Action on bullying

A review of the effectiveness of action taken by schools to address bullying on the grounds of pupils' protected characteristics

June 2014

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- ⬥ primary schools;
- ⬥ secondary schools;
- ⬥ special schools;
- ⬥ pupil referral units;
- ⬥ independent schools;
- ⬥ further education;
- ⬥ independent specialist colleges;
- ⬥ adult community learning;
- ⬥ local authority education services for children and young people;
- ⬥ teacher education and training;
- ⬥ Welsh for adults;
- ⬥ work-based learning; and
- ⬥ learning in the justice sector.

Estyn also:

- ⬥ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
- ⬥ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

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Introduction

This report is published in response to a request for advice from the Welsh Government in the Minister's annual remit letter to Estyn for 2013-2014. The report examines the effectiveness of action taken by schools to address bullying, with particular reference to bullying on the grounds of pupils' protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

The report includes case studies of best practice illustrating how the best practice schools deal with bullying. Pupils shared their experiences of bullying readily with the team, but case studies of pupils' experiences have been written in such a way as to avoid identifying individual pupils.

The report is based on evidence from visits to 21 schools, scrutiny of documentation and evidence from the current inspection cycle. A further seven schools provided policies and strategic equality action plans for scrutiny. See Appendix 1 for further details of the evidence base.

The report is intended for the Welsh Government, headteachers and staff in schools, local authorities and regional consortia. It may also be of interest to teacher trainers and church diocesan education authorities.

Background

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) replaced116 different equality and anti-discrimination statutes with a single Act. The majority of the Act came into force on 1 October 2010.

The nine main pieces of legislation that were merged into the Act were:

- the Equal Pay Act 1970;
- the Sex Discrimination Act 1975;
- the Race Relations Act 1976;
- the Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003;
- the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003;
- the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006;
- the Equality Act 2006, Part 2; and
- the Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007.

The Act creates anti-discrimination legislation covering nine 'protected characteristics', which are:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation.

The Act requires local authorities and other public bodies, including schools, to have due regard for the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Strategic equality plans and equality objectives

An equality duty was created by the Equality Act 2010 and replaces the race, disability and gender equality duties. The duty came into force in April 2011 and covers age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Since April 2012, all public bodies, including local authorities and schools, have a duty under the Act to develop and publish equality objectives and a Strategic Equality Plan. The latter replaces previous plans, such as the disability equality duty and race equality policy, although these may form part of the new plan. The purpose of the objectives and plan is to enable the delivery of measurable equality outcomes that will improve the lives of individuals and communities.

A school's equality objectives should link to its general work on improvement and inclusion and with its school development plan. If a school chooses not to publish an equality objective covering each of the protected characteristics, it is required to justify this choice. For example, having a single objective to tackle identity-based bullying may make more sense than having five separate objectives to deal with anti-disabled, homophobic, racist, religious, and transphobic[1] bullying.

Local authorities and schools are required to consider what information they hold, and what further information they would need to collect, in order to demonstrate compliance with the equality duty. For example, schools should examine and use

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[1] See glossary

any relevant school census information, performance data and pupil and parent questionnaires. In addition, they should make use of national resources, such as annual population surveys and reports relating to issues affecting protected groups. Schools should use this information to set realistic objectives and assess the impact of their strategic equality plans. A local authority should use its information to create a picture of the needs of local communities that can be broken down by the protected characteristics.

Bullying

In this report, we use the Welsh Government's definition of bullying set out in 'Respecting Others: Anti-Bullying Overview (2011)'.

'There are many definitions of bullying, but most consider it to be:

- deliberately hurtful (including aggression);
- repeated often over a period of time, while recognising that even a one-off incident can leave a learner traumatised and nervous of future recurrence; and
- difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

Individual learners' perspectives on what constitutes bullying are also a key element to take into account. Bullying can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings, sexual harassment or aggression;
- verbal – name-calling, insulting, making offensive remarks; and
- indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious e-mails or text messages on mobile phones.'

Responsibility to tackle bullying

Education providers have a responsibility to tackle bullying in all forms under the Education Act 2002. Individual schools, colleges and universities are required to put in place an anti-bullying policy, which sets out how they will:

- record bullying incidents;
- investigate and deal with the incidents;
- support victims; and
- discipline bullies.

Schools should provide staff training on how to identify, prevent and manage bullying. Local authorities are required to produce an anti-bullying policy for their area, identifying any particular trends in the area and stating how they will support schools.

Monitoring and recording incidents of bullying

In its publication 'Respecting Others: Anti-Bullying Overview (2011), the Welsh Government identifies best practice in monitoring and recording incidents of bullying:

"Most schools have mechanisms for recording incidents of bullying. Monitoring incidents of bullying enables a school to identify patterns of behaviour and the extent of bullying, and then take pro-active steps to challenge it. It is best practice that school record all incidents of bullying, as well as specific types of bullying. Schools that use monitoring processes are able to modify their bullying policies to respond to specific trends and issues."

Main findings

Pupils' experiences of bullying

1   Too many pupils suffer from bullying at some point during their time in school. The effects of being bullied can be short or long-term, psychological or social, and often result in underachievement or attendance problems. Certain groups of pupils are at a higher-than-average risk of being bullied, including:

- pupils with special needs or a disability;
- lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils; and
- pupils from a minority ethnic or religious background.

2   Pupils' experiences of bullying and the ways in which schools deal with it vary widely. In many secondary schools, how well staff deal with bullying may also vary within a school. In these secondary schools, staff lack a clear understanding of what constitutes a 'reportable incident' of bullying, because the school does not have an agreed definition of bullying that is clearly understood by the school community as a whole. Even in schools that have robust strategies to address bullying, there is often not a common understanding of the importance of the protected characteristics or their legal implications.

Ethos and values

3   Pupils report lower instances of bullying, both generally and on the grounds of the protected characteristics, in schools where there is a strong ethos that promotes equality and diversity. However, too few schools establish a positive basis for dealing with bullying by helping pupils to understand their rights and using the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The schools where leaders do use the convention to establish an ethos in which children understand that they have and can exercise a right to be safe often achieve success in countering the effects and incidence of bullying. Case studies of such schools are quoted in chapter 2 of this report.

4   There is a close link between how pupils treat one another and how well leaders communicate expectations about pupil behaviour. The best schools take a proactive approach to preventing bullying and to mitigating its effects when it occurs. For example, they make sure that there is effective supervision between lessons, at breaks and lunchtimes, when bullying is more likely to occur, and provide safe places for vulnerable groups during these times. They provide counselling services and use external agencies to support pupils who experience bullying.

Consulting pupils

5   Very few schools consult with groups of pupils to gain a true picture of the extent and nature of bullying at the school. The best schools use a range of methods to collect the views of pupils, parents or carers, and staff about bullying.

Verbal bullying

6   In a minority of primary schools, staff do not have a clear picture of the extent of verbal bullying that takes place or the sort of language that is used routinely as a form of insult. In a minority of secondary schools, staff do not treat remarks that can cause offence seriously enough but treat it as normal 'banter'.

Keeping records

7   Most schools in the survey keep records of behavioural incidents and a minority keep a specific record of bullying incidents. Very few primary schools categorise incidents according to the protected characteristics. As a result, they do not have a clear picture of patterns of behaviour over time that they can use to inform anti-bullying planning.

Supporting pupils

8   Most pupils know whom to tell if they witness or experience bullying. The best schools display details of where help is available, and provide details of local and national helplines. These schools provide opportunities for pupils to support each other, for example through buddy systems. Overall, most primary school pupils are confident that the school will deal with their issues effectively. However, as pupils get older, they become less confident that the school will be able to resolve bullying issues.

9   Most schools hold an 'anti-bullying week' annually that normally includes issues related to the protected characteristics. These weeks usually focus on developing pupils' personal, social and emotional skills, including greater resilience in dealing with bullying. However, developing resilience is less well planned for in the school curriculum generally. In many schools, the curriculum celebrates individual differences, but often shies away from the aspects that staff feel less confident in discussing, such as homophobia and gender reassignment. A minority of schools are anxious about highlighting diversity issues and see this as potentially contentious. This attitude means that a minority of schools only tackle issues as they arise, rather than building them into the curriculum proactively.

