

Pathways to LGBT+ Inclusion: Report

Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in schools today



FOREWORD

Bullying: it's a toxic word. You'd think that in an educated, advanced, supposedly sophisticated society, it wouldn't exist. Sadly, it does and it creates an environment where individuals are made to feel inferior, excluded and despised. The victims all too often don't know where to turn.

Almost half of LGBT pupils who face bullying don't tell anyone. They withdraw, they become more isolated and there have been tragic consequences where young people have taken their own lives because they didn't know how to escape the constant feeling of rejection.

Now, if you could stop bullying, wouldn't you want to do just that?

This report is crucial in finding a way forward because the answer lies in education, language and behaviour.

The report has discovered that parents, staff and governors tend to underestimate the occurrence of bullying compared to the pupils themselves. This is crucial because what adults may think and how adults may react to language will naturally be more considered and resilient. We grow stronger as we grow older but children don't have those layers of protective experience. They respond and react as if stung or burnt and it's why it is so important that we take these findings seriously and we, as adults, react quickly to protect the most vulnerable.

Primarily, we need to address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) language. 42% of year five and six students in primary school report that damaging and hurtful HBT language is prevalent in their school. The number rises to 54%

in secondary schools. Many may think it's not a problem if something negative is described as 'gay' but the micro-aggressions add up and the negative connotations build. Indeed, the figures suggest that LGBT+ pupils or those from LGBT+ families may not feel safe at school.

Just let that sink in. The place you are relying upon to prepare you for the world, the place where you are supposed to get an all-round education is not currently a safe space if you are LGBT+.

The more we talk about LGBT+ relationships and issues, the more we can discuss real life experiences and answer questions honestly, the more we can challenge the concept of 'otherness' and the more we can help create a happy and healthy environment where no one is excluded for perceived difference. Suggestions include inviting guest speakers to talk about their experiences, making a wider range of books available in school libraries and helping to create an open and supportive environment.

Diversity Role Models has worked hard to address and correct the damage caused by LGBT+ bullying but it's up to all of us to try to prevent it happening in the first place. It's time for all of us to step up and help.

Thank you for taking time to read this and to consider the report.

Clare Balding



FOREWORD

Inclusive schools are safe ones. Inclusive schools are productive ones which help set starting points from which children and young people chart the course of the rest of their lives. It's where opinions form, values are established and aspirations are set. School settings so often provide learners with their first taste of what community is all about. They have the chance to demonstrate the heady heights of achievement which can be secured by a community which bases itself first and foremost on the sound core values of tolerance, respect and compassion.

School leaders know that these are in no way soft measures. How we conduct ourselves, how we relate to one another and respond to others, particularly in times of need, sets the foundation from which all other aims and endeavours proceed. Quite simply, until a school gets its moral compass and core ethos right, then the rest of its plans remain on shaky, unpredictable ground.

This report achieves so much more than just conducting an analysis "of levels of LGBT+ education and HBT bullying in the schools DRM have worked with". It charts the standard truly collaborative, inclusive communities

need to aspire to as they seek to exemplify the behaviours upon which successful communities are founded.

Schools have achieved so much in recent times. Their commitment to establishing settings which not only celebrate diversity but exemplify daily the very behaviours and attitudes we would want to see across our wider communities is inspiring and should be commended. But there is clearly more to be done.

I am so proud of the work Diversity Role Models is forging forward with, of the fearless and hugely informed way it is actively challenging schools to be even better than they already are and for the way in which it relentlessly champions the voice of the 21st Century learner. I am proud of NAHT's partnership with them this year, but grateful for it too. Together we have the prospect of achieving great things on behalf of the learners we serve.

Ruth Davies,
President, NAHT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between January 2019 and March 2020 Diversity Role Models (DRM) worked with 94 primary and secondary schools to support improved education about LGBT+ issues and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying. This grant funded programme was called Pathways to LGBT+ Inclusion. Due to the nature of the programme, there are some limitations to this study. DRM was funded to work with primary and secondary schools that were at the start of their journey towards LGBT+ inclusion in certain regions, namely London, the West Midlands or South East of England. We received survey responses from 90 schools which comprised a mix of selective and non-selective schools, independent, faith schools and non-denominational schools, local-authority-maintained schools, academies, free schools and mixed- and single-gender schools. As such, results can be taken as indicative of the experiences and perceptions of stakeholders in schools in London, the South East of England and West Midlands who were early on their journey towards LGBT+ inclusion and who sought the support of DRM to improve their schools.

The project ran at a crucial time for LGBT+ inclusion in the English education system. The Government's updated guidance on relationship, sex and health education (RSE) for schools had been released with some early adopter schools introducing the new curriculum before its statutory implementation in all schools in the 2020/2021 academic year. LGBT+ education faced some strong opposition at that time from a range of voices and a lack of clarity and support from government on what should be taught at primary school, placed school leaders in a difficult position and could make the implementation of the new curriculum more challenging.

Surveys were completed by students, staff, parents and carers, and governors to conduct a pulse check on the levels of LGBT+ education and HBT incidents in schools. The results showed that some schools were failing to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. However, the report points to clear recommendations for schools to support them in creating more inclusive school cultures. The findings presented are not representative of the whole education sector or schools who already have an advanced programme of LGBT+ education but the findings provide stark insights from a unique sample of schools and stakeholders.

Findings include:

- **Surveyed schools were not consistently described as a safe environment for LGBT+ individuals or those with LGBT+ families** – only 27% of secondary school students say their school would be safe for LGBT+ individuals to 'come out' as LGBT+
- **Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) language and bullying was prevalent in surveyed schools** – 42% of year five and six primary school students and 54% of secondary school students report HBT language to be common at their school
- **Rates of education about LGBT+ identities and relationships in surveyed schools was low** – only one fifth (20%) of secondary school students report learning about LGBT+ identities and HBT bullying at school
- **Parents and carers were less engaged in LGBT+ and homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) issues at school** – only one quarter (25%) think that staff would be able to support students who are LGBT+, parents and carers frequently underestimate the prevalence of HBT language and bullying at schools.

These findings have shaped a series of recommendations to help further prevent HBT bullying and language in schools. The recommendations focus on the following areas.

Curriculum and education

Ensure LGBT+ identities are discussed openly and sensitively across the curriculum to help educate about diversity and prevent HBT bullying and language. Ensure schools are supported to effectively deliver LGBT+ inclusive RSE at all levels, including in primary schools.

Policies and procedures

Ensure all relevant school policies are LGBT+ inclusive and are effective in challenging HBT bullying and language. They should be effectively communicated to all stakeholders, including students, staff, governors and parents and carers and data on HBT incidents should be regularly reviewed by governors and senior leaders.

Training and support

Ensure funding is available for schools to allocate to training staff on LGBT+ inclusion, giving them the confidence and support to effectively challenge HBT bullying and language and prevent it through LGBT+ inclusive education.

Values and visibility

Embed LGBT+ inclusion and a commitment to celebrating diversity into the school values and communicate this to the whole school community. Visibly celebrate differences across school life, in displays, examples, lessons, libraries and assemblies to create a culture in which LGBT+ identities are openly discussed and respected.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

Diversity Role Models (DRM) received grant funding to work with schools between January 2019 and March 2020 on a programme we called the Pathways to LGBT+ Inclusion programme. The programme offered tailored support to schools to train members of staff and work with Senior Leadership Teams to adapt and update policies and procedures and to diversify the curriculum with the aim of challenging and preventing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying. The funding was to support schools who were at the start of their journey towards LGBT+ inclusion, meaning those schools who needed support in the areas outlined above.

We surveyed staff, students, parents and carers and governors in participating schools to gain an understanding of the experiences of all stakeholder groups in each school. This allowed us to adapt our consultation and training to meet the needs of each individual school. This, alongside a self-assessment tool completed by members of the Senior Leadership Team, gave valuable insight into life at the school. The DRM team then provided a consultation service to Senior Leaders in which an action plan was jointly produced before being shared with the wider staff team as part of a tailored staff training session on LGBT+ inclusion. Staff and governors from participating schools were also able to access webinars on a range of topics such as LGBT+ inclusive Relationships and Sex Education, trans inclusion, and intersectionality.

At the end of the project we had acquired a sizeable data set from survey responses. Although the original intention of the surveys was only to understand the experiences and issues at an individual school level, taken collectively the data provides fascinating insights into HBT language and bullying and the levels of LGBT+ inclusive education in the schools we supported. Diversity Role Models has since been supported by an Advisory Group comprised of school leaders, policy experts, consultants and researchers to support the analysis of the data and produce a series of recommendations.

The aim of these recommendations and the report more broadly is to provide guidance for the education sector in fostering an LGBT+ inclusive culture and reducing the levels of HBT bullying and language in schools in England. Although the data analysed was from only 90 schools in specific regions in England and recommendations are tailored to the English education system, many of the findings and recommendations will be equally applicable and easily adapted for use in other educational systems.

