

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	Gairloch High School	
Date/time of visit	08.09.22	
HMI	[REDACTED]	
Date ROV submitted	[REDACTED]	

Key contextual information (200 words)

School roll	105
Composition	S1 (17), S2 (20), S3 (18), S4 (13), S5 (24), S6 (13)
Demographics (SIMD, ethnicity, ASN)	<p>SIMD (number pupils per band):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [REDACTED] • Band 10: 33 • Band 11: 19 • [REDACTED] • Band 13: 42 • [REDACTED] <p>ASL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of pupils with ASL Needs: 46 (44%) • ASN Level 3 and above: 13 <p>Ethnicity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED] • [REDACTED]
Leadership structure	There is a Headteacher, a Depute Headteacher, PT Pastoral, a PT ASL and six Faculty heads.

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

Senior staff refer to the local authority anti-bullying policy, developed in 2018 to reflect the latest national guidance. Most young people, staff and parents do not demonstrate awareness of the policy. Senior leaders recognise the need to develop a bespoke policy with stakeholders. They are aiming to define bullying better, clarify the roles of all staff and outline a relational approach, recognising the rights of all young people.

Senior staff record potential bullying incidents in the pastoral notes section of SEEMiS on the same day that the matter is reported. Following on from an investigation, senior leaders record a bullying incident in the Bullying and Equalities module in SEEMiS. Senior leaders are seeking reassurance from the local authority that their approaches are complying fully with national guidance.

Young people understand the different types of bullying behaviours and a few are able to recognise the reasons for bullying. A few learners have either experienced bullying or are aware of bullying incidents. A cohort of young people are Gaelic speakers and they do not experience bullying when they speak to each other in Gaelic in the presence of their English speaking peers.

Almost all young people report that they feel safe in school. Young people, staff and parents agree that the school's zero tolerance stance on bullying is clear. They feel that bullying is not a significant issue in school. Young people and staff believe that the strong sense of community promotes an ethos of equality and respect. Most young people report that anti-bullying is a feature of their learning in assemblies and posters around the school. Young people agree that visits by senior leaders to individual classes are effective in reminding all learners of expectations.

Young people are aware of a range of ways to report bullying. This includes seeking out senior staff and using a dedicated pupil portal which allows them to report bullying discretely. A minority of young people are not confident in reporting bullying. They feel that the small nature of the school community means that they will be identified. They also feel that not knowing the school's response is a barrier to notifying a member of staff of bullying. Additionally, a few young people would rather deal with bullying incidents themselves. Senior leaders acknowledge the need to explore approaches to increase young people's confidence in reporting bullying.

Pastoral staff provide a responsive health and wellbeing curriculum which addresses bullying and the root causes of prejudice. They adapt this to suit the needs of learners. Young people value the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. They would welcome more opportunities to influence content so that it continues to be relevant to their needs.

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

Senior leaders monitor incidents of alleged bullying very well. They review these incidents weekly with the pastoral teacher to identify trends and patterns. [REDACTED].

The school community agree that incidents of bullying are low and are related to gender-based language and online bullying. Most staff and young people feel that these are challenges for the school community to address. This has led to a greater focus on these areas in wellbeing classes and assemblies.

Senior leaders ensure that the right to privacy for all young people involved in bullying incidents is maintained throughout the process. A particular challenge facing staff is that not all parents agree with or understand the school's response to bullying. Senior leaders identified the right to privacy as a tension with parents, particularly those parents of young people experiencing bullying behaviour. Parents express dissatisfaction at not receiving information about action towards the young person displaying bullying behaviour. Senior leaders are beginning to review approaches to ensure stronger stakeholder engagement in reviewing and understanding all aspects of the policy.

Staff respond initially to bullying incidents and refer to pastoral staff. Staff appreciate the weekly updates from the pastoral team. These help them to monitor and support young people, including those involved in bullying situations. Out with PSHE, a few subject departments make natural links to tackling the underlying causes of bullying. For example, the Gaelic teacher uses resources, such as Gaelic novels, to promote respect and diversity during lessons. They also use drama activities to develop learners' knowledge and skills in dealing with bullying situations. Before the pandemic, staff and learners enjoyed focus days, specifically on bullying for S1, which included a focus on Gaelic. Staff should consider approaches to ensure that there are greater links across the curriculum to prevent and address all forms of bullying.

Young people report that they would welcome greater levels of participation in devising and reviewing school policy and systems. They would appreciate opportunities to give their views to improve further the identification of wellbeing concerns. Senior leaders are aware of the need for young people to know the difference giving their views has made.

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

Almost all young people agree that staff act quickly to address issues of bullying. A few young people have experienced incidents of bullying. They feel that staff listened to them and took their views seriously. A few of these learners convey that they would benefit from greater levels of support following incidents of bullying.

Young people agree that the measures in place to prevent bullying are a main reason why it is not a serious issue. Senior leaders are visible and deal with issues efficiently and effectively. Staff and S6 learners provide supervision of student areas. Senior leaders have adapted areas of the building, such as providing gender-neutral toilets, with pupil consultation, to reduce opportunities for bullying to occur. Staff focus on the issue of bullying through the primary to secondary transition. S6 act as mentors to S1 throughout their first year. Young people in S5 and S6 work with staff to offer activities at lunchtime such as inter-house competitions. These provide a safe space and opportunities to foster a positive and community ethos. Senior leaders are exploring ways to increase the range of leadership opportunities available to learners.

Senior leaders and pastoral staff have implemented approaches to successfully respond to bullying. Pastoral staff determine the appropriate response, usually through a restorative approach. This is resulting in young people repairing friendships and developing the skills to resolve issues independently. Most young people are aware of the availability and accessibility of their pastoral teacher. A few young people feel that they do not always have a key adult to speak to in school. Senior leaders are aware of the need to continue to explore ways for young people to access the local authority counselling provision. Young people value

the daily emails from senior leaders to update them on school matters, including regular mention of bullying.

Staff at the school are flexible and reactive to emerging issues. They offer a weekly “time-out” period where young people can focus on issues of concern, including bullying. Recently there has been a group focusing on female empowerment. The PSHE programme is improving young people’s knowledge of bullying, relationships and protected characteristics. Young people speak positively on the impact of focused days in the past, such as Stonewall, in promoting diversity and equality. These are followed up successfully in PSHE lessons.

Almost all staff report that relevant professional learning takes place regularly. Recently, professional learning has been targeted towards improving approaches to wellbeing. Senior leaders are developing a relational and positive approach to behaviour with most staff supportive of this strategy. Senior leaders are aware of the need to develop the role of all staff in providing universal support, including bullying, as part of the health and wellbeing responsibilities for all.