Cyberbullying

10   In most secondary schools, pupils and staff are concerned about the rise in cyberbullying, particularly in relation to the protected characteristics. Cyberbullying has created new forms of bullying that are unfamiliar to some staff. In the best practice, staff keep up-to-date with the technologies that pupils use and understand their potential for misuse inside and outside school.

Policies, plans and procedures

11   Many school strategic equality plans do not pay enough attention to the full range of protected characteristics. The Equality Act 2010 has resulted in some confusion, particularly in primary schools, between a disability equality plan and a strategic equality plan, and actions relating to the protected characteristics may appear in neither. Of the schools in the survey, only a few identify 'reducing bullying on the grounds of protected characteristics' as one of their equality objectives. Even these schools do not refer to specifics, such as how they plan to tackle bullying on the grounds of race or address issues of homophobic bullying.

12   Many schools have separate behaviour and anti-bullying policies. In the best examples, these policies are well understood and set out the school's expectations about how members of the school community should treat each other. A few schools have combined these policies into a single document. These schools see bullying within a continuum of behaviour and tend to deal with it more successfully.

13   In drawing up strategic equality plans, schools are required to consult widely with the community and with groups representing protected characteristics. Many schools consult pupils, parents and staff, but few ask the views of groups linked to the protected characteristics.

14   In many schools, governing bodies review progress towards meeting the strategic equality plan annually. However, the quality of this monitoring and the information provided to governors varies too much and is generally unsatisfactory.

15   Local authorities provided schools with support when drawing up strategic equality plans. Not all local authorities and regional consortia provide schools with ongoing support and advice through monitoring the appropriateness of schools' strategic objectives or the progress towards meeting them well enough. Many do not provide governors with effective training that enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities to monitor strategic equality plans and objectives.

16   In a few clusters, schools collaborate to identify possible issues in relation to the protected characteristics when preparing strategic equality plans. These clusters share useful information and expertise in combatting discrimination and bullying. However, there are very few cases where feeder and receiving schools work towards joint strategic equality objectives.

Staff development and attitudes

17   Many schools train staff on bullying, although the training tends to be general and does not relate specifically to the protected characteristics. Where staff receive specific training, they find this useful. Schools report an absence of high-quality face-to-face training, especially related to transgender issues. Many schools are unaware of the Welsh Government's useful guidance 'Respecting Others'.

Recommendations

Schools should:

R1 raise awareness of bullying on the grounds of protected characteristics with pupils, parents, staff, and governors and take a more proactive approach to preventing and mitigating its effects (see Appendix 3 for a checklist);

R2 consult pupils, parents, and others, to identify the extent and nature of bullying in the school and to agree the contents of strategic equality plans;

R3 plan age-appropriate opportunities in the curriculum to discuss issues related to the protected characteristics and to build pupils' resilience to bullying;

R4 ensure staff have a clear understanding of the extent and nature of bullying that may take place in school, including cyberbullying,

R5 make sure that staff know how to deal with and record incidents of bullying;

R6 record and monitor incidents of bullying in relation to the protected characteristics and use this information to review strategic equality objectives; and

R7 make sure all policies and procedures meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Local authorities and regional consortia should:

R8 provide training and support for school staff to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications;

R9 provide training and support for school governors to enable them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities to monitor strategic equality plans and objectives; and

R10 monitor the quality and effectiveness of schools' strategic equality plans more closely.

The Welsh Government should:

R11 publicise the 'Respecting Others' guidance.

1 Pupils' experiences of bullying

18   We do not know how exactly many pupils suffer from bullying. Different research estimates suggest that between 20% and 50% of pupils, at some point during their time in school, will experience bullying (see Appendix 2 for references to a selection of relevant research). Part of the difficulty in quantifying the extent of bullying is deciding when hurtful name-calling or other cruel behaviour is acute or persistent enough to warrant categorised as bullying.

19   Too many pupils have their lives spoilt by bullying. The effects of being bullied can be short or long-term, psychological or social, and often result in underachievement or attendance problems. Certain groups of pupils are at a higher-than-average risk of being bullied, including:

- pupils with special needs or a disability;
- lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender pupils; and
- pupils from a minority ethnic or religious background.

A stark example of this is that 55% of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people say that they experience homophobic bullying in schools (The School Report: Stonewall (2012)).

20   Part of the reason for the lack of quantitative data on the extent of bullying on the grounds of the protected characteristics is due to deficiencies in school policies and practices, particularly in identifying and recording bullying. Very few primary or secondary schools use pupil focus groups successfully to obtain an accurate picture of the type and amount of bullying taking place in the school. The reasons that pupils experience bullying are complex and staff often find it difficult to record the cause of bullying or whether it relates to a protected characteristic.

21   Pupils' experiences of bullying and how schools deal with it vary widely. Not all bullying that takes place in schools relates to the protected characteristics. Many staff and pupils find it difficult to identify why some pupils are bullied. Pupils who experience bullying often attribute it to being or looking different in some way. This may or may not relate to the protected characteristics. For example, pupils may feel they are bullied for being overweight or not being good at sport. In many secondary schools, pupils' experiences of how well the school deals with instances of bullying often vary across the school.

22   Most primary-aged pupils are confident that staff will deal with bullying sensitively and that, in most cases, they resolve problems quickly. Most pupils have a clear understanding of the steps and sanctions the school uses to resolve issues. However, as pupils get older they become less confident that the school will be able to resolve any issues they have about bullying. In nearly all schools, pupils know whom to tell if they witness acts of bullying or experience bullying themselves.

23   Primary school bullying tends to occur during less structured times in the school day, such as playtime or lunchtime. In many primary schools, there are good systems in place to reduce the risk of bullying at these times by ensuring that all pupils have

someone to play with. These include 'friendship stops' that pupils can wait at if they do not have a friend to play with or 'playground buddies' who engage pupils in activities. These ensure that vulnerable pupils find new groups of friends or feel supported by an older pupil. A few primary schools train peer mentors specifically to look out for pupils who may be experiencing bullying and to provide a 'listening ear'. Staff carefully select mentors and ensure they know when it is necessary to pass information on to an adult.

24   In many primary schools, pupils feel that staff have a consistent approach to dealing with inappropriate language. This usually involves the member of staff who hears inappropriate language talking to the pupil and explaining why it is not acceptable. However, in a minority of primary schools, staff do not have a clear picture of the extent of verbal bullying that takes place or of the sort of language that pupils use routinely as a form of insult. In these schools, pupils often use homophobic language as a form of insult, and this does not relate directly to whether or not pupils have a view on another pupil's sexuality. Pupils explain that they use it as an insult and if angry they 'use the worse word they can think of', even if they are not sure of its meaning. Pupils reported that terms of abuse tend to become fashionable to use and change over time. In a few schools, pupils reported 'gay' as a term often used in the past, but not used as often now. However, pupils in one school referred to an area of the playground as the 'gay corner'.

25   The following case study illustrates how Eveswell Primary School has challenged the behaviours of staff and pupils to eliminate gender stereotyping and to tackle homophobia.

Eliminating gender stereotyping and tackling homophobia at Eveswell Primary School

Context

Eveswell Primary School is in Newport. The school caters for pupils from three to eleven years of age. There are currently 501 pupils on roll, including 94 in the nursery classes. Around 12% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. English is the main language of the home for a majority of pupils. Around 32% of pupils receive support for English as an additional language and 30% of pupils come from an ethnic minority background. The school has nearly 13% of pupils with additional learning needs.

Strategy

Since 2009, the school has undertaken considerable work on challenging stereotypes with regard to culture and now decided to extend its work to include gender stereotyping. It worked with the local authority and a national organisation to tackle homophobia and address any stereotypical choices and views among pupils.

Action

Leaders and managers arranged whole-staff training that began with a staff audit of perceptions and understanding of the issues. The audit revealed that staff lacked confidence in dealing with sensitive issues such as the use of homophobic language.

The training enabled staff to address their own feelings and possible stereotyping behaviours and demonstrated how to tackle homophobia in ways suitable for pupils of primary age.

Staff heard about the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils and adults in schools. They looked at statistics for homophobic bullying, read about gender issues and developed a portfolio of work linked to the personal and social education programme. They looked for materials that they could use to begin discussions about gender issues and built up a bank of ideas that they fed into the curriculum.