OVERVIEW OF LGBT+ EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

Social attitudes and cultural context

Recent decades have seen legislative progress regarding LGBT+ rights and more open attitudes towards the LGBT+ community in the UK.¹ Younger people were also more likely to hold more open attitudes towards the LGBT+ community, with 93% of 16-24-year olds stating they were comfortable with LGBT people as their neighbour, manager, GP and Prime Minister, compared to 80% of 55-64 year-olds, 77% of 65-74 year-olds and 75% of those aged 75 and over.² This is confirmed by recent research by Hope not Hate who found that the majority of young people hold a positive view of LGBT+ young people, with over half stating they'd find it easy to use a gender-neutral pronoun such as "they" and "them".³ Younger people are more likely to identify as being members of the LGBT+

1 Kelley N; Over the rainbow?; NatCen; July 2019

2 Matousek R; How does the UK feel towards the LGBTQ+ community?; Kantar; September 2020

3 Carter, R; Young people in the time of COVID-19: A fear and hope study of 16-24 year olds; Hope not Hate; July 2020

community, with 4.4% of those aged 16-24 identifying as LGB compared to 2.2% of the general population according to the Office for National Statistics.⁴ Polling by YouGov has found that 1 in 2 young people don't identify as completely heterosexual when asked to place themselves on a scale of 1-6.⁵ Although there is less data available on the number of young people who identify as transgender, we can take the rise in referrals to the Gender Identity Development Service between 2015-2019 as an indication of more young people feeling able to seek support for their gender identity than previously. People are also coming out as LGBT+ at a younger age, with research showing that the average age for an LGBT+ person aged 18-24 to come out was 17 compared to 37 for the over 60s.⁶ The majority of LGBT+ people also state that they knew they were LGBT+ by the age of 13.⁷

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and language in school

Despite a positive shift in attitudes amongst young people in particular, we know that this does not always translate into LGBT+ inclusive school environments. Research conducted in 2019 found that bullying related to sexual orientation was more common than bullying related to other characteristics such as religion, with 71% of teachers witnessing homophobic bullying and 35% witnessing it at least once a month.⁸ Figures from the research suggest that 13% of students are bullied because of their sexual orientation. Other studies, focusing on the experiences of LGBT+ young people, found that of that group 45% are bullied for being LGBT+ at school with the figure rising to 64% for transgender young people.⁹ Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language remains common place in schools with 86% regularly hearing phrases such as 'that's so gay' and around half of LGBT+ students hearing other homophobic and transphobic slurs frequently or often in their schools.¹⁰ The Government's 2018 National LGBT Survey, which polled over 100,000 LGBT+ people in the UK, found that "a third of respondents who were in education in 2016-2017 said that they experienced a negative reaction during that time due to them being, or people perceiving them to be, LGBT".¹¹ This seems to corroborate research that suggests LGB young people are twice as likely as their heterosexual peers to face bullying in secondary school.¹² Worryingly 9% of the most frequent perpetrators of the respondents' most serious incidents were teachers.¹³

There is well documented evidence of the negative impact of bullying on attendance, attainment, life chances and mental health.^{14,15} With regards to mental health, young people who identify as LGBT+ are two to three times more at risk of suicidal behaviour according to a study published in the *Lancet Child and Adolescent Health* in 2019.¹⁶ The paper identified discrimination, perceived microaggressions, fear of shame on social media, self-hatred and social rejection amongst the risk factors. Research has found that transgender young people are particularly vulnerable to poor mental health, with research suggesting rates of self-harm could be as high as one in two for trans young people.¹⁷

The state of LGBT+ education in England

Seventeen years since the repeal of Section 28 in England and Wales, which outlawed the so-called 'promotion' of same sex relationships and families, students will now be required

4 Office for National Statistics; Experimental statistics on sexual orientation in the UK in 2018; March 2020

5 YouGov; 1 in 2 young people say they are not 100% heterosexual; August 2015

6 Williams, R; People coming out as gay at younger age, research shows; *The Guardian*; November 2010

7 Metro Charity; National Youth Chances Integrated Report; 2016

8 SkyNews; LGBT bullying more common than racist bullying in schools –poll; July 2019

9 Stonewall; School Report: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people in Britain's schools; 2017

10 *ibid*

11 Government Equalities Office; National LGBT survey: summary report; July 2018

12 Robinson, J.P, Espelage, D. and Rivers, I.; Developmental trends in peer victimisation and emotional distress in LGB and heterosexual youth; 2013

13 Government Equalities Office; National LGBT survey: summary report; July 2018

14 Education Policy Institute; *Bullying: A review of the evidence*; November 2018

15 National Centre for Social Research; Characteristics of bullying victims in schools; Department for Education; 2010

16 Poštuvan, Vita et al.; Suicidal behaviour among sexual-minority youth: a review of the role of acceptance and support; *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*; 2019

17 Public Health England & Royal College of Nursing; Preventing suicide among trans young people: A toolkit for nurses; 2015

to learn about LGBT+ identities and families during their time in school. For the first time since 2000 the government has updated the Sex and Relationships Education guidance for schools in England, setting out the legal duties with which schools must comply when teaching what is now called Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (referred to here as RSE).¹⁸

The guidance makes many references for the need for teaching to reflect the law, including the Equality Act 2010 and schools' Public Sector Equalities Duties, to advance the equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations. This allows schools to take positive action to tackle discrimination and create an inclusive environment. It also notes: "Schools should be alive to issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia and gender stereotypes and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and any occurrences are identified and tackled". Furthermore, the Department for Education's advice on Preventing and Tackling Bullying notes that successful schools "openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference".¹⁹

Teaching of RSE must meet the needs of all students and all students must understand the importance of equality and respect, stereotyping and different types of bullying. In secondary schools teaching of RSE must give equal opportunity for LGBT+ students to an education that is relevant to them and LGBT+ content should be explored at a timely point and in a clear, sensitive and respectful manner. When teaching about these topics, it must be recognised that young people may be discovering or understanding their sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBT+ content, if introduced at primary and when introduced at secondary, should be fully integrated into the programme of study. This is a significant development in the responsibility of schools to teach LGBT+ content and provides an important tool in tackling bullying and discrimination.

The teaching of RSE can be inspected by the schools' regulator Ofsted,²⁰ who state that "all primary and secondary schools, whether state-funded or independent, should be able to demonstrate that no form of discrimination is tolerated and that students show respect for those who share the protected characteristics". There is an expectation that secondary schools will cover LGBT+ identities and schools can be judged as 'requires improvement' by Ofsted for failing to cover such topics at secondary level. Primary schools are encouraged to cover LGBT+ identities, through topics such as exploring different families, and are required to teach about marriage which includes same sex marriage. Ofsted have stated that primary schools that do not teach about LGBT+ relationships must show how they are still meeting the government guidance on RSE and failure to do so could impact judgements on personal development and the leadership and management of the school. Primary schools may also change their policy to begin teaching LGBT+ identities at a younger age to combat issues with HBT bullying or if students with same sex parents join the school.²¹

Covid-19 pandemic

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic schools can delay the implementation of the new RSE curriculum until Summer 2021 and a poll in January 2020 showed that close to half of primary school teachers and 39% of secondary school teachers did not feel prepared to

¹⁸ Department for Education; Guidance: Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education; published 25 June 2019; Updated 9 July 2019

¹⁹ Department for Education; Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies; July 2017

²⁰ Ofsted; Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools; September 2020

²¹ Letter from Secretary of State for Education to General Secretary of National Association of Headteachers; 9 April 2019

teach RSE.²² This suggests schools still have work to do to ensure the effective teaching of the new curriculum. The pandemic has placed considerable stress on schools with regards to staffing and attendance as well as ensuring students catch up on education that was missed during lockdown. It has also placed student wellbeing high on the agenda as many students cope with the trauma and mental health impacts of the pandemic. Evidence suggests lockdown could have presented unique challenges for LGBT+ young people in accessing safe and supportive environments and coping with the mental health impacts of the pandemic.²³

The full re-opening of schools and the implementation of the new RSE guidance, however, provides a clear opportunity to improve upon the lack of education on LGBT+ identities highlighted in the 2018 National LGBT Survey. The survey found that only 3% of respondents had received education on both sexual orientation and gender identity at school, with 77% saying they had received education on neither gender identity nor sexual orientation. Although it is worth noting that the figure improves for younger respondents, it still left around half of 16-17-year olds stating that they had not received education on either. Research has shown that in schools that teach about LGBT+ issues, LGBT+ students are more likely to feel safer, happy and more welcome, feel more a part of the school community, report having someone they can talk to and are crucially less likely to face bullying compared to those that do not teach LGBT+ issues.²⁴

Opposition

Despite cross-party support in parliament and the backing of teaching unions and the wider public, the developments outlined above have not been welcomed by all.²⁵ 2019 saw protests erupt outside primary schools in Birmingham and other parts of the country against LGBT+ inclusive content that supported learning around the protected characteristics under the Equality Act.²⁶ Many schools received template letters opposing the implementation of aspects of the new RSE curriculum, especially content related to LGBT+ identities and relationships. Organisations campaigning against the support being offered to transgender young people have also stepped up their opposition to trans inclusive policies and practices in schools.²⁷ Such opposition, and a lack of clarity and support from government on what should be taught at primary level, placed school leaders in a difficult position and makes the implementation of the new curriculum more challenging.²⁸ However, it appears that LGBT+ inclusive education does enjoy popular support amongst the public at large and parents and carers. Research from 2019 found that 94% of parents felt that it was important that schools teach children about LGBT identities and the same proportion said that schools had a responsibility to promote LGBT inclusion.²⁹ When asked about what age certain topics should be explored there was more of a mixed picture, with 73% believing that same sex marriage should be taught from age 4 but only 50% thinking transgender identities should be taught from this age. It is worth noting that much of the opposition to RSE has focused on the perceived age-appropriateness of content.

The context for the publication of this report is an interesting moment for LGBT+ education in England. As the new guidance on RSE comes into force, secondary schools, for the first time, will be under a statutory obligation to cover LGBT+ identities while primary schools are encouraged and enabled to do the same. This report aims to help school leaders, staff and others to meet their obligations and tackle HBT bullying in schools.

