

National Thematic: Bullying

The purpose of this national thematic is to evaluate the approaches taken by schools to record and monitor incidents of bullying. HM Inspectors will provide a national overview of the approaches adopted in their national report

We will use the information below to draw out national messages and potential case studies of practice worth sharing.

Record of visit (ROV)

- The ROV contains all information gathered in relation to the work. Any other materials should only be retained in line with our records management policy.
- The ROV should be completed in line with confidentiality, information security and Freedom of Information policies.
- The ROV must be completed timeously and sent to [REDACTED].

Establishment/Setting	Bearsden Primary School	
Date/time of visit	Thursday 29 Sept 2022	9.00am – 4pm
HMI	[REDACTED]	
Date ROV submitted		

Key contextual information (200 words)

School roll	418 children The school receives a significant number of placing requests from outwith the local authority. 15% of children on the school roll are placing requests. School is at capacity and is preparing for a school modernisation programme which will result in the school community being decanted to portable units on the grounds of Bearsden Academy for an academic year whilst building is completed.
Composition	Non-denominational primary school
Demographics (SIMD, ethnicity, ASN)	SIMD deciles 8-10: 96%. Less than 3% of children have FME. One percent of children are targeted for PEF funding. Minority ethnic: 9% of children. Children with ASN: 8% of children.
Leadership structure	The headteacher is supported by two depute head teachers (DHT) and one principal teacher. The leadership team has been stable and consistent for a number of years.

1. Approaches schools have taken to record incidents of bullying (400 words)

Bearsden Primary School's "Anti-Bullying Guidelines" have been in place for several years. They were updated in June 2019 to reflect national guidance. A DHT established a working group of parents, children and staff to support this work. Staff report very positive engagement from all, including parents. The policy will be reviewed in October 2022.

The policy effectively defines bullying and helpfully sets bullying in the Scottish context by connecting the policy to other relevant legislative and national guidance, such as The Equality and Child Poverty Act. The policy challenges inequalities and has useful information relating to prejudice-based bullying, including protected characteristics. The policy positively highlights the approaches used by the school to actively prevent bullying.

The policy does not outline the process used to monitor incidents of bullying, or how senior leaders identify and respond to patterns and trends of behaviour. The policy would benefit from outlining the roles and responsibilities of all in dealing with bullying. The policy does not make it clear when an incident may not be considered bullying, such as children falling out. The headteacher is considering these aspects as part of the upcoming review. She is also reflecting on how the policy could be written in Plain English to ensure it is accessible to all stakeholders.

Senior leaders explained that the working group during the previous review used this opportunity to develop the 'Bearsden Primary's Behaviour Blueprint'. This one page document summarises the school's aims and values, expectations of staff and children, behaviour management steps, and restorative questions used by all staff. This document, and the school's commitment to restorative practice, is widely understood by children and is supporting a very calm, purposeful environment built on very positive relationships and mutual respect for all. Children speak extremely positively about the use and impact of restorative conversations. They value the opportunity to talk about the impact of actions, to learn from mistakes, and to plan to ensure conflict can be avoided in the future.

Senior leaders record bullying incidents on the SEEMiS Bullying and Equalities module (BEM) and SEEMiS pastoral notes. They feel the character limits on the BEM text boxes do not allow staff to record all of the information needed. Staff find BEM cumbersome to use and would prefer for all incidents to be recorded in SEEMiS pastoral notes. They feel the system does not recognise the need to monitor and review bullying alongside all of the information collected and stored for a child. Therefore, they find BEM to offer limited opportunities for monitoring and review, or identify patterns or trends.

The headteacher and staff recognise the need to further promote and share widely their anti-bullying policy and approaches. In the pre-questionnaire, a majority of parents reported not knowing how bullying incidents were investigated and most did not know how bullying was recorded. The school are also considering how to continue to promote their complaints process to allow parents and children to offer feedback on their experience of how the school deals with incidents.

2. The arrangements for monitoring incidents of bullying (400 words)

The school have very effective systems in place which allow staff to share information about relationship issues with senior leaders. All staff value how highly visible and responsive the senior leadership team are. Staff are confident to share concerns, even if it is simply a feeling about a situation, and know senior leaders will respond in a pro-active and positive manner. Staff and senior leaders regularly meet to review the progress of children. As part of these reviews, staff discuss relationship issues between children. It ensures staff are aware of children experiencing ongoing issues, can monitor them, and put strategies in place to support the children. Senior leaders and teachers communicate well with pupil support assistants (PSA) and ensure PSA know of ongoing or new relationship issues between children. PSA monitor children while in the playground. PSA report they feel confident supporting children and intervening if they witness negative interactions.

