



EMBRACING
difference **ENDING**
BULLYING

Research and
Impact Report 2024



**Diversity
Role Models**

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the many people who gave their time, insights and expertise to support this research and evaluation, including all the students and school staff who contributed to the research over the three years.

Further thanks goes to the students, staff and Role Models who took part or helped organise the evaluation focus groups.

Additional recognition is extended to the staff and trustees of Diversity Role Models who helped to shape the findings and the recommendations in the co-production sessions.

We would also like to thank Jac Bastian, Chief Education Officer, Lindsey Parr, Programme Manager and Education Manager, Luis La Fauci, Education Officer, and Darius Gervinkas, Education Officer, who provided invaluable advice, guidance and input throughout the development of this research and evaluation report.

Contents

CEO Introduction _____ [6](#)

Executive Summary _____ [8](#)

Introduction _____ [17](#)

[1.1 This Report - Report Overview](#)

[1.2 About Diversity Role Models](#)

[1.3 Project Overview](#)

[1.4 Project Deliverables](#)

[1.5 Methodology](#)

[1.6 Limitations](#)

Section A – The Research _____ [29](#)

[2.1 The Survey Respondents](#)

[2.2 Survey Findings - Overview](#)

[2.2.1 Most Prevalent Forms Of Bullying](#)

[2.2.2 Main Drivers Of Bullying](#)

[2.2.3 Policies And Processes In Schools](#)

[2.2.4 Curriculum And Education](#)

[2.2.5 Relationship Between Prevalence Of Bullying And Regularity
Of Teaching Of Protected Characteristics](#)

[2.2.6 Values And Visibility](#)

[2.2.7 The Three-Year View](#)

[2.2.8 Barriers To Implementing Change](#)

[2.3 Reflections](#)

Section B: The Evaluation 81

[3.1 The Evaluation Methodology And Participants](#)

[3.2 The Evaluation Findings - Summary](#)

[3.3 Feedback](#)

[3.3.1 Staff Feedback On Diversity Role Models' Training](#)

[3.3.2 Staff Feedback On The Student Workshops](#)

[3.3.3 Primary Student Feedback On The Workshops](#)

[3.4 Outcomes](#)

[3.4.1 Primary Student Pledges Made In The Workshop](#)

[3.4.2 The Staff View On Outcomes](#)

[3.4.3 Lasting Changes – Length Of Time Since Intervention](#)

[3.4.4 Staff Outcomes – Post-intervention](#)

[3.4.5 Long-term Outcomes For Students](#)

[3.4.6 Impact Of The Role Model Story](#)

[3.5 Learning](#)

[3.6 Further Support Needed By Schools](#)

[3.7 The Three-Year View](#)

[3.8 Case Study Schools](#)

[3.9 Reflections](#)

Section C: Summary & Recommendations 119

[4.1 Overall Research And Evaluation Conclusions](#)

[4.2 Recommendations](#)

Appendices 126

[5.1 References](#)

[5.2 Embracing Difference, Ending Bullying Theory Of Change](#)

[5.3 Additional Data On Schools Participating In The Research](#)

Contact Details 132

CEO Introduction

Diversity Role Models' mission is to end bullying and enable every young person to know they are valued and supported, regardless of their difference. The publication of this independent evaluation and impact report reaffirms the need for our workshops to create more inclusive school environments.

The report is the culmination of a three-year programme funded by the Department for Education. During this time, our exceptional team and volunteer role models, all of whom have lived experience of bullying, have delivered dynamic staff training sessions in 300+ schools and 290 interactive workshops.

Throughout the report, we are reminded of the difficulties faced in schools by students with a marginalised identity who are perceived as “different”. This group consistently reported much higher levels of bullying.

Another notable finding of the report is that school staff and governors generally have a much more favourable perception of their schools' environment and the bullying levels than the students themselves. We also found that bullying based on sexual orientation and gender expression significantly increased from primary to secondary school.

This publication offers much more to reflect on. However, we need to continue working collaboratively with students, school staff, and parents to understand better the day-to-day experience of students with marginalised identities or protected characteristics.

One of my favourite feedback quotes from the report, given to us by a student following a Diversity Role Models workshop, was, "*Strong people stand up for themselves, but the strongest stand up for others.*" This perfectly articulates the desired impact and outcome of our workshops, the standard of which was consistently rated as extremely high.

We're incredibly proud of our achievements over the past three years. I would like to thank the Department for Education for funding the project and the NCVO for their independent evaluation. I would also like to thank our team, volunteer role models, and all the schools we work with. Without you, we wouldn't be able to positively change young people's lives or fulfil our vision of creating a world where everyone embraces diversity and can thrive.

Alex Feis-Bryce, CEO



Executive Summary

The Project

The Department for Education selected Diversity Role Models in 2021 to implement the Embracing Difference, Ending Bullying programme over three years.

The aim of the programme was to support schools across England to tackle and prevent all forms of bullying. Through training interventions, student workshops, Role Model stories and multimedia resources, the programme targeted staff and students to enhance their understanding of diversity, differences, and protected characteristics.

Whole school research was undertaken to better understand each school's situation, tailor training and create action plans for each school. The research forms the basis of the first part of this report.

The programme targeted 15,000 staff and 4,500 students.



EMBRACING
difference **ENDING**
BULLYING

NCVO And The Report

Diversity Role Models contracted [National Council for Voluntary Organisations](#) (NCVO) as its learning partner for the first two years of the project and then to offer support for as an external evaluator in the third and final year of its Embracing Difference, Ending Bullying project.

This report presents findings from pre-intervention school surveys (research) and post-intervention evaluation, in addition to recommendations for future initiatives.

Methodology

Section A presents research findings based on surveys of school stakeholders, offering a current view on bullying in English schools using data from the third year and comparing trends with the first and second years.

Section B outlines evaluation findings from tools such as staff evaluations, post-intervention surveys, and youth focus groups. Analysis utilised R and Excel for quantitative data and MAXQDA for qualitative analysis, maintaining anonymity throughout the research and evaluation process.

The Findings

Most Prevalent Forms Of Bullying Summary

In primary schools, the predominant forms of reported bullying revolved around looks (15%) and perceived differences more broadly (14%).

Bullying escalated in secondary schools. For secondary students, the most prevalent forms were: looks (34%), sexuality (32%), gender expression – i.e. not behaving like a typical boy or girl (31%) or for being a girl (31%).

The trends in prevalence were similar across the three years of data collection, suggesting these were persistent problems.

Secondary students from marginalised identities and/or those with multiple and intersecting identities consistently reported higher levels of bullying.

Senior levels of school governance - senior leadership team (SLT) and governors - tended to perceive their schools more positively than students or staff. 90% of SLT respondents and 93% of school governors told us that bullying was rare in their school, while 89% of SLT respondents and 93% of school governors said that prejudiced language was also rare.

Around half of the parent and carer respondents stated they were not sure, or they disagreed that bullying was rare, and 59% felt that prejudiced language was rare in their school. The views on these issues worsened with secondary-school-age parent and carers.

There was also a mismatch between the views of students, parents and staff and SLT and governors on how safe students feel in schools. Only 58% of primary students reported feeling safe in their schools. By contrast, 83% of governors felt all students were safe.

Staff attributed bullying to: social media | parental attitudes and behaviours | challenges related to home and friendships | lack of empathy and awareness among students of the impact of their words and actions

Policies And Processes

Students had mixed views on whether their classmates understood that their words could hurt others (59% for primary students and 64% for secondary students). There was a slight increase in understanding across the school stages, although there was much room for improvement across all school stages.

1 in 5 primary and secondary students said teachers didn't inform them, or they weren't sure if teachers regularly informed them, about their school's anti-bullying rules.

Nearly 1 in 4 (23%) secondary students said they didn't, or weren't sure they knew, how to report bullying at school.

Among the secondary students and their parents and carers, there were many open-ended comments indicating a frustration with their school's response to bullying.

Conversely, staff felt they followed anti-bullying procedures. Once again, we saw a mismatch between students and staff. In this case, 1 in 3 secondary students did not feel that teachers consistently helped when someone was being bullied.

Similar to staff, senior leaders and governors tended to score their schools more favourably than students in terms of effectiveness of their policies and procedures, with the exception of reporting of bullying where governors felt more work was needed.

26% of parent/carers were not aware of their school's anti-bullying and behaviour policies and a further 24% said they only 'somewhat agreed they were familiar with the policies'. These results suggest there is work for schools to do to further communicate their anti-bullying policies to parent/carers.

76% of parent/carers agreed that their school would respond appropriately to any incidence of bullying and, of the 76%, 21% were 'somewhat agrees'. Again, this suggests schools need to do more work to build trust in parents that they will respond appropriately to bullying.

Curriculum And Education

Staff and SLT respondents generally felt they delivered a diverse curriculum (86%) and that their schools regularly taught LGBTQ+, race, religion and culture, disability and gender equality.

However, both primary and secondary students disagreed with staff, particularly regarding the regularity of LGBTQ+ and disability teaching. This discrepancy was, on the whole, even more evident among students from marginalised identities.

The analysis demonstrated that where schools focus on delivering a diverse curriculum, students were less likely to say that students were bullied related to protected characteristics.

Values And Visibility

Overall, students leaned towards being positive on visibility of diversity in their schools with 83% of primary and 76% of secondary students agreeing their schools celebrated difference.

Primary school students were more likely to tell a teacher if they heard something bad, but this dropped from 81% to 65% between primary and secondary.

Staff, governors and SLT respondents presented a positive view of visibility and values in their schools, particularly SLT who almost unanimously agreed that their schools' values respect diversity, they regularly celebrate difference through the year and that they make reasonable adjustments for those with protected characteristics to help manage their education.

There is more work to be done in schools to develop student-led equality groups or anti-bullying ambassadors. Only 64% of SLT stated their school had such student-led groups.

The Three-Year View – Summary

Across the three-years of research, bullying related to differences, looks, sexuality and gender (being a girl; for secondary students) were consistently reported as most prevalent among our samples.

Secondary school students were consistently more likely to report a greater prevalence of bullying across all forms compared to their primary counterparts.

Staff perspectives were more in agreement with students related to bullying based on protected characteristics over the years. However, there were gaps when comparing the staff view to that of students from marginalised identities. Staff also reported that prejudiced language and other forms of bullying were more common in secondary schools and less in primary.

Students consistently identified disability and LGBTQ+ as the protected characteristics which were least covered by the school curriculum across the three years. Staff also identified LGBTQ+ as the least taught area over the three years.

Barriers Related To Policies, Processes And Prevalence

The most frequent barriers staff reported facing in relation to implementation of policies, processes and prevalence of teaching a diver curriculum were:

time and resource constraints

lack of time for stakeholder engagement and follow up

resistance to more diverse curriculum from some parents, carers and staff

negative attitudes and languages from the community filtered into schools

inconsistent implementation of anti-bullying policies and procedures

lack of confidence from some teachers to teach certain topics or embed diversity in their subject area.

The Evaluation

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive throughout the evaluation, with respondents consistently praising the training, the facilitator, Role Models and activities, and 96% + stating these elements were good or excellent.

89% of staff reported they had increased confidence and were motivated to effect changes at both a personal and school level.

88% of staff stated the training enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the protected characteristics and deepened their understanding of the impacts of prejudice and bullying.

The training galvanised staff to revisit and review their anti-bullying policies and procedures, equipping them with new tools, resources and confidence to tackle bullying.

The Role Model stories resonated deeply, serving as a powerful instrument in deepening understanding of difference and the impact of bullying, fostering empathy and challenging stereotypes.

Students were also inspired by the workshops, committing to be upstanders and embracing difference.

Post-intervention evaluation showed sustained improvements in understanding diversity and difference (100% agreement) and confidence regarding protected characteristics (97% agreement), among other strong outcomes.

There was demand for additional diversity and anti-bullying training, with suggestions to extend to parents and carers.

Suggested improvements included more time for the session and exercises, further adaptation for younger participants and for SEND schools, ongoing support, widening the protected characteristics covered and extending the training to parents and carers.

Recommendations

Learning And Recommendations For Diversity Role Models:

Diversity Role Models should continue delivering its broader anti-bullying initiative focused on protected characteristics in schools, in addition to its core LGBTQ+ work. Examining the stark findings of levels of bullying in English secondary schools combined with the positive evaluation and lasting outcomes of the project, there is clear need for the training.

Diversity Role Models may wish to find additional ways to promote its wider programme within schools so as to reach more teachers, non-teaching staff, students, and parents and carers.

Further consideration should be given to adapting the programme for early years, younger primary students and SEND schools.

Longer workshops in schools may be beneficial, allowing adequate time for exercises and more time for reflections. In-person is preferable to online, where possible.

Diversity Role Models needs to continue focusing on dissemination and educating staff about policies and processes during staff workshops.

Learning And Recommendations For Schools And The Wider Sector:

Schools need to improve their response to bullying, led by input from students, and enhance consultation and engagement with parents and carers.

There is also some specific work to do regarding a sense from younger students that there may be repercussions from other students if they report bullying (referred to as 'snitching' by the students cited in the report).

Schools need to prioritise data-driven approaches, including encouraging reporting of bullying by students and implementing robust tracking mechanisms. Improved reporting of bullying incidents is crucial, especially considering the disconnect between senior leadership and governors and the lived experience of students.

Exploring and bridging the gap between students, parents, carers, and school staff is essential, with a particular emphasis on centering student voice through initiatives such as setting up equality groups.

We acknowledge the time and resource constraints faced by schools. This underscores the importance of external expertise, like that provided by Diversity Role Models, in offering practical solutions.



Introduction

This chapter provides an outline of the report, an introduction to Diversity Role Models and its Embracing Difference, Ending Bullying project, and an overview of the methodology used for both the research and evaluation elements of the report.

1.1 This Report

This report was authored by NCVO. NCVO has been supporting Diversity Role Models as its learning partner since the start of the Embracing Difference, Ending Bullying project (2021-2024).

NCVO supported Diversity Role Models to develop a theory of change for the project (see Appendix ii p.129), to develop an evaluation framework, to conduct a review of existing data collection tools, as well as to carry out their own data analysis and reporting for the first two years of the project.

In the third and final year of the project, NCVO was contracted by Diversity Role Models to run an external review of the research and evaluation data and to carry out additional youth and Role Model focus groups, as well as to complete the analysis and reporting. Diversity Role Models also conducted some data collection and contributed to the report through key staff interviews, co-creation workshops and feedback on report iterations.

Section A of the report sets out the findings from research conducted by Diversity Role Models (using surveys of senior leadership teams and other school stakeholders) into the state of bullying in England's schools today. It draws on data from the third year of the research to offer a current overview of bullying in English schools with additional analysis to compare and aggregate over all the three years, particularly on prevalence of bullying and frequency of protected characteristics being taught.

Section B of the report sets out the findings of the evaluation of the project itself, combining data from evaluation forms from the training on the day the training was run and some from the post-intervention surveys, written interviews and focus groups, exploring how long-lasting any changes were.

Section C of the report summarises the overall learning from the research and project delivery and makes recommendations for Diversity Role Models' future work.

1.1.1. A Note On Definitions

We use the term **marginalised** in this report to refer to students who may face social, economic, or political exclusion, due to factors such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, gender identity and/or disability, among other grounds. These individuals may experience limited access to opportunities and participation in society because of these factors and face a risk of prejudice-based bullying.

In the survey, we collected demographic data on these factors and were able to compare the experiences of those from these backgrounds *against all students or all others*.

Usualising: in the context of our report means integrating diversity and difference into the curriculum, educational materials and practices to promote acceptance and inclusivity in the day-to-day of school life. It does not mean that these topics are always explored in depth, but rather that different identities are represented throughout the school.

Actualising: is the step after usualisation - once students are familiar with something, they can then study it without distraction. Actualisation signifies the integration of knowledge into everyday reality, building deeper understanding and engagement. The concepts of usualisation and actualisation are drawn from Schools' Out (2024).

Protected Characteristics are the grounds on which it is unlawful to discriminate against someone under the Equality Act 2010. The Equality and Human Rights Commission sets these out as:

Age | Disability | Gender Reassignment | Sexual Orientation | Sex | Religion or Belief | Marriage and Civil Partnership | Pregnancy and Maternity | Race

Ofsted inspectors gather evidence from schools on how they promote equality and pupils' understanding of protected characteristics (Ofsted, 2023).

1.2 About Diversity Role Models

Diversity Role Models is a registered charity whose **vision is a world where everyone embraces diversity and can thrive.**

Their mission is to **end bullying based on sexual orientation and gender identity in schools and promote understanding and acceptance of broader individual differences.** They work collaboratively to create inclusive learning environments where young people know they are valued and supported, regardless of their differences.

Their experienced team of educators and volunteer Role Models deliver in-person and online workshops for students in schools and colleges. They have also developed training sessions for school staff, governors and parents and carers. Each session is underpinned by the power of storytelling, utilising volunteer Role Models who speak openly about their lived experiences of difference and bullying.

Since their formation in 2011, they have worked directly with **1,000+ schools** in the UK. They have delivered workshops directly to **200,000+ young people** and trained **24,000+ school staff members***. In addition to delivering workshops, they develop educational resources for teachers, governors, parents/carers, and communities.

*This data was accurate at the point of writing (02.04.2024).

1.3 Project Overview

In 2021, Diversity Role Models was selected by the Department for Education to deliver a programme supporting schools to take a stand against all forms of bullying: **Embracing Difference, Ending Bullying**. The project was delivered over three years, and this report presents both the findings from surveys of schools conducted before Diversity Role Models' intervention (the research) and the evaluation of the project's impact, post-intervention (the evaluation).

Across the three years, Diversity Role Models supported schools in England by delivering training interventions, student workshops and resources, with the aim of creating more inclusive school cultures by developing staff and student understanding of bullying, its impact and what they and their schools can do to tackle and prevent it.

The training focused on age and developmentally-appropriate teaching of diversity, difference and protected characteristics, supported by schools revising internal policies and processes, and embedding a visible celebration of difference into the culture and curriculum of the school, with the intention of ensuring that all school members feel empowered to address bullying.

Following the training, teaching staff had access to multimedia classroom resources, including personal lived experience (Role Model) stories, which aimed to enhance empathy and to foster inclusion.

The programme aimed to work with 15,000 staff and 4,500 students over three years.

1.4 Project Deliverables

The following table summarises the key deliverables of the project.

Before Diversity Role Models' intervention, key school stakeholders were surveyed to gain insights into their school. This included surveys of:

Students | Staff | Governors | Parents/Carers | SLT Self-Assessment

The data collected was integral to the project and enabled Diversity Role Models to support the Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) through the development of a:

Tailored Action Plan | Detailed Data Report, highlighting key findings from all stakeholders.

Staff and student trainings were adapted and tailored to each school to reflect the findings of these surveys. The data from these surveys also forms the basis of the research chapter in this report.

The staff training session was designed around Diversity Role Models' four pillars for the prevention of bullying:	Policies & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update • Disseminate
	Curriculum & Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update • Embed diversity and challenge stereotypes
	Values & Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared values • Celebrate difference
	Training & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular training • Regular reviews of progress and data

Table 1. Key deliverables of the project

The training aimed to inform and advise across these four key areas to empower schools to prevent bullying, with a particular focus on protected characteristics. Prejudiced language was a key part of the training, with ‘real life’ scenarios included, to give staff an opportunity to build confidence and explore best practice in response to such incidents. Several resources were shared in the training, allowing staff to explore the importance of ‘usualising’ and ‘actualising’ difference.

<p>Student Workshops</p>	<p>For those selected to receive student workshops, Diversity Role Models offered developmentally-appropriate lessons for Year 1 to Year 6. Workshops covered different families and respectful relationships to raise awareness of different forms of bullying and stereotyping based on protected characteristics.</p> <p>Workshops supported schools to meet the Government’s guidance on relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education (Gov.UK, 2021) through encouraging respect for others. All sessions included one of the Role Models who shared their lived experience relating to one or more of the protected characteristics. Workshops covered the themes of celebrating difference, stereotyping, and being an upstander.</p> <p>Workshops were allocated on a first-come, first-serve basis where it was geographically possible for the team to deliver.</p>
<p>Post-Training Packs</p>	<p>Each participating school received a tailored, detailed Action Plan as part of their Post-Training Pack, in addition to a bank of resources to support them in making positive changes towards inclusion. This was formulated from analysis of the data Diversity Role Models received from school stakeholders, and key findings from the SLT Self-Assessment and feedback forms shared in staff training sessions.</p>

<p>Multimedia Resources</p>	<p>Diversity Role Models videos, developed throughout the project, were shared for schools to use following the training. They were a free resource for any school in England.</p> <p>The videos were designed to be a tool to foster discussion on identity, the impact of bullying, how to embrace difference, the importance of equality and the dangers of stereotyping.</p> <p>Resources can be found here.</p> <p>Since 2023, 81 schools have requested additional training or workshops from Diversity Role Models, beyond the DfE grant</p>
<p>Best Practice Guide</p>	<p>A Best Practice Guide was produced every year of the project, drawing on the findings from the research and evaluation. These guides were distributed to schools Diversity Role Models worked with, prospective schools, and other educational establishments, as well as being made publicly available via Diversity Role Models' website and social media platforms.</p>
<p>Steering Group</p>	<p>Throughout the development, delivery and evaluation of the project, Diversity Role Models regularly consulted its steering groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Education Steering Group was made up of school staff and equality, diversity and inclusion specialists who provided strategic support and advice to Diversity Role Models. ii. The Student Voice Group was made up of secondary students from a range of schools across England. Attendees were often members of student-led equality groups within schools. Representatives from schools Diversity Role Models delivered to in the project joined the groups and they met termly.

1.4.1 What Was Delivered

The following table summarises project delivery against targets over the last 3 years, and demonstrates that **the total number of schools, staff and student workshops and the total number of students all exceeded targets.**

Table 2. Project targets

	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	TOTAL	TARGET	+ / -
Total number of schools	55	152	100	307	300	↗
Total number of staff workshops	55	152	100	307	300	↗
Total number of staff	1606	5842	3164	10,612	15,000	↘
Total number of student workshops	41	122	127	290	180	↗
Total number of students	1505	3588	3342	8,435	4,500	↗
Multimedia resources	15 videos 10 resources	30 videos 15 resources	20 videos 10 resources	65 videos 35 resources	65 videos 35 resources	→

Each school typically received 1 staff training and for those who had student workshops they received between 3-6 student workshops.