22 Department for Education; Survey on teacher preparedness for new Relationships and Sex Education; 13 January 2020

23 World Economic Forum; The coronavirus has shrunk LGBTQ youth's safe spaces; 31 July 2020

24 Stonewall; School Report: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people in Britain's schools; 2017

25 Sex Education Forum; Education unions back face-based RSE; February 2018

26 BBC news; LGBT school lessons protests spread nationwide; 16 May 2019

27 The Guardian; Schools pulled into row over helping transgender children; 15 May 2018

28 National Association of Headteachers; Anti-equality protests must be stopped by the end of term; 18 June 2019

29 Glazzard J. and Stones S.; LGBT inclusion in schools; Leeds Beckett University – Carnegie Education Blog; 7 May 2019

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

As part of Diversity Role Models' (DRM) Pathways to LGBT+ Inclusion programme, students, parents and carers, staff and governors were surveyed on their perspectives on the extent of LGBT+ education in their school, the level of homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic (HBT) bullying and language witnessed and being challenged, and the extent to which they believed the school was a welcoming environment for those who identified as LGBT+ or had LGBT+ family members. Survey questions asked respondents to state how strongly they agreed or disagreed to a series of statements about these themes, selecting an option on a scale that included; 'Strongly disagree', 'Disagree', 'Neither agree nor disagree', 'Agree', 'Strongly agree' or 'Not applicable'. Analysis of the results focused on the proportion of responses that agreed or disagreed with each statement. Free-text responses to the question "What more can the school do to prevent homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and create an LGBT+ inclusive school?" were separately analysed for key themes and trends.

Surveys were anonymous, but asked respondents to provide some demographic data depending on their age such as whether or not they identified as LGBT+, their gender identity, and, where applicable, year group in school, to allow analysis of themes from different perspectives. A total of 12,724 responses were received with 11,869 responses (6,136 students and 5,733 adults) from 90 schools included in the analysis, after data cleaning.³⁰ 3,814 verbatim responses from the open-ended question asked in the survey were included in the analysis.

There were some limitations to this study. DRM was funded to work with schools that were at the start of their journey towards LGBT+ inclusion in only certain regions, namely London, the South East of England and the West Midlands. The sample included 90 schools who returned surveys, which comprised a mix of selective and non-selective schools, independent, faith schools and non-denominational schools, local-authority-maintained schools, academies, free schools, mixed- and single-gender schools. As such, results can be taken as indicative of the experiences and perceptions of stakeholders in schools in London, the South East of England and West Midlands who were early on their journey towards LGBT+ inclusion and who sought the support of Diversity Role Models to improve their schools. Surveys were not initially designed to enable a wide-scale analysis of trends, their primary purpose was to inform schools and Diversity Role Models' staff about the current challenges at individual schools, to help shape the programme of support provided at each.

A full methodology, including full lists of survey questions, data cleaning processes and grouping approaches, is available as an Annex to this report.

³⁰ Duplicate responses and responses that contained only the default 'Not applicable' answers for all questions were filtered out

DISCUSSION

SURVEYED SCHOOLS WERE NOT CONSISTENTLY DESCRIBED AS A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR LGBT+ INDIVIDUALS OR THOSE WITH LGBT+ FAMILIES

A concerning finding of our analysis is that the schools surveyed were not consistently described as a safe environment for LGBT+ students, or those with LGBT+ families. This is particularly the case in secondary schools, where more students said that those who are LGBT+ or have LGBT+ families would not feel safe at their school than said they would feel safe, see Figure 1.

In primary schools, only 53% of students said that those who are LGBT+ or have LGBT+ families would feel safe. **In secondary schools, only 27% of students thought that LGBT+ students would feel safe to 'come out'**. Adults were likely to report not knowing whether the school was welcoming for LGBT+ individuals, with more than half declining to comment either way. **21% of secondary school staff said LGBT+ students or those with LGBT+ families would not feel safe at the school;** only 15% of parents and carers and 13% of governors said this.

Students and staff who are not LGBT+ were likely to overestimate the extent to which the school was a safe environment for LGBT+ students. **Almost half of secondary school students who identify as LGBT+ say that LGBT+ students would not feel safe to come out at school:** 46% of LGBT+ students responded this way, compared to 35% of non-LGBT+ students saying school would not be safe. Of secondary school staff surveyed who were LGBT+, 32% said LGBT+ students would not feel safe to come out, compared to 19% of non-LGBT+ staff.

“

We should teach and explain to children, parents and all staff that being LGBT is a life fact and not a life choice

– Primary school staff

”

“

I identify as a gay female and I think it is really hard to come out in my school due to what children would say and teachers struggle to help with this

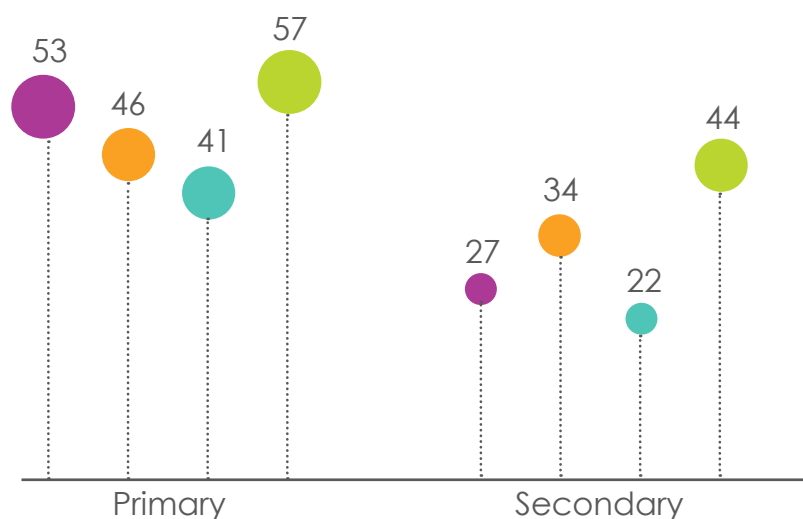
– Secondary school student

”

Extent that schools are described as a safe place for LGBT+ students

Students who are LGBT+ or have LGBT+ families would feel safe at this school

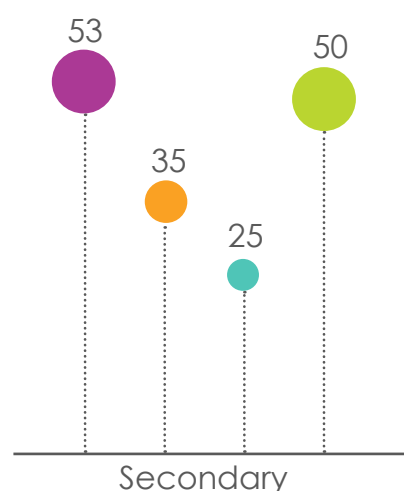
% of respondents who agree or strongly agree



- Students
- Staff
- Parents & Carers
- Governors

Staff support students who are LGBT+

% of respondents who agree or strongly agree



Students who are LGBT+ or have LGBT+ families would feel safe at this school

% of respondents who disagree or strongly disagree

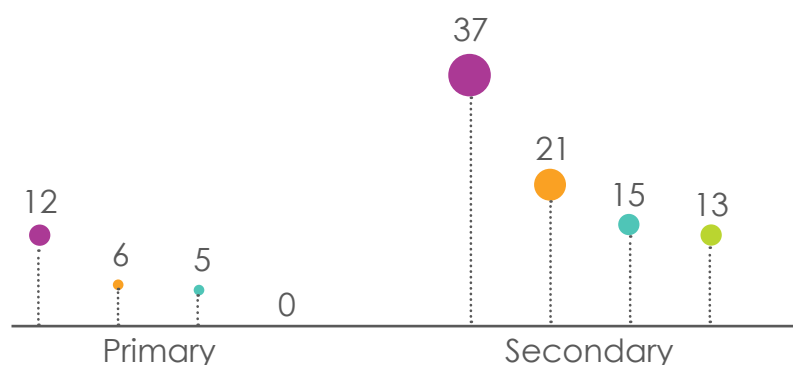


Figure 1: Extent that schools were described as a safe place for LGBT+ students. Column charts show % of survey respondents who 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' ('Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' in the second chart) with the statements: 'Students who are LGBT+ or have LGBT+ families would feel safe at this school' and 'Staff support students who are LGBT+' – note, the second statement was only put to secondary school students and adults.

Data also highlighted a significant disconnect between schools and their governors. Governors were 30% more likely to say their school was safe for LGBT+ students than staff, and 65% less likely to say their school was unsafe. Governors were also overly optimistic on the confidence of staff to support LGBT+ students, with 50% suggesting their school staff knew how to support LGBT+ students, compared to just 35% of staff themselves. That only 35% of school staff know how to support LGBT+ students suggest significant scope for training and development for staff to help close this gap and ensure schools can offer the network of support necessary for students. This lack of alignment is similar to that seen regarding awareness of HBT language and bullying at schools, and adds to the argument that school staff and governors need to better work together to fully understand what is happening in their schools and better tackle bullying.

It is encouraging that many schools were reporting safe environments. Schools that were included in the Pathways to LGBT+ Inclusion programme self-identified as being early on in their journey to being actively LGBT+ inclusive, and so it is encouraging to see many already having students describe the school as a safe environment for their LGBT+ peers. Further work is warranted to identify the characteristics associated with schools where LGBT+ students would not feel safe, to develop targeted support and education programmes to facilitate the development of a more inclusive environment at all schools.

CASE STUDY

I think that the work DRM does is vital to sustaining a safe environment in school. My school is often a difficult and hostile environment for the queer community and when DRM came to visit it gave a whole new perspective on the story. Not only did their workshops help other students to accept and become more respectful of their queer peers but it also helped me to accept the reality that I live in. I think what helped the most was the relatability of their visit. The direct questions and way that they challenged bias and stigma was a fresh approach. The LGBTQ+ community faces constant challenge and meeting people who face these challenges and spend their time fighting for our freedom opened my eyes. I never expected that being gay would be so tricky. I didn't think that it would be so hard for others to understand how I identify. My school took a lot from me and DRM helped me re-gain a sense of determination, I wasn't going to settle for my situation. They helped me and other queers at my school to gain confidence and direction. They are the spark to a great explosion of acceptance and change.

