



To: All Chairs of Governors

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SKILLS

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Your Ref.

Please ask for: Lorraine Lord

Our Ref. LL/kes

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Dear Chair of Governors

We write to report on the anti-bullying required activity in the 2017 safeguarding visit to all education provisions in Solihull. The visit sought to answer the question 'How effectively do school leaders deal with incidents of bullying?' This includes raising concerns, timeliness of response, analysis of types of bullying, anti-bullying in the Personal, Social, Health Education curriculum and peer on peer abuse. Each education provision received a safeguarding visit report, and we recommend that:

- You read the report and check that any recommendations have been actioned.
- You include this activity within your annual cycle of governor scrutiny.

Prior to the visit, a website check of the education provision's anti-bullying policy by the school adviser against local authority anti-bullying policy guidance was undertaken. We recommend that governors check that their policy is up-to-date and reflects local authority guidance.

During the visit, the school's anti-bullying log was viewed. A discussion to review the education provision's approach to anti-bullying including policy, practice and procedure with the headteacher and appropriate senior leaders took place, which included focusing on how school leaders analyse bullying incidents, namely:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture.
- Bullying related to special educational needs and disability (SEND).
- Bullying related to appearance or physical/mental health conditions.
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic bullying).
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances.
- Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying.
- Bullying via technology –“cyberbullying”.

This approach should be considered by governors when holding school leaders to account for their work on anti-bullying; guidance questions include:

- How effective are leaders in dealing with incidents of bullying? (timeliness, raising of concerns, analysis of types of bullying, etc), the PSHE curriculum (re: bullying) and peer on peer abuse (victim/ perpetrator).
- Are strategies effective? How do you know?
- Are patterns identified?
- Are any links between decline in achievement/attendance explored and the possibility of a link with bullying?
- What do parents and pupils say about bullying at this school?

The health related behaviour questionnaire (HRBQ) provides an opportunity to glean feedback from pupils on bullying. This was also considered during the visit. Where schools felt more confident in the data produced from the questionnaire, guidance for delivering this questionnaire had been closely followed and pupils were appropriately prepared for undertaking the questionnaire in line with the guidance in order to gain an accurate response. The bullying questions are attached to this letter and vary according to year group.

Similarly, where parental questionnaires were more focused, schools felt that they had a good response. Parents should be able to consider if their child:

- Feels safe at this school.
- Is well looked after at this school.

and if the school:

- Makes sure its pupils are well behaved.
- Deals effectively with bullying.
- Is well led and managed.
- Responds well to concerns I raise.

Key Findings:

- Schools have anti-bullying policies in place, which are aligned with the school behaviour policy. This ensures a staged approach is in place to manage bullying incidents.
- Bullying incidents are rare. The majority of schools report very low incidents of bullying. Logs of bullying incidents are maintained in schools and were made available for viewing during the visit.
- Where incidents of bullying are identified, they are dealt with in line with the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Some schools identify a core group of pupils for whom there are behaviour concerns. A range of interventions are in place for those pupils whose behaviour is not always good. A range of approaches ensures any bullying issues are "nipped in the bud" and closely monitored.
- A growing number of schools are adopting the Kiva approach, which a Solihull primary school is leading on following successful implementation of the approach at the school, or other restorative approaches.
- Schools analyse incidents of bullying by pupil, year group, class, type of bullying (e.g. SIMS, My Concern, Sleuth, written records). Some schools have further work to do to fully analyse their data.

- Schools have structured personal, social, health education programmes in place which include a focus on anti-bullying. Pupils learn about what bullying is and how to report on incidents of bullying. This is taught alongside the school's approach to bullying which is firmly rooted in the school's anti-bullying and behaviour policy. Anti-bullying week is adopted in all schools (Spring Fever, Jigsaw, Stonewall Resources).
- The majority of Solihull schools are Stonewall Champions and are proud of their inclusivity.