The targets for total staff number were not met. This was a target area both Diversity Role Models and the DfE were aware that they would not meet throughout the project. The number of staff able to attend was not as high as expected at the point of writing the bid. Further, delivery included a higher proportion of primary schools as well as more rural and small-town schools than initially planned for, meaning smaller staff numbers. This is something for Diversity Role Models to consider in future bids.

This table does not capture schools who expressed an interest in more training. Since 2023 (when the team started collecting data on this), 81 schools have requested additional training or workshops from Diversity Role Models, beyond the term of the DfE grant.

1.5 Methodology

Section A provides an overview of the research findings which are based on the data collected through surveys of school stakeholders. We firstly present the data collected during the third year of the project, to offer a current view on bullying in English schools. We then draw on data from the first and second years of the project in order to compare the data trends.

Section B provides an overview of the evaluation findings which are based on the data collected through the evaluation tools including evaluation forms with staff, post-intervention surveys and youth focus groups.

While the [research and evaluation findings](#) for the first year of the project were published in 2022, the findings of the Year 2 evaluation were written up and shared with the Department for Education but not published by Diversity Role Models as this focused on the evaluation only.

In order to analyse both the research and evaluation data, we used R, a statistical programming language, and Excel for the quantitative analysis, and MAXQDA software for the qualitative analysis.

At points in the presentation findings, we split out the views of primary and secondary school staff where we considered there were relevant differences.

All surveys, bar the SLT self-assessment, were anonymised and additional identifiers were removed from any quotes and case studies to uphold anonymity throughout the research and evaluation.

1.6 Limitations

The main limitations in the research and evaluation of this programme relate to a possible participation bias and low response rates.

Firstly, Diversity Role Models advertises its training offer widely and schools voluntarily choose to take part. Consequently, as a starting point, the sample of schools in this research wished to focus on diversity and anti-bullying work, a leaning that might not be representative of all schools.

Secondly, survey completion rates varied considerably, with some schools not participating at all and variations in the number of respondents from school to school and across stakeholder groups. Where response rates were lower, for example among governors and parent/carers, responses may tend towards individuals who felt more strongly about the issue of bullying and/or diversity training.

There is a further consideration when exploring respondents' attitudes in any research - respondents' responses may not always accurately reflect the true extent of bullying due to their personal unconscious bias, prejudice, or if they are not affected themselves. Non-disabled respondents may, for example, be less aware of ableist stereotyping, and those who are not trans may not be aware of the prevalence of transphobic stereotyping or levels of transphobic bullying. We carried out additional analysis of the views of respondents from marginalised identities to explore this.

The post-intervention survey had much lower response rates than we had hoped for, resulting in findings based on a limited dataset.

Additionally, only four schools were willing to take part in the post-intervention follow-up as case studies. They exhibited some similarities including that all four schools were based in North East England. Three had relatively low deprivation scores, with Free School Meal rates of 9-13% which are below the average of 19.7% –(Gov.UK, 2023). The fourth school had a higher-than-average Free School Meal rate of 38%. Two of the case study schools were rural and two were urban. Existing evidence suggests that students eligible for Free School Meals tend to experience more bullying than those who do not (Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2023).

Schools who did not fill in the survey informed Diversity Role Models that they could not find the time or may not have had access to a device to fill in the online surveys. This was a particular issue for the students.

The implications of this are that this sample cannot be considered representative of all stakeholders in participating schools, or all schools in England. Nevertheless, it remains a relatively large dataset that provides a snapshot of bullying in some English schools, and a diverse range of experiences and learning with some interesting insights that will be useful for the wider sector.



Section A: The Research

This chapter summarises the findings of the research, based on data collected through stakeholder surveys. It draws on the most recent 2023-2024 data with additional comparison to the previous years' findings.

2.1 The Survey Respondents

2.1.1. Number Of Respondents And Schools

Diversity Role Models endeavored to survey all schools that it worked with to be able to tailor its interventions to their particular needs and to understand the state of bullying in English schools. The surveys explored school stakeholder views on the prevalence and causes of bullying, perceptions on how frequently topics such as race and LGBTQ+ are taught, policies and processes related to bullying and values and visibility of diversity in schools.

This table summarises the number of respondents and number of schools over the three years of the project.

Stakeholder group	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Senior leadership team respondents	67	151	88
No of schools	47	123	54
Governor respondents	160	383	170
No of schools	43	106	50
Staff survey respondents	908	2,538	1,485
No of schools	56	140	78

Stakeholder group	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Secondary student survey	3203 respondents	5005 respondents	2145 respondents
No of schools	30 schools	37 schools	19 schools
Primary student survey	2384 respondents	4775 respondents	2594 respondents
No of schools	34 schools	88 schools	47 schools
Parent/carer survey	1989 respondents	6009 respondents	2384 respondents
No of schools	38 schools	121 schools	56 schools

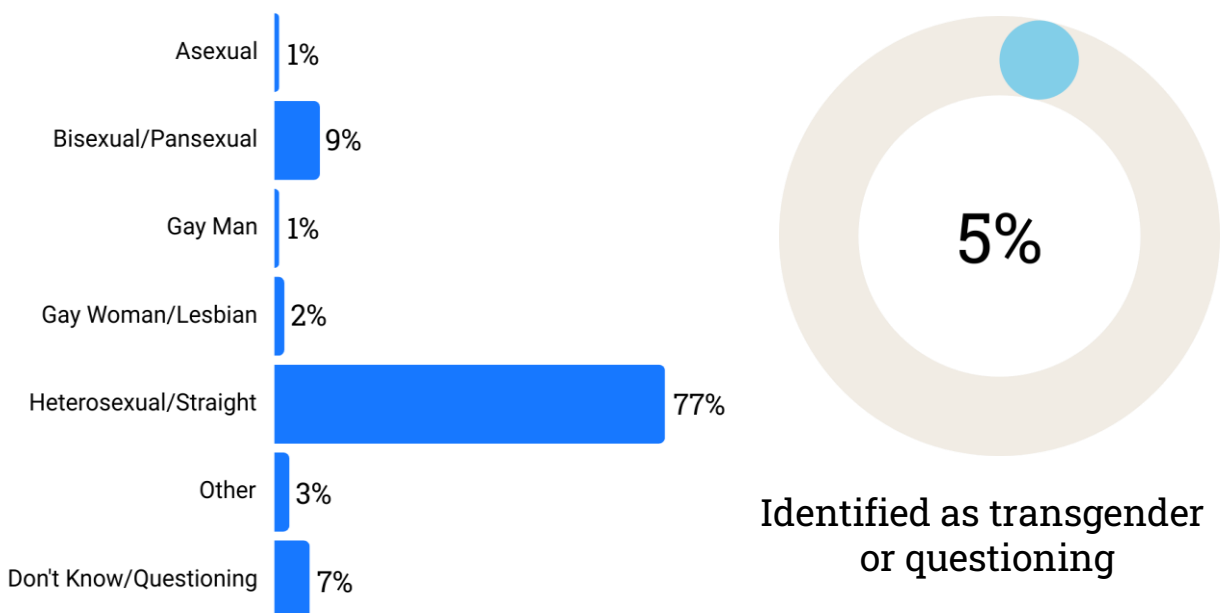
2.1.2 Secondary Student Respondent Profile – Year 3

In this section, we provide an overview of the demographic data of the secondary student respondents. This data included those in 6th form college and Further Education. We draw on secondary students only as demographic data was not collected from primary students. We present the secondary student breakdown as we wished to be able to explore the views of students according to the detail below, for example what disabled students felt about bullying of disabled students.

We received 2,594 responses from primary students (i.e. Years 3 to 6), and 2145 responses from secondary students (i.e. Years 7 to Sixth Form). We did not survey younger primary students (Key Stage 1) due to their young age, which was considered a barrier to meaningful participation.

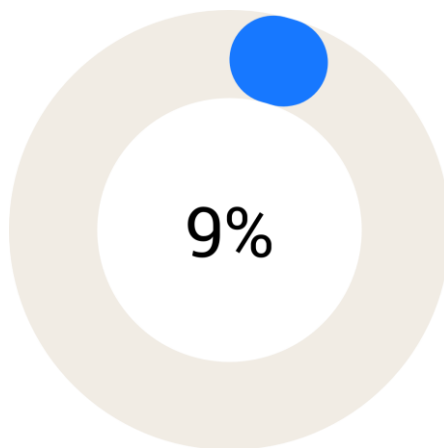
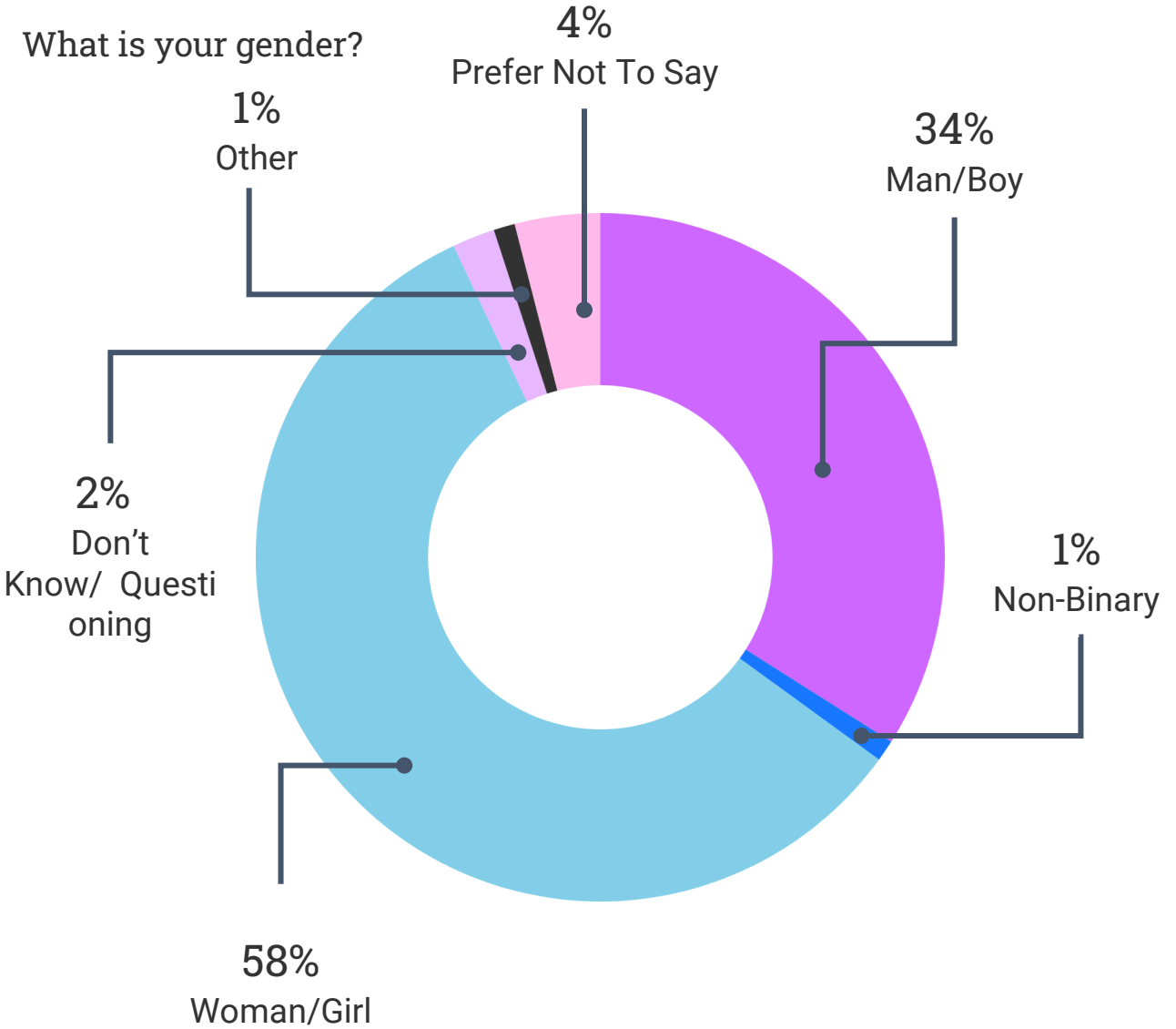
We compare against UK Government school data where possible.

What is your sexuality?



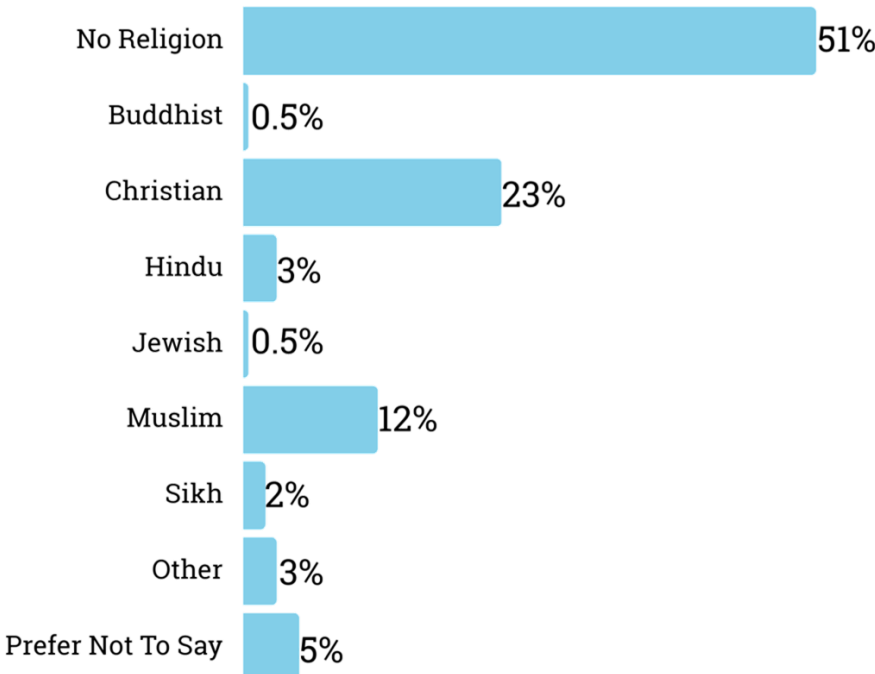
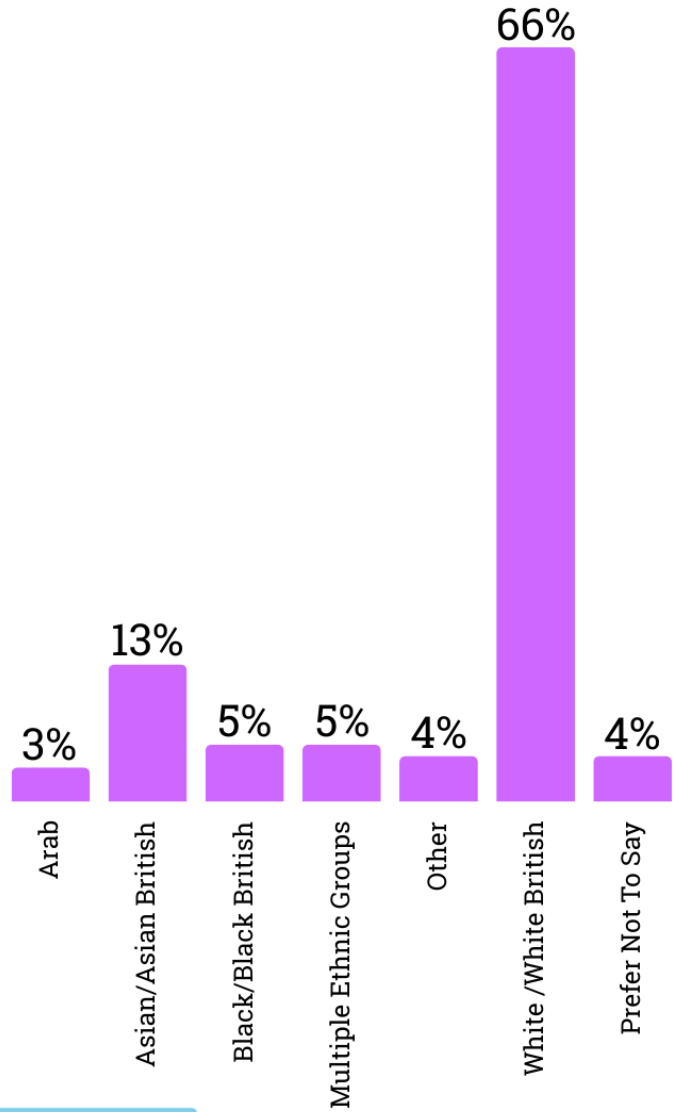
We have a slight over-representation of girls in our dataset as girls make up 49% of the national secondary school population (Gov.UK, 2023).

What is your gender?



Identified as disabled

Our respondents mirror the ethnic composition of English secondary students with 35.4% from ethnic minority backgrounds, 13% Asian/Asian British and 6% Black/Black British, for example (ibid.). We aligned our demographic section with the ethnicity categories specified in the census.



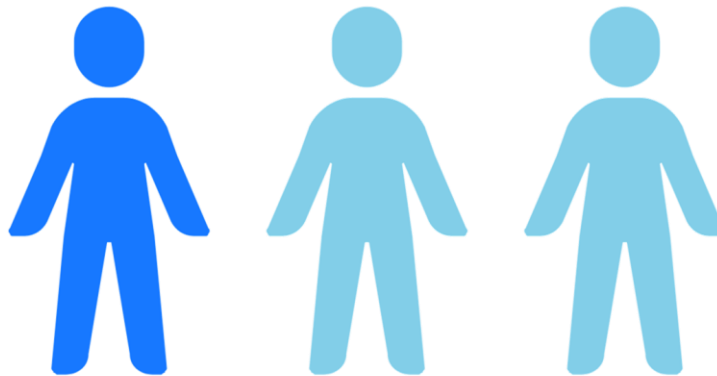
2.2 Survey Findings

In this next section, we present the findings from the stakeholder surveys.

2.2.1 Most Prevalent Forms Of Bullying - Summary

In primary schools, the predominant forms of reported bullying revolved around looks (15%) and perceived differences more broadly (14%).

Bullying escalates in secondary school. Around 1 in 3 students agreed that bullying takes place related to: looks (34%), sexuality (32%), gender expression –i.e. not behaving like a typical boy or girl (31%) or for being a girl (31%).



The trends in prevalence were similar across the three years of data collection, suggesting these were persistent problems.

Secondary students from marginalised identities and/or those with multiple and intersecting identities consistently reported higher levels of bullying.

1 in 3 secondary staff acknowledged the presence of prejudiced language, bullying based on protected characteristics and other forms of bullying.

Senior levels of school staff (senior leadership team – SLT and governors) tended to perceive their schools more positively than students or staff. 90% of SLT members and 93% of school governors told us that bullying was rare in their school, while 89% and 93% said that prejudiced language was also rare, among SLT members and school governors, respectively.

Around half of the parent and carer respondents stated they were not sure, or they disagreed that bullying was rare, and 59% that prejudiced language was rare. The views on these issues worsened with secondary school age parent and carers.

Only 58% of primary students reported feeling safe in their schools. Among parents and carers, 1 in 3 disagreed or didn't know if all students felt safe in their schools. 83% of governors felt all students were safe.

Therefore, there seemed to be a mismatch between the views of students and parents on the one hand and staff, SLT and governors on the other on the prevalence of bullying in schools.

Drivers of bullying: staff attributed bullying to social media, parental attitudes and behaviours, challenges related to home and friendships, and lack of empathy and awareness among students of the impact of their words and actions.

i. The Student Perspective

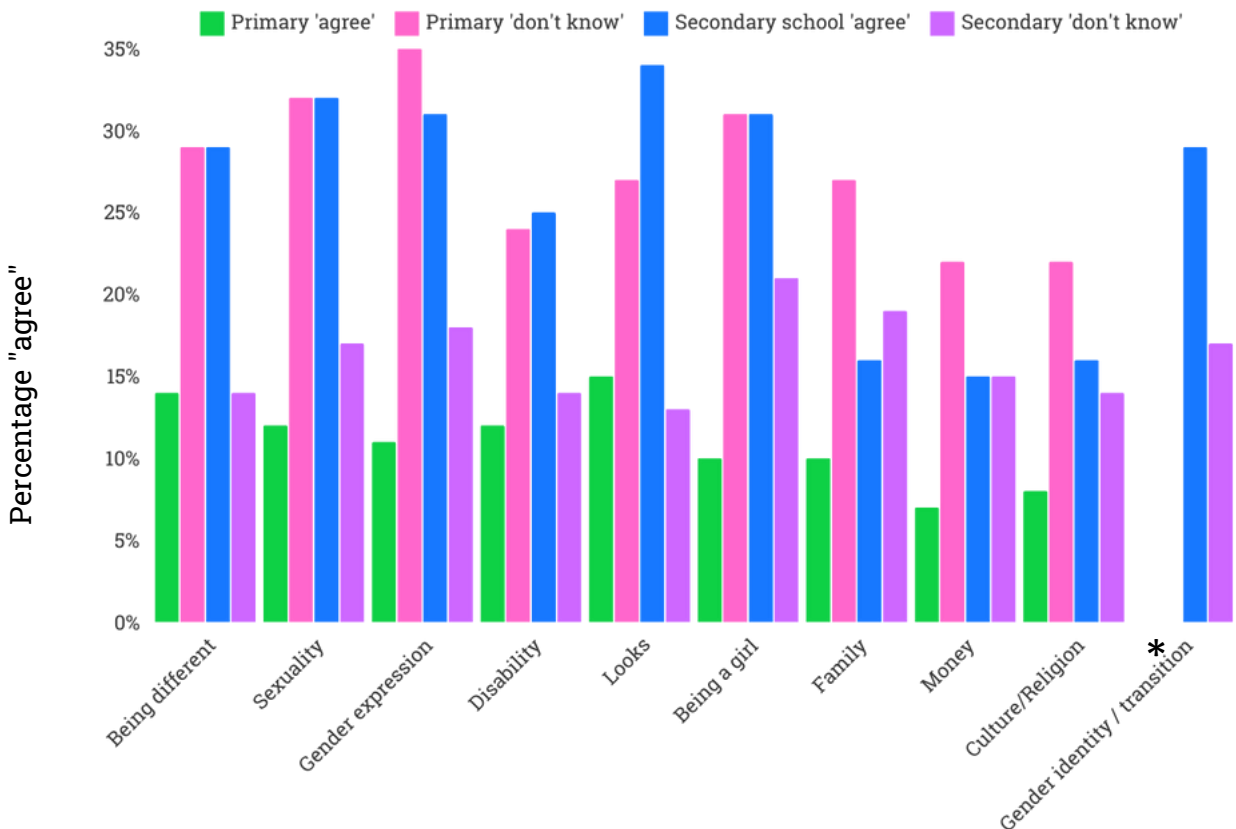
The survey shows nuances in the challenges faced by students at different educational phases. In primary schools, the predominant forms of bullying reported involve being based on looks (15%) and perceived differences more broadly (14%).

