

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	St Mary's RC PS	
Date/time of visit	10th October 2022	
HMI	[REDACTED]	
Date ROV submitted	[REDACTED]	

Key contextual information (200 words)

School roll	162
Composition	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P5/6, P6, P7
Demographics (SIMD, ethnicity, ASN)	SIMD 1&2 – 2%, 3-5 – 62% 6-8 – 26% 9-10- 5% EAL – 30% ASN 56%
Leadership structure	Headteacher and Depute headteacher (class committed 0.8)

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

In 2018, St Mary's Primary School consulted with all stakeholders to create their anti-bullying policy. Their policy reflects the Scottish Government guidance, 'Respect for All' (2017). In November 2022, senior leaders plan to review the policy in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure full alignment with the Supplementary Guidance for Respect for All' (2018). All staff receive a copy of the anti-bullying policy as part of their induction when starting at St Mary's PS.

The school ethos is underpinned by; their mantra, '*you should treat other people the way you would like to be treated*', the Gospel values, the school values of care, courtesy, concern, cooperation and communication and the philosophy held within the Laudato Si programme. The policy separates bullying issues from what they refer to as 'conflict issues' and defines each separately. While the majority of children and parents feel the school deals well with

bullying, senior leaders plan to reflect on both their bullying and conflict definitions as part of the planned review. This will ensure that all stakeholders have a shared understanding of what bullying is. They will then be able to consistently apply this when they investigate, record, report and monitor incidents of bullying.

Although only a minority of parents feel involved in developing approaches to bullying, the majority of parents are aware of the policy. The current policy does not reflect the protected characteristics identified in 'Respect for All' guidance and children are limited in their ability to describe prejudiced based bullying. The updated policy should make reference to the UNCRC Rights of the Child, Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and Respect for All.

The anti-bullying policy sits alongside a behaviour policy, which describes the '*Good to be Green*' approach staff adopt for behaviour management. The headteacher shared that they plan to develop a nurture and inclusion policy this session. Stakeholders will be fully included as part of its creation. Senior leaders plan retain a separate anti-bullying policy so that all updated information is clear and accessible. The anti-bullying policy will be referred to within the nurture and inclusion policy to ensure there are clear links between both.

The current policy signposts parents to a few resources although only a minority of parents are aware of this. The head teacher plans to update all web links and include other resources and supports for families within the updated policy.

The majority of children and parents feel they know what happens after they have reported an incident of bullying. However, only a minority of children and parents know how incidents are recorded. To share explicitly how incidents are investigated and recorded, the head teacher plans to create a simplified version of the revised anti-bullying policy appropriate for children and parents.

Until September 2022, the headteacher logged all bullying incidents in an electronic file held on the school server. Since September 2022, SEEMiS is now being used to log all incidents of bullying. The headteacher aims to complete this process between 1-3 days as per guidance. Due to the system being new to senior leaders, they have not closed off any incidents yet. While they feel it is helpful to have all bullying information in one place, they find SEEMiS 'clunky' to use and time consuming.

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

Senior leaders currently monitor incidents of bullying when there has been an incident. At this time, they look at any trends and patterns. The headteacher plans to change their approaches so that they formally monitor their data twice each term. This will be added to the quality assurance calendar and ensure systems and processes are reviewed on a regular basis as opposed to the current 'ad hoc' approach. Senior leaders identify an increase in incidents relating to cyber bullying and body shaming.

The headteacher issues letters of advice to specific classes if there are concerns relating to any bullying related issues. In addition, the headteacher will raise concerns through whole school assemblies for example; cyber responsibility. Children cannot identify the protected characteristics affected by prejudice based bullying. The headteacher plans to address this with all stakeholders.

Through focus groups, the majority of children shared that they would not report an incident for fear of repercussions as a result and possibly being called a 'grass' or 'snitch'. The headteacher addresses this at assembly but plans to review this further. This fear could be resulting in the under-reporting of incidents.

All staff complete a Form 1 if they have any concerns about bullying and this is shared with the headteacher. The head teacher should ensure that the wording within the initial referral form used by all staff is in line with 'Respect for All' guidance. For example, identifying any potential protected characteristics. They should also ensure the terms 'victim' and 'perpetrator' are no longer used.

The majority of children know what happens when they report an incident of bullying. However, through focus groups, children shared that they would like to be included more as *part of* the investigation process. This would allow children affected by bullying behaviour more ownership of the resolution.

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

Most children and the majority of parents report that the school deals well with bullying. Most children feel that staff tackle bullying behaviours if seen. In focus groups, children confidently discussed how they would approach a trusted adult if they were experiencing any concerns. The majority of children and almost all parents feel confident to report incidents of bullying. Most children know who to speak to following an incident of alleged bullying. Recently, children have completed a '*This is Me*' wellbeing survey based on the wellbeing indicators. Staff use the data from the assessments to plan the health and wellbeing curriculum and identify children who would benefit from a targeted intervention.

Pre-visit questionnaire show that most parents feel that school staff promote respect and positive relationships and treat children fairly. Almost all children understand what bullying is although only a minority say they learn about bullying in school.

Staff have completed various professional learning such as understanding of the nurture principles, Emotion Works, and restorative approaches. More recently, staff are engaging with Playback Inclusion Citizenship and Equality (ICE) Pack. This uses an approach called 'Knowing me Knowing you' (KMKY). KMKY is a progressive skills development programme that promotes social and emotional literacy. This programme also offers support for families although this work has not started yet. The school plan to link their work around the UNCRC to this skills progression. It is too early to identify impact yet.

Last session, senior leaders used additional staffing to support children transition to secondary school due to their concerns about bullying there. Feedback from all stakeholders involved shared that this was a very positive experience.