Areas for Further Development:

- Many schools recognise there is further work to be done to secure parental understanding of bullying. For example, adding anti-bullying resources to the school website and including in the school newsletter, so that parents are better informed and schools continue to improve parental understanding of what bullying is.
- Whilst there is a range of good practice in schools around cyber bullying, schools remain vigilant and concerned about cyber bullying due to its nature and the prevalence of social media.
- Sharper questions on parent and pupil questionnaires about bullying, giving the option for a narrative where pupils and parents do not feel the school takes bullying seriously (generally 95% for parents but 80% for pupils) so schools can then act on areas of identified weaknesses.
- A small number of schools have an action point to update their policy to reflect the more recent Local Authority anti-bullying policy guidance.
- Some schools have further work to do to analyse incidents of bullying better and in some cases they are included in general behaviour incidents and need to be separated.
- Some schools have further work to do to broaden the types of bullying, ensuring they are included in their policy and practice and analysed appropriately so that school leaders can take appropriate action to improve.
- Avoid using reading and writing as a punishment e.g. completion of a think sheet, reading stories associated with Golden Rules.

Best Practice:

- Pupils tell a trusted adult or use a worry box when they feel that they or a peer is being bullied.
(Streetsbrook Infant & Early Years Academy)
- School governor and school council sign a charter against bullying.
(St Mary & St Margaret's CE Primary School)
- Schools provide case study evidence of how they have improved outcomes for a pupil who has been bullied (e.g. – response to concerns around homophobic bullying raised by a parent).
(Marston Green Infant Academy)
- Key staff trained in restorative justice and the school has good working relations with local Police Community Support Officers.
(Heart of England School)
- Materials from assemblies promoted on school website and through social media so that messages also reach parents and the wider school community.
(Heart of England School)

- Early involvement of parents in anti-bullying incidents.
- Governors are informed on bullying and behaviour matters through headteacher's report to them and provide appropriate challenge.
- Pupils, staff and parents involved in the review of the anti-bullying and behaviour policy, so there is a shared definition of what bullying is. *(Merstone Special School)*
- Additional anti-bullying packs produced for individual pupils who require a more targeted approach by the behaviour lead and behaviour support team. *(Forest Oak Special School)*
- Play partners/buddies empowered to support one another.
- Individual behaviour contracts signed by pupils annually.
- Pupils self-refer using STOP forms (several times on purpose/start telling other people).
- Drama productions and workshops to help pupils learn about what bullying is and how to respond to any bullying incidents.
- E-safety warriors – pupils discuss e-safety issues and make recommendations to other pupils. *(Fordbridge Community Primary School)*
- Anti-bullying charter is in place and signed by all. *(Dorridge Primary School)*
- Effective multi-agency support is in place. *(Anonymous)*

Examples of school reports on required bullying activity:

School 1: The academy has a robust anti bullying policy and process which is strictly adhered to. Senior leaders investigate any bullying allegations and report back to parents within 24 hours. Appropriate sanctions are put into place and support is provided for both parties involved. The curriculum is effective in supporting pupils to keep themselves safe and the inclusion team work well with individuals providing appropriate interventions. The behaviour log was available for discussion and it is clear to see that information is carefully logged and analysed on a daily-weekly basis. Following investigation, it is evident that not all reported incidents are as a result of bullying; some occurrences are due to friendship fallouts and parental perception. Further work with parents is planned focusing on understanding what constitutes bullying. There have also been incidents of cyberbullying which have been addressed through school and parents have been offered workshops to demonstrate how they can keep children safe online and to use restrictions on social media sites and apps. Parent view shows that most parents feel that bullying is dealt with effectively in school. The academy's recent OFSTED report states that *'Pupils that inspectors spoke to overwhelmingly feel safe in school. Pupils even seemed surprised when aspects of safety were explored with them; being safe in school is the norm'* and *'pupils raised no concerns about bullying. Pupils trust their teachers; they know that if a problem arises, it will be sorted out very quickly.'*

(Smith's Wood Primary Academy)