The situation in secondary schools is more sobering. Around 1 in 3 students agreed that bullying takes place related to: looks (34%), sexuality (32%), gender expression – i.e. not behaving like a "typical" girl or boy – (31%) and being a girl, for reasons boys are not (31%).

Strikingly, the number of 'Don't know' responses is high in all categories, particularly gender expression, sexuality, being a girl and being different.

There were also many examples within the qualitative comments where students commented that multiple forms of bullying took place at once.

Students were asked whether they agree that bullying takes place in their school related to...



* Not asked to Primary Students

Open-Ended Comments

The most frequent responses from the primary students' open-ended comments was that their school did not have any bullying, they were not sure or they didn't know why bullying took place.

Where there was reported bullying, there were similar trends to the findings above. The most frequent responses related to bullying based on "the way they look" including students being bullied for physical differences such as height, weight, looks and being younger.



*I've heard a lot of 'kill yourself' or saying something is 'gay' or 'you're gay if you do so and so.' These are meant as jokes or banter
(Primary student survey comment)*



Bullying based on difference was the next most frequent response. This included skin colour, being perceived as being gay and/or a lesbian, being a girl, being of a different religion, different race, bullying based on disability including bullying based on neurodivergence such as autism and ADHD; bullying for supporting a different football team and hair colour.

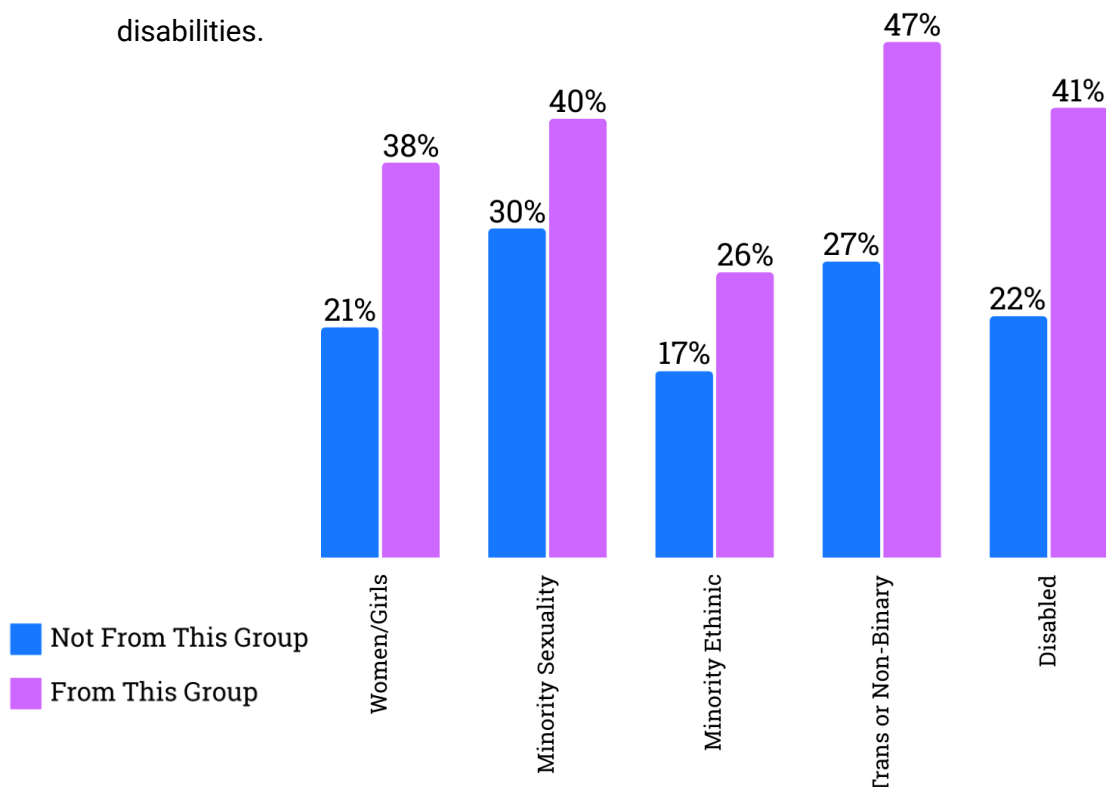
Among secondary students' open-ended responses, there was again a similar picture to the findings on the previous page, with bullying based on how someone looks emerging as the most frequent issue. This was followed by bullying based on sexuality including being perceived as being a minority sexuality, trans, on difference or perceived difference, race, skin colour, ethnicity, being a girl and religion.

ii. Students With Marginalised Identities' Perspective

Delving deeper, we explored the experiences of secondary students from marginalised identities.* This data highlights an important point that those not being bullied for a particular reason are less likely to see it happening, which means detection, action and prevention are harder to achieve.

Our data shows that:

- Girls and women in all their diversity are **81% more likely** to agree that targeted bullying takes place at their school related to gender.
- Those who were from a minoritised sexuality were **33% more likely** to agree that bullying takes place related to sexuality.
- Those from minoritised ethnicities were **53% more likely** to agree that bullying takes place related to race or ethnicity.
- Those who are trans or non-binary were **74% more likely** to agree that bullying takes place related to gender identity and/or transition. This reflects the largest gap seen through the data.
- Disabled students were **84% more likely** to agree that bullying takes place related to disabilities.



*We compared demographic-specific bullying for those who do or do not belong to that demographic (e.g. disabled is compared with non-disabled for disability-based bullying).

iii. The Parent And Carer Perspective

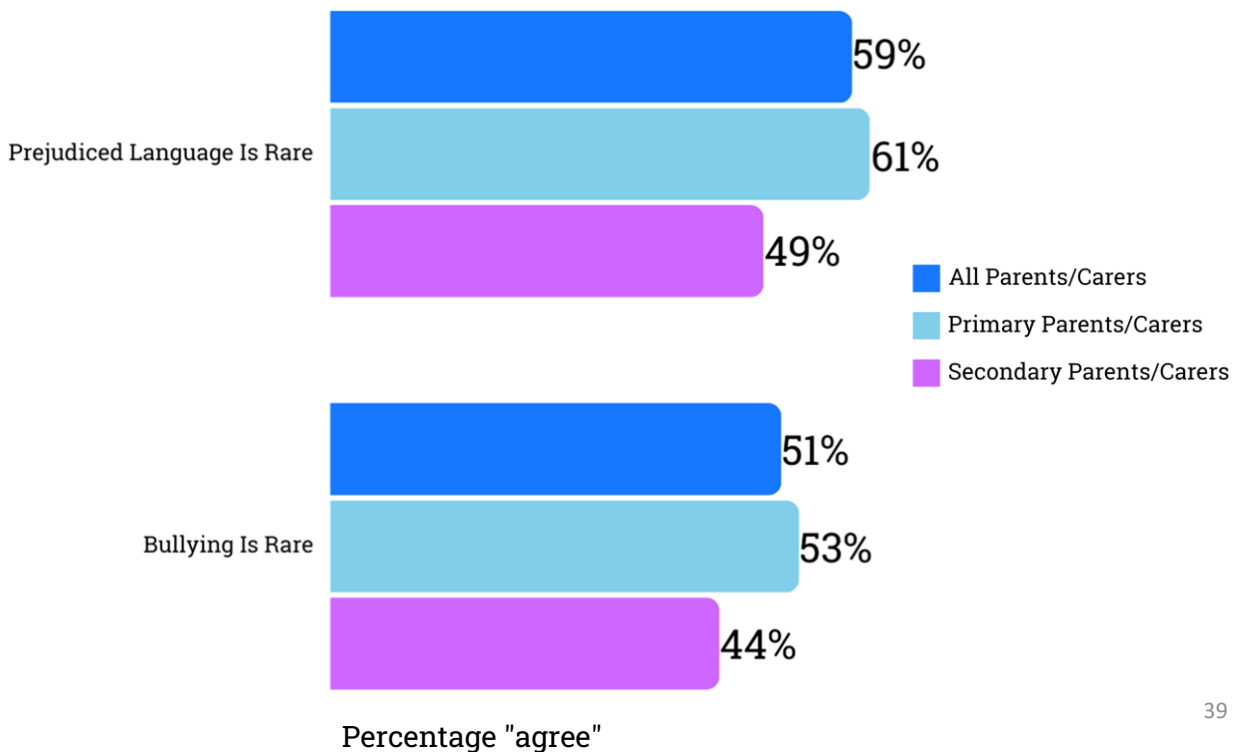
Nearly 1 in 2 parents and carers disagreed that, or did not know if, bullying was rare in their school, with a further 41% also disagreeing or not knowing if prejudiced language was rare.

While this may naturally reflect how parents are much more distanced from the school environment compared to other groups, it still underscored a critical gap in communication and awareness of bullying issues within the school community.

Nearly 1 in 2 parents/carers disagreed that, or did not know if, bullying was rare

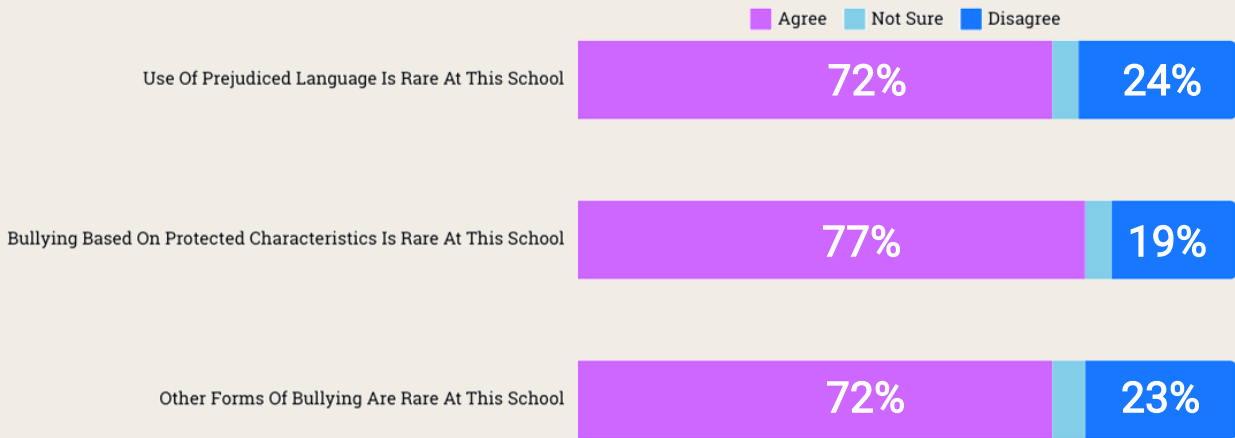
41% of parents /carers disagreed that, or did not know if, prejudiced language was rare

We carried out additional analysis to compare the view of primary against secondary parents and carers. The findings show a more negative picture from secondary parents and carers.



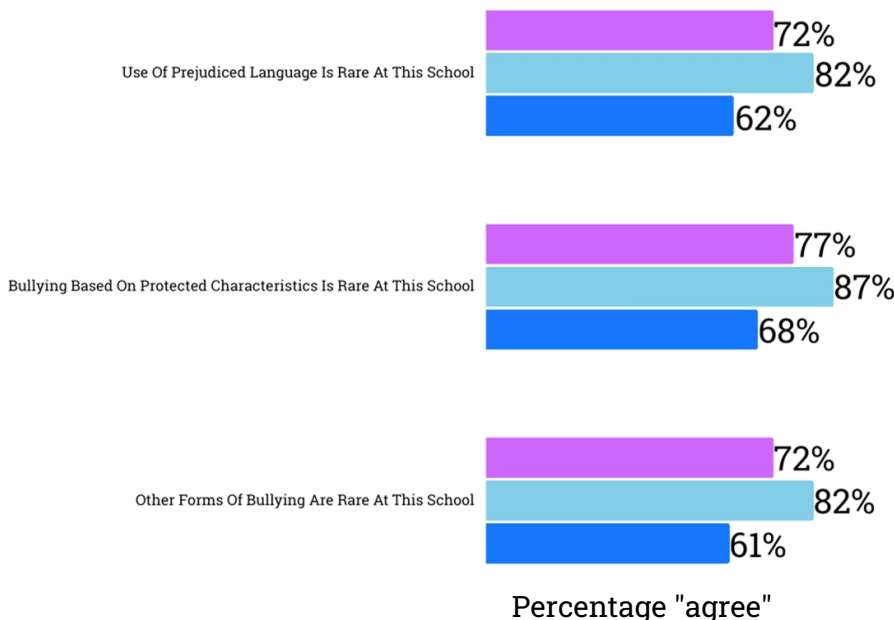
iv. The Staff, SLT And Governor Perspective

School staff were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:



Students were not asked these questions.

Looking specifically at the proportion of staff who 'Agreed' that these forms of bullying were rare, we also compared this across primary and secondary school staff and saw a trend in worsening language and behaviour in secondary.



Overall, primary staff reported less bullying in their school compared to secondary teachers. This appears to correspond to our secondary student data: the prevalence of bullying is considered to be greater at secondary schools compared to primary schools.

However, despite this pattern, school staff beliefs about the prevalence of bullying were not quite in line with the students from marginalised identities. Despite 68% of secondary school staff reporting that bullying on the basis of protected characteristics is rare, students from those backgrounds i.e., 47% of trans and non-binary students, 41% of disabled students, 40% of students from a minority sexuality, and 38% of girls reported bullying related to these corresponding protected characteristics.

This disconnection is perhaps more pertinent at more senior levels of school governance. 90% of SLT members and 93% of school governors told us that bullying is rare in their school, while 89% of SLT members and 93% of school governors said that prejudiced language is also rare.

Further, it is interesting to note how this discrepancy is reflected in results regarding policies and processes for dealing with bullying (p.47). For example, only 63% of secondary students believe that teachers always help if they know someone is being bullied. It contributes to the emerging issue of unmet need for greater bullying support in schools.

90% of SLT and 93% of governors told us that bullying is rare in their school

89% of SLT and 93% of school governors told us prejudiced language is rare

63% of secondary students believe that teachers always help if they know someone is being bullied

Additional Staff And SLT Perspective: Prevalence And Causes Of Bullying

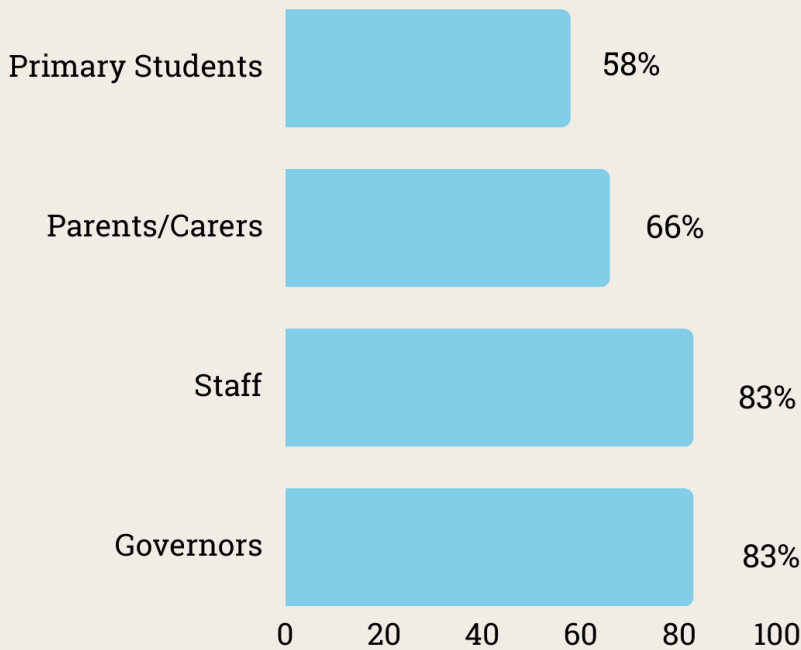
Corroborating the quantitative data findings, among the open-ended responses, there were many respondents who felt that bullying did not occur in their school or was rare.

Where there was bullying, staff felt that specific reasons for this included a child's perceived sexuality – being gay/homophobia and gender. Misogyny and toxic masculinity were mentioned several times and teachers felt that some young men held worrying views about young women.

v. Safety In Schools – The Student, Parent And Staff Perspective

Only 58% of primary students said they felt safe from bullying in their school, with a further 29% saying they were not sure and 13% disagreeing with the statement.

Students feel safe at this school. % agree:



Further, only 2 in 3 (66%) parents and carers agreed that students with protected characteristics feel safe at their school, with a further 13% who stated they didn't know and 21% who disagreed. Further analysis show that this drops between primary and secondary with a further 68% of parents and carers in primary school stating students were safe and only 57% in secondary school agreeing.

This is in contrast to the 83% of staff and 83% of governors who felt that students with protected characteristics feel safe at their school.

We did not ask this question of secondary students.

There is some important insight here about the need to consider multiple perspectives when assessing safety in schools and the need for further investigation into the experiences of students, especially in primary schools where concerns about safety were more prevalent.

vi. Prevalence Of Bullying – External Research

It is notable that data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) provides additional insights into the research (House of Commons Briefing Paper, 2020). While the questions in this study may not directly align with those of the ONS, the findings still offer valuable insights.

The ONS conducts an annual crime survey in England and Wales, including a survey on the experiences of young people aged 10 to 15 with additional questions on bullying experiences added in 2014. Analysis by the Department for Education (DfE, 2018) using this survey data from April 2013 to March 2018 estimated that around 17% of young people in England had experienced bullying, with certain groups, such as those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or living in deprived areas, more likely to report bullying. Moreover, younger age groups reported higher rates of bullying, with 22% of 10-year-olds and 8% of 15-year-olds reporting bullying in 2017-18. This is somewhat different to this research which suggests that bullying increases between primary and secondary schools. However, this research did not compare specific age groups and therefore is not comparable.

In June 2018, the DfE published analysis of data from the second Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (Gov.UK, 2018), conducted in 2015, allowing for comparisons across time. Key findings indicated a slight decrease in reported bullying among year 11 pupils compared to the previous year, with a gender disparity observed, as 35% of female students reported being bullied compared to 26% of males. Additionally, a higher proportion of young people with SEND reported bullying compared to their peers. These findings highlight the complexity of bullying experiences among young people and the importance of longitudinal analysis for understanding trends over time.

17% of young people in England had experienced bullying with certain groups, more likely to report bullying.

22% of 10-year-olds and 8% of 15-year-olds reported bullying in 2017-18.

35% of female students reported being bullied compared to 26% of males.

2.2.2 Main Drivers Of Bullying

SLT and staff suggested that the following were drivers of bullying in their schools:

1. Social media and internet use.
2. Lack of empathy and awareness regarding the impact of their words and behaviour.
3. Parental attitudes and behaviours that students mimic at school.
4. Friendship challenges.
5. Home-related issues leading to behavioral issues at school.



YouTube and other online platforms are often linked to some of the language coming into school.



The outside community having prejudice surrounding other cultures, religions and races.



Lack of empathy from children and not caring or understanding that they are hurting others



2.2.3 Policies And Processes – Summary

Students had mixed views on whether their classmates understood that their words could hurt others (59% for primary students and 64% for secondary students). There was a slight increase in understanding across the school stages. 29% of secondary students disagreed their peer understood this, which seems quite high.

We asked school stakeholders a range of questions related to their awareness of their school's policies and processes on bullying.

1 in 5 primary students said teachers didn't inform them or they weren't sure if teachers regularly informed them about their school's bullying rules. A similar percentage of secondary students (22%) said they either disagreed that, or weren't sure whether, teachers have informed them of the rules on bullying. Nearly 1 in 4 (23%) secondary students said they didn't, or weren't sure they knew, how to report bullying at school.

Among the secondary students and parents and carers, there were many comments indicating a frustration with their school's response to bullying.

Conversely, staff felt that they followed anti-bullying procedures. However, these figures are somewhat at odds with the responses of secondary students themselves where 1 in 3 did not feel that teachers consistently helped when someone is being bullied.

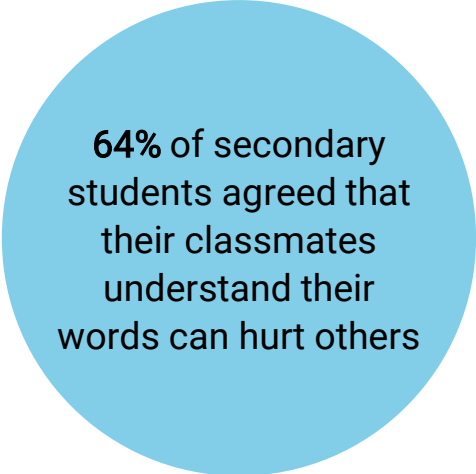
Senior leaders and governors tended to score their schools more favourably in terms of effectiveness of their policies and procedures, with the exception of reporting of bullying where governors felt more work was needed.