– Secondary school student

HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC LANGUAGE, AND BULLYING, WERE PREVALENT IN SURVEYED SCHOOLS

Surveys asked students and staff about whether they felt that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying and HBT language³¹ - for example, phrases such as 'that's so gay', were common at their school, with results shown in Figure 2.

42% of year five and six students in primary schools reported that HBT language was common at their school. 54% of secondary school students reported the same. Across all schools surveyed there was a significant variation in the reported level of HBT language and bullying.

Students and staff were asked about how frequently they challenge HBT language when they witness it. **Only 67% of primary staff and 78% of secondary staff said they challenge HBT language when they hear it.** These numbers were lower in students, where 54% of primary school students and 28% of secondary school students said they themselves challenge HBT language. Secondary school students also reported significant variations in confidence that staff challenge HBT language and bullying. **Only 32% of secondary school students reported that staff challenge HBT language.** This gap suggests a need to provide better training and support for staff in schools to help them feel confident in challenging HBT behaviours and supporting LGBT+ students. The data suggests that in secondary schools many students

³¹ HBT language includes phrases such as "that's so gay", and other abusive or derogatory terms that target an individual for their LGBT+ identity

are likely to become bystanders and turn a blind eye to HBT behaviours. This may be to fit in amongst their peers and adhere to social pressures to not report incidents. Improving awareness amongst secondary school students of the negative impact HBT bullying and language can have on individuals could help build greater empathy and understanding amongst this student cohort and encourage them to challenge HBT language and behaviour when they witness it.



Discuss the school policy on HBT language collectively as a staff team so that everyone feels confident to challenge any incidents of HBT language in a fair and consistent way

– Primary school staff

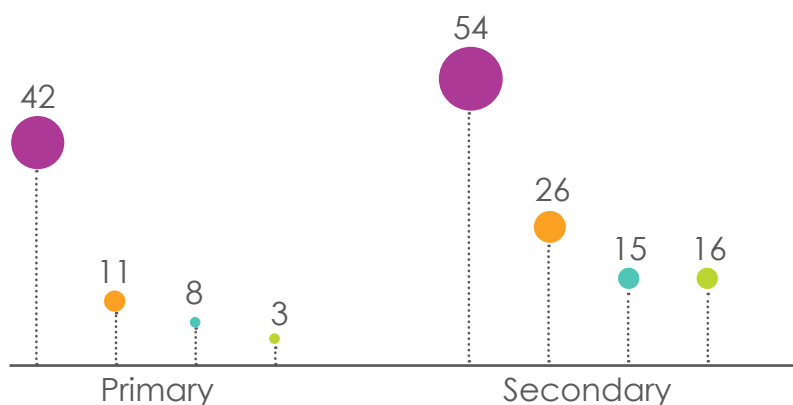


Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying

HBT language is common at the school

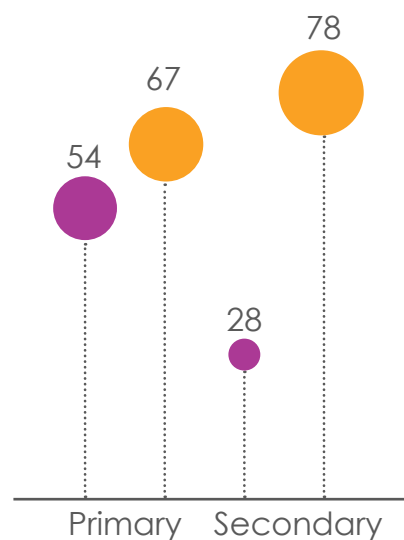
% of respondents who agree or strongly agree

- Students
- Staff
- Parents & Carers
- Governors



I challenge HBT language when I hear it

% of respondents who agree or strongly agree



HBT bullying is common at the school

% of respondents who agree or strongly agree

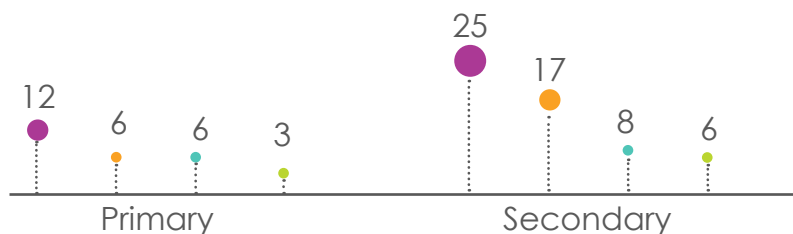


Figure 2: Extent of HBT language and bullying in schools. Column chart shows % of survey respondents who 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with the statements: 'Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language is common at the school'; 'Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is common at the school'; and, 'I challenge HBT language when I hear it' – note, the final statement was only put to students and staff at schools, and not parents and carers or governors.

Research has demonstrated the negative impact on individuals' physical and mental health that HBT language can have. For example, the Department for Education states that low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can, in itself, have a significant impact on students. If left unchallenged, or dismissed as 'banter' or horseplay, it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour.³² This is echoed by findings in the Stonewall School Report, which found that almost half of LGBT pupils (45%) who are bullied for being LGBT never tell anyone about the bullying. Furthermore, the research reports that the majority of LGBT pupils – 86% – regularly hear phrases such as 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay' in school and the majority of LGBT pupils stated that hearing the word gay used in such a way bothered or distressed them.³³

Although HBT bullying was reported as less common than HBT language, **a quarter (25%) of secondary school students said HBT bullying was common at their school.** This gap between the perceived prevalence of HBT language and HBT bullying suggests a disconnect between attitudes on language and bullying. This may stem from schools focusing on a tightly scoped definition of bullying, which the Department for Education defines as behaviour repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally.³⁴ This does not adequately consider how harmful the casual or targeted use of HBT language can be, meaning students may feel able to use HBT language without considering it wrong, and without considering the impact it may have on others.

In secondary schools, students surveyed were asked whether or not they identified as LGBT+ and 14% of students identified as LGBT+. **Secondary school students who identify as LGBT+ were twice as likely to report HBT bullying being common at their school than those who do not.** 42% of secondary school students who identify as LGBT+ reported HBT bullying is common at their school – compared to 21% of those who don't identify as LGBT+. **Secondary school LGBT+ students were also 20% more likely to hear HBT language such as "that's so gay" at school than their peers.** Although disappointing, this finding is not altogether surprising. This may suggest that LGBT+ students are more attuned to HBT incidents.

In both primary and secondary schools, and with regards to both HBT language and HBT bullying, adults at schools significantly underestimate the prevalence of these negative behaviours compared to students. This disconnect between the prevalence of HBT language and bullying reported by students and that reported by staff may suggest that much HBT behaviour is happening out of sight of staff and is not being reported to them. Whatever the cause, underestimating the amount of HBT behaviours happening may lead to staff and school leaders underestimating the need for positive education on LGBT+ identities and relationships that is needed. Governors had the biggest difference in perception of the prevalence of HBT behaviours from students, suggesting this group is particularly distanced from what goes on at the school, with opportunity to increase communication between school staff and their governors to jointly work towards tackling bullying.

32 Department for Education; Preventing and tackling bullying – Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies; July 2017

33 Stonewall; School Report: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people in Britain's schools; 2017

34 Department for Education; Preventing and tackling bullying – Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies; July 2017

“

The boys at the school are the problem here; whether you are LGBT, openly or closeted, or some people think that you are, they will mock you for it. There are people in our year group (Year 11) who are teased on a daily basis, and they aren't even gay. The boys at the school need to be educated so that the school can be a more inclusive environment. Year 11 has no PSHE sessions, so assemblies/Tuesday morning form periods can be used for LGBT education so that the boys become less ignorant. Use of slurs like “fag” and “faggot” are commonly used throughout the school, sometimes in relation to LGBT and sometimes as a ‘banterous’ insult. The boys don't know the full history of this word and the slur that surrounds it and don't know the full effect of using a word like this.

– Secondary school student

”

Rates of HBT bullying also varied by year group. Having witnessed HBT bullying is most commonly reported by year eleven students where 32% of students say they have seen someone be bullied due to being, or being thought to be, LGBT+. Prevalence of HBT language peaks earlier: HBT language is most commonly reported by year nine students where 61% of students say they regularly hear language such as ‘that's so gay’ at school. These findings differ slightly from existing research on bullying that suggests bullying tends to peak with the transition to secondary school in years seven or eight.³⁵ Its slightly later onset may be reflective of the nature of LGBT+ identities, whereby students may not develop a full awareness and understanding of gender and sexuality until later in their development.

THERE IS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE LEVEL OF LGBT+ EDUCATION IN SURVEYED SCHOOLS

School surveys asked respondents to state to what extent they agreed with two statements related to LGBT+ education in schools. These statements were: “Students learn about LGBT+ identities”, and “Students learn about HBT bullying”.³⁶ Positive responses to these statements were low, in both primary and secondary school students, and school staff, see Figure 3. **Fewer than half of year five and six primary school students learn about LGBT+ identities and HBT bullying, while only one fifth (20%) of secondary school students learn about these topics.** Wide variation in the prevalence of LGBT+ education was found, with students at some schools reporting much higher levels than others.

Many students actively disagreed with the statements: 50% of secondary school students said they do not learn about LGBT+ identities at school, and 59% said they do not learn about HBT bullying.