School 2: The school takes bullying behaviour seriously and are pro-active in their anti-bullying work to ensure that the school community are clear about their rights and understand acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The school's approach to dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour is firmly rooted in the behaviour policy, including cyber-bullying and behaviour online. This is updated annually following anti-bullying week in November, to include pupils' and parents' views. Anti-bullying is an annual school council agenda item and feedback helps inform the development of policy and practice. Positive, supportive relationships mean that the staff know all the children very well and work effectively with parents. The work of the recently recruited Child and Family Support Worker (CFSW), who

also works with the Junior school on the same site, is having a positive impact on relationships with parents. The school use an electronic recording system for behaviour concerns and celebrations, SIMS Behaviour Log. Knowledge of pupils and their behaviour informs appropriate and effective intervention work. Their approach to supporting emotional well-being and their anti-bullying work is embedded in practice and bullying is a consideration when a pupil's emotional or academic behaviour changes. The head teacher has recently investigated an allegation of peer to peer homophobic bullying following procedures correctly. A parent felt able to come into the school immediately; the school acted swiftly and appropriately to support the victim, perpetrators and parents in this situation. The Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum is developing using materials from Jigsaw. Designed as a whole school approach, it ensures pupils have an opportunity to understand all forms of bullying and learn about safe behaviours. Displays around school, and the focus of regular assemblies reflect and support anti-bullying work. The PSHE lead delivers staff training annually and supports staff throughout the year to develop skills and knowledge in this area of the curriculum. Most recent parent and pupil questionnaires are positive. Pupils feel safe and well looked after in school. All parents who responded feel their children are safe in school. Of those that expressed an opinion, 97% of parents felt that the school dealt effectively with bullying. Analysis of behaviour, recorded in the SIMS log, is developing and will be used to target actions to further improve behaviour, linked to the action plan.

(Marston Green Infant Academy)

School 3: A review of the school's approach to anti-bullying, policy, practice and procedures, was carried out with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. A revised policy on anti-bullying was drafted June 2017 and is due to be adopted by governors at their autumn 2017 meeting. Governors are informed on bullying and behaviour matters through the headteacher's report to them. Pupils and staff have been involved in the review of the policy and this has enabled a definition of bullying to be shared with the school community including parents. This is neatly summed up by STOP (Several Times On Purpose, Start Telling Other People). The school clearly takes bullying behaviours seriously and investigates thoroughly when incidents occur. There are a range of activities and strategies throughout the school to support children, including anti-bullying week, playground leaders, PSHE curriculum and a focus on cyberbullying. Class teachers keep class behaviour logs which are monitored by the headteacher. The school's incident log was reviewed during the visit. A case study showed that leaders had thoroughly investigated, outside agencies were involved and regular communication with parents kept all parties informed.

(George Fentham Endowed CE Primary School)

School 4: A review of the school's approach to anti-bullying policy, practice and procedure was carried out with the head teacher (HT). The school's approach to dealing with any incidents of bullying is firmly rooted in the behaviour policy and the KiVa approach (<http://www.kivaprogram.net/program>). The school has clear processes in place to manage allegations of bullying and any bullying incidents. Any reported incidents are swiftly investigated and logged in the school's Child Protection Online Monitoring System (CPOMS) system with discussions and actions formally noted. CPOMS enables leaders to easily monitor and analyse behaviour across school. This year there have been 20 reported alleged bullying incidents. Following investigation, only 3 of these were deemed to be as a result of bullying behaviour; support was put into place for both parties involved and followed up with parents. Other reported incidents were as a result of friendship conflicts and were followed up accordingly. KiVa has had a huge impact on the school community and pupils fully understand what bullying is and the impact that it has on others. Parents that engage with this part of the school's work also show a good understanding. School questionnaires show

that 98% of the parents who responded believed their child is safe at school and 91% believe that the school deals effectively with bullying. Although pleased with these figures, leaders follow up issues for those parents, where possible, who have not agreed with these statements. Senior leaders have recently become KiVa trainers and are supporting other local schools with this approach. The school now wishes to further embed the process by supporting hard to reach parents.