26% of parent/carers were not aware of their school's anti-bullying and behaviour policies. A further 24% of parents and carers were 'somewhat agrees.' These results suggest there is work for schools to do more to communicate their anti-bullying policies to parent/carers.

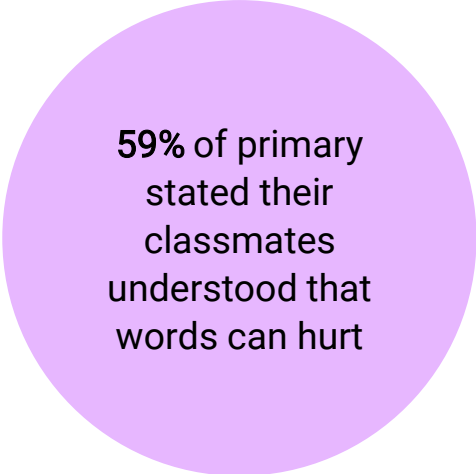
76% of parent/carers agreed that their school would respond appropriately to any incidence of bullying and of these 21% were 'somewhat agrees'. Again, this suggests schools need to do more work to build trust in parents that they will respond appropriately to bullying.

I. Language Use – The Student Perspective

Students gave a mixed view on the language use of their peers.



64% of secondary students agreed that their classmates understand their words can hurt others



59% of primary stated their classmates understood that words can hurt

59% of primary students stated their classmates understood that words can hurt, with a further 31% stating they weren't sure and 10% disagreeing.

With older students, there was a slight improvement in understanding the impact of their words, 64% of secondary students reported that classmates understood their words could hurt others, with 29% disagreeing and 7% stating they didn't know. However, the 29% disagreement rate seems quite high for this stage of school. **There is much room for improvement at both primary and secondary levels.**

ii. Policies And Processes - The Staff, SLT And Governor Perspective

Overall, awareness – self-assessed - among staff and governors on school bullying policies was very high (>96%), suggesting a belief that training and/or communication about school policies was generally effective.

An area of interest was the extent to which bullying was logged and captured within the data. Although this scored well among SLT respondents (92%), this was one of the weaker responses among both staff (80%) and governors (72%). This suggests that where data is being recorded on bullying, it may not consistently trickle both downwards towards staff, nor upwards towards governors. However, it should be noted that these figures were still high overall.

Notably, school governors reported being very engaged with their school's inclusivity efforts on the whole, with regular consultation being reported (91%).

While positive overall, these figures did not align with the responses of secondary students themselves. Only 63% of secondary students said that teachers consistently help when someone is being bullied, while nearly 1 in 4 (23%) said they didn't, or weren't sure they knew, how to report bullying at school. Additionally, 22% either disagreed or weren't sure whether teachers have informed them of the rules on bullying.

94% of staff say teachers consistently implement the school bullying policy...

...but **only 63%** of secondary students say teachers always help when someone is being bullied...

...over **1 in 5 (22%)** disagreed or weren't sure whether teachers have informed them of the rules on bullying

iii. The Secondary Student Perspective

Among the qualitative responses from students, there were many comments indicating a frustration with their school’s response to bullying. There was no specific open-ended question on the student view on policy and implementation but there were several related comments.

Some students felt their concerns were not acted upon:



I’ve been reporting bullies since the year I started. It’s hard to make changes but it’s harder to get the teachers to do something about bullying. It’s literally tiring to talk to lots of members of staff and not getting a response, let alone a change. I don’t mind if I feel awful and helpless anymore, I’m just sad about little children especially girls in the years below hiding around the school and secretly talking about it because no change was ever received by anyone. I don’t plan on reporting or talking on this bullying issue any further as all this anti-bullying is just a maze that leads out to nowhere for helpless kids to waste time and lose track of it, and eventually give up.

(Secondary student comment)

The school has a horrific bullying culture. Many are bullied and the most that has been done is a 2/3 day isolation. People are scared to come forward because they know nothing can be done. I know people who have been filmed without consent and spread through the year, physically abused, and emotionally abused. We need to sort it out, because it is unacceptable and needs to actually be addressed and not swept under the rug.

(Secondary student comment)



IV. The Parent And Carer Perspective

The parent and carer respondents tended towards more positive views on awareness of bullying policies and faith in their schools to respond to bullying.

I am very pleased with how the school handles bullying. My daughter has experienced racist bullying and matters were addressed immediately. So happy my kids attend [school name] primary. My kids are happy to go to school daily.

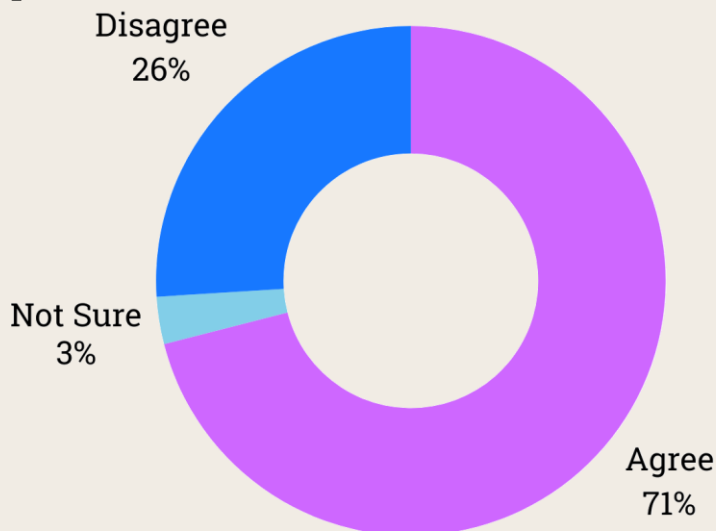
(Parent or carer survey respondent)



However, a sizeable minority did not agree and the open-ended comments conveyed an anguish among some families that the schools had not resolved bullying incidents.

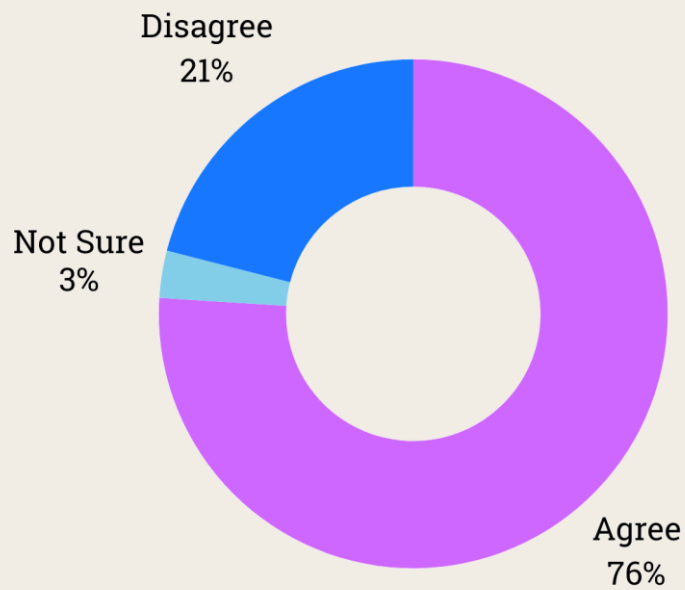
26% of parent and carer respondents were not aware of their school’s antibullying and behaviour policies. 71% agreed they were aware, although 24% of these were ‘somewhat agrees’ and when combined with those who were not aware, this means there is work for schools to do to further communicate their anti-bullying policies to parent/carers.

As a parent/carers, I am aware of the school anti-bullying and behaviour policies:



76% of parent/carers agreed that their school would respond appropriately to any incidence of bullying. 21% disagreed and 3% of those who agreed were 'somewhat agrees'. Again, this suggests schools need to do more work to build parents' trust that the school will respond appropriately to bullying.

I am confident that the school will respond appropriately to any incidents of bullying:



Among the open-ended responses, we found instances where schools had effectively addressed bullying incidents well and respondents judged the schools' interventions as fair and appropriately. However, there were many more mentions of bullying and/or concerns where schools had not acted decisively or were not seen to be doing enough.



This included cyberbullying and sharing of discriminatory content. There was a strong sense of anguish and frustration among these respondents.



The school also allow children to be bullied by the same children and do nothing. My child repeatedly told his teacher he was being bullied and she did nothing when we tried to sort it with the headmistress she told us that it is not for her to sort out it is up to the teachers, we were also told by her that really we shouldn't be asking for a meeting with her as it is not part of her job

(Parent or carer survey respondent)

Some of these were **very serious accusations of schools failing students, where the school support was inconsistent, or there was insufficient action taken**. There were many comments regarding unfair treatment of the bullied child, where parents and carers reported it felt like their children were punished or treated badly during a very vulnerable period. There were accusations of the schools not taking the student view seriously. Further, there were parent/carers who didn't think their school even had an anti-bullying policy. Multiple illustrative quotes can be found overleaf.

I don't think they always take some of the things seriously. My child was bullied about being who he was and what he liked over numerous years by the same child and nothing was done. Eventually my child lost all resilience and started to change who they were to lessen the name calling.

(Parent or carer survey respondent)



Parent/carers believed that the perceived lack of action by teachers and/or the school led to an apathy among their students, low school attendance, negative behaviours at home, self-harm and depression.

Parents listed other issues including poor communication with parent/carers and, more specifically, a lack of engagement with the parent/carer community by schools.

When bullying was reported it was not handled appropriately at all. The way it was handled actually caused further bullying and this is extremely disappointing.

(Parent or carer survey respondent)



Approaches to bullying by staff are inconsistent and records are not kept. Some staff do not take it seriously, with victim blaming and failure to act. Most staff seem keen to support but also seem to lack the time to do this effectively. There is also a failure to pass information to key staff and to new year group heads. This means that the victim and family have to re-live experiences time and time again to give a new member of staff the full picture of the issues.

(Parent or carer survey respondent)

My child feels that they have a negative experience almost every day and that also some teachers just turn a blind eye to this “low level” activity which unfortunately makes them feel negative almost all the time.

(Parent or carer survey respondent)



2.2.4 Curriculum And Education - Summary

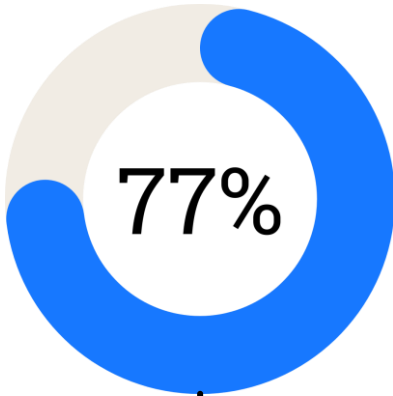
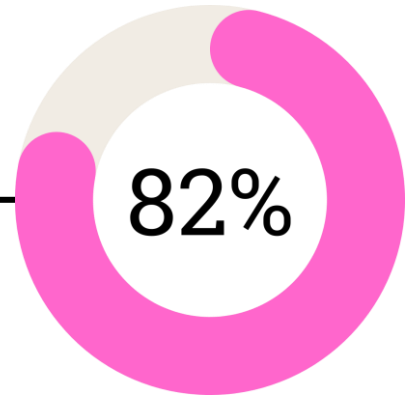
Staff generally felt they delivered a diverse curriculum, with 86% agreeing that students learned about diversity as part of their educational experience. Specifically, 77% of staff reported that their curriculum included the lived experience of a wide range of diverse people. Additionally, 86% of staff reported learning about diversity as part of their continuing professional development (CPD). SLT agreed and were even more positive about students' exposure to diversity and discussions about prejudice.

SLT respondents felt staff could be further supported to teach diverse content. However, staff and SLT perceived that their schools regularly taught LGBTQ+, race, religion and culture, disability and gender equality. This was consistent over the three years of project delivery and data. It should be noted that both primary and secondary students disagreed with staff, particularly regarding the regularity of LGBTQ+ and disability education. This discrepancy was, on the whole, even more evident among students from marginalised identities – these students were less likely to agree that the curriculum covered topics related to their protected characteristic.

Additional analysis demonstrated that where schools focus on diverse curricula, students were less likely to report bullying related to protected characteristics.

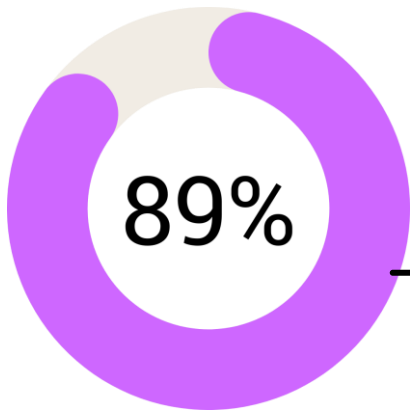
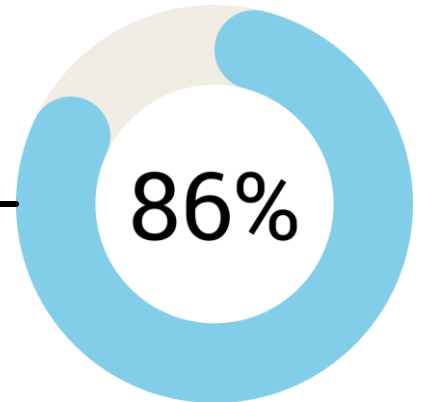
i. Diversity Of Content - The Staff Perspective

of staff believe diverse identities, people and relationships are widely discussed in the curriculum they deliver.



of staff believe their curriculum includes lived experience of diverse people (such as providing quotes or videos) to better represent those with protected characteristics.

of staff agreed that they learn about diverse identities, people and relationships as part of their continuing professional development.



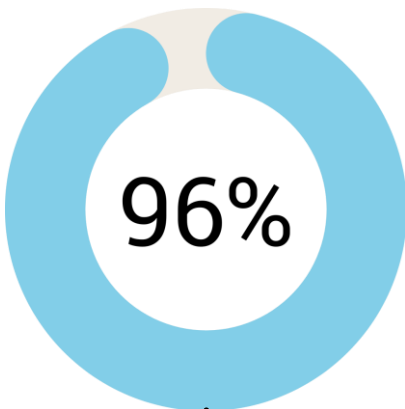
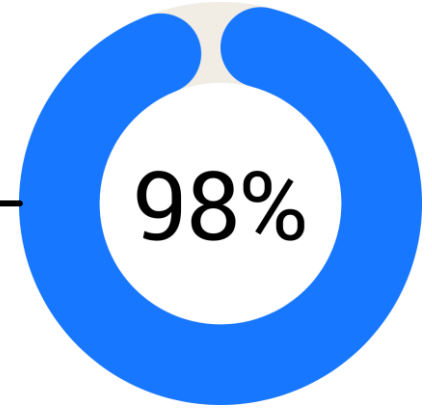
agreed that students learn about prejudice-based bullying on the basis of protected characteristics and its impact.

While positive on the whole, the slightly lower scores for the integration of lived experience and coverage of diverse identities in the curriculum may suggest that more could be done to better formalise both staff knowledge and student learning into the curriculum itself.

ii. Diversity Of Content - The SLT Perspective

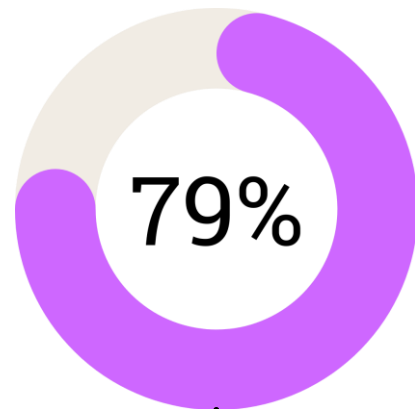
Moreover, it would appear that SLT are significantly more positive about the extent to which the curriculum is designed to address prejudice-based bullying.

Nearly all (98%) SLT members we surveyed told us that students learn about prejudice-based language and bullying, as well as its impact.



Similarly, nearly all (96%) of SLT members said that students learn about diverse identities, people and relationships.

However, SLT members were slightly less positive overall about the extent to which staff are supported to build their confidence in teaching diverse content, such as through training – 79% agreed staff were in fact supported this way.

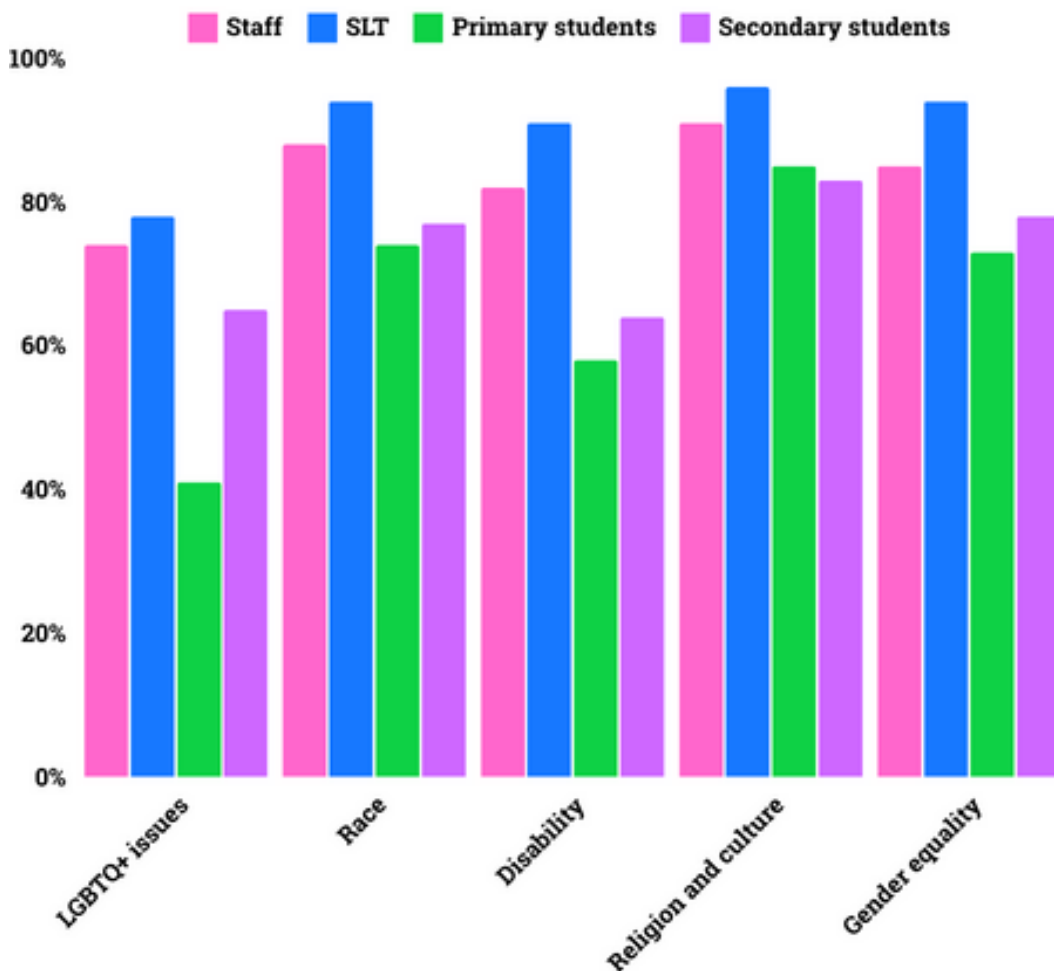


iii. Frequency Of Teaching Of Protected Characteristics – Student, Staff And SLT Perspective

We asked staff and SLT members whether students are regularly taught about various protected characteristics - as well as asking students themselves whether they've been taught this content.

We can see notable gaps between what staff and SLT suggest is taught, and the accounts from students themselves. This is most stark for issues relating to disability as well as LGBTQ+. Further description can be found on the next page.

It is noted that parents and carers and governors were not asked for their view on this area.



"Do you regularly teach... / Are you regularly taught about..."

Examining the two areas where there was most difference revealed disparities among SLT, staff and students.

In terms of LGBTQ+:

- 79% of SLT respondents and 74% staff agreed LGBTQ+ was regularly taught in their schools.
- 65% of secondary students agreed with 26% disagreeing and 9% stating they didn't know.
- This was more pronounced for primary students, with only 41% agreeing LGBTQ+ was regularly taught in their school and a further 37% stating they didn't know.

For disability education, this breaks down into:

- 91% of SLT respondents and 82% of staff agreed their schools regularly taught disability
- 64% of secondary students agreed, with 28% disagreeing and a further 8% who did not know.
- 58% of primary students agreed, 30% not sure and a further 21% who disagreed.

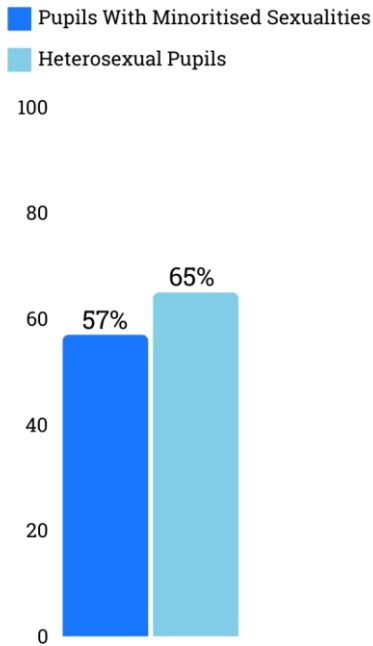
These disparities suggest there was a wide gap between the views of staff and students, an area where further exploration and communication is needed.

iv. Students with marginalised identities' perspective

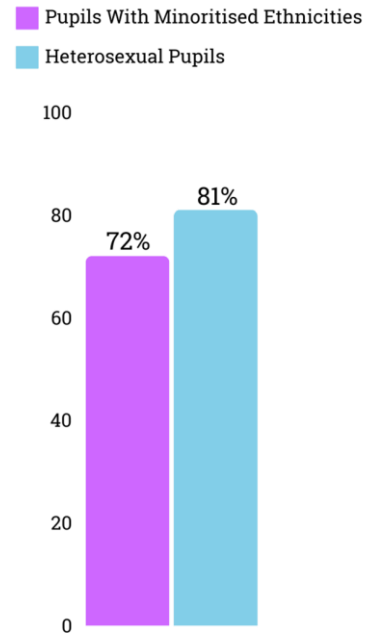
Additionally, with the exception of gender, students were notably less likely to report being taught about a particular marginalised identity if they themselves belonged to that identity. This difference may highlight that those not from marginalised identities may not notice whether something is being taught to the same degree, highlighting that teaching these topics is all the more important.

