Stonewall

LGBTQ+ INCLUSION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: HOW PRIMARY SCHOOLS ARE CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE AND TACKLING HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA

FOREWORD

At Stonewall, we imagine a world where LGBTQ+ people everywhere can live our lives to the full. We were founded as a response to the introduction of Section 28, a law which stopped schools from teaching in an LGBTQ+ inclusive way. Since Section 28 was repealed, a lot has changed and the law now encourages schools to support and celebrate LGBTQ+ children and children with LGBTQ+ parents/carers. But there's still a long way to go.

There is a lot you can do to create a safe and supportive environment in your school and this guide will help you do just that. We've updated it to reflect the most up to date good practice as well as the latest statutory requirements and guidance from Ofsted, Estyn, Education Scotland and the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

We've given you some practical steps your school can take to celebrate diversity and have included some case studies from schools already doing some fantastic LGBTQ+ inclusive work. They've found, as you will, that doing this work benefits the wider school community, rather than only those who are LGBTQ+ or come from, LGBTQ+ families. Your inclusive work will empower children to be true to themselves, to celebrate difference and to speak up for what is right. Together we can work towards a world where all children can go to school and feel free to be themselves, free to thrive and free to learn.

Nancy Kelley
Chief Executive, Stonewall

At Stonewall, we use the acronym LGBTQ+, which stands for lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace. You can find definitions of these terms and other key terms on our website.

Other organisations may use a different acronym – for example, LGBT or LGBTI or LGBT+. Often, the acronym an organisation uses will depend on their areas of specialism or expertise, or the specific groups of people that they work with. In this resource we've cited lots of different organisations, as well as Stonewall's research from a time where we used the acronym LBGT, and that's why you'll see that we've used a range of acronyms throughout.

Our good practice guidance is developed by our team of expert teachers, trainers and education professionals and informed by the work of our **School & College Champions**. We're constantly developing our work and we regularly update our **resources** to introduce more information and advice on supporting LGBTQ+ children and young people – you can expect to see more content on supporting young people who are questioning and young people on the ace and aro spectrum coming soon.

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

Lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people today enjoy greater equality and freedom to be who they are than ever before – but that's not the case in many of our schools.

The 🖊 **Teachers' Report**, research commissioned by Stonewall and YouGov in 2014, showed that 70 per cent of primary school teachers heard expressions like 'that's so gay'. Almost half of them said that children in their school had experienced homophobic bullying.

The Teachers' Report (2014) showed that teachers were reluctant to tackle homophobic bullying despite nine out of ten primary school teachers believing that their school had a duty to tackle homophobic bullying. The barrier to them stepping in was a lack of training on how to do so.

A perceived lack of support for LGBTQ+ inclusive approaches can also be a barrier. Ofsted's 🖊 **Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges** (2021) highlighted the experience of a teacher who told them 'she frequently heard both homophobic and sexist language but did not challenge this as she did not think she would be supported by other staff and her challenges would be disregarded.'

Primary schools are now 'strongly encouraged' to teach RSHE in an LGBTQ+ inclusive manner by including LGBTQ+ families when teaching children about different families. However, in their Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges (2021), Ofsted found that many teachers lack confidence in delivering some aspects of the new RSHE curriculum. This is echoed by the findings of 🖊 **research conducted by the NSPCC and NEU** in 2020. Half of the teachers they surveyed reported lacking confidence to teach the new statutory RSHE curriculum.

This means many children start secondary school with negative impressions of LGBTQ+ people, and a lack of tolerance and understanding of difference and diversity. Not surprisingly, Stonewall's research has found bullying to be rife; research from the University of Cambridge in the 🖊 **School Report** (2017) found that almost half of LGBT pupils in Britain's secondary schools experienced homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying.

Whilst things are starting to improve, Just Like Us' ⬗ **Growing Up LGBT+ report** from 2021 shows us that there's still a long way to go. Just 55 per cent of the school staff told them that their school has LGBT+ inclusive policies in place and only 52 per cent had received training on LGBT+ inclusion. Only 30 per cent of the pupils told them that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is taken seriously at their school, and 48 per cent of all pupils surveyed said their school gave almost no positive messaging about being LGBTQ+. Those LGBT+ pupils who had seen these positive messages at school are more likely to feel safe at school. 68 per cent of pupils who see strong LGBTQ+ inclusive messages report feeling safe in school, compared to just 49 per cent of those pupils who don't see them.