(Meriden CE Primary School)

School 5: The school's approach to prevent and address bullying is multi-layered and effective. They have an anti-bullying week and have an assembly focused on bullying. A whole programme is linked with school values, through assemblies and pastoral care, lunch-time and playground charters; they work as community, send information to parents to help them support child at school. Pupils learn about what bullying is and how to respond to incidents of bullying through personal, health and social education (PHSE) and wider curriculum time. There are specific links built in about accepting differences through Stonewall and Spring Fever - both touch on differences in family units and building relationships. The school has the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) award based on the care, kindness, understanding support and empathy, the Truly Trusted award for those who live the school values. Play-partners and buddies on the playground are deployed to empower children to support one another. At the beginning of the school year, every child signs an individual behave contract; this forms their class log on which to record their behaviours. The teachers use the Classroom Dojo for recording positive behaviours. A staged approach to managing behaviour, incidents are logged in detail and analysed. The headteacher is confident that the low level of incidents recorded is as a result of the positive work the school does to prevent this behaviour. The headteacher regularly interviews groups of pupils, has an open door policy and monitors behaviour across the school. Last year cyber bullying had been a concern; it was rigorously addressed and now is not an issue.

(Dickens Heath Community Primary School)

School 6: The school's approach is grounded in the care and values of honesty kindness, determination, courage and humour and has been strengthened following the restructure of Pastoral Care and the launch of 'CALM' Behaviour Policy 2016. The school clearly state that bullying, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment is not tolerated and the school is continually improving the culture in the school to support students and staff to report incidents. Recent changes to the method of recording bullying incidents on PARS gives immediate alerts to the Assistant Principal with responsibility for Pastoral Care and has enabled analysis of incidents to be more useful. Regular, planned for assemblies have focused on 'Don't be a by stander', cyber-bullying and 'Values versus Violence'. The material for these assemblies is also promoted on the school website and through social media allowing the messages to also reach parents. Key pastoral staff have recently received training on 'restorative justice' and there are good working relationships with police school liaison officers.

A review of a case study where relationships between students had broken down showed that intensive interventions were put in place to focus on addressing behaviours to bring about change. Pupils were able to access mediation and made references to bullying assemblies. Staff were effective in keeping notes, identifying and arranging support and communicating with parents.

(Heart of England School)

School 7: The relevant policy was revised in April. The school operates a “no tolerance” approach to bullying. The matter has a high profile and leaders can point to clear procedures for staff to follow. Provision includes: close liaison with the local police, the vigilance of school prefects, staff awareness and pupil advocates (who support the most vulnerable youngsters). The bullying log is analysed for any patterns relating to type of misdemeanour or pupil group. Currently there are no evident patterns to address. As a result of the above, a strong pastoral curriculum and timely interventions, incidents are modest in number and actions are effective. For example, one vulnerable pupil has returned to 100% attendance and stable learning due to a home/school diary, pastoral mentoring and sanctions against the perpetrators. Parent and pupil feedback in the school is overwhelmingly positive. The overwhelming majority of parents agree or strongly agree that bullying is handled well by the school.

(Langley Secondary School)

School 8: A review of the schools approach to anti-bullying policy, practice and procedure was carried out with the senior leaders, and family support worker. The schools approach to dealing with any incidents of bullying is firmly rooted in the behaviour policy. There is a very clear process which has been communicated to the whole school community. At the beginning of the new school year all pupils complete a bullying questionnaire, this is followed up with a plan for every class. Pupils can complete concerns logs and hand them to a member of staff whom they trust. The Child family support worker has oversight of these. There are other ways of pupils raising concerns such as worry bags. Actual incidents of bullying are logged and actions are clear. There have been 4 incidents logged this year. It is clear to see what action was taken by the senior leaders in school. The school are pro-active and identifying potential situations before they arise. The staff knowledge of the pupils and their behaviour informs intervention work that is carried out by the pastoral support staff. There is a big emphasis being placed on happy and safe relationships. A big piece of work has been developed around consent and using the ‘assertive no’ programme written by the school. This is a unit of work consisting of 6 lessons and has already been taught in year 3. This has had a positive impact on pupils’ behaviour overall and there is already evidence of impact of this piece of work. This will be rolled out to other year groups. Pupils have developed their boundaries as a pupil population and are very clear on what is acceptable and unacceptable in terms of behaviour. Recent parent questionnaires are extremely positive. All parents who responded feel their children are safe in school. Pupil questionnaires were as positive as the parents, pupils feel safe and well looked after in school.