These experiences helped staff to become more aware of stereotyping and prepared them to address it as part of other lessons. They used classroom displays effectively to promote positive messages about diversity and difference.

Leaders and managers evaluated the impact of the project and amended policies. They revised the whole-school approach on how to deal with homophobic incidents and considered how to avoid language that could reinforce gender stereotypes.

Outcomes

The school has almost entirely eradicated homophobic language. Staff confidence in addressing homophobia has increased considerably. Staff promote gender diversity as part of the curriculum and day-to-day work. Pupils identify and question gender stereotypes from a young age. Boys and girls participate in a wider range of activities such as rugby, football and singing in a choir as a result.

26   In a few schools, lunchtime supervisors do not deal with issues as effectively as teachers and teaching assistants. Disagreements that occur at lunch times are more likely to continue or to escalate into bullying than at other times in the school day. However, in a few schools this is due to the length of the lunchtime rather than the quality of the supervision. Where pupils have free access to the whole playground, bullying can to take place in hidden corners where staff supervision is not as rigorous. Where schools carefully consider how and where pupils play and provide stimulating activities and playground equipment, instances of bullying reduce.

27   In secondary schools, pupils generally experience greater instances of bullying relating to race, religion, background or appearance, and of homophobic bullying. In schools that have sought to eliminate homophobic language, the instances of homophobic bullying have reduced. In a minority of schools, teachers or senior managers do not treat it as a serious issue. Pupils report differences between members of staff's acceptance of homophobic language. Some ignore it and others take it seriously. There are differences within schools as well as across schools. In a one school visited, where senior staff thought that the school had a low tolerance to any abusive language, pupils reported: "it depends who hears it, whether or not you will be in trouble".

28   In most secondary schools, the rise in cyberbullying, as a vehicle for anonymous bullying, is a concern for pupils and staff. In general, schools find this type of bullying

difficult to manage. It is also often unreported, because pupils feel too ashamed or embarrassed to talk about it. Often, by the time the school becomes aware of cyberbullying, it has been taking place for some time. Many pupils feel that once adults address individual issues, and talk about the victim's feelings openly, the situation improves. This often involves contacting police liaison officers who work with groups of pupils and remind them of the possible legal implications of cyberbullying.

29   For example, Dŵr-y-Felin School takes all cases of cyberbullying seriously. The staff are proactive in educating pupils about e-safety through information and communication technology (ICT) and personal and social education lessons, assemblies and talks from outside speakers. The school has a detailed anti-bullying policy, which advises staff on the procedures to follow when pupils report cyberbullying. The school acts on all reported incidents of bullying by supporting the victim and working with the perpetrator. Staff work closely with police liaison officers to support pupils whether the bullying has taken place in or out of school. The school has good procedures to ensure that pupils are free from cyberbullying while on school premises. Staff do not allow mobile phone use and carefully monitor the use of the internet via a sophisticated system linked to the school network. Pupils appreciate the support and information provided through lessons and find the tips included in their school diary useful. As a result, they are more confident to use information technology and clearer about how to deal with cyberbullying.

30   In a few schools, staff do not follow up on pupils who have experienced bullying well enough. In these instances, pupils often continue to experience problems at a low level and these tend to escalate later. Where schools use trained counsellors or designated adults that pupils can easily access, the school monitors pupils' wellbeing more successfully and pupils experience better support.

31   In a very few schools, pupils who have recently moved to this country feel that other pupils bully them because they do not speak English fluently. Pupils make jokes about them that they do not fully understand and, as a result, they become an easy target for bullies. Where pupils have a designated adult to talk to, particularly someone who speaks their first language, they are more confident in reporting any issues they experience and, as a result, issues are usually resolved quickly.

32   A very few pupils stay away from school as a result of bullying. This bullying may, or may not, be related to the protected characteristics. These pupils report an inability to cope with the bullying and having no other option. However, very few schools identify bullying as a reason for absence.

33   At Townhill Community Primary School pupils are enthusiastic about the system of 'check in and check out' that operates at the start and end of each day. They say that this gives them a chance to say how they feel and to have their concerns listened to before they escalate. This system operates across the school and, as a result, pupils are used to expressing their feelings. If pupils do not want to elaborate on their feelings, staff make sure that they have an opportunity to speak to them privately later in the day. The school employs a pastoral manager who provides good support for pupils and develops strong links with parents and the community. Pupils feel confident about talking to adults about their feelings and know that the

school will help them to address any worries or concerns. Many pupils say that this enables them to concentrate better in class. This system enables staff to monitor the wellbeing of pupils effectively and to address potential problems at an early stage, resulting in fewer cases of bullying.

2 Ethos and values

34   In nearly all the schools where there is a strong ethos that promotes equality and diversity successfully, pupils report lower instances of bullying, both in general terms and on the grounds of the protected characteristics. In many such schools, pupils are able to articulate the school's ethos and explain its core values. Pupils and staff have a clear understanding of what the school regards as unacceptable behaviour.

35   Nearly all the schools visited during the survey have articulated a vision or mission statement that outlines their ethos. In most schools, this refers to promoting pupils' wellbeing. In a few secondary schools, it refers to eliminating or reducing discriminatory behaviour. In most primary schools, the ethos is likely to focus on encouraging pupils to be kind and thoughtful to one other and to show respect for individual differences. In a few schools, mainly in areas where communities are not diverse, the school's ethos does not focus enough on tolerance or respect for others. These schools do not recognise these as issues of high priority for preparing pupils to live in a diverse society. Generally, pupils in these schools have less positive experiences of how staff deal with bullying related to the protected characteristics.

36   Where pupils are involved in developing the school's mission statement and revisit it regularly, they can often become ambassadors for equality. They have an important role in communicating the school's ethos to others and reminding each other of how to behave.

37   For example, this is particularly evident at Eastern Primary School, Port Talbot, where pupils describe the school as 'inclusive' and can explain what this means to them and how it affects the way in which they behave towards one another. All pupils are involved in developing the school's mission statement. Pupils talk about all being members of the school council and having their opinions taken seriously. They feel that they all play a part in setting the tone for the standard behaviour expected at the school. As a result, behaviour has improved and there are very few cases of bullying.

38   In most schools, there is a close link between how well expectations about behaviour are communicated by leaders and how pupils treat one another. In nearly all schools, the headteacher takes the lead role in developing and promoting the school's ethos. In many schools, there are expected standards for both pupil and staff behaviour.

39   In nearly all schools visited, both staff and pupils feel that the headteacher sets the ethos. In schools where the headteacher and other leaders promote equality and diversity and highlight discriminatory behaviour, staff and pupils take a proactive approach to reducing discrimination and are more aware of how it affects others.

40   Many schools use assemblies well to promote their ethos and, in the best examples, to address any issues as they arise. Faith schools, are particularly effective in using collective worship as a vehicle to promote the school's ethos. This is because they can link the values of the school to the values that inform the practice of their faith.

41   Many schools identify a set of key values that they would like their pupils to adopt, and promote these throughout the school year. They focus on a particular value for a set period, usually a month, in assemblies and acts of worship. Many schools follow this up with work in the classroom that links to other areas of the curriculum. Pupils share their classwork in assemblies or display it prominently as a reminder to others. In many primary schools, staff congratulate or reward pupils for displaying behaviours linked to this value. In one school they put glass beads in a jar that build into an overall measure of how well pupils demonstrated that value. Most schools that adopt this approach work from a set of agreed values. These differ from school to school, but generally include respect and tolerance as key values. In schools that embed these values in their whole-school ethos, pupils talk confidently about them and give examples of what they mean in relation to respecting and celebrating difference.

42   Only a few schools use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as the basis for their ethos. In these schools, staff help pupils to understand their rights and encourage them to speak out when they feel that other pupils disregard them. The following case study highlights how Abertillery Primary School used the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to develop their whole-school ethos.

Developing a school ethos that promotes the rights of the child

Context

Abertillery Primary School caters for pupils between three and eleven years of age. There are currently around 390 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is increasing and currently stands at 35%. The school has identified 21% of pupils as having additional learning needs. A very few pupils come from ethnic minority background. No pupils speak Welsh as their first language.