At School We Are Regularly Taught About..."

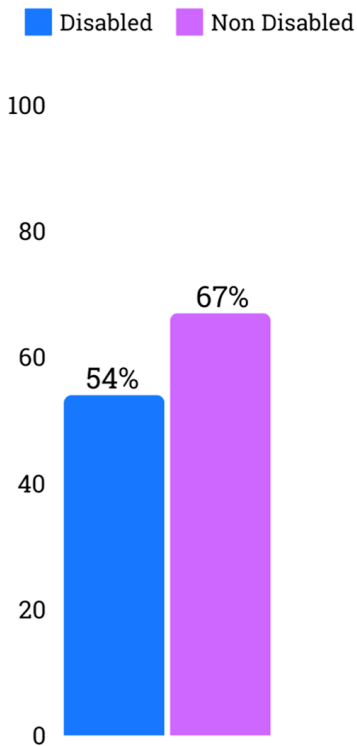
"...minority sexual orientation issues"



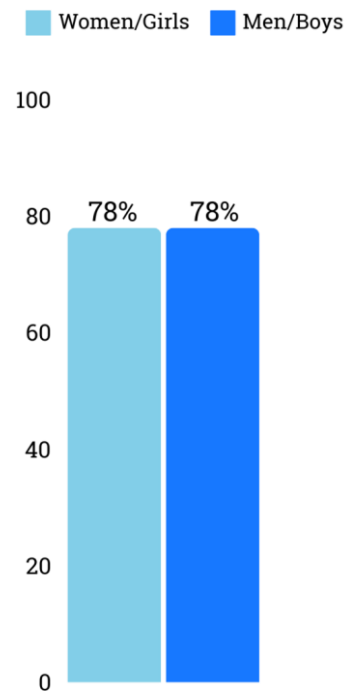
"race"



"disability"



"gender equality"



Iv. External Research

The lack of teaching about LGBTQ+ is mirrored in research from Just Like Us (2021). Their research findings highlighted notable gaps in the education and support provided to LGBTQ+ students in UK schools. Further, they found that a considerable portion of LGBTQ+ youth encountered negative language and bullying on a daily basis, alongside limited positive messaging about LGBTQ+ issues. Additionally, they reported that only a small number of schools actively participated in events like Pride, School Diversity Week, or LGBT+ History Month.

Similar to this research, many LGBTQ+ students reported receiving little to no education about LGBTQ+ topics. In the Just Like Us research, there was additional detail including limited coverage of safe sex in same-sex relationships, bisexuality, and gender identity.

Edurio's Pupil Safeguarding Review (2022) echoes these sentiments. Gay students reported struggling to feel represented by the topics covered. Students also highlighted that they felt teachers couldn't answer questions about LGBTQ+ relationships due to what pupils perceived as a lack of knowledge.

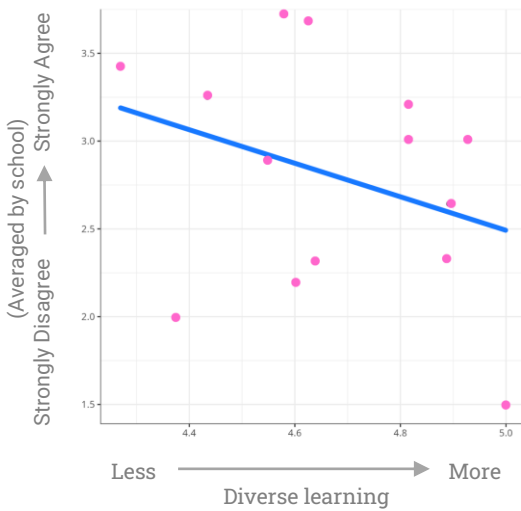
These findings are further echoed in [Diversity Role Models' Pathways to LGBT+ Inclusion research](#) (2020).

Although the questions explored in these studies were different, their collective insights suggest similar trends. There was a strong sense that many schools need to do more to build diverse curricula to build inclusivity and representation.

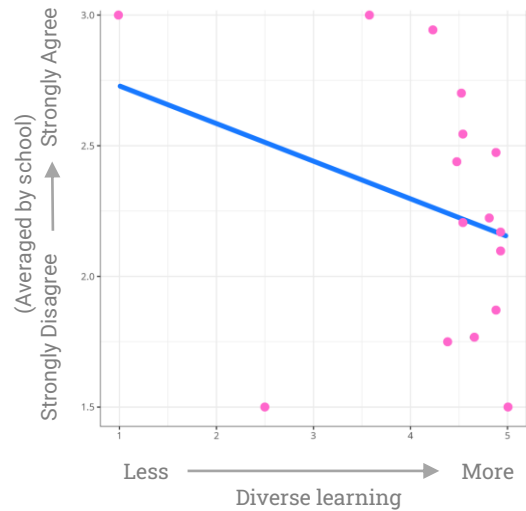
2.2.5 Relationship Between Prevalence Of Bullying And Regularity Of Teaching Of Protected Characteristics

We examined whether schools whose pupils reported higher average scores for *'learning about different types of people'* (diverse learning) were also less likely to agree, on average, that forms of bullying take place related to the following questions...

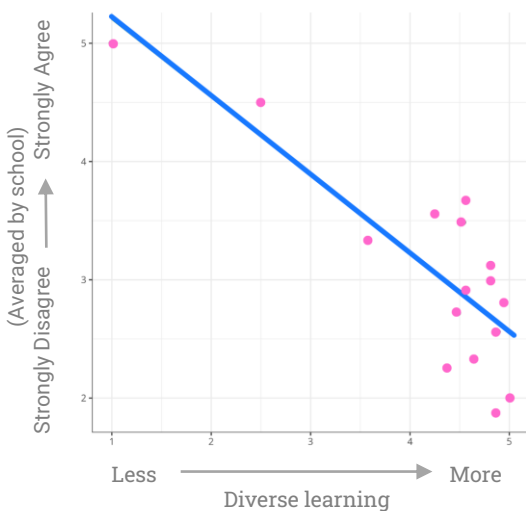
"People are bullied because they are gay"



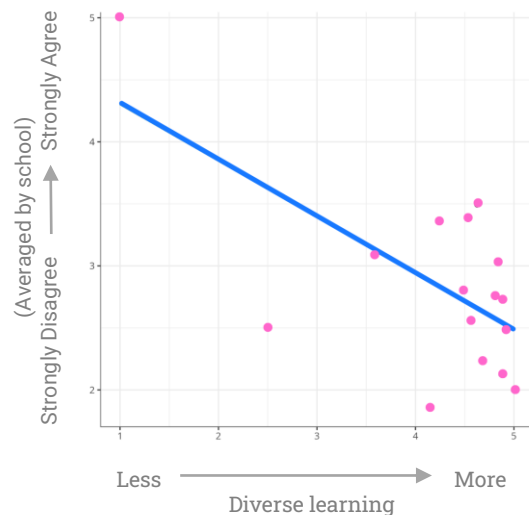
"People are bullied because of their religion"



"People are bullied because of their gender"



"People are bullied because of their gender identity"



● Schools

In this analysis, scatter plots were created to explore the relationship between students' perception of how frequently they were taught diversity education and the frequency of bullying related to sexuality, gender, religion, and transgender identity. Values were averaged within each school surveyed.

The plots consistently demonstrate a negative correlation, indicating that an **increased emphasis on teaching about diverse identities in schools is associated with a decrease in bullying based on protected characteristics.**

This pattern underscores the importance of integrating diverse identities into the school curriculum to foster a safer and more inclusive environment for all students. The findings strongly advocate for educational policies that prioritise diversity education as a crucial step in combating bullying and discrimination at school.

2.2.6 Values And Visibility - Summary

In this section we explore wider school values and how these play out through behaviour. Further, we explore visibility including how visible celebrations of diversity are throughout schools.

Overall, students leaned towards being positive about the visibility of diversity in their schools, with 83% of primary and 76% of secondary students agreeing their schools celebrated difference.

Primary students were more likely to tell a teacher if they heard something bad, but this drops from 81% to 65% between primary and secondary (NB the questions are worded slightly differently).

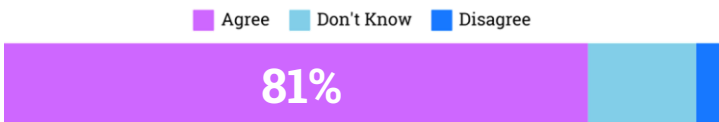
Staff, governors and SLT respondents presented a positive view of visibility and values in their schools. This was particularly the case for SLT respondents who almost unanimously agreed that their schools' values respect diversity, they regularly celebrate difference through the year and that they make reasonable adjustments for those with protected characteristics to help manage their education.

There is more work to be done in schools to develop student-led equality groups or anti-bullying ambassadors. Only 64% of SLT respondents stated their school had such student-led groups.

i. The Primary Student Perspective

This section explores wider school values and how these play out in behaviour. It also explores celebration of difference and diversity across the school year.

“My Classmates Show Respect To People Who Are Different To Them”

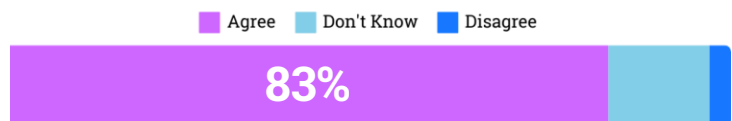


“I Would Say Something Or Tell A Teacher If I Heard Something”

Primary students were weakly positive regarding whether their classmates showed respect to those who are different.

They were largely positive about telling a teacher if they heard something bad and if they had observed celebrations of diversity in their schools.

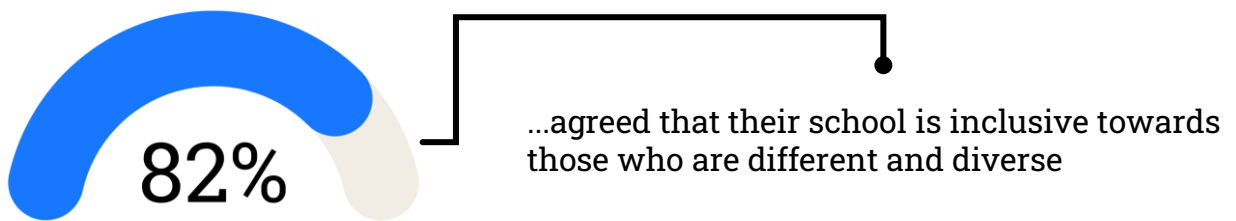
“My School Celebrates The Fact That We Are All Different”



ii. The Secondary Student Perspective

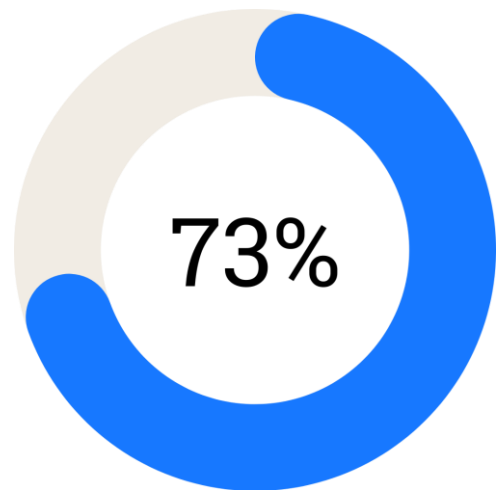
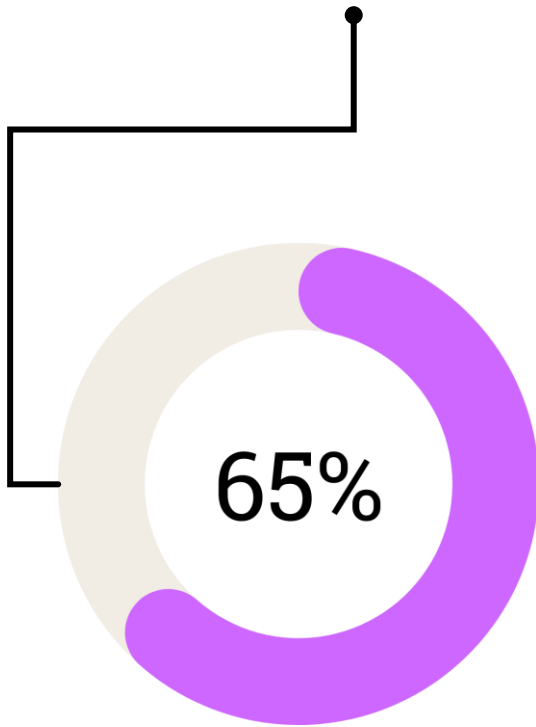
The trends in responses here reflected those of the primary student responses, in that they were more positive about celebrating difference. The contrast here is on whether they would report bullying to a teacher – this seemed to drop off in secondary school.

Overall, students scored more positively in this section than others – for examples 82% agreed their school was inclusive of those who are different or diverse.



It was interesting that this finding on schools being inclusive to diverse students received a more positive response than other aspects of secondary student findings. For instance, students highlighted a lack of education and celebration in areas like LGBTQ+ and disability. The difference could stem from factors such as the wording or focus of the statement in the survey.

Only 65% of secondary students stated they would challenge someone or report them to a teacher if they overheard them bullying another student. This is, therefore, an area where significant improvement is needed in schools.



...agreed their classmates show respect to people who are different from them

In the open-ended comments, a minority of secondary students felt strongly that there was limited diversity or representation in the daily life of their school:



The most we have to celebrate religious or cultural events (that aren't Christian) is a quiz or treasure hunt or something.

(Secondary student comment)



Although they do cover all topics in PSHE and assemblies, it's very common that they barely ever look into disability, gender equality, or queer identity.

(Secondary student comment)



It is important to note that these were a minority of respondents.

However, this is echoed in others' research such as Just Like Us (2021) and Edurio's Safeguarding review (2023). This is explored in [section 2.24 \(p.60\)](#).

Some secondary students felt their school had a lack of understanding of, or downplayed the challenges faced by students from ethnic minority backgrounds. There were several comments related to students wanting more learning on diversity, including on gender, sexuality and neurodiversity.

Secondary students flagged up some challenges to creating more inclusive schools:

Whilst the school does make efforts in this regard, students are not always receptive to them. Most students, particularly male/male identifying students, consider these to be boring, and pay little attention. A minority of students, but a still notable amount, also continue to use terms such as “gay” with a negative connotation, or show disrespect to aspects of certain cultural and religious groups.



(Secondary student comment)

Further, there were several comments, although again from a small minority, from students leaning towards more transphobic and homophobic views:



I think this school should stop forcing us to support LGBTQ+ because if we don't want to support LGBTQ we can't be forced to support.

(Secondary student comment)

Similarly, there were several negative comments from the parent and carer community related to too much focus on LGBTQ+ in the curriculum. More inclusive curricula and visibility in the curriculum did not align with their values and there were comments suggesting some parents and carers felt such teaching could influence a child to question their gender.



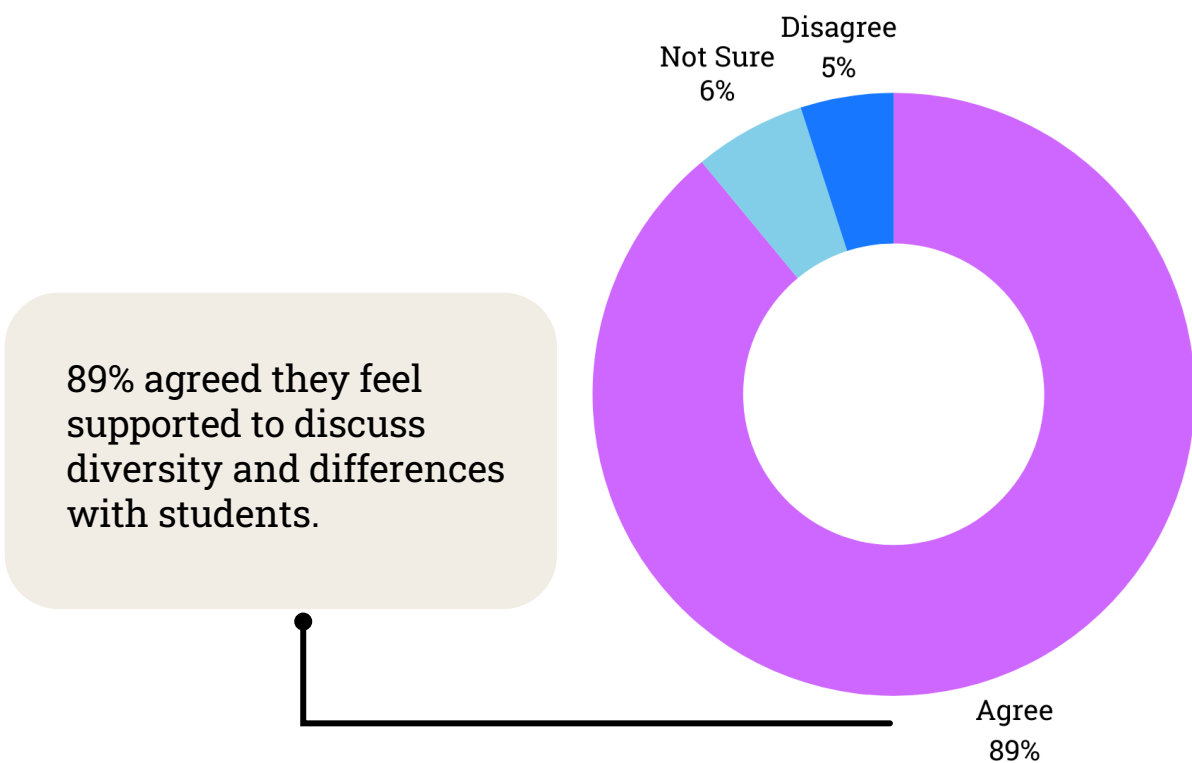
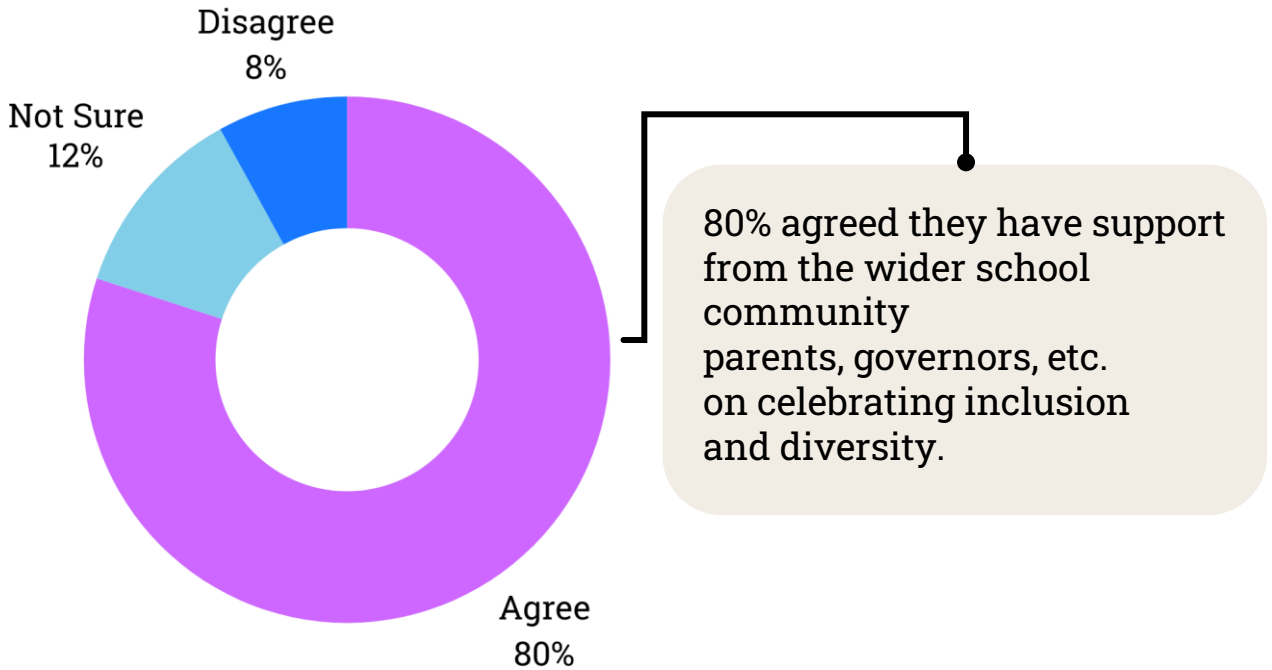
I do not want the transgender agenda pushed to my son and wish him to be removed from any lessons that encourage discussion... Gender and pronouns should not be discussed with children.

(Parent or carer survey respondent)

iii. The Staff, SLT And Governors' Perspective

Staff, governors and SLT respondents presented a positive view of visibility and values in their schools.