(St Anthony’s Catholic Primary School)

School 9: A review of the anti-bullying log was undertaken. School leaders are confident that there are no incidents of bullying ‘which go on over an extended period’. They note that some anti-social behaviour, for example unpleasant comments does happen on occasions. There are a core group of five boys prone to aggression, unpleasant and provocative behaviour, who are being closely monitored and supported by senior leaders in a range of ways (e.g.: time to talk, supervised activities at break time). Effective multi-agency support is in place for this group of boys. A discussion took place about how school leaders might further analyse the log, for example by types of bullying, and how in one case support for the perpetrator might be sought.

(Anonymous)

School 10: The evidence presented (or witnessed) during the visit indicates that the school is effective in this area. Leaders can point to very positive feedback from pupil and parent surveys. Much work has taken place and 99% of pupils accurately understand the nature of bullying and 97% of pupils believe the school acts effectively to resolve bullying in school. Depending on the year group, between 96% and 99% of parents feel their children are safe in school. There is evidence of the bullying log and the discriminatory incident log being analysed for all patterns of negative behaviour. The school mediates when bullying occurs online and well away from the school. Discriminatory incidents have fallen from 25 (last year) to five. Bullying incidents have fallen from 10 to eight. Leaders believe there are no sustained examples of bullying during the 2016/17 academic year. Currently, there is no overlap between cases on the discriminatory and bullying logs. Leaders believe this improving picture is due to: regular sessions on the nature of and responses to bullying the anti-bullying ambassadors recently trained in Key Stage 3; the availability of non-teaching pastoral managers. Leaders feel that there are currently no cases of poor attendance with bullying as their cause. Leaders can point to case studies of effectiveness. For example, a very nervous and vulnerable school refuser who has been integrated after a managed move from elsewhere. Policies adhere closely to LA models. Leaders are accommodating the latest LA anti-bullying policy into their own document.

(Light Hall School)

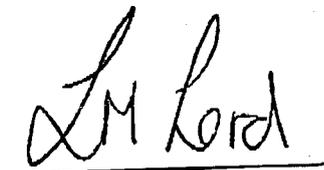
School 11: The school adopts a restorative justice approach to dealing with bullying and has a clear policy on anti-bullying. The policy however does not detail the restorative justice approach, or multi-agency responses, which has been rightly identified by school leaders in the next steps for development. The school's anti-bullying log has 28 cases of verbal bullying, 4 of sexual, 16 physical and 20 cyberbullying. These have all been dealt with in line with school policy and procedures, and every concern is taken seriously. School leaders ensure clear oversight by heads of year, and staff are held to account to ensure all incidents are logged appropriately and fully investigated. An annual cyber bullying assembly takes place. Recent work on the difference between banter and bullying has been undertaken, where bullying is repetitive and intentionally hurtful, whilst banter is having a laugh and poking fun; however pupils have realised that banter can be hurtful and this work has encouraged pupils to reflect more. Leaders were challenged about SEND bullying, but did not feel it was a current issue in the school. The current Year 8 have had an intensive focus due to a range of challenging behaviour; staff have sensitively supported pupils and rigorously implemented the school behaviour and anti-bullying policy. School leaders have been proactive in ensuring they are vigilant around peer on peer abuse ensuring the school context is well understood, and the safeguarding team are well placed to offer holistic and bespoke support, with clear leadership oversight. During anti-bullying week, a drama workshop was purchased by school leaders for all pupils. This school's work in this area is one of good practice, and the local authority would like to share the approach with other schools to further improve anti-bullying work in secondary schools.

(Grace Academy Solihull)

Local Authority Resources to support your anti-bullying work:

- Anti-bullying policy guidance <http://www.solgrid.org.uk/safeguarding/>
- Designated Safeguarding Lead Handbook – anti-bullying guidance
<http://www.solgrid.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/DESIGNATED-SAFEGUARDING-LEADS-HANDBOOK-MARCH-2017-3-9.pdf>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L M Lord". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Lorraine Lord
Education Safeguarding Lead
Solihull Education Improvement Service
Education and Skills Division