Variation in levels of education and understanding of school policies and processes was present by age group also. 55% of year seven students reported knowing the school rules on HBT language and bullying. This decreases as students get older, and is only 44% in

³⁵ James, A.; Research briefing: school bullying; NSPCC; 2010

³⁶ Survey questions were mapped to a standardized nomenclature and ‘students learn about LGBT+ identities’ and ‘students learn about HBT bullying’ are standardized question names – see Annex for question mapping

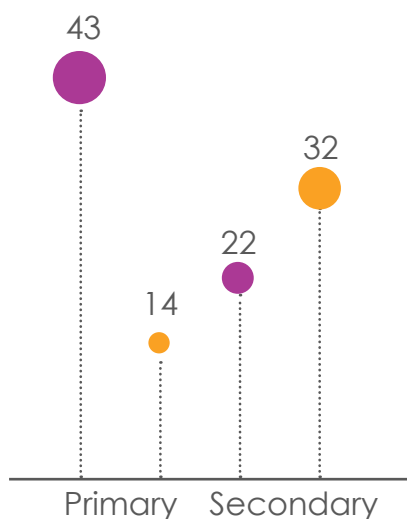
year eleven and 32% in year thirteen. This downward trend is present across the education themed questions asked. Knowing who to speak to about HBT bullying; learning about LGBT+ identities; and, learning about HBT bullying. In primary school the levels of education about LGBT+ identities and HBT bullying were higher in year six than year five (other year groups not surveyed) – HBT language and bullying were still prevalent in year five, however, suggesting a need to discuss LGBT+ identities and families in these younger years to prevent homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

Rates of LGBT+ education in schools

- Students
- Staff

Students learn about LGBT+ identities

% of respondents who agree or strongly agree



Students learn about HBT bullying

% of respondents who agree or strongly agree

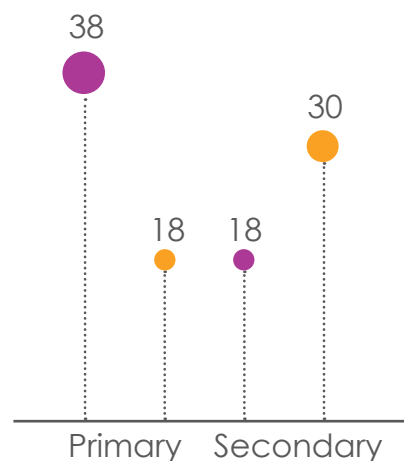


Figure 3: Extent of LGBT+ education in schools. Column chart shows % of survey respondents who 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with the statements: 'Students learn about LGBT+ identities' and 'Students learn about HBT bullying'

This broad variation in levels of education at schools points to a need for consistent application of clear national guidelines. Surveys were completed before the implementation of new government requirements on relationships and sex education (RSE). The lack of a national framework up to that point left many decisions about the type and extent of education on LGBT+ identities, families and bullying to individual schools, potentially contributing to the varied levels reported in the survey. While the new government guidelines make RSE compulsory, the guidance is light on specific detail of what and how to teach students, leaving scope for variation and gaps in implementation.

“

My daughter told me that in KS1 she had friends who did not believe women could marry each other (she had been to a same-sex wedding). It made me think we need to be teaching inclusivity more explicitly to children in the lower year groups

– Primary school parent

”

Another stark observation is the perceived difference in education levels between primary and secondary schools, with secondary school students half as likely to report receiving education about LGBT+ identities and HBT bullying than primary school students. These findings align with previous studies that have found the frequency of PSHE sessions to significantly drop off in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, compared to earlier years,³⁷ and point to significant opportunity to improve education and attitudes to reduce the incidence of bullying in secondary schools and improve the school lives of all students.

CASE STUDY

The Galaxy Trust is a group of three primary schools in North Kent, working together as a Multi Academy Trust. Our values of Respect, Responsibility and Equality are at the heart of everything we do. In each school, we value and celebrate every family, recognising that all families are different and that it is these differences that make our families special.

We are very keen for our pupils to see their own family represented in our schools, which is why some of our classes are named after LGBT+ people. We ensure many aspects of equality and diversity are taught throughout the curriculum and conduct a library book audit each year to make sure that all sorts of families are covered in the books our children read.

The key for a seamless and positive experience for learning about LGBT+ issues in Primary School is to always consider the age-appropriateness of the discussions we have, to always focus on staff attitudes and expertise first, in order to make sure they are equipped with the necessary language, skills and understanding, and then to always be mindful of the richness and diversity of our own children's families and how they themselves can lead understanding and learning.

Using “gay” as a term of offence does happen on rare occasions, but this is always seen as a teaching tool. Involving other pupils who are either offended or just confused about why this is used as an insult, a discussion takes place about why this isn't an appropriate word to use to either hurt, shame, offend or tease another child. Where possible, the discussion is always brought back to the gay people we know – in our own families, in our own school and in the wider media too.

The CEO of The Galaxy Trust, Garry Ratcliffe, regularly writes in the newsletter about his own family experience. Being a gay man with a husband and four adopted children is discussed openly amongst parents, pupils and staff and is held as a positive example of how our values are “lived” in our schools every day.

³⁷ Formby, Eleanor & Wolstenholme, Claire; 'If there's going to be a subject that you don't have to do ...!' Findings from a mapping study of PSHE education in English secondary schools; Pastoral Care in Education; 2012

INCREASED LEVELS OF EDUCATION ARE ASSOCIATED WITH LESS BULLYING AND SAFER ENVIRONMENTS FOR LGBT+ STUDENTS

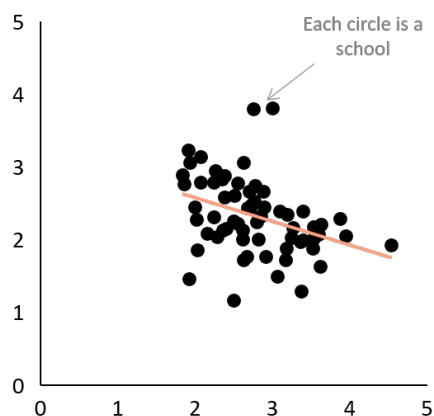
Data was analysed at the school level to identify an average level of student-reported LGBT+ education and homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) behaviour at each school. Level of LGBT+ education was plotted against metrics on HBT bullying, HBT language, and the extent to which the school was deemed a safe environment for LGBT+ students or students with LGBT+ families. Simple linear regression identified a significant correlation between the two, see Figure 4.

Correlations between education about LGBT+ identities and HBT behaviours in schools

Scatterplots showing the correlation between education about LGBT+ identities and HBT behaviours in schools. Each point on the chart represents a school, plotted according to calculated weighted average scores against each statement on the X and Y axes, whereby 5 = 'Strongly agree' and 1 = 'Strongly disagree'

Learning correlated against HBT bullying

HBT bullying is common at the school



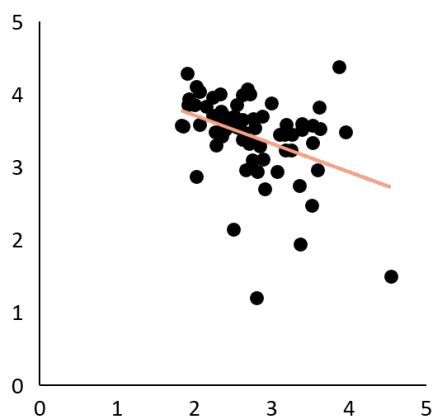
Students learn about LGBT+ identities

$$R^2 = 0.13$$

$$p < 0.01$$

Learning correlated against HBT language

HBT language is common at the school



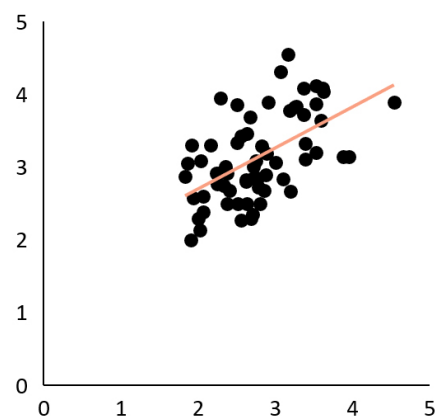
Students learn about LGBT+ identities

$$R^2 = 0.15$$

$$p < 0.01$$

Learning correlated against safe environments

Students who are LGBT+ or have LGBT+ families would feel safe at this school



Students learn about LGBT+ identities

$$R^2 = 0.31$$

$$p < 0.01$$

Figure 4: Correlations between education about LGBT+ identities and HBT behaviours in schools. Scatterplots show a distribution of school results, whereby each circle represents a school. School survey results were analysed to construct a weighted average score against each statement on a scale from 1 to 5 ('Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree'). A simple linear regression was conducted to identify the correlation between education and bullying. Trend lines show the correlation between student education about LGBT+ identities and three different metrics about HBT behaviour. Note: The simple regression used did not control for factors such as location and level of deprivation in the school catchment, or school type (e.g. faith schools, single-sex schools). Analysis of a larger dataset from an even broader set of schools could support the analysis of influence of these factors, and others, on levels of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools

Interestingly, the same correlations between “Students learning about HBT bullying” and the above three metrics were not found to be statistically significant. This suggests that discussing LGBT+ identities and relationships through education at school has a greater impact on increasing acceptance and reducing bullying. This aligns with previous research into why children bully, which has found negative attitudes towards victims being associated with bullying.³⁸ Educating individuals about LGBT+ identities and relationships ‘usualises’ what students may otherwise consider ‘atypical’. Other research shows that students in schools that teach about LGBT+ issues were less likely to face bullying.³⁹ Presenting students with real life experiences of LGBT+ individuals, their lives and the impact of HBT bullying encourages students to empathise with their experience. This greater level of awareness and empathy, and understanding of the LGBT+ experience can reduce the perception of difference between LGBT+ individuals and their non-LGBT+ peers. DRM has over nine years of experience changing perceptions and building empathy through the delivery of workshops and training that feature LGBT+ and ally role models who share an age-appropriate personal lived experience story.

“

Schools should educate the children about differences between people and how name calling can be upsetting and offensive. My son came home saying something sounded ‘gay’, not something we would ever say at home. I explained why he shouldn’t use the term in a negative way and he completely understood. School needs to reinforce this.

– Primary school parent

”

PARENTS AND CARERS WERE LESS ENGAGED IN LGBT+ ISSUES AT SCHOOL

Alongside students, staff, and governors, parents and carers of students were also surveyed on the same topics. Comparing parental responses to students shows an opportunity to improve parental engagement in homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying and LGBT+ education to support an inclusive environment at school.