Strategy

Abertillery Primary School is committed to becoming a fully inclusive community where pupils develop a sense of self, sensitivity to others and an awareness of their rights and responsibilities as global citizens. The school embraces the principles behind the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and a focus on respecting pupils' rights permeates many aspects of school life.

Action

Staff encourage and support pupils to know and understand their rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is at the heart of the school's ethos and features in schemes of work, lesson plans and assemblies. The school works with a training provider, to promote knowledge and understanding of these rights with the whole school community including staff, pupils and parents. The training provider

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uses music and drama to explore issues of equality and diversity. The school promotes positive images of people with diverse identities and abilities and encourages pupils to celebrate diversity and show respect for all people. This provides a strong knowledge base from which pupils explore seven of the nine protected characteristics. Pupils make presentations on equality and diversity to parents, pupils at other schools and members of their local community.

School policies link together well and the strategic equality plan sets clear targets linked to the protected characteristics.

Impact

The school has successfully developed an inclusive ethos in which pupils know their rights and respect the rights of others. Pupils have a positive attitude towards diversity, develop an awareness and interest of a wide range of cultures and traditions, and know how these affect the lives of children across the world.

Pupils describe the school as being a "telling school' that has a zero tolerance of bullying and are confident in speaking out for their rights.

43   At Hafod Primary School in Swansea, pupils talk confidently about their right to feel safe and to be treated with respect, and the need to have respect for individual differences. A group of pupils monitor how well this is happening and intervene appropriately if they feel that individual pupils have broken some of the rules. For example, they will call a meeting with the pupil to explain their concerns and why it is important to 'stick to the rules'. The headteacher is part of this group, but the pupils take the lead. If a pupil is a perpetrator of bullying or does not show respect for another pupil's culture or belief, the group explores how this makes the victim feel and how it affects their rights. They discuss, with the perpetrator, what they need to do to put this right and whether or not they should impose any sanctions.

3 Curriculum

44   In many schools, while staff often take advantage of opportunities to celebrate individual differences they often shy away from aspects that they feel less confident about such as homophobia or gender reassignment.

45   In most primary schools, there is no overall plan to cover all aspects of individual difference and diversity, including those related to appearance, religion, race, gender, sexuality, disability and ability. Most teachers will refer to the same characteristics, but do not plan how to develop this systematically across year groups and key stages.

46   In most secondary schools, there are opportunities to address most of the protected characteristics. The personal and social education curriculum plays a large part in delivering messages about anti-bullying in most schools. In the best examples, there is an integrated approach across curriculum areas. However, in a few schools the

work is restricted to discrete subjects, such as personal and social education and religious education. Many schools use the Welsh Baccalaureate as a vehicle for addressing many of the protected characteristics.

47 Most schools hold an 'anti-bullying week' during the school year. They participate in the nationally-organised week and use the materials produced to address an aspect of bullying. In some years, these activities link closely to bullying related to the protected characteristics. The activities often focus on helping pupils to develop a greater resilience to bullying.

48 In a minority of schools, teachers adapt the curriculum appropriately to respond to whole-school and community issues. For example, they encourage pupils from different cultures to share their beliefs and traditions and celebrate a variety of festivals.

49 A minority of schools use philosophy sessions well to provide children with good opportunities to have in-depth discussions about issues of equality and diversity. This is particularly effective where staff use these to identify pupils' concerns about or lack of understanding of the protected characteristics.

50 The following case study shows how Crickhowell High School has developed an approach that addresses all of the protected characteristics and promotes tolerance and understanding.

Crickhowell High School develops an approach that promotes tolerance and understanding

Context

Crickhowell High School is an 11 to 19 community-focused school of around 750 pupils, with 180 in the sixth form, in the Brecon Beacons National Park. Around 5% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified around 16% of pupils as having additional learning needs. Around 4% of the school's pupils are from a minority ethnic background. A very few pupils are learning English as an additional language.

Strategy

Staff emphasise the importance of developing the skills and attitudes that will help pupils to become responsible global citizens. Central to this is the expectation that all members of the school community practise tolerance and understanding of others. The school is committed to being a fully inclusive community where pupils respect and celebrate individual differences. School leaders believe that to make this a reality the curriculum must promote issues of diversity and equality.

Action

Teachers identify where they can promote issues of equality and diversity effectively across the curriculum. Subject leaders include reference to aspects of the protected characteristics in schemes of work. Pastoral leaders make good use of assemblies

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to promote issues of diversity and equality linked to the protected characteristics and ensure that they cover each characteristic. A team of specialist teachers of personal and social education provide additional guidance for staff and deliver discrete units of work on some of the protected characteristics in personal and social education lessons.

A student support officer provides counselling and guidance for pupils and also supports staff. The support officer advises pupils, parents and staff on cyberbullying and e-safety issues. Pupils in the sixth form have been trained by a children's charity to provide peer support and promote issues of diversity and equality.

Impact

As a result of these actions:

- the curriculum promotes tolerance, respect and understanding more consistently;
- the curriculum promotes awareness and understanding of each of the protected characteristics;
- pupils within the protected characteristics feel safe in school;
- pupils know their rights and responsibilities and show respect for others;
- pupils are confident in reporting incidents of bullying and believe that issues will be dealt with quickly and fairly; and
- pupils have a good understanding of their responsibilities as global citizens.

4 Policies and procedures

51   Most schools have a range of policies and procedures to support pupils who experience bullying. These vary in quality from excellent to unsatisfactory.

Strategic equality plans

52   Most schools are aware that the Equality Act 2010 requires them to have a strategic equality plan and that this has superseded previous equality plans, although they still may form part of the overall plan.

53   Although the Equality Act 2010 should make it easier for people to understand and comply with its requirements, it has resulted in some confusion about policy documentation, particularly in primary schools. For example, in a few schools, there is confusion between a disability equality plan and a strategic equality plan, and actions relating to the protected characteristics appear in neither. Many strategic equality plans do not pay due attention to the range of protected characteristics. The schools visited often identify issues related to the protected characteristics during interviews but these are not included in the school's strategic equality action plan.

54   In preparation for the implementation of the Act, most local authorities supported schools to produce strategic equality plans in training events and by producing documentation that could be adapted to suit the individual needs of the school. Most schools adopt and build on these templates, but a few do not adapt them enough to their own situation or make them particular to the school. As a result, these plans do not support the school successfully in promoting issues of equality and diversity or in reducing bullying on the grounds of the protected characteristics.

55   In drawing up a strategic equality plan schools must consult widely with the community and groups representative of the protected characteristics. The survey team found that although many schools consult pupils, staff and parents, very few seek the views of community groups or associations linked to the protected characteristics. In a few schools senior managers produce the action plan with little consultation. Where this happens, objectives are often narrow and most staff are unaware of them or what they need to do to achieve them.

56   The following case study describes how pupils at Hafod Primary School, Swansea were involved in explaining the protected characteristics to their parents. This ensured that pupils and their parents were actively involved in developing the school's strategic equality plan.

Pupils understand and explain the protected characteristics at Hafod Primary School

Context

Hafod Primary School is in Swansea. The local authority designates the local area as one of the most deprived areas of Swansea and nearly all pupils live in the 30% most deprived areas of Wales. The school caters for children aged three to eleven years of age. There are approximately 240 pupils on roll. Approximately half of the pupils have English as an additional language. The school identifies just over a third of pupils as having special educational needs. About 39% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals.

Strategy

The headteacher and staff are committed to an ethos of inclusion. They promote equality and diversity at every opportunity and seek to involve members of community in the life and work of the school. In drafting the school's strategic equality plan, the headteacher recognised that, in order to consult effectively with parents and the community, she would need to ensure that they understood the protected characteristics.

Action

The headteacher and staff considered how best they could involve parents. They decided to produce a presentation explaining the protected characteristics using clear language and photographs. The presentation was accessible to pupils and explained the protected characteristics in a way that they could understand. The headteacher gave the responsibility for delivering the presentation to pupils in Year 6.

The pupils presented to school staff, where they received feedback and practised answering questions. Following this, they presented to key stage 2 pupils, governors in a governing body meeting and to the school's partner agencies at one of their regular meetings.

The pupils then invited parents to a wellbeing workshop where they explained the protected characteristics and discussed bullying. A bilingual assistant attended the workshop to help with translation.