Among teaching staff:

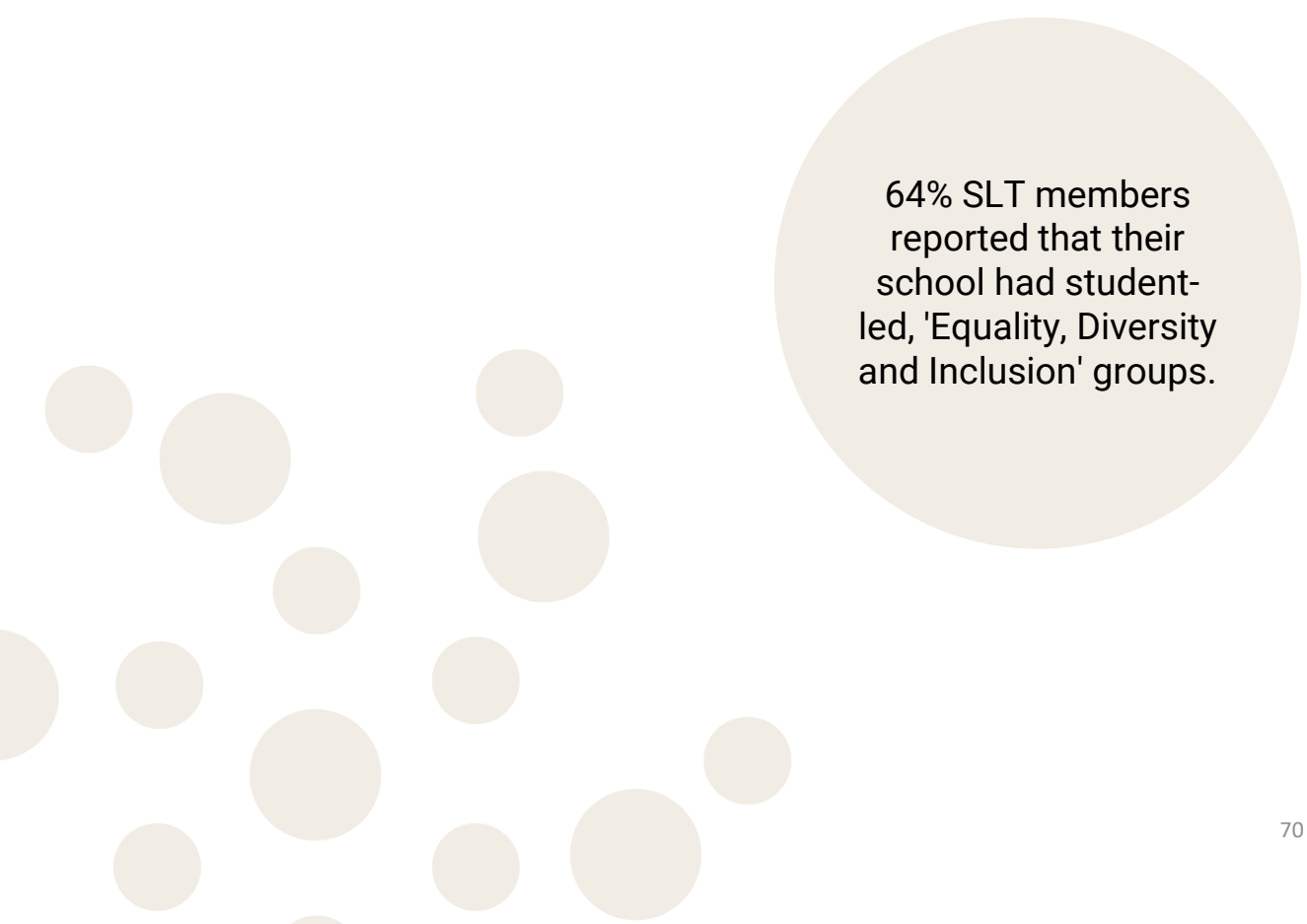


Among SLT Respondents:

Apart from one exception, members of SLT nearly unanimously reported that:

- 98% agreed their school has values which referred to respecting diversity.
- 96% agreed their schools regularly celebrated differences throughout the year (e.g. religious festivals, Black History Month).
- 94% agreed their school had staff which supported the school in being more inclusive.
- 97% agreed their school made reasonable adjustments for those with protected characteristics to help manage their education.
- 90% agreed their school proactively engaged with parents/carers on creating inclusive culture.

The main area where members of SLT had lower agreement was regarding student groups: 64% reported that their school contained student-led equality groups, or anti-bullying ambassadors.



64% SLT members reported that their school had student-led, 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' groups.

2.2.7 The Three-Year View – Summary

Across the three-years in which research was conducted, certain forms of bullying maintained consistent levels of prevalence. In primary schools, bullying related to differences, looks and sexuality was consistently reported as the most prevalent. In secondary schools, bullying based on sexuality, looks and gender (being a girl) were consistently reported as most prevalent among our samples.

Another consistent pattern observed throughout the years was the gap between primary and secondary students. Secondary students were more likely to report a greater prevalence of bullying across all forms compared to their primary counterparts.

Staff perspectives were more in agreement with students on the prevalence of bullying based on protected characteristics over the years, and that other forms of bullying were more common in secondary schools and less in primary. There was less agreement, however, when comparing the staff view on prevalence against those from marginalised identities, who reported higher rates of prevalence than staff.

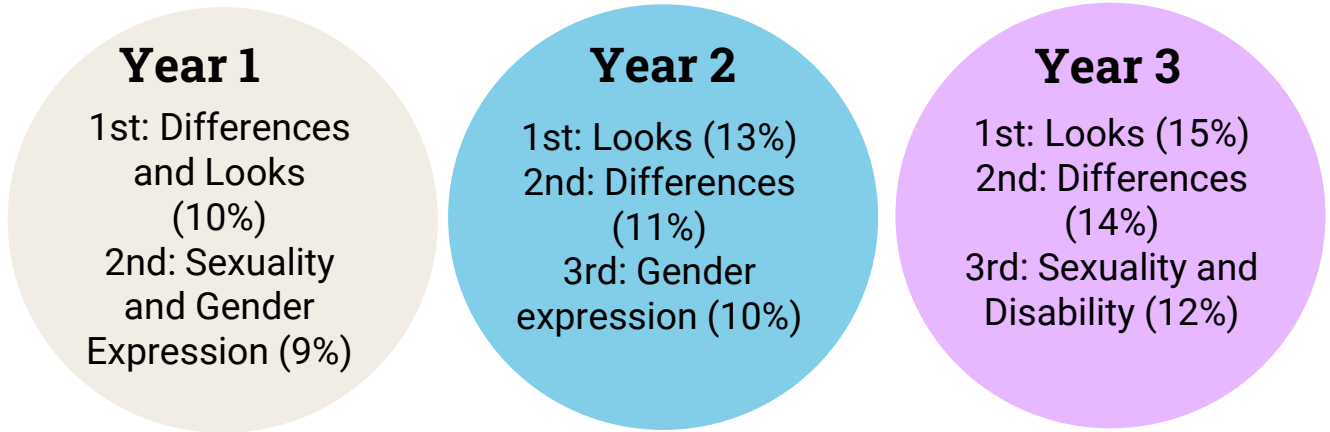
Students consistently identified disability and LGBTQ+ as the protected characteristics which were least covered by the school curriculum across the three years. Staff also identified LGBTQ+ as the least taught area over the three years.

I. Prevalence Of Bullying - The Student Perspective

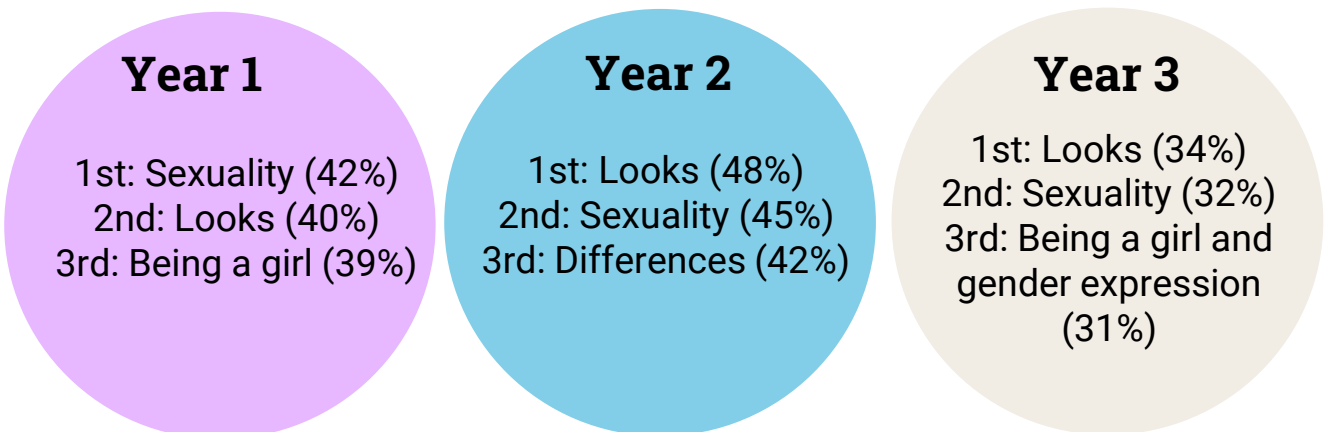
Research from Years 1, 2 and 3 was conducted with different samples, and was therefore not statistically comparable. We were therefore unable to examine how responses have changed through the years or examine trends. We were, however, able to examine how consistent the results were across time and different samples.

Prevalent forms of bullying

Primary schools



Secondary schools



Between the years, the most common forms of bullying identified by survey respondents were moderately consistent – with bullying based on differences, looks and sexuality being common in primary school, and bullying based on sexuality, looks and being a girl frequently being most common among secondary student samples.

A very consistent pattern through the years is the gap between primary and secondary students. Secondary student samples were much more likely to report a greater prevalence of bullying across all forms.

ii. Bullying In Schools - The Staff Perspective

In the following table, we present staff views on rates of bullying based on protected characteristics, other forms of bullying and prejudiced language over the three years of the project delivery. We split the results according to primary and secondary staff.

Table 4. Staff perspective on bullying in schools

(% agree)

Question	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
	Primary N = 441	Secondary N = 402	Primary N = 851	Secondary N = 529	Primary N = 852	Secondary N = 423
Bullying based on protected characteristics (e.g. race, sexual orientation) is rare at the school among students	83%	53%	90%	59%	87%	68%
Prejudiced language is rare in this school among students	80%	43%	85%	52%	82%	62%
Other forms of bullying, for example based on appearance including weight, accent, being adopted etc. are rare at this school	82%	43%	84%	51%	82%	61%

We can also see that, across the years, there is a noticeable gap in the reported levels of prevalence of bullying between primary and secondary school staff, with secondary teachers reporting much higher levels of concerning behaviour across the three years than primary teachers.

iv. Secondary School Students' Perspective On The Curriculum

Table 5. Student view on regularity of topics taught

"At school, we are regularly taught about..." (% agree)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Gender equality	76%	74%	78%
Disability	60%	61%	64%
LGBTQ+ issues	69%	63%	65%
Race	77%	76%	77%

(Answers are from historically marginalised identities only. For example, for "race", only those not belonging to White backgrounds are recorded).

In terms of how far the above topics were regularly taught at school, year 3 leaned towards being more positive than previous years' samples, with a greater proportion of students agreeing that they were regularly taught about gender equality, disability, LGBTQ+ issues and race.

Notably, disability and LGBTQ+ were the consistently lowest responses across all years – suggesting improvements in the teaching of these protected characteristics are needed by schools.

iv. Staff Perspective On Frequency Of Teaching

Table 6. Staff perspective on regularity of topics taught

(% agree)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
LGBTQ+ issues	69%	65%	74%
Disability	78%	80%	84%
Gender equality	84%	83%	85%
Race	86%	85%	88%
Religion and culture	89%	89%	91%

Teacher respondents report that LGBTQ+ was the least frequently taught across the three-years.



2.2.8 Barriers Related To Policies, Processes And Prevalence Of Teaching About The Protected Characteristics - Summary

We asked SLT respondents what barriers their school faces surrounding policies, processes and prevalence of teaching related to the protected characteristics. The most frequent barriers from 2023-2024 surveys were:

- Time and resource constraints, despite these being essential for reviewing and implementing policies, bringing about changes and providing adequate staff training.
- Lack of time for stakeholder engagement and follow up.
- Resistance to more diverse curriculum from some parents, carers and staff.
- Negative attitudes and languages from the community filtered into schools.
- Some examples of inconsistent implementation of anti-bullying policies and procedures, which undermined efforts to address bullying.
- Lack of confidence from some teachers to teach certain topics or embed diversity in their subject area.

i. The Staff Perspective

In the open-ended responses, we asked staff what barriers their schools face in implementing anti-bullying policies and processes and fostering more inclusive curricula. The most frequent response was lack of time and resources essential for both reviewing and implementing policies, bringing about changes and providing adequate staff training.

The current primary curriculum was described by one teacher as "bulging" with "competing priorities." Carving out time to focus on diversity issues was seen as challenging.

Lack of time (i) for stakeholder engagement and (ii) for follow up were also mentioned which further compounded the challenges of creating more inclusive curricula.

(We struggle) with timing and resourcing, it can be difficult to ensure that people from different groups are consulted and involved in our decisions, for example through talking to students and parents/carers, and through our School Voice.

(Staff survey respondent)

Sometimes we struggle with restorative follow up. Resources to support are greatly needed.

(Staff survey respondent)

Additionally, several respondents highlighted that there were some challenges because of the less inclusive views of some families and teachers.

Too many of our children hear racist and homophobic language and ideas at home.

(Staff survey respondent)

This was further pronounced in some faith schools where some teachers felt there was a tension between teaching LGBTQ+ and being a faith school and/or cultural beliefs within a school:



There are some teachers who disagree with our focus on LGBT ... particularly trans, and some families do too.

(Staff survey respondent),

C of E School and the line between education and seen to promoting.

(Staff survey respondent)

Christian school so some content is not covered. Do we teach gay/lesbian/ transgender, as I am unsure.

(Staff survey respondent)



Some staff flagged issues with their anti-bullying policies including inconsistent implementation:

Lack of clarity on behaviour policy. Any sanctions are inconsistently applied and not always reflective of the indiscretion. Students know there are no clear or significant consequences - the highest is a lunchtime detention with a teacher. No detentions take place. No clear escalation path.

(Staff survey respondent)



Further, staff flagged that not logging incidents was problematic and an area for improvement.

Finally, SLT flagged another area relating to a lack of confidence of some teachers to address diversity. This was reflected in the open-ended responses, although not in the closed responses where staff gave themselves very positive scores. Delving deeper into the qualitative responses, we found that some teachers struggled to see how diversity could apply to their subject or felt bound by exam board specifications, which they felt limited their ability to embed diversity. Further, some teachers found it difficult to include information relevant to diverse people without seeming tokenistic. Some felt under-confident to lead discussions on diversity and inclusion. There were examples where staff wanted more training and support to effectively address diversity and inclusion in the curriculum.

The need to address these barriers feels particularly significant when considering the gap between student views on levels of bullying in their schools and the gap between their views and staff, SLT and governor views on incidences of bullying at secondary school.

2.3 Overall Reflections – The Research

The research identified a gap between the views of SLT and governors in schools and the views of staff, students, especially those from marginalised identities, and their parents and carers. Senior leaders are generally more positive about the prevalence of bullying, the frequency of teaching about protected characteristics, the knowledge and effectiveness of their policies and procedures and the values and visibility of equality commitments within the school.

While school stakeholders praised their school's bullying prevention measures, students – particularly secondary students – and parents and carers highlighted more issues, indicating a need for better response mechanisms by schools.

Bullying spanned various forms and motivations, and reports of bullying on the basis of protected characteristics were notably higher from those sharing the characteristics than from those who did not. Types of bullying remained consistent across primary and secondary schools, and across the three years, emphasising the need for more action from schools to tackle homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and ableist bullying, and all forms of bullying.

In year 3, only 65% of secondary students stated they would challenge or report to a teacher if they overheard bullying. There is more work to be done here. There was also room for improvement on the percentage of students and parents and carers who felt they/their child was safe in school. Further, more work is needed on tackling use of language (based on the percentage of respondents who feel their classmates do not understand their words can hurt).

Dissatisfaction at schools' response to bullying among some parents and students again highlights the need for schools to enhance their approach, address communication gaps and trust issues.

Staff cited constraints in time and resources as barriers to effective policy implementation and communication.

There were differences in opinion of how regularly LGBTQ+ and disability were taught in both primary and secondary schools. This was all-important as the research also found that where there was more teaching of the protected characteristics, there was less bullying.



Section B: The Evaluation

This chapter summarises the evaluation findings from the third year of the project (2023-2024). We also compare the findings to the previous years' evaluation reports. It covers:

- Summary of respondents
- Feedback
- Outcomes
- Learning

3.1 Summary Of Methodology And Respondents

The Evaluation – Methodology And Participants

In this section, we describe the evaluation tools used to collect data in the third year of the project, and the response rates we achieved for each. The evaluation tools were:

- **Evaluation form:** All staff participating in the training received an evaluation form straight after the training. 809 of a possible 3164 filled the form in, equating to a 26% response rate.
- **Year 3 feedback:** Teachers observing the year 3 workshops were invited to take part in a short survey exploring their views on the workshop and the students' responses. There were 32 respondents.
- **Student feedback:** Student feedback was completed following the workshops and collated via a paper-based form that students had time to complete independently with their class teacher. There were 980 respondents.
- Student pledges made during the workshops were also captured and are recorded in this section.
- **Case study schools:** Schools were invited to take part as case study schools. NCVO ran four focus groups with students in four schools, an extra survey for SLT and carried out analysis of teacher responses to the post-intervention survey to triangulate across different stakeholders.
- **Post-intervention:** Adapting from the previous years' evaluation, we carried out a post-intervention survey of teachers to explore whether there were any lasting changes from the training and whether schools had been able to make any changes. There were 35 respondents.

NCVO also carried out a Role Model and staff member focus group and interview which helped to inform the findings of this report.

In the following table, we summarise the various evaluation data collection tools, who responded and number of respondents.

Table 7. Evaluation participants and response rates

Tools	Respondent details	No of respondents
Staff evaluation forms	No of staff No of schools	809 respondents 90 schools
	No of primary school staff No of sec school staff No of all-through No of SEND schools Other incl PRU	657 100 11 38 3
Year 3 teacher feedback forms	No of schools No of respondents	11 32
Student feedback from individual student workshops (primary)	No of students	980 respondents
Case study schools	No of schools	4
	No of student focus groups	4
	No of students	32
Post-intervention teacher survey	No of schools	7
	No of respondents	35

3.2 The Evaluation Findings - Summary

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive throughout the evaluation, with respondents consistently praising the training, the facilitator, Role Models and activities.

Staff reported they had increased confidence as a result of the training and were motivated to effect changes at both a personal and school level, generating many ideas on how to usualise protected characteristics in their practices.

The training enhanced attendees' knowledge and understanding of the protected characteristics and deepened their understanding of the impacts of prejudice and bullying.

The training galvanised staff to revisit and review their anti-bullying policies and procedures, equipping them with new tools, resources and confidence to tackle bullying.

The Role Model stories resonated deeply, serving as a powerful instrument in deepening understanding of difference and the impact of bullying, fostering empathy and challenging stereotypes.

Students were also inspired by the workshops, committing to be upstanders and embracing difference.

Post-intervention evaluation showed sustained improvements in understanding and confidence regarding protected characteristics.

There was demand for additional diversity and anti-bullying training, with suggestions to extend to parents and carers.

Suggested improvements included more time for the session and exercises, further adaptation for younger participants and for SEND schools, ongoing support and widening the protected characteristics covered.

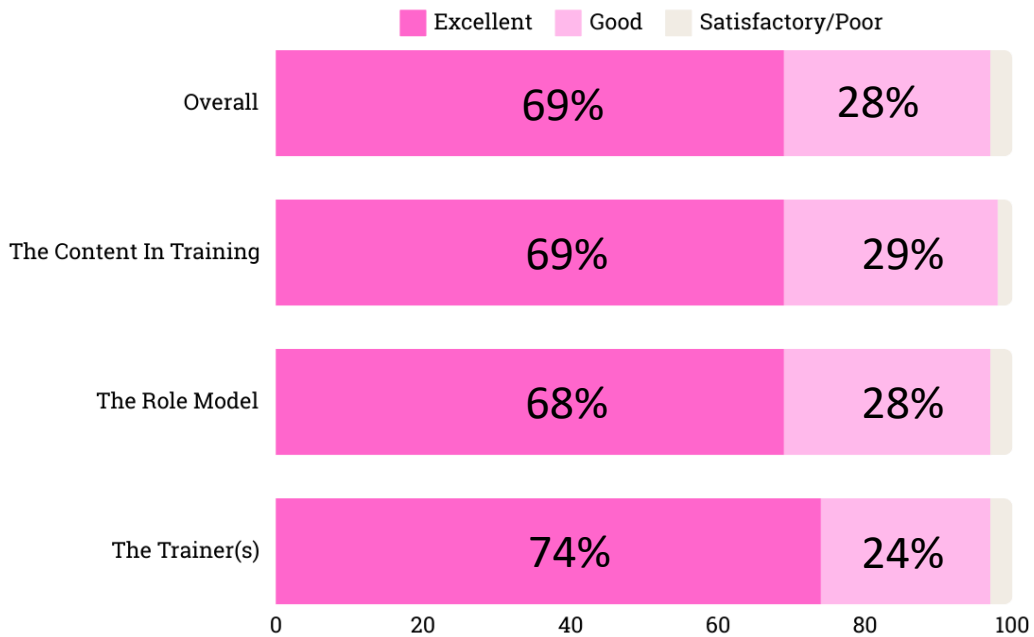
3.3 Feedback

3.3.1 Staff Feedback On Diversity Role Models' Training

Staff rated the training

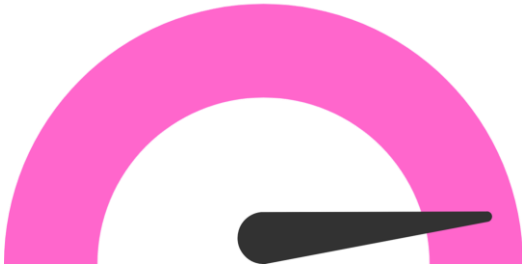
In total, 809 staff members took part in the post-training evaluation survey.

97% rated the training as either "good" or "excellent" overall. More specific elements of the training – including the content, the Role Model, and the trainer(s)– also scored very highly.



88% agreed that the training was pitched at the right level for their school. Though a positive figure, this does suggest there is room for improvement, such as by offering different levels of training in the future, or more flexibility in how trainings were run. There were some comments in the open-ended responses that the workshops could be further tailored to early years, primary and SEND schools.

Staff would recommend the training



On all counts, those undertaking the training were very positive – with 94% of staff saying they would recommend the training to others.