Only one third of parents and carers knew rules on HBT language and bullying at their child’s or children’s school (35% in primary, 32% in secondary), as shown in Figure 5. This compares to 90% of primary school students knowing the rules and 47% of secondary school students. Further, **only half of parents and carers knew who to speak to about HBT language or bullying at the school** (53% in primary, and 42% in secondary). Figure 2 earlier also showed parents and carers underestimated the prevalence of HBT language and bullying in schools. **Only 8% of parents and carers of primary school students and 15% of secondary school students said HBT language was common at their school.** In primary and secondary school students themselves these figures were, respectively, 42% and 54%, showing a 3-4-fold difference in estimated levels of HBT language. A similar level of discrepancy was reported in relation to how common HBT bullying was.

38 Rigby K.; Why do some children bully at school? The contributions of negative attitudes towards victims and the perceived expectations of friends, parents and teachers; School Psychology International; 2005

39 Stonewall; School Report: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people in Britain’s schools; 2017



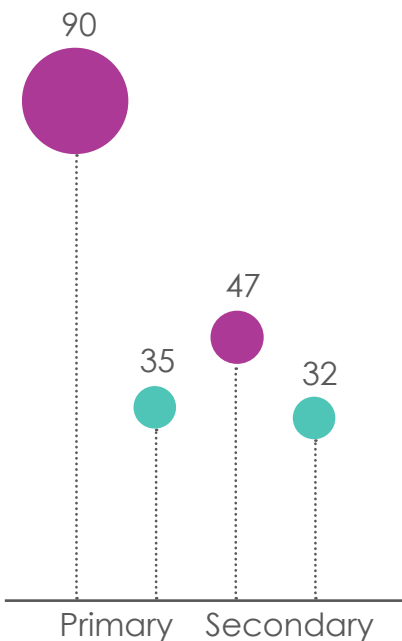
Communicate the LGBT policy clearly to parents and make sure that children from nursery upwards are given access to stories and other resource material about the wide spectrum that families come in so that LGBT is normalised
 – Primary school parent



Extent of knowledge of school policies and procedures on HBT language and bullying at school.

● Students
 ● Parents & Carers

I know the school rules on HBT language and bullying
 % of respondents who agree or strongly agree



I know who to speak to about HBT language and bullying at the school
 % of respondents who agree or strongly agree

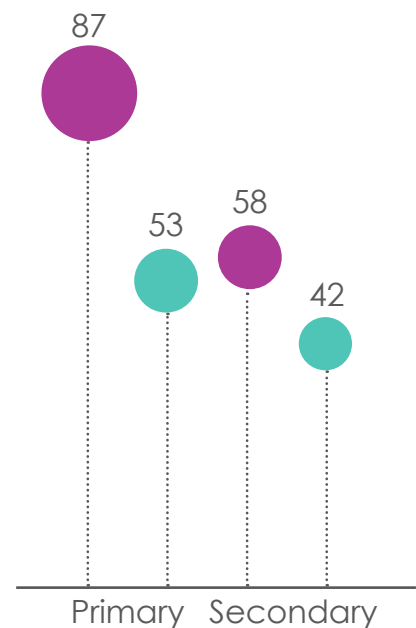


Figure 5: Extent of knowledge of school policies on HBT language and bullying at school. Column charts show % of survey respondents who 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with the statements: 'I know the school rules on HBT language and bullying' and 'I know who to speak to about HBT language and bullying at the school'

Overall, there is room to improve engagement between parents and carers and schools. The findings on HBT language at schools suggests students and parents and carers do not frequently discuss the topic of HBT behaviours. This may be explained by students not feeling it significant enough a topic to raise and discuss with their parents and carers, especially if their children do not identify as LGBT+ or if such language is considered to be inconsequential by the students. Students may also hide the use of negative or incidences

of bullying from their parents and carers. Gaps in knowing the school rules on bullying perhaps suggests scope for better communication between the school and parents and carers. Ensuring that students and parents and carers alike, as well as staff, are aware of school policies on bullying of all forms, not just HBT behaviours, should fall within the remit of the school. Information on key school policies and points of contact should be clearly and regularly communicated to parents and carers. There may also be a more proactive role for parents and carers to play in supporting LGBT+ inclusive environments at school.

“

School is totally different from work. You need school leaders to engage and have a plan and parents and carers need patience. If homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic language and bullying is not addressed it creates incredible pressures on a young person. You can turn someone who is confident into someone who ends up self-harming and its harrowing for anyone who cares for that young person. All schools having an active programme of LGBT+ education and ways to help address the topic is really really important.

– Secondary school parent

”

Figure 1 shows that only **22% of secondary school parents and carers thought that students who are LGBT+ would feel safe at the school**, and only **25% thought that staff would be able to support students who are LGBT+.**

The Department of Education notes that schools that are successful in preventing and tackling bullying have policies in place to deal with bullying and poor behaviour which are clear to parents and carers, students and staff so that, when incidents do occur, they are dealt with quickly. Parents and carers feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they reinforce the value of good behaviour at home.⁴⁰ The issue of parental engagement in education, and its potential impact on bullying, has been studied in other research. ParentKind has focused much of its research on parental engagement, and finds that parents prioritise a curriculum which develops responsible citizens and good mental health and well-being.⁴¹

“

For me the issue of LGBT+ discrimination is part of a much wider educational issue centring on respect and kindness to all and should be clearly seen as a segment of a policy designed to develop young people who are not racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ageist, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic or anything I've missed out.

– Secondary school parent

”

⁴⁰ Department for Education; Preventing and tackling bullying – Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies; July 2017
⁴¹ ParentKind; Annual Parents Survey; 2019

SURVEY RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON IMPROVING LGBT+ INCLUSION IN THEIR SCHOOLS

Survey respondents were asked “What more can the school do to prevent HBT bullying and create an LGBT+ inclusive school?” and were given the option to provide a free-text response. 3,814 responses were received (427 from primary school adults,⁴² 1,803 from secondary school students and 1,584 from secondary school adults⁴³) and analysed for key themes, see Figure 6.

Increasing education and awareness was the most common theme in responses: 48% of responses referenced increasing awareness of LGBT+ issues, the impact of HBT bullying and LGBT+ visibility in school, and 42% of responses spoke to improving education. Doing more to take action against bullying, such as consistently applying punishments and considering more severe consequences also appeared as a theme in responses as did training staff to enable them to take a bigger role in preventing HBT bullying.

Responses were further analysed to identify any differences in response by whether or not individuals identified as LGBT+, their relationship to the school, and, if a student, their year group. No significant differences in responses were seen by year group. Respondents who identified as LGBT+ were more likely than those who did not identify as LGBT+ to recommend improving awareness of core LGBT+ issues and education on HBT bullying, as well as emphasising the importance of supportive environments. This may stem from them being a target of HBT language or bullying – education about LGBT+ identities and the impact of bullying may, as suggested in this report, help reduce incidents of bullying, and LGBT+ students may be finding a lack of support in schools currently. Members of staff were more likely to speak to improving the role of staff, including having more training on key issues, suggesting a willingness amongst the staff community to play a more significant role in tackling bullying, but a sentiment that they are currently unequipped to do so, with 33% of primary school staff and 41% of secondary school staff discussing this theme.

What more can the school do to prevent HBT bullying and create an LGBT+ inclusive school?



To maybe have more LGBT+ role models come into school more frequently and talk about different things and to maybe have more lessons across all subjects and in PSHE

– Secondary school student



More awareness and training for teachers to be able to teach it (LGBT+) effectively and correctly. More understanding of the LGBT+ community for those who are not aware e.g. language, pronouns to use, how to explain things to children if they are confused. Also, how to teach to the children that come from religious families.

– Primary school staff



⁴² Including staff, parents and carers, and governors

⁴³ Including staff, parents and carers, and governors



Open up more space for conversations surrounding LGBT+. Bring in speakers with lived experience to share their stories- to understand the impact that HBT bullying can have. Have clear guidance on the correct language to be using in school related to LGBT+.

– Secondary school staff



Other suggestions from survey responses included:

- Making age-appropriate books on LGBT+ issues available to children in school libraries
- Introducing more LGBT+ topics into lessons such as LGBT+ inclusive sex education, pronoun awareness and history of the LGBT+ community
- Inviting LGBT+ guest speakers into school to give informal talks on lived experiences
- Hosting more awareness days, e.g. 'Pride month' events or fundraisers for LGBT+ charities
- Providing gender neutral toilet and facilities for students
- Establishing a parental engagement and education system to engage parents and carers if their child or children are demonstrating discriminatory behaviour

Overall, the verbatim responses data aligns with the rest of the survey results – there is a significant opportunity to further tackle HBT bullying in schools, by improving education about LGBT+ identities and the impact of HBT bullying, and better equipping staff to provide such education and support their students. It is heartening that staff, students, governors and parents and carers understand the approach that schools must take to improve LGBT+ inclusion.

Key themes on what schools can do to prevent HBT bullying and create an LGBT+ inclusive school

What more can the school do to prevent HBT bullying and create an LGBT+ inclusive school?