Outcomes

Many pupils, parents and members of the local community now have a clear understanding of the protected characteristics. Many participated in the consultation prior to drafting the strategic equality plan. Many pupils can discuss issues of equality and diversity confidently and have a clear understanding of discrimination on the grounds of the protected characteristics. A few older pupils monitor the impact of the strategic equality plan and contribute to its review.

57   Of the schools in the survey, only a few identify reducing bullying related to the protected characteristics as one of their equality objectives. However, even these schools do not refer to a specific characteristic, such as how they plan to tackle bullying on the grounds of race or by addressing issues of homophobic bullying. Rather, they refer to reducing the instances of bullying related to the protected characteristics in general. Many plans refer to targets such as improving disability access or performance of boys in line with girls. Very few have targets such as increasing pupils' awareness of the protected characteristics.

58   In many schools, governing bodies review progress towards the strategic equality plan on an annual basis. However, the quality of this monitoring activity and the information provided to governors varies too much and is generally unsatisfactory. In a few schools, senior staff conduct an informal review but do not share the results with the governing body. In many schools an annual review looks at progress on the action plan, but does not ask for or take into account any new information related to the protected characteristics, for example parent or pupil questionnaires, school census data or attainment and performance information. In most schools, the targets remain the same as those set in 2012. A few schools do not plan to review the action plan until 2015 when targets are due for completion. As a result, governors in a minority of schools do not know enough about the strategic equality plan, the school's progress towards it, or whether its targets are the most suitable for the school. In these schools, governors do not meet the statutory requirement to conduct an annual review of the strategic equality plan.

59   Many local authorities do not provide governors with training to help them to fulfil their statutory responsibilities in monitoring strategic equality plans and objectives.

Anti-bullying policies and practices

60   Many schools have separate behaviour and anti-bullying policies. In the best examples, these set out the school's expectations about how members of the school

community should treat each other. A few schools have combined these into a single document or linked them closely to other relevant policies, such as travel and e-safety. As a result, they see bullying as part of a continuum of behaviours and deal with it successfully. In a few schools, there is lack of cohesion between policies. This results in a lack of clarity of the sanctions schools apply to bullies. In primary schools in particular, policies that should be are often not related and they occasionally directly contradict each other. In a few schools, although staff are aware that there are policies, they do not know their purpose or content.

61   Most schools keep records of behavioural incidents and a minority keep them specifically for bullying incidents. Very few primary schools categorise incidents in relation to the protected characteristics. As a result, they do not have a clear picture of patterns of specific behaviour over time that they can use to inform strategic equality planning. However, most schools continue to record incidents of a racial nature, as previously they had to report on these termly. Only a minority of primary schools take the recording of incidents seriously and use records effectively to track pupils through school. The school holds these records in a central log, which builds up a picture of concerns about individual pupils and is useful in identifying patterns of behaviour over time.

62   In many secondary schools, incidents of bullying are often recorded in inconsistent ways and they are often not categorised according to the protected characteristics. In these schools, staff hold different views about what constitutes bullying. On occasion, departments within the same school have different thresholds for what constitutes bullying. Different staff groups, for example meals supervisory assistants and teachers, have different understandings of what is a 'reportable incident'. This is particularly problematic where schools want to identify issues early and then show evidence of improvements. In schools where the recording of all incidents of banter and bullying is thorough and consistent, leaders are able to identify problems before they escalate and they can demonstrate the impact of their actions. Increasingly, schools are reviewing their record keeping of bullying and becoming more specific in the way in which they record incidents.

63   Even in schools that have robust and effective strategies to address bullying of any vulnerable pupils, there is often not a common, shared understanding by all staff of the importance of the protected characteristics and their legal implications, for example in monitoring and preventing bullying incidents.

64   Most schools report termly to governors about behaviour and racial incidents, but not all reports deal with bullying as a separate issue. In a few schools, governors request this information and ask suitably challenging questions in relation to pupils' behaviour.

65   The following case study from Marlborough Primary School, Cardiff, shows how a comprehensive, whole-school approach to dealing with bullying has been successful in reducing the number of bullying incidents and of re-offending.

Marlborough Primary School takes a comprehensive, strategic approach to dealing with bullying

Context

Marlborough Primary School serves the areas of Penylan and Roath in Cardiff. There are currently around 510 pupils on roll, including around 60 part-time pupils in the nursery. The school has 16 classes and two specialist resource base classrooms for children with moderate to complex learning difficulties. Currently, about a third of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Around a quarter of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Among these pupils, there are 26 different home languages. Approximately 12% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified 10% of pupils as having additional learning needs, including 5% who have a statement of special educational needs.

Strategy

Reported instances of bullying were relatively low, but the school felt that they were being reactive rather than proactive in dealing with issues. Staff developed and piloted a more strategic approach to dealing with reported bullying. This comprises a comprehensive programme of class lessons, web-based games, a website for parents and materials for teachers.

The school anticipates any bullying and tries to prevent it from escalating. It deals robustly with all instances of bullying.

Action

As part of the strategy, the school established a project team consisting of a class teacher, teaching assistant and educational psychologist.

The school used an online questionnaire as a baseline to find out about pupils' perceptions and experiences of bullying.

The University of Bangor delivered an in-service training for the project team and a twilight session for all the school staff. Following on from this, the project team delivered further training to school staff and an awareness session for parents and carers.

The school is using the programme across key stage 2. Every month, all children receive a lesson on how to recognise and deal with bullying and what to do if they experience or encounter bullying.

Pupils and staff refer all reported cases to the project team. The project team undertake the investigation and work at both an individual level and group level with the victim and perpetrators. They ensure that all incidents are recorded appropriately and monitor them to identify patterns or concerns.

Outcomes

As a result of the programme there is:

- greater awareness of what constitutes bullying and how to report and deal with bullying by all school stakeholders;
- a consistent whole-school approach to dealing with incidents of bullying;
- increased in-school capacity when dealing with the victims and perpetrators of bullying, which reduces the need to rely on outside agencies;
- a preventative approach, which involves intervention at an early stage to support children from becoming potential bullies or victims of bullying;
- a holistic package of support for victims of bullying that also links to the work of the school on emotional literacy and to Student Assistance Programme (SAP) support packages;
- consistent and effective promotion of anti-bullying through the curriculum; and
- a reduction in the reported incidents of bullying and of re-offending rates.

5 Staff development and attitudes

66   Many schools provide staff with training about combating bullying and how to help pupils develop resilience to bullying. In many schools, training tends to be general and does not specifically relate to the protected characteristics. An item about bullying often forms part of an in-service training day, particularly at the start of the school year. However, training on dealing with bullying does not always form part of staff induction. Where staff receive specific training, they find this very useful in helping them challenge issues around bullying. Many staff express a wish for more training and information regarding the protected characteristics.

67   Often schools acknowledge the need for further training and support both about bullying and the protected characteristics, but find it difficult to access suitable training either from the local authority, consortia or outside providers. Schools report a marked absence of high quality face-to-face training for staff, especially related to transgender issues. A few schools use commercially-based schemes effectively to help staff in delivering lessons linked to the protected characteristics. Very few schools use the Welsh Government guidance materials 'Respecting Others' to raise staff awareness of issues and provide training. Many schools are not aware of its existence. A few schools make effective use of drama workshops and theatre groups to provide pupils with role-play activities where they can rehearse, experiment with and examine their response to bullying situations.

68   Generally, staff in the survey felt less confident about dealing with issues related to gender reassignment, although in most schools they had not come across this as a reason for bullying. Most staff feel confident in dealing with prejudice-based language and say they would discuss issues openly with pupils. A very few staff are uncomfortable discussing issues of sexuality with their pupils. In schools where respect for individual differences has a high profile, staff are generally more confident in talking about issues related to the protected characteristics.

69   The increase in cyberbullying has created new forms of bullying that staff are often unfamiliar with. Many staff are unaware of the software used by pupils to communicate with one another through mobile phones and online activities, both inside and outside school. In 2012, a report by Ofcom ('Children and parents: Media use and attitudes in the nations') found that 80% of children aged 5-15 years of age use the internet at home. Technology is now a major part of the lives of children and young people and their knowledge of it has overtaken that of some parents and staff. In the best practice, staff keep up-to-date with technology and maintain an awareness of the software pupils use and its potential for misuse.