Stonewall's Education & Youth team have worked with thousands of schools and colleges across England, Scotland and Wales. For more than fifteen years, we've been helping teachers and education staff create inclusive settings, where all children and young people, including those who are LGBTQ+, are free to be themselves. Our experienced team of teachers, trainers and education professionals are proud to support schools and colleges through our ⬗ **School & College Champions programme**, and local authorities and young people's organisations through our ⬗ **Children & Young People's Services Champions programme**.

We've brought training and support to schools and settings across the country, from nursery schools to FE colleges: some of our work with church schools and schools with faith values and primary schools has been funded by the Government Equalities Office. We create quality, affordable ⬗ **training**; we produce sector leading research and education ⬗ **resources**; we benchmark best practice through ⬗ **awards**; and we provide guidance and support for teachers and professionals supporting LGBTQ+ children and young people and children with LGBTQ+ family members. We're here to help you create a world where all children and young people can reach their full potential.

We can work together to improve life at school for LGBTQ+ children and young people and those with LGBTQ+ family members. This guide is packed with information and ideas, as well as examples of good practice from primary schools that have embedded an LGBTQ+ inclusive approach into their work. It gives you tangible examples of policies and practices that worked in schools, shows you how start this work and offers some ideas and inspiration to keep things moving. And, as you might encounter some bumps along the way, it also has some tips to keep you on course.

GETTING STARTED

All the schools we've worked with stress the importance of getting the basics right. A clear plan of work to tackle homophobia, biphobia and transphobia:

- **helps stop problems arising down the line**
- **makes the work less daunting**
- **makes it easier to answer questions about this work from parents, colleagues or governors**

Know where you stand

The Public Sector Equality Duty (s149(1) of the Equality Act 2010) places a duty on bodies carrying out public functions, in the exercise of those functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation** and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act – including because of the protected characteristic of sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

- **Advance equality of opportunity** – which may include the need to:
  - **Remove or minimise disadvantages** suffered by those who are LGBTQ+ which are connected to their LGBTQ+ identity
  - **Take steps to meet the needs** of LGBTQ+ people that are different to those who are not LGBTQ+
  - **Encourage LGBTQ+ people** to participate in public life or any other activity where participation is disproportionately low

- **Foster good relations** between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it – e.g. between those who are LGBTQ+ and those who are not LGBTQ+.

In England, the **Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017/353** include specific duties such as publishing equality information at least once a year to show how you have complied with the duty (regulation 4), as well at setting specific and measurable equality objectives which should be prepared and published at least every four years (regulation 5).

Similar requirements apply to governing bodies of educational institutions in Wales (see **The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011**).

In Scotland, the **Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012** place specific duties on listed authorities. This includes duties to publish a set of equality outcomes to enable it to better perform the equality duty at least every four years (regulation 4(1)).

The Public Sector Equality Duty is a continuing duty of process rather than an obligation to achieve a particular outcome. The duty can be used to challenge a school, college or local authority's policies or decisions if, in coming to that decision, or formulating or implementing the policy, the body has not adequately taken into account the potential for discrimination or disadvantage based on a protected characteristic such as sexual orientation or gender reassignment.

You can't know what you need to improve until you fully understand exactly where you are right now. That means an honest assessment of the problems you have before you explore the best ways to address them.

If work to celebrate difference and diversity is just a box ticking exercise it can become tokenistic and ultimately counterproductive.

So, like the best schools, you'll need to look at how you can integrate this work throughout your curriculum and school life.

Lead from the top

To be effective, this work demands a whole school approach with strong leadership from senior management and governors. Only a third of primary school teachers say their headteacher demonstrates clear leadership on tackling homophobic bullying (Teachers' Report 2014), leaving many teachers uncertain about starting this work.

By taking responsibility for communicating the importance of this work senior management:

- show pupils these issues are being taken seriously
- give staff the confidence to address HBT bullying.

One problem which some schools highlighted was that occasionally work around tackling homophobia, biphobia and transphobia is delegated to a single member of staff, which makes it both ineffective and unsustainable. Whilst it is perfectly appropriate for someone to lead and coordinate the work, it must be seen as the responsibility of all staff across the school. This approach needs to include the governors or trustees too, you'll find **guidance for them on our website**.

In thinking about the implementing the duty, it may be useful to consider:

- What do you know about the needs of LGBTQ+ communities in your school?

- How would you demonstrate what steps you are taking to engage with the LGBTQ+ communities in your school to understand their needs and experiences?