Reviewing the comments for those who stated they would not recommend the training, it appears that there were some who misinterpreted the question. Their comments and other responses were highly positive, yet they said they would not recommend. This may be because the survey was filled out in a hurry at the end of the session. There is some learning for Diversity Role Models here to build in more time for the evaluation.

Open-ended evaluation form comments were highly positive

More generally, in the open-ended responses, staff were overwhelmingly positive about the training. There were several comments stating that it was one of the best trainings attendees had been at in some time:

So interactive. One of the best training models I've been part of.

(Staff training evaluation form respondent)



Attendees reported that the facilitators were passionate, knowledgeable and delivered the content in a clear and concise manner. There were several comments stating the facilitators were "exceptional" including -



[The facilitator] was an exceptional speaker, he gave a really clear and concise description of each area, and his own personal story was extremely inspiring.

(Staff evaluation form respondent)

Several respondents appreciated the training being tailored to their schools' needs.

Attendees also appreciated being challenged:

[The facilitator] was incredibly open honest and approachable. She made the training informative but in a very non-confrontational way. She helped me realise that although I consider myself to be open and accepting to all, we all have some stereotypes in our head that we just can't help. I have to be more proactive in addressing these so I can support people around me. She gave me tools, so I can start working on this and hopefully make our school a more inclusive and equitable environment.

(Staff training evaluation form respondent)



The Role Model Story Was Rated Positively

The Role Model's personal story was considered to be powerful and added depth to the training ([see the section on Role Models](#) on p.104). The survey respondents felt the use of real-life examples and scenarios helped to contextualise the training content.

Attendees liked that the training was both thought-provoking and practical. They appreciated the suggested resources for implementing diversity and inclusion in the classroom, as well as the tools and tips for improving practice.



The training was really relevant to my role in school, offered lots of practical suggestions for embracing differences to use in the classroom and was delivered really well.

(Staff evaluation form respondent)

...the content was relevant and incredibly important for our setting!

(Staff training evaluation form respondent)



3.3.2 Staff Feedback On The Student Workshops

Feedback from teachers in Year 3 regarding the student workshops they observed was overwhelmingly positive. They expressed high levels of satisfaction with the facilitation and highlighted several key aspects.

Engaging and relevant workshops

Teachers found the workshops to be highly engaging and relevant to the students, with a diverse range of activities that kept them engaged throughout. Teachers felt the facilitator and Role Models were relatable and the students connected with them. They felt the pace and pitch of the lesson was appropriate.

Thought-provoking content

The workshops successfully challenged students' thinking, prompting them to consider social dynamics and cultural norms.

Teachers noted that the facilitators' honest and open approach encouraged constructive conversations among the students. For instance, allowing the class to ask questions and addressing sensitive topics like the 'anti-snitch' culture (one where students discourage each other from reporting peers' misconduct to authority figures) was particularly valued by both teachers and students.

Learning about diversity in a positive way

Teachers observed that the workshops effectively taught students about diversity in an enjoyable and accessible manner. They appreciated that the workshops celebrated diversity without overwhelming the students with excessive detail. Furthermore, teachers noted that students gained valuable insights, such as understanding the distinction between a bystander and an upstander, which they found inspiring and thought-provoking.

Overall, teachers expressed enthusiasm for the impact of the workshops on their students, noting their increased awareness and curiosity to explore further.

3.3.3 Primary Student Feedback On The Workshops

At the end of each session, primary students were asked for their feedback. This was recorded by the session facilitator.

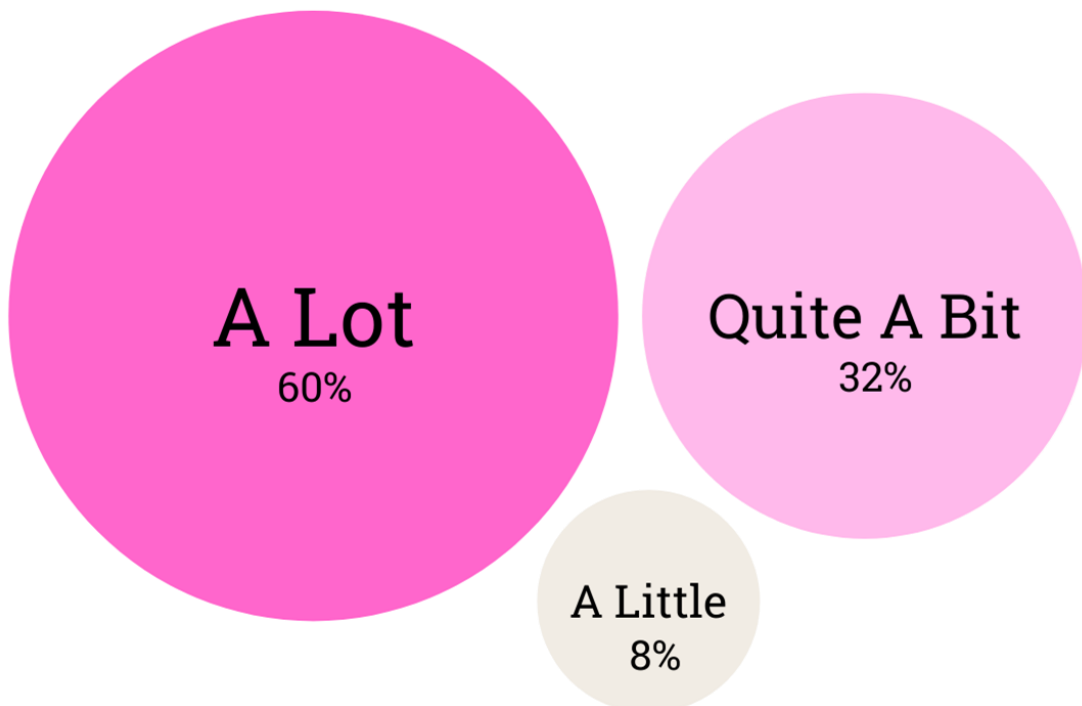
Students were asked what they would like to change about the session. Responses showed that most loved it and **didn't want to change anything**.

The next most frequent response was **more time**, suggesting this is something of interest to students and they would like more space to delve deeper into these issues.

Students provided specific feedback on the aspects of the session they particularly enjoyed. The '*this or that*' game and designing badges were mentioned frequently in feedback. Additionally, the Role Model's story resonated strongly with primary students. Further, they liked the opportunity to learn about differences.

The facilitator asked the primary students how much they had learnt during the workshops: 8% said a little, 32% said quite a bit, 60% said a lot (n=980).

“How much have you learnt from the workshops?”



Sample quotes included:



Learning about differences is really great, and knowing that I can be myself around others.

(Student comments, workshop evaluation form)

Strong people stand up for themselves but the strongest stand up for others.

(Student comment, workshop evaluation form)

I have learnt that stereotyping can harm people and that we can accept everyone's differences.

(Student comment, workshop evaluation form)



3.4 Outcomes

3.4.1 Primary Students' Pledges Made In The Workshop

Immediately after the workshops, students pledged to:

- be themselves
- not assume things about people
- commit to be upstanders
- fight against stereotypes
- understand and not bully others for their differences
- support those who are different
- treat others with kindness
- always tell a teacher or adult if they saw someone being bullied.

3.4.2 The Staff View On Outcomes

We asked staff in the post-training evaluation forms if anything had changed for them. We saw some strong responses across the board related to increases in their confidence and understanding.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that their confidence and understanding had increased in relation to the following statements:

Table 8. Staff outcomes

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
"my understanding of prejudice and its impact"	88%	5%	6%
"my understanding of how to tackle and prevent bullying at my school"	88%	5%	7%
"my understanding of diversity and difference"	87%	6%	7%
"my understanding of the protected characteristics"	88%	6%	6%
"my confidence to make changes that will ensure my school is more inclusive"	89%	5%	6%

i. As A Result Of The Training...

The feedback gathered following the training workshops (from the staff evaluation forms) revealed a strong sense of empowerment and motivation among staff respondents, reflecting a collective commitment to implementing positive changes within their schools.

Usualisation and actualisation in teaching practice and the curriculum

The most frequent response among the school staff evaluation responses related to usualisation and actualisation of diversity in their teaching practices, the wider curriculum and the teaching environment. This applied to staff from different subject areas and ages.

This included intentions to:

- Carry out both whole school and subject audits to assess visibility of diversity in school materials.
- Refresh classroom activities, worksheets, display boards to better reflect and celebrate diversity.
- Include Role Model stories (such as Diversity Role Models' Role Model videos) in teaching materials to provide different perspectives and representation.
- Allocating additional time for discussions and questions related to protected characteristics.
- Establishing a “diversity library” to promote increased awareness of world events to enhance cultural understanding and appreciation among students and staff.

Review Of Anti-Bullying Policies And Improved Communication To Staff And Parents

There were many comments related to reviewing existing anti-bullying policy, developing Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategies and enhancing both parent and staff communications to articulate the school's position and values related to bullying.

We are planning a whole school community project based on today's training. We will focus on ensuring that all of our anti-bullying work which has been undertaken previously is revisited and shared with parents and carers. There will be a renewed focus on identifying and using diverse role models for children which link to the curriculum and ensure that protected characteristics are on display throughout school, ensuring everyone is confident teaching and discussing them.

(Staff evaluation form comment)



Staff Reflected On Themselves And Their Position

Staff described how they had increased empathy:



[the training has] [i]mprove[d] my awareness of a student's possible feelings of being 'the odd one out' due to their [skin] colour, disability (hidden or otherwise).

(Staff evaluation form comment)

This included being aware of unconscious bias and of the influence they have as teachers to bring about change, or, conversely to reinforce stereotypes.

They were also more aware of the need to look out for microaggressions (an example of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against a marginalised group, for example a racial or ethnic minority).

The students made signs detailing microaggressions they had heard or experienced

(Staff evaluation form comment)



Staff reported increased self-awareness in terms of their language and actions, recognising the effect these can have on students' experience. An example quote included:



Be more specific and intentional in the language I use in order to allow everyone in my classroom to feel valued and seen.

(Staff evaluation form comment)

Staff Acquired Knowledge Of New Approaches To Tackling Bullying

In terms of addressing bullying, staff listed many new strategies they had learnt to tackle bullying based on protected characteristics. These strategies centred novel ways to challenge prejudiced language and promoting inclusivity.



Try to always explain effects of discriminatory language rather than just stopping it happening at that time.

(Staff evaluation form comment)

This included questioning why someone holds the view they do, rather than having punishment as their immediate response:

Challenge prejudice stereotyping and discrimination in a different way with more questions!

(Staff evaluation form comment)



3.4.3 Lasting Changes – Length Of Time Since Intervention

Diversity Role Models carried out an additional survey post-intervention to assess what changes, if any, schools had made.

i. Length of time since the training

36 staff members filled in the survey, representing 7 schools. Of these:

- 4 had attended the training in the last month
- 14 had attended the training between 1 and 6 months ago
- a further 16 had attended 7 months + ago.

The other 2 who filled in the survey but were not aware of the training. We kept their views in the survey as we were keen to understand their take on whether they had seen any changes over recent months.

26 of the respondents were classroom teachers, 3 were SLT, 6 were classroom-based support-staff and 1 other did not specify their role.

3.4.4 Staff Outcomes – Post-Intervention

Respondents had very positive views on the increase they had experienced in their understanding and confidence, agreeing as follows with the statements below:

Table 9. Staff long-term outcomes

	(% agree)
"I have a better understanding of prejudice and its impact"	97%
"I have a better understanding of how to tackle and prevent bullying at my school"	97%
"I have a better understanding of diversity and difference"	100%
"I have a better understanding of protected characteristics"	97%
"I am confident to make changes to ensure my school is more inclusive"	97%
"I feel more confident in my understanding of..."	
LGBTQ+	89%
Race	97%
Disability	97%
Religion and Culture	100%
Gender Equality	100%

Interestingly, these results are even stronger than the evaluation form results straight after the training.



Mixed views on whether the prevalence of bullying had changed

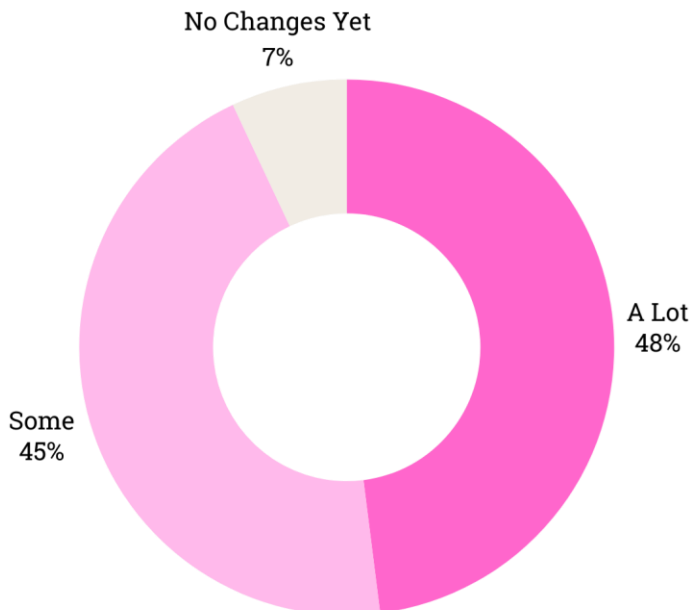
Views of staff on changes to the prevalence of bullying since the training were mixed, mainly because either bullying was not considered to be prevalent or respondents did not know.

Nine of the respondents felt that there was no change - bullying and prejudice were never prevalent. 12 did not know whether there was a change or not. 14 felt it was less prevalent as a result of Diversity Role Models' input and only one person felt it was still prevalent.

Staff attributed positive change to Diversity Role Models' intervention

We asked staff how far they attributed positive change in their schools to Diversity Role Models' training, if at all. 93% (n=32) said that positive change was attributed to Diversity Role Models.

“How far do you attribute any positive change in your school to the support you have had from Diversity Role Models?”



Staff Had Made Several Positive Changes

Among the open-ended comments exploring longer-term changes in the schools, we found staff had made several changes following Diversity Role Models' training, including:

- Changes to policies and practices to better reflect diverse identities:
- Improvements in the representation of equality, diversity, and inclusion in resources and curriculum materials.
- Staff and students were more open to discussing diversity.
- Stakeholders were more confident to tackle bullying based on protected characteristics.
- Adoption of Diversity Role Models' resources, particularly when teaching lessons on gender identity.
- There was a greater awareness and recognition of unconscious bias among school staff.
- More focus on equality groups, which in turn were running school-wide events and assemblies geared towards supporting all students within the school.

I have incorporated diversity and bullying/racism in more areas of learning such as PSHE lessons, daily Thrive sessions and RE lessons. I have also incorporated the protected characteristics and diversity into our class charter, which is referred to daily to enhance the children's understanding.

(Staff post-intervention survey comment)

I have been involved in staff Diversity Role Models training as well as a pupil workshop for my class. [The facilitator] was exceptional at delivering both sessions - she was very open and approachable, which helped to put all the information into relative perspectives. I have very much enjoyed both training sessions and I actively incorporate them into any areas of learning as appropriate. The children have learned so much from it, and I love seeing the positive impact that it is having around school.

(Staff post-intervention survey comment)



3.4.5 Long-Term Outcomes For Students

i. The Student Perspective

We gathered the view of young people on longer-term changes in their schools through the four case studies. 31 students from four schools took part in four focus groups between January and March 2024.

Outcomes reported by the young people included:

- Increased awareness of the serious impact of bullying.
- Increased familiarity with school rules concerning bullying.
- A new-found confidence to intervene as an upstander should they witness bullying, along with new or reinforced strategies to address bullying if they were to experience it themselves.
- They also expressed greater confidence in reporting incidences of bullying.



I think that a lot of confidence has come, especially from the trainings. We were talking a lot about upstanders and bystanders.

(Child focus group participant)

- Students were more accepting of differences, displaying a solid understanding of protected characteristics.
- They had been challenged regarding commonly held stereotypes, leading to a more nuanced perspective on diversity and inclusion within their school environment.

It told us how whatever gender you are or whatever you are like, you can still do whatever you want to do it. It doesn't matter. The gender doesn't matter. The looks doesn't matter, the skin ... You can still do it.

(Child focus group participant)



... It was good that it was like helpful 'cause ... it taught us whoever you are, whoever you love, you can still do stuff that people think you can't do.

(Child focus group participant)



- They found the workshops had “ ... *Set[s] up differences like a good thing.*”
- They also had **increased empathy** towards those who face struggles due to perceived differences.
- They were more sensitive in their language use now:



Ever since.... Diversity Role Models came, people have been a lot nicer to each other, so it's really helped.

(Child focus group participant)

- They felt the workshop had a wider positive impact on school behaviours:

Don't be really rude with each other and we're getting better at it. There's less arguments and teachers are coming over more. There is less rudeness and there's like friendship around the school since.

(Child focus group participant)



However, some respondents flagged ongoing poor behaviour among a small cohort of students. In one school, they mentioned that telling teachers was still viewed as 'snitching' and would come with repercussions for students. There is more work to be done in schools on addressing this.

ii. The Staff Perspective On Changes In The Students

Staff appreciated that students had the opportunity to explore and embrace differences, recognising it as acceptable for themselves and others: "Pupils having the opportunity to understand difference and that this was OK and acceptable for themselves and others."

They observed that **the workshops had fostered greater mindfulness** among students regarding their language: "The impact of words on other feelings and thinking before they speak."

Staff reported a positive shift in students' attitudes: "I think it has been very helpful and the children are more aware and challenging to stereotypes. Homophobic language is definitely less."

They believed that staff and student learning about diversity had **positively influenced their school's culture.**



Although I feel we did not have a bullying issue, I feel the pupil and staff understanding of a range of diversity topics has greatly widened therefore making the whole school culture a more open and pleasant one to be in.

(Staff post-intervention survey comment)

3.4.6 Impact Of The Role Model Story

A key feature of the staff training and student workshops was the sharing of a personal story from a volunteer Role Model whose identity was linked to one or more of the protected characteristics. In the primary student workshops, Role Models may have discussed their differences, different types of family, their own experience of stereotyping, bullying, prejudice and how they celebrate and are proud of their differences, ensuring the content was age and developmentally appropriate.

The Role Model story received **overwhelmingly positive feedback**, with stakeholders finding it impactful and compelling. Evaluation respondents across the various tools reported that it helped to **increase empathy, raise awareness, and challenged misconceptions**. Illustrative quotes can be found below.



It helped to see another's perspective and to be able to ask questions of someone who has experienced discrimination and difficulty firsthand. This was an invaluable lesson for the children, especially when [the Role Model] was explaining that 'When you say 'gay' in a negative way, this hurts me'.

(Staff evaluation form respondent)

It was very moving and makes you realise that things are going on that you may not know or think about.

(Staff evaluation form respondent)



Role Model stories also highlighted the importance of trusting relationships with adults in schools for children who may be experiencing bullying. This was reiterated by respondents in our surveys who experienced bullying, frequently citing the absence of such support in our research findings.

The youth focus groups were able to recall the Role Model story they had heard even months after the workshop, showing its lasting impact.

It was also a highly positive experience for the Role Models who enjoyed working with students and staff. They observed that their personal account was a powerful tool to build empathy.

Lovely to hear people's stories you wouldn't normally be exposed to, thus increasing your compassion and understanding of the effects certain behaviours have towards people from diverse backgrounds.

(Staff evaluation form respondent)



I feel that many people may not know a trans person and it helped challenge misconceptions even within the education community.

(Staff evaluation form respondent)



Thank you for sharing your story, it was great to hear from personal experience what you went through and how it has affected your life, answering questions about how we as educators can make a difference was very helpful!

(Staff evaluation form respondent)

3.5 Learning

We asked the evaluation respondents (staff) what could be improved about Diversity Role Models' training in the future. There were several themes:

No Change Needed

The most frequent response to this question was "not applicable" and/or comments related to the session being highly effective as it was. Other responses focused on improvement included:

More Time

This included that the session could be longer and more time could be spent on the scenarios, group discussions and questions at the end. In a small number of cases, attendees reported that the session felt rushed and there was too much content for the available time. This was compounded by busy school life – there were instances where Diversity Role Models could not start on time as something occurred in the school meaning attendees were late and/or there was a clash with other school business such as assemblies. There was some minor frustration with this as this was felt to be an avoidable issue.

Cover More Of The Protected Characteristics

A small number of staff felt additional protected characteristics should be covered further. Disability, race, religion and sex were mentioned as protected characteristics that would benefit from more coverage. Any training was tailored to the school as a result of the findings from the initial research pre-intervention. As there was limited time, the team usually only cover one or two of the protected characteristics that came through as needing additional work in stakeholder surveys. The schools and the facilitator may wish to remind attendees of the rationale behind the selection process in future training or extend the length of the training and include more of the protected characteristics.

It needs to be more diverse... As a disabled person, I was a little frustrated that this wasn't really addressed at all. Sex was also not mentioned and yet these are areas we know that is especially important to address when there are people like the Andrew Tate's of this World who try to taint young peoples' minds.

(Staff evaluation form respondent)



Need Time And Space To Implement Changes

Attendees expressed a wish to have more time to be able to implement changes in their practice. While they were motivated, they emphasised the importance of time set aside to focus on learning following on from the session.

More Support Needed

Attendees also wished for more support. This could be from Diversity Role Models and/or school themselves.

Specifically, there was an expressed need for resources and guidance in dealing with challenging questions or statements, facilitating “tricky conversations” and advice on inclusively talking about identities that may be complex to explain to students.

In light of this feedback, Diversity Role Models created resources focusing on facilitating positive conversations.

Extend The Training To All Staff And Parents And Carers, Where It Was Not Already Being Run For Them

Some respondents advocated for extending the training to all staff members, including support staff and lunchtime supervisors, as well as parents and carers. Diversity Role Models can deliver training to non-teaching staff and the wider parent and carer community. All schools are offered this up-front. Diversity Role Models might want to consider how best to promote the opportunities to more staff and parents and carers.

