would happen if...' to explore some of the issues raised in this session with the children or young people you work with. For example think about the use of language, disabled pupils experiences, pupils' experiences on the playground or going to and from school, or anything else relevant to your role.



# Further information



Ofsted's survey 'No place for bullying', 2012

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/no-place-for-bullying>

Two good practice films made by Ofsted

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/good-practice-film-hillcrest-school-and-community-college-bullying>

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/good-practice-film-edith-neville-primary-school-anti-bullying>

This DVD clip below was prepared by a group of young LGBT people. They wanted inspectors to know about some of their experiences.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaATQR2mtsU>