- How do these needs differ based on intersections with other protected characteristics, such as your children and young people or staff who are LGBTQ+ and of a particular faith?

- How far did you take into account the needs of your LGBTQ+ communities when you last developed or reviewed your bullying, uniform or behaviour policies?

- How far did you take into account the needs of your LGBTQ+ communities when you developed your co-curricular offers or admin processes?

- How far do you understand the experience of attainment of LGBTQ+ people when you plan your RSHE and wider curriculum?

Involve pupils

The best schools also involve pupils in their anti-bullying work right from the start because:

- it helps to inform anti-bullying work

- reveals exactly where intervention is needed

- gets their support for the task itself.

School councils are a good way of doing this. Some schools have found it led to the council members becoming ambassadors for the work, and the pupils became more proactive in challenging homophobia, biphobia and transphobia.

Train your staff

The biggest barrier to tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in primary schools is that staff feel unprepared for it. Without proper training and know how they won't have the confidence to take the work on or make it effective.

The good news is that this training needn't be difficult; half an hour discussing a school script to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language can easily be integrated into a staff training day. Many schools also turn to external support and training, to offer new perspectives and give their work added authority. 91 per cent of teachers who have addressed different types of families in the classroom would do so again.

Case study: Whole-school celebration

The school encouraged staff to make sure words like 'lesbian' and 'gay' were used in an appropriate, non-abusive context. A Diversity Week was created where differences in family life are celebrated and the school's work on tolerance and inclusion are showcased. The school works with feeder secondaries to reassure pupils that support is available as they grow up and progress through the education system.

TACKLING HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC LANGUAGE AND BULLYING

- 'Tranny.'
- 'You're such a girl.'
- 'That's so gay.'

Language like this is heard in seven out of ten primary schools. It means that young people are encouraged to see LGBTQ+ identities as negative.

And use of such language makes the estimated 20,000 young people in the UK growing up with LGBTQ+ parents or carers think their family is being equated with something bad. So, tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language should be a priority for all primary schools.

Set boundaries

Be clear about what language is and isn't acceptable and make sure that all members of your school community understand that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language is not acceptable. This information should be included in your anti-bullying and behaviour policies. You could also supplement these policies by asking all pupils to sign up to a language charter and making sure they're aware of what's expected of them. Some schools have developed home-school agreements to support this.

You'll find example policies in some of our resources, so be sure to take a look at the ones we've highlighted later in this guide.

Consistency and reporting

Once you put a policy in place it's important you act upon it from the start and that all staff are consistent in their approach.

As well as being told that pupils shouldn't tolerate homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language, they should also be encouraged to report it.

Ofsted inspectors look for evidence that English schools log and monitor homophobic, biphobic and transphobic incidents. You can read more about this requirement in paragraph 96 of **Ofsted's School Inspection Handbook**.

Similarly, Estyn's '**Celebrating Diversity and Promoting Inclusion**' report recommends that schools ensure that instances of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying are recorded and that trends are identified and acted upon (paragraph 59).

The guidance in Scotland is similar too. Education Scotland's '**How good is our school?**' guide encourages Scottish schools to collect a 'a wide range of quantitative data for example about attainment, attendance, bullying and prejudice-based discrimination' as part of their self-evaluation processes (see page 11 of 'How good is our school?' for more detail).

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) also inspect 'the effectiveness with which schools deal with discrimination'. Logging and monitoring rates of bullying can be useful in evidencing the effectiveness of your approach to tackling discriminatory bullying.

Logging and monitoring incidents helps to both gauge the level of the problem and how effective you're being in tackling it.

Some teachers don't intervene when pupils use homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language because they think pupils don't know the real meanings of the words and aren't referring to gay, bi or trans people.

But the use of gay in a derogatory manner in particular still equates being gay with something bad. Such negative connotations can have a long-term impact on children's self-esteem, so a consistent approach to the misuse of terminology is vital. It is good practice to highlight this in the school's behaviour policy.

Scottish schools

Schools in Scotland are now expected to embed LGBT inclusion across the curriculum. You'll find more information about this at **lgbteducation.scot**

Child friendly definitions

Homophobic words are words that people use to make it seem like being lesbian or gay is a bad thing, to make people feel bad about being lesbian or gay, or to make people feel bad about having lesbian or gay family members or friends. A gay person is a man who falls in love with other men, or a woman who falls in love with other women. Lesbian is another word for a woman who falls in love with other women.