% of responses that recommended each action

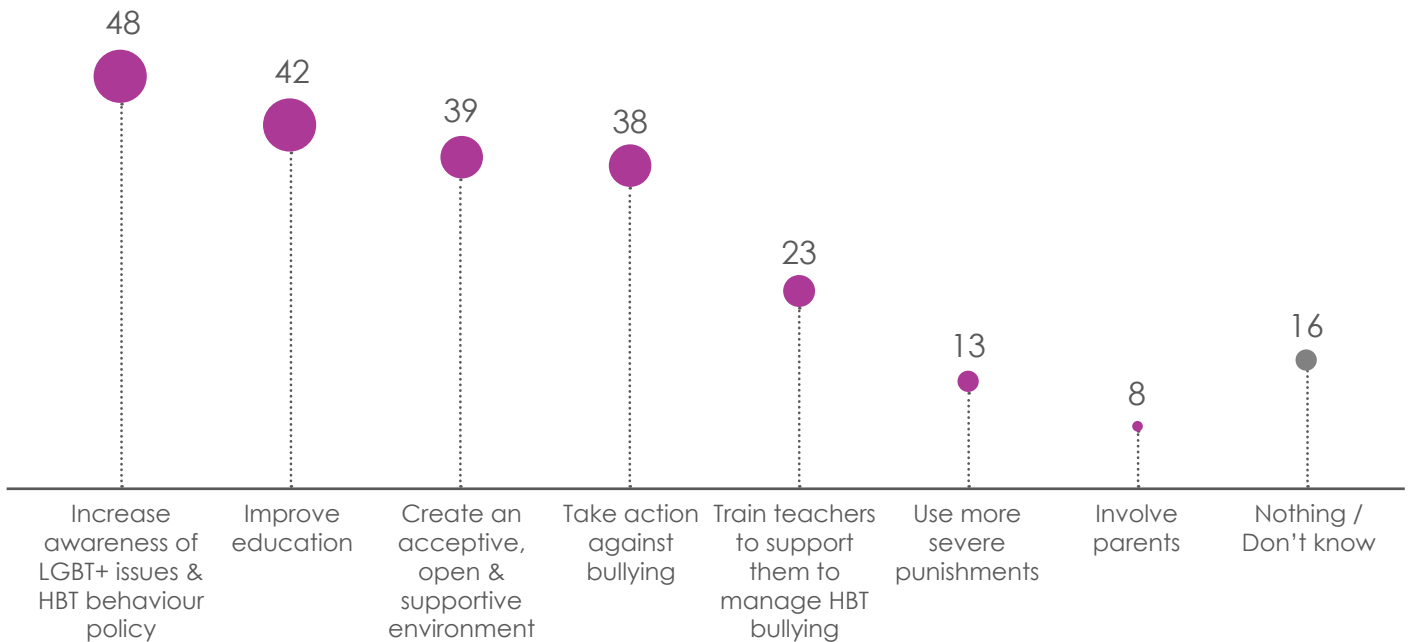


Figure 6: Key themes on what schools can do to prevent HBT bullying. Survey respondents were asked "What more can the school do to prevent HBT bullying and create an LGBT+ inclusive school?" – column chart shows the % of responses that recommended each action shown on the chart.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings presented in this report from the quantitative data and verbatim responses gathered from 90 schools suggests that, given the correlation between higher levels of education on LGBT+ identities and lower levels of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying and language, more education on LGBT+ identities could have a beneficial impact on school culture. Of the schools surveyed there was a large variation in levels of education and as such schools can learn from those who are succeeding in this area. Our engagement with schools over the last nine years, including on this programme, and input from the report Advisory Group has led to the development of key recommendations.

Here we summarise the key imperatives for stakeholders in the education sector, including schools, government and parents and carers, to help embed LGBT+ education and inclusion in schools and ensure that schools are a safe environment for all students including LGBT+ individuals or those with LGBT+ families.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

School Leaders

- Root inclusion into the core values of school, engaging staff, governors, parents and carers and students on these shared values to help foster a truly inclusive school environment
- Prioritise staff training on LGBT+ identities and inclusion to ensure staff feel confident to deliver LGBT+ inclusive content and respond to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic incidents appropriately
- Ensure staff are prepared to effectively teach LGBT+ inclusive RSE
- When reviewing policies ensure they are inclusive, for example, behaviour and anti-bullying policies explicitly mention homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying and language, with clear guidelines on behavioural expectations, and establish clear procedures for the swift and effective resolution of HBT incidents, in a consistent manner
- Regularly communicate relevant information and expectations from the school's policies and procedures to all staff, students, and parents and carers
- Empower all staff to celebrate diversity in the school, for example through encouraging inclusive displays and reading materials
- Establish measurable school targets, for example in School Improvement Plans or Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives, around LGBT+ inclusion and regularly review progress
- Regularly report on homophobic, biphobic and transphobic incidents to school governors to ensure they understand trends and challenges so they can effectively support the school leadership

All staff

- Challenge homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying whenever it takes place, following clear school guidelines on what an appropriate challenge and consequence are to ensure consistency
- Use language inclusive of all LGBT+ identities
- Embed LGBT+ inclusion into all aspects of teaching, for example including same-sex families in example questions
- Visibly celebrate difference in your school to make it clear that your school is welcoming of all students, for example inclusive classroom displays, rainbow lanyards, pride flag stickers
- Educate about key drivers of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying and its impact, for example gender stereotypes, the casual use of phrases such as 'that's so gay' and a lack of understanding of different identities
- Involve students in discussions about the work the school is doing in diversity and inclusion, for example setting up a student led equality group to act as a safe environment to discuss LGBT+ inclusion at the school

Governors and Trustees

- Appoint a lead governor/trustee for diversity and inclusion who is responsible for ensuring governors, trustees and school leaders are working to improve LGBT+ inclusion
- Ensure all governors or trustees receive training to understand the importance of inclusion at the school and why it is important for parental engagement, curriculum and recruitment and retention of staff
- Regularly inquire about the progress the school is making to be LGBT+ inclusive, for example during school visits or at governor or trustee meetings
- When approving policies ensure they are inclusive, for example, behaviour and anti-bullying policies explicitly mention homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying and language, with clear guidelines on behavioural expectations, and establish clear procedures for the swift and effective resolution of HBT incidents, in a consistent manner
- Request data on instances of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic incidents in school, and support leadership in reducing the number of incidents
- Allocate school budget to train staff in LGBT+ inclusion to support their confidence in delivering effective RSE and prevent homophobic, biphobic and transphobic incidents

“ We could save someone's life just by making sure our staff know how to be trans-inclusive, and then students too

– Primary school staff ”

“ Staff need more training on the correct way to challenge bullying

– Primary school staff ”

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT, LOCAL AUTHORITIES, MULTI-ACADEMY TRUSTS AND OFSTED

Department for Education and Government Equalities Office

- Make funds available for staff training on confidently delivering effective LGBT+ education
- Continue to demonstrate leadership and strengthen guidance for schools that makes it clear that Government is committed to improving LGBT+ inclusion in schools. For example mandate the inclusion of teaching LGBT+ identities in primary schools as well as in secondary schools, to ensure that all schools are inclusive and safe environments
- Provide clear and actionable guidance for schools on how to deliver LGBT+ inclusive RSE lessons and further embed LGBT+ in the curriculum
- Support teacher training programmes to prepare teachers for how to tackle and prevent homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying and how to support LGBT+ students, and include effective training to teach LGBT+ inclusive RSE
- Update Government guidelines on Preventing and Tackling Bullying to specifically discuss homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and other forms of prejudice-based bullying in detail, and how schools can act to prevent this
- Fund LGBT+ inclusion education programmes and research in schools to better understand the extent of LGBT+ education and drivers of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools
- Work with examination boards to ensure content on LGBT+ inclusion is included in syllabus material
- Continually work with LGBT+ education groups and trade unions to ensure the teaching profession is attractive and welcoming for all LGBT+ teachers and staff

Ofsted

- Ensure consistent and rigorous assessment of effective LGBT+ inclusive RSE teaching and teaching around protected characteristics in schools in line with the latest guidance
- Continue the effective inspection of school policies and rates of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic incidents, ensuring school policies and procedure are effective

Local Authorities and Multi-Academy Trusts

- Establish clear, LGBT+ inclusive guidance and policies for schools in their network, reducing the burden on individual schools and ensuring consistency between them
- Introduce trust-wide or local authority-wide staff training programmes on LGBT+ inclusion to support the rollout of RSE teaching and more broadly support staff to better promote LGBT+ inclusion in schools

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

- Take an active role in having conversations with children about diversity and inclusion, for example reinforcing the discouragement of bullying behaviours or homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language at home, and promoting inclusion as a core part of being a good citizen
- Positively engage with the school to understand their policies on bullying and inclusion and support the school in implementing these policies. Policies should be available on the school's website
- Take part in school LGBT+ History Month, Pride celebrations, or other events, to demonstrate support for inclusion and diversity at the school
- Inform the school of any homophobic, biphobic or transphobic incidents that have come to your attention involving students at the school

DIVERSITY ROLE MODELS

EDUCATION SERVICES

Diversity Role Models (DRM) offer a whole school approach, our education services support schools to be more LGBT+ inclusive. Our services include:

- Student workshops
- Staff training
- Parent and carer workshops
- Governor training
- RSE training
- Senior Leadership Team consultancy
- Educational resources

Please visit <https://www.diversityrolemodels.org/education-services> to learn more about how we can support your school.

71% of year five and six student have heard the phrase 'That's so gay' used in school, but after the workshop, 83% indicated they'd be confident to challenge its use.

98% of staff stated the student workshops will have a positive impact on inclusion at school

84% of secondary school students said they would support a friend who tells them they are LGBT+ after the workshop

95% of secondary school student rated the role model who shared their story as good/excellent.

CASE STUDY

Two years ago, I felt like I had no one to talk to at school about the challenges I faced as an LGBTQ student. Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying was rife and there was little education on LGBT+ topics. I wanted to ensure no other student went through what I went through.

So, while still a student at school, I helped set up a student-led LGBT+ equality group called HERO. The group allows LGBTQ+ students and their allies to talk about the issues they face and has provided educational sessions to the wider student body and training for school staff on LGBT+ issues. School staff have worked with the student led group to tackle all instances of HBT bullying and language in the school - which has seen a dramatic fall since the group started. Working together with staff to provide peer mentoring for LGBTQ+ students and working with groups such as Diversity Role Models to provide an educational session on LGBT+ identities to student groups has helped us create a welcome and safe educational institution for all LGBTQ+ students from a wide range of different religious and societal backgrounds

Through the work of HERO, the LGBTQ+ young people are offered the support that wasn't available to me when I started at school. This change has been the proudest and most fulfilling part of my educational journey, and working with staff to give students just like me a voice and a safe, supportive environment has been remarkable.