All staff have received professional learning in relevant areas such as 'behaviour as communication', ACES and embedding whole school nurturing principles. This learning underpins the culture of support and care demonstrated across the school. It ensures a relational approach is being widely adopted. All staff are confident and capable at facilitating restorative conversations. These conversations are an essential tool in ensuring relationship issues and conflict do not escalate into bullying situations. As a next step, senior leaders plan to educate and inform parents further of the relational approach used and the positive impact of restorative conversations.

Senior leaders stated that they do not feel BEM helps them to monitor incidents of bullying, or identify patterns or trends. However, senior leaders do have effective and impactful informal processes to monitor relationship issues. All relevant information is recorded on SEEMiS pastoral notes and senior leaders review incidents during their weekly SLT meetings. This led to senior leaders identifying bullying behaviours in children with ASN as being an issue. Staff have put in place a range of effective supports to meet the wellbeing needs of these children, including creating a highly effective visual emotions folder. The folder supports children with ASN to communicate thoughts and feelings without using verbal words. This ensures staff can adopt a restorative approach in a range of situations and contexts.

Staff know children and families very well and use this knowledge to support all. Where staff have a concern about a child, senior leaders will contact and inform parents. Senior leaders are aware of a child's right to privacy when discussing concerns with parents. Children report that staff regularly check in with them following a relationship issue and ensure they are kept updated and well-informed of actions taken. Children feel listened to, involved in the process, and generally feel staff work hard to support them. Almost all parents are confident to contact the school if they have a concern about their child and feel staff treat children with respect. In the pre-questionnaire, most children report feeling safe in school and that their teachers will tackle bullying when they see it happening. Most children and almost all parents report that bullying is not accepted in the school.

3. The effectiveness of measures taken to respond to incidents of bullying and in supporting children and young people. (400 words)

Children show care, value each other, and are welcoming towards visitors of the school. All staff are proactive in establishing a positive school ethos with a zero tolerance for bullying. All of the work of the school is underpinned by the school's aim, values and shared expectations. A range of approaches are used to encourage high expectations and positive relationships. These include weekly awards for children demonstrating skills and care for others, assemblies which reinforce the values and explore the wellbeing indicators and children's rights, relationship lessons in the HWB curriculum, as well as involvement in the annual anti-bullying week. Children talk positively about their learning in relation to the difference between equality and equity and how the school meet learner's needs. Staff regularly do wellbeing check ins with children through different means such as wellbeing journals, circle time, teacher greeting time and identifying feelings class displays. Staff use annual wellbeing surveys and East Dunbartonshire Council wellbeing trackers to compile data about children's wellbeing. Senior leaders then release teachers from class to analyse this data and offer targeted support to, or check ins with, children seeking support with their wellbeing.

Children's rights are well-established in the school. Children talk confidently about their rights and can connect them appropriately to different aspects of their lives. Staff are progressing very

well with a review of their curriculum to ensure learning is connected to children's rights. Classroom charters have been written with a focus on children's rights. This work is beginning to support children to meaningfully connect their learning and understand clearly how bullying relates to issues such as respect, equality and diversity. The school received a richly deserved RRS Gold Award for their very effective work with children's rights. The headteacher acknowledges offering more opportunities for children to celebrate diversity in an inclusive community is an important next step.

The school works effectively with partner agencies to offer targeted support to children experiencing relationship issues. This includes work with the counselling service and the Campus Police Officer who offers assemblies on social media and online bullying. Staff also deliver Seasons of Growth for children experiencing loss, change or bereavement.

Staff are currently involved in a professional enquiry project seeking to explore how play-based learning can support children to develop important meta- and social- skills. It is planned that children will enhance their skills throughout their primary years, starting by developing an understanding of key skills in the early primaries, to developing those skills in primary 2 – 5, before children in the upper years get opportunities to lead learning for younger peers on the skills. This project is at an early stages but has the potential to positively impact on children's ability to learn and embed life-long skills which support conflict resolution and mutual respect.

Before periods of pandemic, the school had effective inclusion and social groups for children and employed a peer mediation programme. Senior leaders are considering how to reintroduce these approaches to offer targeted support and enhance existing pupil buddying schemes.

Quotes: Please add any quotes below with each one clearly separated by the use of "quotation marks". Please add in brackets who they are from (e.g headteacher).

[REDACTED]

Effective practice worth sharing if applicable

I am providing a case study along with the ROV.

This will cover the school's effective use of restorative conversations to ensure relationship issues do not become a bullying issue and its work to ensure children's rights underpin everything they do.