Biphobic words are words that people use to make it seem like being bi is a bad thing, to make people feel bad about being bi, or to make people feel bad about having bi family members or friends. A bi person is someone who falls in love with people of all different genders – so they might fall in love with a man, a woman, or a non-binary person.

Transphobic words are words that people use to make it seem like being trans is a bad thing, to make people feel bad about being trans, or to make people feel bad about having trans family members or friends. A trans person is someone who was labelled as a 'boy' or a 'girl' when they were born, but who grows up to feel like that doesn't fit who they really are. For example, someone who was given the label 'girl' as a baby, but who grows up and says, 'I'm a boy'.

You'll find more definitions relating to anti-LGBTQ+ bullying on our **website**.

Case study: An inclusive curriculum

Staff at this primary school explore the concept of gender with both their KS1 and KS2 pupils using age-appropriate books in their PSHE lessons. With KS2 pupils, teachers also discuss the differences between gender and gender stereotypes. The overall curriculum has been designed to promote diversity, tolerance and equality for all. Staff have had CPD training in trans issues, and a trans toolkit informs the Equality and Diversity Policy. The school has also installed gender neutral toilets.

Case study: Inclusive policies

An equalities audit at this school found that they needed to do more to promote gender equality and family diversity. The school wanted to have support and policies in place so that it didn't have to react in an ad hoc way to a situation. Pupils helped put together a language code of conduct which stated that homophobic language was unacceptable and set out procedures for recording incidents of discriminatory language. The move from primary to secondary school was made easier by inviting in a local LGBTQ+ youth group who recounted their experiences of homophobic and transphobic language and bullying.

Tackling bullying

Tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language goes a long way towards tackling anti-LGBTQ+ bullying too as it helps to remove the negative connotations sometimes associated with being LGBTQ+ or having LGBTQ+ family members.

Most homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in primary schools is directed at children who are different in some way, rather than at children who are actually LGBTQ+. It should be dealt with in the same way as homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language:

- making sure that all members of the school community understand that homophobia, biphobia and transphobia are unwelcome

- creating a school environment which celebrates difference

- ensuring that children see LGBTQ+ people and LGBTQ+ families represented in the curriculum.

It is important that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is highlighted in the school anti-bullying policy and in the school online safety policy.

This anti-bullying work helps dispel misconceptions about being LGBTQ+ and better prepares children for life in our diverse society.

For more on tackling anti-LGBTQ+ bullying and language, take a look at our **Getting Started toolkit** and our e-learning modules at **www.stonewall.org.uk/e-learning**

WIDER INCLUSION WORK

This work doesn't have to be stand alone or 'crowbarred' into a school's work. It should form part of your school's wider work around inclusion and respect, helping children to understand and value diversity.

Case study: A whole school approach

The governors include a Diversity Link governor who works closely with the Diversity Lead on the teaching staff, to ensure the curriculum and policies are inclusive of trans issues. School assemblies, SMSC related learning, RSHE content from a third party, an intolerance of discrimination and bullying and a gender-neutral school uniform keep diversity and understanding at the heart of the school community.

Using storybooks

Once upon a time, traditional story books excluded LGBTQ+ people and different families, focusing exclusively on romantic relationships between men and women.

Now though, there are plenty of high-quality children's books that feature LGBTQ+ characters and challenge stereotypes.

You could use an LGBTQ+ inclusive story book:

- as the basis of RSHE/RSE/RHSP sessions or circle time
- as a stimulus for lessons, activities and games
- in an assembly or at story time
- for guided reading

And it's a great idea to have LGBTQ+ inclusive books in your library or book corner too! Take a look at **Stonewall's list of LGBTQ+ inclusive children's books** for ideas of books to include.

Avoid assumptions

It's important to avoid making assumptions about your pupils or about their families. If there is an assumption that none of the children have LGBTQ+ parents or that they live with either or both of their parents, this can make children from different types of family feel uncomfortable telling others about their families. Although not deliberate, incorrect assumptions can make children feel excluded.

To avoid this, use language which allows children from all families to talk about their home life, such as asking what pupils' parents or carers do, rather than what their mum and dad do. In school activities based on parents and carers, think of ways to make sure that children from different families don't feel excluded.

So, when young people make cards for parents on Mother's or Father's Day, consider that some children have same-sex parents, have a non-binary parent, come from a single parent family or live with step parents, grandparents or with foster carers.