70   Staff training in e-learning and technology provides a great opportunity for staff to both develop their own practice creatively and to support children and young people in their safe and responsible use. Schools should review existing staff development targets and opportunities, and look at including e-safety issues as an important component of technology for education. Schools should also review training and support opportunities for school leaders and governors, as well as teachers, support staff and extended schools provision staff.'[2]

71   The following case study explains how the educational psychology service in Denbighshire supports staff, pupils and parents with tailored information about cyber bullying and how to prevent it.

Denbighshire educational psychology service deliver effective training about cyberbullying

Context

Schools in Denbighshire receive an increasing number of requests for advice from the educational psychology service (EPS) about how best to manage and resolve internet-based disputes occurring between pupils, particularly disputes on social networking sites.

The EPS support individual pupils and schools when bullying incidents occur. They are also proactive in encouraging pupils and school staff to think about how their behaviour can avoid negative consequences for themselves and others.

They recognise the importance of improving community awareness and developing safe use of the internet outside school. They have trained parents, voluntary organisations and community groups.

Strategy

The key aim is to educate people on the safe use of technology and the possible implications of not doing so. Members of the EPS trained with the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOPS) and have developed their practice to ensure the information given to pupils, school staff and parents is up-to-date and represents pupils' new and growing use of technology.

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[2] Taken from Respecting Others: Cyberbullying: Welsh Government 2011

A small team of designated schools' police liaison officers work with the EPS to offer more detail on the legal aspects and the responsibilities of all those who access technology.

Action

Tailored training sessions for pupils and adults, about positive aspects of using technology, provide a context to examine potential pitfalls and dangers of the misuse of social networking.

Very powerful training materials provided by CEOPS show effectively the impact of the misuse of technology on young people. Trainers encourage pupils to consider their own use of technology in the light of their training. They demonstrate how to update the privacy settings on their computers and mobile phones regularly, and explain the implications of not doing so.

Messages are designed to meet the needs and understanding of specific age groups. All sessions cover making 'friends' on the internet and cyberbullying.

The training provided for adults aims at increasing their confidence in talking to children and young people about the internet sites they are using and offering advice and guidance.

The training package is constantly evolving, often at a fast pace, as technology is updated and new internet sites appear. Through talking and listening to pupils, the EPS are able to learn from their experiences and knowledge. They encourage other adults to do the same. It is clear that pupils' misuse of social media is mostly through naivety and a lack of knowledge of the possible consequences.

The local authority has an effective anti-bullying website, but is updating this and launching a new anti-bullying policy to support schools in adapting, when necessary, their own anti-bullying policy. Appointing a bullying champion in each school and further improvements to the anti-bullying recording database will allow the authority to formally record rates of bullying incidents and target initiatives and support appropriately.

Outcomes

Verbal feedback from children and adults confirms that this training is useful and beneficial. For example:

- a parent attending the training reported that her child had shut down her internet site after receiving the training;
- at the end of a training session, two pupils reported that one of them was the victim of on-line abuse. This disclosure eventually led to the arrest of a local man. It transpired that this pupil was not the only victim of his abuse; and
- a pupil reported to his teacher that after his training he was going to check the privacy settings for his younger siblings to ensure that they are safe.

The EPS has information that individuals changing their practices to ensure that they are safer on line. Schools are becoming more proactive in supporting each other in addressing issues that arise.

6 Cluster arrangements and transition processes

72   In a few clusters, secondary schools and their feeder primary schools collaborate identify possible issues in relation to the protected characteristics when preparing strategic equality plans. In the best practice, they work together to identify common issues and share useful information and expertise with regard to their experience in combating discrimination. However, in the schools visited, there are very few cases where feeder and receiving schools work towards the same strategic equality objectives. In many clusters, schools produce strategic equality plans independently of other local schools, with little or no consultation. In these schools, leaders and managers are unaware whether or not they share strategic equality objectives with other local schools. They do not take advantage of opportunities to share information and expertise in relation to the protected characteristics or to work together to promote equality and diversity.

73   Many clusters of schools have good arrangements for supporting pupils on transfer from primary to secondary school at the end of key stage 2. Most primary schools know their pupils well and identify vulnerable pupils prior to transfer. Many secondary schools provide additional transition visits for vulnerable pupils, to enable them to become familiar with key staff that can support them if issues arise. In many clusters, there is particularly good information sharing about pupils on the special educational needs register.

74   For example, at Townhill Primary School, Swansea, pupils who transfer to Dylan Thomas School spend a week there during the summer term. Staff from Townhill School accompany them for a full week, and this helps pupils to build confidence in a new situation and become familiar with the new school and its routines. As a result, pupils experience fewer problems related to transfer and instances of bullying are reduced.

75   There are very few reported instances of pupils transferring from other schools specifically on the grounds of bullying in relation to the protected characteristics during the school year. A very few schools have implemented a specific programme of support as a response to this situation.

76   In Mount Stuart Primary School, Cardiff staff provide a high level of support for pupils who are new to the community. They ensure, whenever possible, that pupils have a 'buddy' with the same language and cultural tradition. This ensures that pupils settle quickly and have opportunities to communicate any concerns in their own language.

77   The following case study shows how Dŵr-y-Felin Comprehensive School's transition systems and peer mentoring arrangements result in pupils settling quickly at a new school and being confident to report incidents of bullying.

Effective transition arrangements at Dŵr-y-Felin

Context

Dŵr-y-Felin Comprehensive School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive school in Neath. There are around 1,070 pupils on roll, of whom around 13% are entitled to free school meals. The school identifies around 15% of pupils as having additional learning needs. Nearly all pupils have English as a first language and around 3% have English as an additional language.

Strategy

Senior managers place a high value on successful transition. They believe that pupils who settle early following transfer to secondary school, and who feel safe and happy, make good progress. The school has close partnerships with its cluster primary schools. Headteachers work together purposefully to ensure that transition arrangements are proactive, detailed and robust and that they suit the needs of all learners. They pay particular attention to the needs of vulnerable pupils and develop additional strategies to support these pupils during transition.

Action

An assistant headteacher is responsible for the transition process. Every September, along with the headteacher, she visits each primary school to meet with parents and pupils. Through liaison with the primary school headteachers, she organises the meetings at a mutually convenient time so that as many parents as possible can attend. In 2013, around 80% of parents attended. At this meeting, senior staff provide parents with as much information about the school and the transition process as possible. This gives them the opportunity to outline the expectations of the school and to introduce some of the whole school policies, such as the behaviour policy, 'Respect', and to explain the work of pupil support services. It is also an opportunity to respond to queries or concerns raised by parents.

Following the meeting, teachers and pupils at Dŵr-y- Felin School offer an after school club for pupils in Year 6. They invite each cluster group to attend the after school club once a week for six weeks. During the sessions, pupils meet new friends, meet staff and become familiar with the school environment and its facilities. They participate in a range of activities, such as team building, sport and using information technology.

In addition staff organise a range of transition days and several staff from Dŵr-y-Felin visit each of the partner schools during the year. Where necessary, there are additional opportunities for vulnerable pupils and their parents to visit the school.

In collaboration, primary and secondary teachers identify potentially vulnerable pupils in each of the feeder primary schools. There is a careful selection of Year 10 pupils who wish to train as mentors. Pupils can discuss concerns with their mentors during weekly registration meetings. The school counsellor regularly monitors the work of the mentors, particularly checking that their role is not too burdensome and that they share any relevant information.

Outcomes

Year 6 pupils arrive at their new school feeling confident that they know staff and pupils. They know their way around, where to go and whom to see if they have any problems. Most importantly, this initiative has a positive effect on pupils' ability to learn and ensure maximum progress during the first few weeks of secondary school life. Staff identify and support vulnerable pupils before any issues arise. Pupils value the link with the peer mentors and often seek them out, as a first port of call, if they experience bullying.

The transition process starts early in the academic year when senior staff provide an initial link with parents. As a result of this good communication, many parents are confident to contact the school as soon as their child experiences problems.

On arrival at Dŵr-y-Felin, pupils feel part of the school community. They benefit from having had time to get to know each other before starting in the new school and have a better appreciation of each other's experiences. Consequently, pupils are more tolerant of one another.