It was noted that while teachers typically have allocated time for professional development, other school staff, such as teaching assistants, do not. They may face barriers in attendance due to hourly pay structures. Further, a small number of respondents felt the training should include more on what non-teachers can do to tackle bullying:

[The school name] as a school has staff members who don't teach, and the training had a very teaching heavy focus.

(Staff evaluation form respondent)



Deliver In-Person, Where Possible

While online training was convenient for many, there was an overall preference for in-person training.



I would prefer in-person and not online as it increases engagement and proactive discussion. Perhaps the Role Model still online if needed.

(Staff evaluation form respondent)

The Role Model Can Create Tension

Overall feedback on the Role Models was very positive throughout the evaluation.

However, there was a small amount of feedback that younger Role Models with more recent experience of bullying was preferable.

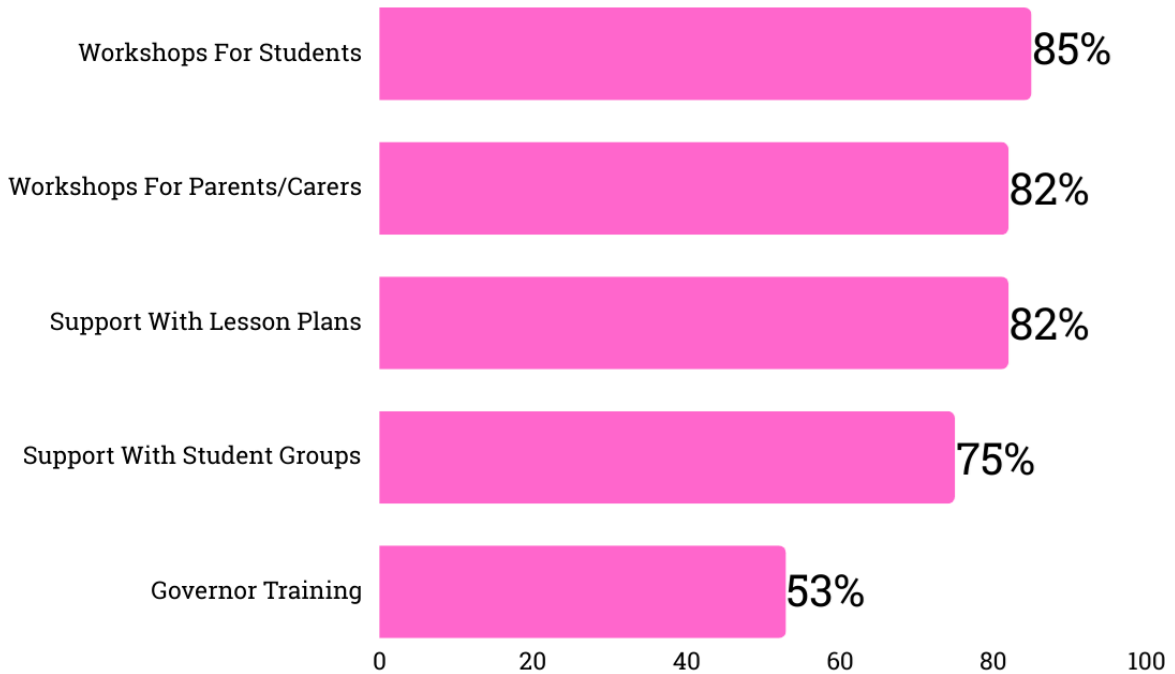
Tensions arose in one secondary school where some staff members did not receive the Role Model as well as other schools. Staff held differing perspectives to the Role Model on their experiences relating to equality issues within faith communities.

This prompted communication and additional feedback with the school. Diversity Role Models decided to conduct some internal reflection which saw plans laid to develop new materials and training approaches to ensure volunteers are supported to share their stories in the most effective and impactful way when covering sensitive topics. However, it highlights a challenge that can arise when asking volunteers to share personal stories related to sensitive or contentious topics.

3.6 Further Support Needed By Schools

i. The Staff View On Further Support Needed

We asked staff survey respondents (as part of the research phase but relevant to include within this evaluation section) what support, if any, their school needs to prevent bullying and create an inclusive, diverse and equitable environment. Responses included:



ii. The SLT And Governors' Perspective

In addition, governors and SLT respondents offered some views on what schools needed for moving forwards in the pre-intervention surveys that offer some further insight:

- More and continued staff training sessions on diversity and anti-bullying, working with external experts to guide this.
- Continued school-wide dialogue on bullying and diversity. This should include governors, parent carers, school staff and the students.
- More budget, resources and space and time in the curriculum and in planning workloads to support this.
- Further development of diversity policies and anti-bullying policies. More support for governors to deepen their understanding of these.
- Students need to be exposed to and educated about diverse cultures and traditions, particularly where there is less diversity in schools.
- Additional support measures to tackle bullying in areas outside but related to school such as travelling to school and cyberbullying.
- Recruitment of a diverse workforce and governing body should be supported.

3.7 The Three-Year View: Evaluation

Diversity Role Models had consistently high satisfaction rates and achieved strong outcomes across the three years. It is clear that the training model works and is impactful.

The first-year report can be found on the Diversity Role Models website. The second-year report was not published but is available on request.

The following table summarises the staff evaluation form feedback data for the last three years.

Table 10. Feedback data, the three-year view

"How would you rate..."

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
The Role Model	100%	97%	96%
The Trainer	100%	98%	98%
The Training Overall	99%	98%	97%
The Content Of The Training	100%	98%	97%
Would Recommend	99%	94%	94%

(Combining excellent and good)

Table 11. Outcome data, the three-year view

This second table summarises staff evaluation form outcomes data over the last three years.

	Year 1 *	Year 2 *	Year 3*
The training increased my understanding of how to tackle and prevent bullying at my school	92%	97%	88%
The training increased my understanding of diversity and difference	100%	97%	87%
The training increased my confidence to make changes that will ensure my school is more inclusive	95%	97%	89%
The training increased my understanding of prejudice and its impact	92%	96%	88%
The training increased my understanding of the protected characteristics	N/A	96%	88%
The training was pitched at the right level for my school	88%	91%	89%
The training was relevant to me and my role at the school	97%	95%	88%

**combining strongly agree and agree responses*

The outcomes scores are strong across all areas. However, the year 3 data dips by over 10 percentage points from year 1 at a couple of points including ‘the training increased my understanding of diversity and difference’ and ‘the training was relevant to me and my role.’

The agreement scores are still very high, but this is something Diversity Role Models may wish to consider.

Table 12. How much students learnt from the workshops, the three-year view

At the end of each student workshop, students were asked how much they had learnt. They could say ‘nothing,’ ‘a little,’ ‘quite a bit’ or ‘a lot.’ This table summarises their responses over the three years. Once again, this is a consistently high score over the three years.

"How much have you learnt from the workshop?"

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Overall (positive)	90%	95%	94%
Learnt a lot	56%	61%	61%
Learnt quite a bit	34%	34%	32%
Learnt a little	7%	5%	8%



3.8 Case Study Schools

NCVO carried out student focus groups for students between year 3 and year 6 in four separate schools. The findings from these have been included in the section above on long-term outcomes for students.

In the focus group, we used a mixture of facilitation methods to encourage participation.

These included:

- group discussion
- vignettes (Diversity Role Models resources about stereotyping or being an upstander)
- opportunities to write ideas on post it notes
- interactive polls

Using a range of methods allowed students the option to communicate through their preferred method.

In addition, school data from the post intervention surveys was pulled into individual reports for the four schools, to provide the staff perspective.

The following chapter offers a synthesised version of the four schools' data.

The four schools were all in Yorkshire or the North East of England.

Strong recall of the Role Model story

The students, on the whole, could remember the Role Model story. In one case, they needed additional prompting but once they remembered some of the detail, they could recall many of the details of the Role Model's story, even several months after the workshop.

Stakeholders Gained Knowledge

Students and teachers both reported having gained knowledge about prejudice, bullying and its impact through the staff training and student workshops.



I learnt a bit more about it because at first before I did the training, I didn't really know much about it and I would [have] like to know a bit. And then after the workshop, I knew loads of stuff because ... I now know that that bullying is, like, really, like, really mean and that you should never do it.

(Child focus group participant)

Students Knew How To Report And Were More Confident In Responding To Bullying

There was a strong sense that the students knew how to report and respond to bullying.

Both staff and students reported they had learnt new strategies and increased confidence to deal with it. Students, for example, said they were much more likely to be upstanders since the workshops. They seemed, on the whole, confident to tell trusted adults if there was an issue, although there were some comments related to a fear of being labelled a 'snitch'.

Students Had More Understanding Of The Protected Characteristics

They had a deeper understanding of protected characteristics, with teachers playing an important role in reminding and reiterating through various routes such as assemblies, the school charter and increased conversations with young people. Students reported that they were more careful with their choice of words now as a result of the workshops.

Students Were Challenged In Their Thinking

Students had been challenged on widely held stereotypes. They had strong responses to the vignette where a boy teased another because he wanted to be a dancer when he grew up and how people should be allowed to choose what they did freely. They also had strong memories of how unfair it was that the Role Model had been bullied because they did not conform to typical girl behaviour. They, and their teachers, reported that they had learned to respect differences:



I think it has been very helpful and the children are more aware and challenging to stereotypes. Homophobic language is definitely less.

(Staff post-intervention survey comment)

Pupils having the opportunity to understand difference and that this was OK and acceptable for themselves and others.

(Staff post-intervention survey respondent)



Staff Experienced Many Positive Changes

Staff also reported improved awareness of diversity and difference and increased understanding of protected characteristics.

There were several examples of changes within schools, with usualisation emerging as one of the strongest outcomes:



Not using difference as a teaching point- making sure difference is part of our every day."

(Staff post-intervention survey comment)



Staff respondents reported their schools were celebrating diversity more as a result of the training.

There Was A Mixed View On Levels Of Bullying In Schools

There was a mixed view on levels of bullying in schools since the training. Some staff and students reported less bullying since the training, although the students reported that there was still bullying and poor behaviour in the schools. Some teachers felt that bullying was not an issue in their school before or after the training.

New Equality Groups

There were new examples of equality groups being formed since the training.

Desire For More Training And Workshops

There was an appetite for more frequent and widespread training for adults and workshops across all ages, with an identified need to discuss LGBTQ+ earlier in the curriculum.

3.9 Overall Reflections On The Evaluation

The evaluation of Diversity Role Models' interventions was overwhelmingly positive, with participants praising the training, facilitators, Role Models, workshops and activities.

Staff reported increased confidence and motivation to implement changes, generating ideas to incorporate protected characteristics.

The training deepened understanding and prompted revision of anti-bullying policies.

Post-intervention evaluation showed sustained improvements for students, teachers and at a school-wide level. Students were inspired to be upstanders. The Role Model stories were particularly compelling and helped to underpin the messaging from the training, particularly around challenging stereotypes. They were remembered many months after the intervention.

Suggestions for improvement included more session time, content adaptation, ongoing support, and broader coverage of protected characteristics.

There was appetite for additional diversity training, extending to parents and carers.



Section C: Summary & Recommendations

This chapter summarises the research and evaluation findings and present recommendations for moving forwards for Diversity Role Models and for schools/the education sector.

4.1 Overall Research And Evaluation Conclusions

A. The Research

The research was marked by notable differences in views between staff, SLT, governors in schools, school students (particularly those from marginalised identities) and parents and carers in relation to prevalence of bullying in schools. This gap is wider at more senior levels, with SLT and governors generally being much more positive than staff.

Staff, SLT and governors were consistently positive about the low prevalence of bullying and the anti-bullying provision in place across the board – including policies and processes in place, the curriculum being taught in schools, and their school's values related to bullying.

However, it seems these views were not consistently in tune with the on-the-ground insights from students themselves, who were much more likely than staff to identify higher levels of bullying, including incidents related to protected characteristics. Students were also divided on whether staff had the ability to effectively respond to this bullying.

Bullying manifests as widespread within secondary schools with various forms and motivations. Responses from students indicated that bullying related to physical appearance, sexuality, gender, and gender expression was among the most prevalent.

Further, students from marginalised identities consistently reported significantly higher levels of bullying on the basis of their protected characteristics compared to their peers.

This emphasises the need for schools to routinely hear the voices of those from marginalised identities and/or those with lived experience of bullying and ensure they feed into the shaping of any future policies/interventions. The research suggests that those who are not subject to bullying are potentially less able to see it, meaning they might not report it or be an ally. Raising awareness of these different types of bullying feels like a pressing issue to address.

A significant minority of parents/carers expressed dissatisfaction with schools' handling of bullying incidents, further elaborated by concerns in open-ended responses. Similar sentiments were echoed among secondary students, with many feeling unheard and frustrated in their attempts to address bullying situations. This highlights a need for schools to improve their approach to tackling bullying and to establish better lines of communication and trust with affected students and parents.

Staff cited time and resource constraints as barriers to effectively implementing and reviewing bullying policies, engaging stakeholders, and following up on reported incidents.

A further disparity exists between staff and student perceptions, particularly concerning the consistency of teaching LGBTQ+ and disability-related topics. This is important as this research demonstrates that where schools focus on delivering a diverse curriculum, students were less likely to report bullying related to protected characteristics.

By incorporating diverse voices and narratives into the curriculum, schools can help promote empathy, understanding, and acceptance among students, ultimately reducing incidents of bullying related to protected characteristics. This may prove to be an effective strategy to create safer and more supportive learning environments.

While students generally viewed school values and celebrations of diversity positively, there were concerns regarding classmates' understanding of the impact of hurtful words (among primary and secondary students) and their willingness to intervene or report bullying incidents for secondary students. This may be related to feeling unheard when they have reported bullying in the past, as per the frustration expressed in the open-ended comments. There is much needed room for improvement here.

Staff, governors and SLT presented a positive view of visibility and values within their schools, emphasising respect for diversity, regular celebration of differences and accommodations for students with protected characteristics to help manage their education.

There is room for improvement regarding student-led equality groups in schools, with many SLT respondents stating their school did not have student-led groups or anti-bullying ambassadors.

A significant finding from the research related to prevalence of bullying compared to frequency of teaching. We found that where schools focus on delivering a diverse curriculum, pupils are much less likely to report bullying related to protected characteristics.

The Three-Year View

The most prevalent forms of bullying are relatively consistent over the years and across primary and secondary school settings among our sample, with bullying based on differences, looks and sexuality being most common in primary school, and bullying based on sexuality, looks and being a girl frequently being most common among secondary school samples.

The Evaluation

Diversity Role Models' work is consistently highly rated. Its content, activities, facilitators, Role Models as well as the pace and level of the training and workshops work well for schools.

There are many enduring outcomes for students and staff including:

- Increased confidence and motivation to effect changes at both personal and school levels.
- Enhanced understanding and awareness of prejudice and bullying and their impact, alongside improved strategies for addressing prejudice-based bullying at school.
- Increased appreciation of diversity and protected characteristics and greater openness among staff and students to discussing diversity and prejudice.
- Better representation of equality, diversity, and inclusion in resources and curriculum materials.
- Increased familiarity with school rules concerning bullying.
- Increased focus on equality groups, resulting in broader school-wide initiatives.

4.2 Recommendations

NCVO facilitated a co-production session with Diversity Role Models' education team and CEO, along with a focus group involving Role Models, to gather feedback on potential improvements for moving forwards. Additionally, we also sought feedback from the research and evaluation survey respondents. The recommendations below summarise the discussions and findings. We order these into learning for Diversity Role Models, for schools and for the wider sector.

Learning And Recommendations For Diversity Role Models:

Diversity Role Models should continue delivering its broader anti-bullying initiative focused on protected characteristics in schools, in addition to its core LGBTQ+ work. Examining the stark findings of levels of bullying in English secondary schools combined with the positive evaluation and lasting outcomes of the project, there is a clear need for this training in schools. Diversity Role Models may wish to find additional ways to promote its wider programme within schools to include more teachers, non-teaching staff, students, and parents and carers.

Further consideration should be given to adapting the programme for early years, younger primary students and SEND schools. Most found the programme to be well-tailored but a small minority wished for further adaptations.

Longer staff workshops in schools may be beneficial, allowing adequate time for exercises and more time for reflections. In-person delivery is preferable to online, where possible.

Diversity Role Models needs to continue focusing on dissemination and educating staff about policies and processes during staff workshops.

Diversity Role Models' data reports and data collection approaches remain highly valuable but may benefit from streamlining and shortening, possibly targeting a sample, rather than the whole school population.

In light of this report and the differing perceptions of stakeholder groups, it could prove interesting to further align questions throughout the surveys to aid further direct comparison.

Learning And Recommendations For Schools And The Wider Sector:

Schools need to improve their response to bullying, led by input from students, and enhance consultation and engagement with parents and carers. Diversity Role Models could assist in this process by developing guidance on easy-read versions of anti-bullying policies and processes for students and more accessible versions for parents and carers, alongside a potential parent and carer pack outlining strategies for school engagement.

There is also some specific work needed to respond to the expressed sense from younger students that there may be repercussions from other students if they report bullying.

Schools need to prioritise data-driven approaches, including encouraging reporting of bullying by students and implementing robust tracking mechanisms. Improved reporting of bullying incidents is crucial, especially considering the disconnect between senior leadership and governors and the lived experience of students.

Exploring and bridging the gap between students, parents, carers, and school staff is essential, with a particular emphasis on centering student voice through initiatives such as setting up student-led equality groups.

We acknowledge the time and resource constraints faced by schools. This underscores the importance of external expertise, like that provided by Diversity Role Models, in offering practical solutions.



Appendix



Appendix i. References

- (1) Anti-Bullying Alliance (2023) *Children in receipt of free school meals*. Accessed: 03.04.24, from <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/at-risk-groups/children-receipt-free-school-meals>
- (2) Department of Education (2018) *Bullying in England, April 2013 to March 2018 Analysis on 10- to 15-year-olds from the Crime Survey for England & Wales*. Accessed: 03.04.24, from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/919474/Bullying_in_England_2013-2018_1_.pd.pdf
- (3) Diversity Role Models (2022) *Pathways to LGBT+ Inclusion: Report - Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in schools today*. Accessed 03.04.24, from: <https://www.diversityrolemodels.org/media/1473/pathways-to-lgbtplus-inclusion-report.pdf>
- (4) Edurio (2023) *Pupil Safeguarding Review, Report 2: Safeguarding in the Curriculum*. Accessed 18.04.23, from: <https://home.edurio.com/pupil-safeguarding-review>
- (5) EHRC (July 2021) *Protected characteristics*. Accessed 18.04.24, from: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/protected-characteristics>
- (6) Gov.UK (2023) *Academic year 2022/23 Schools, pupils and their characteristics*. Accessed 03.04.24, from: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>
- (7) Gov.UK (2021) *Free School Meals, Autumn Term*. Accessed 04.04.24, from: [Free school meals: Autumn term, Autumn term 2020/21 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/free-school-meals)
- (8) Gov.UK (2022) *Parent, pupil and learner panel omnibus surveys for 2021 to 2022*. Accessed 18.04.24, from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parent-pupil-and-learner-panel-omnibus-surveys-for-2021-to-2022>

- 9) Gov. UK (2018) *Research and analysis: Longitudinal study of young people in England: cohort 2, wave 3: Research into the health and wellbeing of 15-year-old*. Accessed 04.04.24, from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/longitudinal-study-of-young-people-in-england-cohort-2-wave-3>
- 10) Gov.UK (13 September 2021) *Statutory guidance: Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education*. Accessed 18.04.24, from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>
- 11) House of Commons Briefing Paper (2023) *Bullying in UK schools*. Accessed 03.04.24, from: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8812/CBP-8812.pdf>
- 12) Just Like Us (June 2021) *Growing up LGBTQ+ - The impact of school, home and coronavirus on LGBT+ young people*. Accessed 25.04.24, from: [Just-Like-Us-2021-report-Growing-Up-LGBT.pdf \(justlikeus.org\)](https://www.justlikeus.org/reports/growing-up-lgbt/)
- 13) Ofsted (31 August 2023) *Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools*. Accessed 18.04.24, from [Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-teaching-of-the-protected-characteristics-in-schools)
- 14) Schools Out (2024) *The Classroom*, Accessed 17.04.24, from ['Usualising' and 'Actualising' | The Classroom \(the-classroom.org.uk\)](https://www.the-classroom.org.uk/)

Stakeholder group	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	No of respondents/schools
Secondary student survey	3203 respondents	5005 respondents	2145 respondents	10,353 respondents
No and type of school	30 schools: 27 secondary 2 FE 1 SEND	37 schools: 33 secondary 2 FE 2 SEND	19 schools: 16 secondary 1 SEND 2 FE	86 schools
Primary student survey	2384 respondents	4755 respondents	2594 respondents	9,733 respondents
No and type of school	34 primary schools	88 schools: 86 primary 1 SEND 1 PRU	47 primary schools	169 schools
Parent/carer survey	1989 respondents	6099 respondents	2384 respondents	10,382 respondents
No and type of school	38 schools: 26 primary 11 secondary 1 SEND	121 schools: 86 primary 31 secondary 2 all-through 2 SEND	56 schools: 46 primary 8 secondary 1 both 1 other	215 schools

Contact Details

Get in touch

 [Contact us via our website](#)

 Contact us via email at: education@diversityrolemodels.org

Find us online

 www.linkedin.com/company/diversity-role-models

 www.instagram.com/diversityrm

 www.facebook.com/diversityrm

 <https://twitter.com/diversityrm>

 www.youtube.com/@DiversityRoleModels

 <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/diversityrolemodels>

 www.tiktok.com/@diversityrm

Find out more

 www.diversityrolemodels.org

 [Sign up to receive our newsletter](#)

Further PDF copies and information about this report can be found [here](#)

The associated Best Practice Guide for Educators can be downloaded [here](#)

For the full dataset, evaluation questions and data collection tools, please contact Diversity Role Models:

Phone:
020 3795 9201

Email:
education@diversityrolemodels.org

Diversity Role Models
St Anne's Church, 55 Dean Street,
London W1D 6AF
Registered Charity number 07640644
Published by Diversity Role Models, 2023