

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	West Barns PS, East Lothian Council	
Date/time of visit	11.10.22	9:15am – 4:30pm
HMI	[Redacted]	
Date ROV submitted	[Redacted]	

Key contextual information (200 words)

School roll	96 - P1-P7, 34 - ELC
Composition	5 classes P1-P7
Demographics (SIMD, ethnicity, ASN)	SIMD – FSM – ASN – EAL –
Leadership structure	Headteacher Principal Teacher (teaching commitment)

1. Approaches schools have taken to record incidents of bullying

West Barns PS implements East Lothian Council's 'Respect for All – a positive approach to preventing bullying' policy. The policy was reviewed in January 2022. East Lothian Council recognises that the most successful anti-bullying interventions are embedded within a positive ethos and inclusive culture. East Lothian Council's aim is to create safe and secure environments where bullying is openly acknowledged, discussed and challenged as unacceptable behaviour, resulting in the reduction of incidents. The policy reflects Scottish Governments, 'Respect for All' guidance.

In addition to ensuring the policy is in line with national guidance, the views of children and young people, parents and staff across East Lothian have been sought, throughout the it's development. The policy provides guidance for all learning establishments on the processes and procedures that should be followed to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying behaviour. It aspires to ensure the ongoing development of relational practices within East Lothian Council. It complements and is integrated within a suite of policies and guidance including nurture, recovery and reconnection (2020).

The anti-bullying policy includes a definition of bullying, a statement about equalities and reflects UNCRC and GIRFEC principles. Staff are familiar with the policy and clear about their roles and responsibilities to prevent bullying. The policy includes a flowchart for addressing an incident of bullying and another to support staff in using SEEMiS to record and monitor incidents of bullying.

Almost all children understand what bullying is and the majority feel safe at West Barns PS. In pre-questionnaires, almost all children stated that bullying is not accepted in their school. Almost all children know who to speak to if they or someone they know feels they are being bullied. Most children are confident that staff will tackle bullying if they see it happening in school. The minority of children are aware that incidents of bullying are recorded.

Most parents feel the school promotes respect and positive relationships. The majority of parents are aware of the school's anti-bullying policy. Most parents know how the school investigates incidents of bullying but only a few know how the school records incidents of bullying. Almost all parents feel confident about reporting bullying.

Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in relation to reporting incidents of bullying. Staff report incidents of bullying to the head teacher. Staff complete a school-based incident form which is passed onto the headteacher. The headteacher investigates all incidents of bullying and since August 2022, records them on the Bullying and Equalities module (BEM), SEEMiS. The headteacher reports that parents do not like that their child's school record, details that they have been accused of bullying, particularly if the case is unproven. The headteacher feels this is a contradiction to the 'Respect for All' policy which encourages us not to label a child as the bully. The headteacher reports that SEEMiS does not provide sufficient space to include all details of the incident. She therefore includes additional detail in children's pastoral notes.

2. The arrangements for monitoring incidents of bullying

The headteacher supported by the principal teacher, monitor formally all incidents of bullying well. Termly, they review incidents to identify trends and patterns relating to groups and individuals. [Redacted] As a result, staff have revisited the digital literacy curriculum to ensure there is rigorous focus on online safety across all stages of the school. In addition, they have arranged for the community Police Officer to lead a session with P6/7 children about the dangers and consequences of inappropriate use of digital platforms.

[Redacted]. They used 'Friendship Matters' a six week programme to promote positive peer relationships amongst girls. The programme has supported the girls to understand the importance of friendship and what it means to be a good friend. Since implementing the programme, staff report a significant reduction in the number of falls out the girls now experience.

In the pre-questionnaires, almost all children answered that they understand what bullying is. 56% of children report they have experienced bullying in school at some point. However, children and staff reported in the focus groups that there is no bullying at West Barns PS. As a result staff plan to further explore the definition of bullying with children and continue to promote positive and respectful relationships with peers.

Staff ensure children's right to privacy throughout the investigation process. This applies to children who have both demonstrated bullying behaviours and those who have experienced

bullying. Staff are responsive to relationship issues which arise in class or the playground. They have a restorative conversation between children and support children to discuss what has happened and how to move forward positively. Children and staff both shared they found this approach successful. Parents and other relevant stakeholders are kept well informed about actions taken in relation to incidents of bullying and ongoing monitoring by staff throughout the process.

The headteacher is very keen to gather the views of all relevant stakeholders and include them in a range of quality assurance activities. The headteacher has identified a next step for the school is to ensure safeguarding processes, including bullying are monitored and evaluated regularly. The headteacher plans to review their positive relationships policy in partnership with children, parents and staff this session.

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

Staff at West Barns PS actively promote positive relationships and work in partnership with children, parents and partners to prevent bullying behaviour at school. They implement a range of approaches to promote and foster respectful relationships. The school's values and UNCRC class charter's guide and influence behaviour and daily interactions across the school. At the beginning of a new school session, class teachers use the 'Circle' resource. They complete the classroom audit in partnership with the children in their class to ensure that classrooms are inclusive and supports improved achievement and attainment for all children. In partnership, the teacher and children create an action plan as required to improve identified areas within their classroom. The action plans will be reviewed during the school year.

The majority of children report that they learn about bullying regularly in school. Staff implement a range of universal strategies to promote positive relationships and an anti-bullying school culture. Children participate in anti-bullying week annually and the whole school has implemented a health and wellbeing programme to support children in developing their resilience. At a recent anti-bullying assembly, children and staff have made a pledge to promote an anti-bully culture at West Barns PS. The children have identified they would like to have anti-bully ambassadors in the school. The headteacher is looking into the training delivered by the 'Diana Award' to support with this. Participation in the programme will equip the children and key staff with the tools to transform their school's approach to anti-bullying and create a safer, kinder school community. The 'Anti-bullying Ambassadors' will lead whole school initiatives to raise awareness through pro-active strategies including anti-bullying focus week, assemblies and posters displayed around the school. The 'Anti-bullying Ambassadors' will be able to support peers in the playground when they have fall outs with their friends.

Staff implement a range of appropriate and well-judged interventions. These interventions support children who have been involved in bullying incidents or require support to have positive relationships with others. For example, daily check-ins and participating in a friendship group.

All staff report that relevant professional learning takes place regularly for both universal and targeted approaches. This includes nurture training, Zones of Regulation, Building Resilience programme and promoting positive relationships. Professional learning supports a consistent approach across the school. Almost all staff report that this improves their ability to be responsive to the needs of children.

The headteacher plans to include a refresher of the schools anti-bullying policy at the beginning of each new school session. She will do this in partnership with the schools promoting positive relationships policy. For new staff joining during the school year, the anti-bullying policy will form part of their induction programme.

Effective practice worth sharing if applicable

Case study to follow re friendship targeted intervention [Redacted]

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).