7 The wider community

78 Only a few schools experience a tension between the ethos of the school and issues that arise in the wider community. Negative attitudes and behaviours towards different groups and cultures from some parents and carers are occasionally an issue for some schools.

79 Many schools work well to include all community groups and to make them aware of the school's ethos. They have close links with support services and community police officers who help them to reinforce the work of the school in the local community.

80 For example, police officers visit one city community primary school about three times a week. They regularly talk to pupils about things that have happened in the community and, as a result, pupils see them as friendly faces that are there to help and support them. Recently, there has been concern about gang culture developing in the community. School staff and police officers work together to identify pupils at risk of potential gang involvement. They involve the youth offending and anti-social behaviour team to work with pupils on a structured programme about the dangers and implications of gang culture. Police officers report that the school has had a positive influence in helping to break down the barriers between the community and the police.

81 A few schools hold awareness-raising events where pupils make presentations and show work they have produced to celebrate diversity in the community and across the world. In these schools, pupils have a good understanding of global citizenship and develop positive attitudes towards equality and diversity. Pupils are confident in talking to their family and local community members about tolerance and respect for individual differences.

82   A few schools make good use of community services to support them in raising awareness of diversity and equality. They engage with local, regional, national and international organisations to provide specific information about the different protected characteristics. Many pupils, particularly in secondary schools, find this specialist approach useful. It provides them with a point of contact if they have any issues or concerns that they would like to discuss.

83   The following case study highlights how Bassaleg School uses community and counselling services effectively to support vulnerable pupils.

Effective working with community support services at Bassaleg School

Context

Bassaleg School is an 11-19 secondary school on the outskirts of Newport. It has around 1,750 pupils on roll of whom around 400 attend the sixth form. Around 8% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified around 8% of pupils as having additional learning needs. Around 10% of pupils are from an ethnic minority background. Most pupils speak English as their first language.

Strategy

The school has identified a growing need for one-to-one counselling support for individuals experiencing difficulties. Pupil referrals are often due to of bullying issues or emotional distress.

Action

The school works closely with a range of partners, including Families First, the Youth Service and the local authority, to provide counsellors and a youth worker. A local schools' police liaison officer visits the school regularly, delivers programmes of work and reinforces relevant community issues within school.

This support includes:

- supporting the school in addressing local issues as they occur, which may include knife crime and work to reduce racial tensions;
- contributions to a wide-ranging and thought-provoking programme of year assemblies, including a recent unit about hate crime linked to disability, gender, sexual orientation, race or religion;
- a drug and alcohol project for Year 10 pupils; and
- a 'virtual babies' topic, giving Year 10 students the experience of caring for a baby over a period of time.

Outcomes

Relationships are established with a wide range of specialist services, which result in support of high quality for pupils and parents. Many pupils benefit, particularly those that are more vulnerable or have English as an additional language.

The counsellors and youth workers attribute their success to being accessible, based on the school site, but independent from the school staff. They hold open and frank conversations with young people. Many of the young people visit this service because of bullying or emotional issues related to the protected characteristics, for example if they want to discuss their personal sexuality, online and homophobic bullying, relationships and pregnancy. The school monitors the broad issues and addresses these effectively through the curriculum and school assemblies.

84   A minority of schools are anxious about highlighting issues of diversity because they consider them potentially contentious. These schools only tackle issues as they arise rather than building them into the curriculum.

85   In a very few schools, particularly those that draw their intake from different catchment areas across a wide area, leaders and managers often fail to respond to wider local issues and tensions that they regard as only affecting a small proportion of their pupils.

86   In a few schools, misunderstandings about cultural differences lead to community tensions. For example, in one school, a parent who had recently arrived in Wales hugged and kissed their child's classmates at the start of the school day. Other parents found this inappropriate. The school acted effectively as a mediator and organised a meeting where parent representatives could explain their concerns to the new parent. Once they had explained their concerns and expectations, tensions reduced and the new parent was accepted and included.

87   The following case study demonstrates how Maindee Primary School works effectively with parents and members of the local community to address concerns over cultural issues.

Maindee C.P. School successfully promotes an understanding of race in a changing cultural landscape

Context

Maindee C.P. School is in Newport. The school caters for pupils from three to eleven years of age. There are currently around 430 pupils on roll, including around 64 in the nursery classes. Around 32% of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified around 17% of pupils as having additional learning needs. Around 89% of pupils come from an ethnic minority background. A minority of pupils receive support for English as an additional language.

Strategy

The school is well known in the locality for its work to promote community cohesion and welcome children from multicultural backgrounds. Traditionally, around 85% of pupils have come from Asian backgrounds, mainly Pakistani or Bangladeshi. Recently the school's population has changed. Currently a quarter of the school population come from eastern European families, the largest group being Roma. Most of these pupils arrive at the school with limited skills in English. The school has

identified the need to address the cultural shift in its intake. Leaders have worked with its second generation Asian parents to develop an understanding of Romani culture and traditions.

Action

The school organises coffee mornings and information sessions for parents of many different cultures. Translators are on hand to support parents in seven different languages.

Alongside work to celebrate Asian culture and festivals, the school has worked to develop a shared understanding of Romani culture. A recent festival included a horse and 'varda'[3] taking up residence on the school field. Pupils attended workshops to explore aspects of Romani culture, including artefacts and traditions.

In Romani culture, boys particularly are encouraged to solve their own disputes physically, and shake hands afterwards. This is not acceptable in school. Therefore, the school explains restorative justice to parents and pupils so that they learn that pupils, supported by adults, talk and express their feelings to resolve disputes. On occasions, the school's leaders have needed to call parents to school specifically to remind them of its rules on resolving disputes. The school has clear and consistent systems to deal with reported or observed bullying. Where incidents cause concern, the school invites parents into school to discuss their child's behaviour. The school provides translators to support these meetings.

Outcomes

The school has established a rich and inclusive ethos that celebrates equality and diversity well. The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) group supports parents in developing an understanding of the Welsh education system effectively. Ninety-seven parents attended the most recent information morning.

Pupils have a rich and varied curriculum that includes aspects of many different cultures and traditions.

Pupils report that there are very few instances of bullying. They are confident that staff will sort out occasional name calling or physical aggression quickly and effectively. Staff are well informed about the protected characteristics. As a result, they are open and honest in dealing with pupils and responding to their questions and discussions. They are proactive in dealing with bullying.

88 A few schools experience tensions between teaching about the protected characteristics and respecting cultural and religious beliefs. Issues often arise in relation to sexual orientation and civil partnership. In the best practice, schools discuss with governors, parents and community representatives how teachers can incorporate the protected characteristics in the curriculum in a way that enables the school to fulfil its duties and respect beliefs.

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[3] Gypsy waggon or caravan

Appendix 1: Evidence base

The findings and recommendations in this report draw on:

- visits to schools;
- interviews with groups of pupils;
- interviews with teachers, support staff and meals supervisory assistants;
- interview with local authority representative;
- scrutiny of a range of school documentation including schools' strategic equality plans, anti-bullying, behaviour and e-safety policies, reports to governors, school development plans, school prospectus, staff training records and records of bullying; and
- interviews with community representatives

The sample of 21 schools visited included English-medium and Welsh-medium schools, and schools in rural and urban areas. The sample included eight secondary schools, 12 primary schools and one special school. In addition seven schools provided relevant documentation, including their strategic equality plan and policies related to bullying. The schools represent a range of inspection outcomes.

The schools visited as part of this study were:

- Abertillery Primary School, Blaenau Gwent
- Bassaleg School, Newport
- Bishop Vaughan RC School, Swansea
- Blaenhonddan Primary School, Neath Port Talbot
- Crickhowell High School, Powys
- Dŵr-y-Felin Comprehensive School, Neath Port Talbot
- Eastern Primary School, Neath Port Talbot
- Eveswell Primary School, Newport
- Hafod Primary School, Swansea
- Llangynidr CP School, Powys
- Lliswerry Primary School, Newport
- Maindee C.P. School, Newport
- Marlborough Primary School, Cardiff
- Michaelston Community College, Cardiff
- Mount Stuart Primary School, Cardiff
- Townhill Community Primary School, Swansea
- Treorchy Primary School, Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Trerobart Primary School, Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Ysgol Maes Garmon, Flintshire
- Ysgol Pen Coch, Flintshire
- Ysgol Y Llys, Denbighshire

Schools that provided documents for scrutiny were:

- Acton Park Primary School, Wrexham

- All Saints CIW Primary, Wrexham
- Llangewydd Junior School, Bridgend
- Northop Hall CP School, Flintshire
- Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School, Caerphilly
- Pencoed Comprehensive School, Bridgend
- Ysgol Bryn Teg, Carmarthenshire

Denbighshire local authority provided information about its cyberbullying safety initiative.