– Secondary School Graduate

ABOUT DIVERSITY ROLE MODELS

Established in 2011, Diversity Role Models (DRM) is a LGBT+ education charity with a vision of a world where everybody embraces diversity and can thrive. We have a mission to foster an LGBT+ inclusive environment where students are empowered to embrace difference and end bullying. This mission is realised through the delivery of student workshops in schools featuring LGBT+ and ally role models. Role model storytelling is our unique approach to help students understand differences and develop empathy. Our diverse role models share developmentally appropriate stories on a range of topics including: family, religion, identity, love, relationships, marriage, bullying, coming out, and mental health.

Our work has been in person and focused in London and the Home Counties, West Midlands and North West and North East of England. Since September 2020 we now also offer a range of digital services. DRM is supported by 550+ volunteers and has worked in 510+ schools, delivering 4,500+ student workshops to over 116,000+ students.

To ensure sustained change, student workshops are supplemented by training staff, governors and delivering parent and carer workshops. DRM has delivered over 300 adult trainings reaching over 10,000 adults. A range of LGBT+ inclusive teaching resources are also provided to schools to support the regular teaching of LGBT+ inclusive content.



Change starts with us. Understanding differences empowers us to be the positive force of change to create a better tomorrow. Name calling, physical bullying and emotional pain should not be the lasting memories for any student after they leave school. We all have a responsibility to safeguard children and ensure they all have an equal opportunity to access education. This education must reflect them and their families. Volunteers at Diversity Role Models often tell me they choose to give their time to our cause because they want to be the role model they never had in school. These role models play an integral part of every workshop and training we deliver, I am grateful to all 550+ of our volunteers.

Isn't it different for LGBT+ young people in schools today? I am often confronted with this question, but the answer is clear in this report. While we have seen progress in some schools, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) language and bullying are still prevalent across school communities. We all have a role in creating a more inclusive society and I hope this report has provided insights that will inspire action. If not us, then who?

– Adam McCann,
Chief Executive Officer, Diversity Role Models

Diversity Role Models would like to thank all of the schools involved in the Pathways to LGBT+ Inclusion Programme, the Advisory Group, and everyone who contributed to the development and delivery of the programme and this report.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The Pathways to LGBT+ Inclusion programme was designed by Diversity Role Models (DRM) and funded by a grant. The funding of the grant enabled DRM to work with 94 primary and secondary schools between January 2019 – March 2020. There were restrictions set by the funder including the location of the schools and that all schools were 'at the start of their journey towards LGBT+ inclusion'. We defined 'start of their journey' as schools that would benefit from support on; adapting and updating policies and procedures to ensure they are effective at preventing and tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying, effectively monitoring HBT incidents, and/ or creating an LGBT+ inclusive curriculum. Before working with each school, we requested surveys to be sent to key stakeholders of the school including; staff, students, governors and parents and carers. We requested that the surveys were sent to a diverse representative sample of secondary school students and only year five and six students in primary schools.

Geography

The funder required us to recruit schools for the programme that were in specific local authorities in three regions; London, South East of England and West Midlands. As a result, the data is only representative of these three regions and not the whole of the UK. We worked with primary and secondary schools in all three regions, see Figure 7 for total number of schools by school type and region.

	London	South East of England	West Midlands	Total
Primary school	15	11	03	29
Secondary school	28	18	15	61

Figure 7: Total number schools by school type and region

Responses and data cleaning

855 responses were removed prior to conducting the analysis due to unreliability, see Figure 8. All surveys were conducted online and completed anonymously and multiple people replied without a means of tracking them. We therefore conducted a process of checking for duplicates.

Responses were flagged for removal based on indicators that suggested a duplicate, fake or otherwise unreliable response. Three filters for reliability were used:

- Gender entry - where a derogatory or joke term was used in the 'Other' gender selection in the survey, the response was flagged for removal
- Time – where a response was completed in a short amount of time that suggests responses were not thoughtful or genuine. Cut off times were 30 seconds for primary schools and 1 minute for secondary schools, reflecting different lengths of surveys
- Duplicate responses - where a response was given duplicate responses for all of the questions asked, the response was removed

Respondent group	Gender flag	Time flag	Duplicate flag	Total removed	All responses	% of responses removed	Responses included
Primary school adult	1	0	42	43	1,252	3.4	1,209
Primary school students	-	5	12	12	1,404	0.9	1,392
Secondary school adult	57	201	219	420	4,944	8.5	4,524
Secondary school students	146	108	216	380	5,124	7.4	4,744
Total	204	314	489	855	12,724	6.7	11,869

Figure 8: Summary table of survey responses removed as a result of data cleaning, all responses, % of responses removed and all responses included. Note: responses removed may not equal the sum of gender, time and duplicate flags, as one response may be flagged under multiple categories.

Responses included – adults

Three adult populations were surveyed including staff, governors and parents and carers. We requested that the school sends the online survey to all people in these three groups. Responses were received from all groups in primary and secondary schools, see Figure 9 for the total number of responses from the adult population that were included in the analysis.

	Primary school adults	Secondary school adults
Staff	621	2,180
Governors	58	112
Parents and carers	530	2,232
Total	1,209	4,524

Figure 9: Total number of responses from adults that were included in the analysis.

Do you identify as part of the LGBT+ community?

Understanding the views and experiences of LGBT+ survey respondents was important for the tailored school interventions as part of the Pathways to LGBT+ Inclusion programme. All surveys distributed to primary school adults, secondary school students and secondary school adults included the question 'Do you identify as part of the LGBT+ community?'. See Figure 10 for total numbers in response to this question grouped by primary school adults, secondary school students, secondary school adults.

	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
Primary school adults	74 (06%)	1098 (91%)	37 (03%)
Secondary school students	652 (14%)	3708 (78%)	384 (08%)
Secondary school adults	327 (07%)	4070 (90%)	127 (03%)
Total	1,053 (10%)	8,876 (85%)	548 (05%)

Figure 10: Total number of responses included in the analysis to the question 'do you identify as part of the LGBT+ community?'. Note: percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

What is your gender identity?

Gender identity was asked on all surveys sent to primary school adults, secondary school students and secondary school adults. Respondents could select one of the following answers: 'male (including trans male)', 'female (including trans female)', 'non-binary', 'intersex', 'prefer not to say', or 'other'. If 'other' was selected a respondent could complete a free-form text response. Gender identities from the free-form text response that could not be categorised as male, female or non-binary/genderfluid were grouped to support anonymity when analysing responses by gender.

	Male	Female	Non-binary/genderfluid	Other
Primary school adults	193 (16%)	989 (82%)	4 (<1%)	23 (2%)
Secondary school students	2022 (43%)	2485 (52%)	69 (1%)	168 (4%)
Secondary school adults	1070 (24%)	3344 (74%)	18 (<1%)	92 (2%)
Total	3,285 (31%)	6,818 (65%)	91 (<1%)	283 (3%)

Figure 11: Total number of responses to the question 'what is your gender identity?' that were included in the analysis. Note: percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Survey questions mapping

Eight different versions of the online survey were distributed, one version for each of the different groups (students, staff, governors, and parents and carers) in both primary and secondary schools. The original intention of the survey was only to understand the experiences and issues at an individual school level. To complete the analysis for this report, each question was mapped to a standardised nomenclature to allow for comparative analysis between different groups. The following standardised question names were used:

- Students learn about LGBT+ identities
- Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language is common at the school
- Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is common at the school
- Staff challenge homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language
- Students who are LGBT+ or have LGBT+ families would feel safe at this school
- I know the school rules on homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying
- I know who to speak to about homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying at school

Verbatim responses analysis

Respondents to the adult and secondary school surveys were asked “What more can the school do to prevent HBT bullying and create an LGBT+ inclusive school?” and were given the option to answer the question in a free-text response. 3,814 responses were included from the following groups:

- 427 from primary school adults, including staff, governors and parents and carers
- 1,803 from secondary school students and
- 1,584 from secondary school adults including staff, governors and parents and carers

Responses were analysed for key themes. To analyse the responses, key term searches were conducted to group responses by the following topics: ‘improve education’, ‘take action against bullying’, ‘use more severe punishments’, ‘create an accepting, open and supportive environment’, ‘increase awareness of LGBT+ issues and HBT behaviour and policy’, ‘train teachers to support them to manage HBT bullying’, ‘involve parents’, and ‘nothing/don’t know’.

A limitation of this type of analysis is grouping adult responses, meaning we were unable to analyse differences between the adult populations. A comparative analysis between respondent groups and key themes and opportunities was completed, see Figure 12.

Segment	Primary Adults	Secondary Students	Secondary Adults
Total responses included	427	1803	1584
Responses recommending to...			
Improve education	44%	47%	41%
Take action against bullying	30%	42%	39%
Use more severe punishments	7%	15%	13%
Create an accepting, open & supportive environment	42%	28%	55%
Increase awareness of HBT issues & policy	55%	41%	59%
Improve role of teachers & training	23%	17%	33%
Involve Parents	17%	1%	15%
Nothing / Don't know	12%	20%	16%

Figure 12: Comparative analysis between respondent groups and key themes and opportunities for schools. Not included in the table are 54 primary adult, 792 secondary student and 390 secondary adult responses as these were not allocated

Diversity Role Models
St Anne's Church, 55 Dean Street, London W1D 6AF
info@diversityrolemodels.org
Registered Charity number 07640644
Published by Diversity Role Models, 2020