Displaying posters and signs

Stonewall's **Different Families posters** send out a visible sign that a school is a tolerant and diverse place. They trigger discussion among children and make them aware that different types of families exist, so displaying the posters is a great place for your school to start.

You can use the posters, or other posters from our website, in your RSHE/RSE/RSHP lessons. Ask children to look at the posters, draw their own family and then compare it with their classmates, to show them how all families are different. Or you can use the posters for a discussion about what makes a family. Pupils soon realise that it's things like 'love', 'support' and 'how they treat one another' that matter, not who makes up the family.

Including lesbian, gay, bi and trans people in the curriculum

In England, the **statutory guidance for RSHE** states that schools should ensure that their RSHE teaching meets the needs of all learners, and that all learners are able to "understand the importance of equality and respect". In its **FAQs on RSHE**, the DfE says that primary schools are 'strongly encouraged and enabled to include LGBTQ+ parents and carers when teaching about different types of families.

From September 2022, all primary schools in Wales will be expected to deliver developmentally appropriate LGBTQ+ inclusive RSE. The Welsh Government's **⬦ Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Code** notes that "curriculum content in RSE must be inclusive and reflect diversity. It must include learning that develops learners' awareness and understanding of different identities, views and values and a diversity of relationships, gender and sexuality, including LGBTQ+ lives" (Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Code, page 3).

Schools in Scotland are also expected to deliver LGBTQ+ inclusive RSHP and paragraph 36 of the Scottish Government's '**⬦ Conduct of relationships, sexual health and parenthood education in schools**' states:

'It is also important that RSHP education addresses diversity and, for example, reflects issues relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) young people or children with LGBTI parents, such as same sex marriage and hate-crime reporting.'

All of the schools featured in this guide, and many more, found this work rewarding and enjoyable.

Case study: A holistic approach

The work on gender and diversity at this infant school takes a holistic approach, setting it in the teaching and visual environments. Assumptions aren't made about the family backgrounds of the pupils, various books explore different family set ups and the rainbow flag is displayed in the school, along with the Different Family Same Love poster. Teachers also developed a resource around the book And Tango Makes Three. The story sack contained the book and props so that children could reenact the story once they'd read it and then draw pictures of their own families and share them with their classmates.

CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE

One of the easiest ways to create a culture free from homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is to actively celebrate difference. Remember to be intersectional in your approach by ensuring that you celebrate LGBTQ+ people of all genders and races, as well as disabled LGBTQ+ people and LGBTQ+ people of faith.

When you celebrate difference it sends out a message that it's OK for people not to conform to the norm and that no one should be bullied for being different. You'll create a learning environment where children feel able to be themselves, which can contribute to increased happiness and better performance at school.

For many primary schools, tackling gender stereotypes and celebrating trans people is an extension of the excellent work they've already been doing on celebrating difference. Threading these themes throughout the curriculum means they are treated in the same way as other differences, through an ethos of respect for everyone.

Challenging gender stereotypes

The 🔖 **Teachers' Report** found that the children and young people most likely to experience homophobic bullying were those who didn't conform to gender stereotypes, such as boys who were perceived as being feminine, girls who were into sports and boys who were academic. This was true for both primary and secondary school pupils, suggesting that intolerance of non-conformity begins in primary school and continues into secondary school. Teachers told us that this bullying took place regardless of whether the children and young people were LGBT or not.

You can stop this intolerance developing by actively challenging gender stereotypes. Make sure that school activities aren't exclusively for pupils of a particular gender and use inclusive language to show it's fine for people to behave in ways that makes them feel comfortable.

Primary schools who take on this work find that challenging gender stereotypes and removing unnecessarily gendered aspects of school life has an empowering effect on all their pupils. It will also help make your primary school a more inclusive space for trans children.

Case study: Inclusive books and displays

Pupils, staff and visitors at this school are invited to challenge gender stereotypes by a display in the main school hall. The PSHE curriculum and resources have been carefully chosen to continue this theme. Pupils have access to a wide range of books that tackle gender stereotypes – from female rocket mechanics who don't want to marry a prince to a prince who loves to design dresses. A comprehensive guide to trans issues covering legal duties, school policies and plans for trans staff, pupils and family members, has been drawn up, and there are plans for gender neutral toilets and school visits from members of the trans community.

Supporting trans children

Many schools are already showing excellent practice in ensuring that trans children feel safe and able to be themselves at school.

Seemingly small changes, like helping a pupil to use their preferred name and pronoun at school, can have a huge impact on the pupil's self-esteem.