As part of their research, the survey team met groups of pupils. These included pupils who have experienced bullying related to the protected characteristics. Pupils shared their experiences of bullying with the team readily. However, it is difficult to provide case studies of pupils' experiences without potentially identifying individual pupils.

Appendix 2 – Anti-bullying checklist

Anti-bullying practices

Does the school:

- make sure that all pupils know what to do if they experience bullying;
- have an agreed definition of bullying that is clearly understood by the school community;
- regularly consult with groups of pupils to gain a true picture of the extent and nature of bullying at the school;
- use a range of methods to collect the views of staff, pupils, parents and carers, and take appropriate action in response;
- make sure that it is proactive in preventing bullying;
- have a range of strategies to address cyberbullying;
- actively engage with external agencies to support pupils who experience bullying;
- provide counselling services;
- make sure that there is effective supervision between lessons, at breaks and lunchtimes;
- provide safe places for vulnerable groups at breaks and lunchtimes;
- display details of where help is available in school, and details of local and national helplines; and
- provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, for example through buddy systems or peer support?

Do staff:

- have a clear understanding of what to do to prevent bullying; and
- know what action to take when bullying occurs?

Ethos

Does the school:

- have a strong ethos that promotes equality and diversity; and
- have strategies to address all forms of prejudice-driven bullying?

Curriculum

Do assemblies, lessons and activities:

- make sure pupils understand what constitutes bullying in its different forms, its impact and the roles of those involved in bullying behaviour, including bystanders;
- develop pupils' personal, social and emotional skills, including resilience to help them to deal with bullying effectively;
- reinforce messages about what to do if pupils experience bullying; and
- make pupils aware of who they can turn to for help?

Policies and procedures

Does the school:

- know when it is appropriate to report bullying behaviour as a criminal act or a child protection concern;
- nominate a governor that takes the lead for anti-bullying;
- review its behaviour and anti-bullying policies annually and make them easily accessible to all;
- make sure that all policies linked to behaviour and anti-bullying are consistent in their messages, for example, e-safety and use of school transport;
- have a strategic equality plan that contains equality objectives that have been well considered and are relevant to the needs of the school;
- work towards its equality objectives to reduce bullying; and
- make it obvious to parents about how to raise a concern or make a complaint if they are worried about bullying, or concerned that school has not effectively addressed bullying?

Do staff:

- record bullying incidents according to agreed definitions and analyse records for patterns (individuals / groups, protected characteristics, types, places, and times) and take the appropriate action?

Staff development and training

Does the school:

- make effective use of relevant research and information, such as the Welsh Government guidance 'Respecting Others' to provide effective training and support for staff?

Do staff:

- receive regular anti-bullying training (all staff teaching and non-teaching);
- have a clear understanding of the protected characteristics and their legal implications; and
- keep up-to-date with new forms of bullying, such as cyberbullying?

Cluster arrangements and transition processes

Does the school:

- collaborate with other schools to identify possible common issues related to the protected characteristics;
- share useful information and expertise in combatting discrimination and bullying with other schools; and
- liaise to identify and provide additional support for vulnerable pupils on transfer to another school?

Wider community

Does the school:

- take responsibility for working with the wider community to act when bullying takes place outside of school;
- address bullying that takes place on journeys to and from school;
- address bullying that takes place when pupils are engaged in any school activity;
- address cyberbullying both inside and outside school; and
- work with parents/carers and the local community, including police, to maintain an awareness of local tensions and act proactively to reduce them?

Appendix 3 – Research and references

Some extracts from research

"Despite the encouraging evidence suggesting that bullying is declining in Wales, large numbers of pupils are victims of bullying and a small proportion of pupils in Years 6, 7, and 10[4] are victims of bullying which is often both frequent and sustained over long periods of time. Pupils experiencing frequent and sustained bullying also had less confidence that their school could help them if they were bullied. This was a consistent finding across different types of schools and suggests that all schools need to identify more effective ways to both reduce this frequent and sustained bullying and to support these pupils." (A Survey into the Prevalence and Incidence of School Bullying in Wales Main Report: People and Work Unit, 2010)

"It is clear that identity-based bullying is a significant problem for a large proportion of children. The studies reviewed serve to illustrate how any individual characteristic that distinguishes a child from the rest of their peer group can increase the risk of bullying, ranging from looking or behaving differently to holding personal or religious beliefs which set one apart from the rest of their peer group. Whether a child is bullied because of their race, sexual orientation or any other personal characteristic, research shows the effects of being bullied are the same, causing both short-term and long-term problems psychologically, socially or academically." (Prevention and response to identity-based bullying among local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales: Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010)

"More than half (55%) of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people experience homophobic bullying in Britain's schools. Three in five lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils who experience homophobic bullying say that teachers who witness the bullying never intervene. Nearly one in four (23%) lesbian, gay and bisexual young people have tried to take their own life at some point. More than half (56%) of gay young people deliberately harm themselves. More than half (54%) of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people don't feel there is an adult at school who they can talk to about being gay. One in three (32%) gay pupils who experience homophobic bullying change their plans for future education because of it." (The School Report: Stonewall 2012)

"Disablist bullying has received relatively little research attention. However, since the 1990s, studies have demonstrated the increased likelihood of disabled children and young people being bullied, compared to non-disabled peers." (Nabuzoka and Smith 1993; Dawkins 1996). "More recent research has tended to focus on individual disabilities, but has further confirmed that disabled children and young people are at greater risk of being victimised. Recent reviews of research findings suggest that vulnerability to bullying cuts across all types of disability." (Mishna, 2003; Smith and Tippett, 2006).

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[4] The survey used self-completion questionnaires, which were completed by pupils in Years 4, 6, 7 and 10 in participating schools between April 2009 and July 2009. In total, 7,448 pupils from 167 schools and five pupil referral units (PRUs) took part in the survey.

In 2010 research conducted about pupils from age 14 to 19 by the Department for Education stated: "One of the most important findings in this research was how bullying relates to attainment. The analysis clearly shows that, even having adjusted for other important factors, educational attainment at GCSE level was significantly lower if the young person had reported being bullied at any time between ages 14 and 16. This was particularly true for young people who had been forced to hand over money or possessions, and for young people who had been socially excluded. Clearly, by targeting those young people who are at greatest risk of being bullied, there is an opportunity to not only increase their immediate wellbeing, but also their attainment at age 16 and consequently their future prospects." (Characteristics of Bullying Victims in Schools: DFE 2010)

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The nature and extent of pupil bullying in schools in the north of Ireland: RSM McClure Watters, 2011

The School Report: Stonewall, 2012

Glossary

Cyberbullying	The use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature
Gender reassignment	The process whereby a person changes their physical, sexual characteristics by means of medical procedures such as surgery or hormone treatment
Gender stereotyping	Putting someone down because of their sex or not thinking that they are able to do something because they are either male or female
Homophobic bullying	When people behave or speak in a way that makes someone feel bullied because of their actual or perceived sexuality
Mission statement	A short sentence or paragraph used by a school to explain, in simple and concise terms, its core aims
Transgender	Transgenderism has had different meanings over time, and in different societies. Currently, it is used as an inclusive term describing all those whose gender expression falls outside the typical gender norms; for example, those who cross-dress intermittently for a variety of reasons as well as those who live continuously outside gender norms, sometimes with, and sometimes without, medical intervention.
Transphobic	Showing discriminatory attitudes to or treatment of transgender people
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people (aged 17 and under) a comprehensive set of rights. The UK signed the convention on 19 April 1990 and ratified it on 16 December 1991, and it came into force on 15 January 1992. The convention gives children and young people over 40 substantive rights, including the right to: • special protection measures and assistance • access to services such as education and healthcare • develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential • grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding • be informed about and participate in achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner

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