

## 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

### Example of good practice

<b>Establishment/Setting</b>	
<b>Date/time of visit</b>	
<b>HMI</b>	
<b>Date ROV submitted</b>	

#### What did the school do well?

In 2018, senior leaders identified an increase in gender-based bullying. As a result, staff have worked very effectively to address all issues of homophobic behaviour, particularly in friendship groups. Initially, senior leaders linked successfully with local authority colleagues to gather the views and perceptions of staff and their understanding of homophobia. The audit showed a lack of understanding and confidence in addressing sensitive issues such as homophobic language.

Staff report the very positive impact that professional learning, delivered by a third sector partner, had on them being able to address their personal feelings and possible stereotypical behaviours. As a result, staff know and demonstrate very well how to address homophobic behaviours in ways suitable for all learners.

#### How did the school undertake this work?

Learners and staff shared experiences of gender-based bullying with all staff. Senior leaders created working groups to look at different aspects of gender-based and homophobic bullying in the school using the data available on SEEMiS. Staff made changes to the classroom environment, providing worry boxes and gender-based displays. These colourful displays promote positive messages about diversity and difference.

Staff in working groups researched national guidance and publications to increase their knowledge of gender issues, homophobic behaviours and discriminatory language. Teachers then developed a progressive programme to address gender-based learning as part of an extended health and wellbeing curriculum. They reviewed existing school resources about gender issues and identified gaps in materials suitable for all children. Over time, senior leaders have invested significantly to increase suitable resources to meet the needs of all children, including those with additional support needs.

The school library has an attractive and very informative selection of fiction books which address lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues. Children are enjoying reading about these fictional characters in school and at home with their parents. Learners talk openly and knowledgeably with each other and staff about differences and diversity. Older children are very confident in challenging any language in the playground that may offend others.

Regular and well received assemblies are planned monthly to address different aspect of diversity and discriminatory behaviours, including using appropriate gender-based language. Children can describe how using homophobic language might make their friends feel and can skilfully describe alterative phases which are more acceptable.

### What was the impact of this practice and in what way did this make a difference for children and young people in the school?

Staff tell us that their knowledge and confidence in addressing gender and diversity issues has increased. They challenge behaviours in lessons, in the playground and at break times effectively and timeously. Staff considered how to avoid language that could reinforce gender stereotypes. For example, staff promote diversity as part of the day-to-day life of the school.

### How do you know? What evidence do you have?

Senior leaders evaluate the impact of the changes made to the health and wellbeing curriculum to address gender stereotypes and homophobic language every term. In 2022, SEEMiS data shows that homophobic language has almost been eradicated across the school. Through lesson observations, senior leaders observe the increasing confidence staff are demonstrating as they address gender stereotyping in lessons.

Senior leaders have amended policies to reflect the school's refreshed approach to gender and diversity issues. Working with parents, senior leaders revised the whole school approach to how staff address homophobic incidents.

Children from an early age tell us they can identify and question gender stereotypes. They know that all sports activities, including the football and rugby teams are available to everyone. They talk positively about lessons in health and wellbeing, drama and music which help them to explore gender and identity issues in a safe environment. Learners tell us that they feel confident to talk about gender openly with staff. They know they can challenge confidently any homophobic language in the playground.