

## 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. Joseph's Primary School	
Date/time of visit	Wed 14 Sept 2022	9.00am
HMI	[Redacted]	
Date ROV submitted	[Redacted]	

### Key contextual information (200 words)

School roll	140 children
Composition	Denominational (Roman Catholic) primary school. The school has recently been reconfigured to include an early learning and childcare facility (with spaces for 35 children – currently 32 children). This has impacted on space available within the school building.
Demographics (SIMD, ethnicity, ASN)	SIMD 1 - 2: 68% / SIMD 9-10: 1.4% FSM: 57.8% ASN: 27%. Minority Ethnic: 6.9% (based on our records)
Leadership structure	The headteacher has been in post for 11 years. He is supported by a depute headteacher (DHT) who has been in post for 1 year.
Bullying incidents logged on SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities Module	0

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

Inverclyde Council published an anti-bullying policy in November 2021 which reflects national guidance. It will be reviewed in November 2024. The policy was developed through an extensive engagement with children and young people, parents and staff. The policy effectively defines bullying and explores issues highlighted by children and young people during the policy development. The policy promotes children's rights, issues of equality, and has useful information relating to prejudice-based bullying, including protected characteristics. It is also responsive to local context specific issues such as sexting. The policy provides a clear holistic framework to help staff support children experiencing bullying and the expectations for

recording incidents are clear and promote the use of the SEEMiS Bullying and Equalities modules (BEM). The policy encourages staff to exercise their professional judgement when deciding what incidents should be recorded on SEEMiS. In St. Joseph's Primary, this is leading to a lack of consistent practice in recording bullying across the school. The policy could offer increased guidance as to how the wellbeing indicators could support staff in the process of assessing children's wellbeing needs.

The St. Joseph's Anti-Bullying Charter was developed last year but has not yet been launched with children and parents. This is planned for November 2022 to coincide with anti-bullying week. A previous DHT had completed 'Respect for All' professional learning and invited children, parents and staff to complete an online questionnaire to share their views of bullying. The headteacher reported that staff were disappointed by a limited response from parents. The charter establishes that the school has a zero tolerance for bullying, is framed around children's rights, and summarises the roles and responsibilities of the school community in challenging bullying.

The charter does not offer parents and children information relating to how the school responds to, and records, incidents of bullying. The pre-questionnaire highlighted that a majority of children and parents did not know what happens when an incident of bullying is reported and most are not aware how bullying is recorded by the school. The charter also does not offer an agreed and consistent definition of bullying. A few staff highlight this lack of definition as a barrier to achieving a consistent approach to bullying across the school. The headteacher and a few staff stated they avoided using the term 'bully' as they felt the label did not reflect the school's values. Staff believe children can learn from relationship issues and so the use of a label is unhelpful.

Senior leaders and staff recognise the need to improve systems for recording incidents of bullying. Staff currently use their own written pastoral notes on children to record relationship issues between children. Staff then use their professional judgement to determine whether concerns need to be passed on to senior leaders. When this happens senior leaders will log actions taken on SEEMiS pastoral notes. Staff report they address almost all relationships issues in the classroom without senior leader's involvement. This is leading to almost all bullying incidents not being appropriately recorded on either SEEMiS pastoral notes or BEM.

Senior leaders are responsible for recording information on BEM. They have not yet recorded any incidents of bullying on BEM. Senior leaders report the system is easy to use and they liked the headings on the system of "Person(s) experiencing" and "Person(s) displaying". They feel this recognises the behaviour without requiring children to be labelled as bullies.

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

Teachers are responsive to relationship issues between children and take appropriate action, such as restorative meetings, to address them. Staff have informal systems of monitoring relationship issues between children. They encourage children to use wellbeing webs and diaries or perform wellbeing check ins with individuals to monitor and identify appropriate supports. Teachers also, where appropriate, discuss learning relating to relationship issues with their entire class during circle time. This ensures children can learn from the experiences of others. However, staff need to ensure that a child's right to confidentiality is still respected.

Teachers communicate well with pupil support assistants (PSA) and ensure PSA know of ongoing or new bullying issues between children. PSA monitor children while in the playground.

PSA report they feel confident supporting children and intervening if they witness bullying behaviours. [Redacted].

Staff and senior leaders regularly meet to review the progress of children. As part of these reviews, staff discuss relationship issues and bullying behaviours. This ensures the staff team are aware of issues and can monitor them. It also ensures staff are aware of children who are experiencing ongoing relationship issues and are putting in place support for them. These meetings have supported senior leaders to identify bullying trends within the school, which include boisterous behaviour in the playground, children being rough while playing football, and a few examples of children sending inappropriate messages via messaging apps or games consoles. Senior leaders recognise the need to review their recording systems to support whole school monitoring of bullying. The headteacher plans to review the use of BEM as a tool to identify specific trends or patterns, but also to track improvements across the school. As no information has yet been logged on BEM, staff are unable to use the system as a tool to support the monitoring of instances of bullying.

Children reported they feel able to contribute ideas to improve the school. They feel listened to and respected. Before the pandemic, the school had an effective peer mediation initiative where children were trained to intervene and support younger peers with relationship issues. The headteacher recognises that re-establishing this approach has the potential to develop the role of P6 and P7 buddies, as well as the school's approach to dealing with bullying.

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

The headteacher and staff focus on creating a positive ethos across the school. Almost all children and most parents recognise that bullying is not accepted in the school. All of the work of the school is underpinned by a focus on their vision and values, underpinned by the gospel values of kindness and compassion. Positive relationships are demonstrated across the school community. Almost all parents feel the school promotes respect and positive relationships. Children show care, value each other, and are welcoming and friendly to visitors to the school. Parents value how accessible and approachable staff are, including senior leaders. This is supporting information relating to relationship issues being shared openly and allowing staff to be responsive to the needs of children. Most children feel that staff deal well with bullying and take appropriate action when staff witness bullying behaviours in children. Most children report that they feel safe in school and they would know who to speak to if they need help with bullying.

The school use classroom and playground charters, with a focus on children's rights, to support shared and agreed expectations. Teachers and children create new classroom charters every year and it is written in child friendly language. Staff believe this is supporting children to communicate what they need from each other in order to learn in a safe and positive environment.

Children learn about bullying through assemblies, the health and wellbeing curriculum, and the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) curriculum resource. A few children struggle to connect their learning around respect and diversity to issues relating to bullying. Staff are considering how to better support children to connect and make sense of their learning. In the pre-questionnaire, a minority of children indicated that they disagreed or didn't know whether they would be confident reporting an incident of bullying. Staff are reflecting on how to develop confidence and ensure the bystander effect does not restrict children from reporting concerns.

Staff identify appropriate support for children who may need to develop their relationship skills. Staff offer social groups where children can develop friendships or come together to explore, with the support of an adult, issues that arise between friends. There are examples of effective work with partners, such as the Barnardos Support Workers or the area Outreach Base offering individual or small group work to support children with social or emotional support needs.

**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]