Schools often have questions at the start of this work. How should we support the parents or carers to support the child? What can we do as a school to support the child? Can the pupil still take part in sports competitions?

If your school hasn't yet needed to support a trans child, it can be useful to proactively put inclusive policies in place. This means that you're prepared and ready to support any trans child that may join your school. To enable a whole school approach, start with a review of your policies and training for staff and governors.

You'll find more information on supporting trans children in our '🔖 **Introduction to supporting LGBTQ+ children and young people**' resource.

The Scottish Government have published specific non-statutory guidance on trans inclusion in schools. This is the only current public government guidance on this in the UK, and schools across the UK will find '🔖 **Supporting transgender young people in schools: guidance for Scottish schools**' useful.

Case study: Supporting a trans child

When a pupil at this Catholic school began a social transition, the school made sure that the pupil was at the centre of all decisions. A step-by-step process was agreed with the pupil and their parent, and the pupil was offered choices at every stage. The school was clear with both the parent and the pupil about what was possible. They respected the pupil's confidentiality regarding which information would be shared with the wider school community. The school also offered the pupil and their parent information on external support agencies. Policies and procedures were audited and reviewed with guidance from Stonewall. Respect for everyone is a key thread throughout the curriculum with trans issues and gender stereotyping featuring prominently. Staff have received training on trans issues in relation to cultural and religious backgrounds.

Celebrate Role Models

Your LGBTQ+ inclusive work will probably have its biggest impact when it involves real LGBTQ+ people who are part of the school community.

This doesn't mean singling LGBTQ+ people out or treating them any differently. All it takes is to celebrate the achievements, special occasions and big milestones of LGBTQ+ people in the school's community, just as you would its non-LGBTQ+ members – for example, celebrating marriages, welcoming children into the family, or having an LGBTQ+ person with an interesting job come in to talk to pupils about their work.

When pupils move to secondary school, any negative attitudes that they already hold will move with them too. Stonewall's 🔎 School Report (2017) found nearly half of LGBT secondary school pupils – including 64 per cent of trans pupils - were bullied for being LGBT at school, while 7 per cent experienced physical abuse. 4 per cent of LGBT pupils – including 9 per cent of trans pupils – also received death threats at school.

Work with your Year Six pupils to help reduce their likelihood of either leading homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or being on the receiving end of it when they reach secondary school. You could consider bringing LGBTQ+ young people of secondary school age into your school to talk to pupils directly about their experiences.

By adopting these measures, you'll be ensuring that your pupils start secondary school knowing they don't have to put up with homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language, and are willing and to challenge others who do.

Holding events

It's a great idea to actively celebrate difference through assemblies, plays and events. Find ways to embrace all the aspects of diversity that make your school unique.

Case study: Challenge stereotypes

Staff at one junior school have been challenging gender stereotypes and bullying in the classroom, playground and assemblies. Diversity Days are timetabled to address issues of identity and stereotyping, parents are engaged with the work through the school newsletters and staff are given regular reminders around gendered activities, such as art classes for Mother's and Father's Day. A successful move for a trans pupil from primary to secondary school, and another younger child openly exploring their gender identity, show the work has paid off as the pupils felt comfortable in a safe and supportive space. An 'Aspirations & Careers' day saw a shift away from children coming dressed as stereotypically gendered careers; not all the girls were hairdressers and dancers, and not all the boys were footballers.

SCHOOL ETHOS

Your school ethos sets the tone and parameters for the environment in which your pupils learn. It supplements and supports the curriculum and, just like the curriculum, it must embrace everyone. Only then can your ethos be truly valuable and meaningful to everyone who learns at, works in, or visits your school.

So, LGBTQ+ inclusion and tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying must be central to your school ethos – not just because it's the right thing to do or because inspecting bodies say you should, but because it matters to your pupils and their parents and carers.

If yours is a church school or a school with a faith character, national guidance may be provided by the relevant religious body. For example, '**Valuing All God's Children: Guidance for Church of England schools on challenging homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying**', '**Made in God's Image: Challenging homophobic and biphobic bullying in Catholic schools**' or '**The Wellbeing of LGBT+ Pupils – A Guide for Orthodox Jewish Schools**'.

As you work to make your school more LGBTQ+ inclusive, you'll find it helpful to emphasise that celebrating difference encourages children to treat everyone with love and respect, a value which lies at the heart of most religions.

MOVING UP

Your school could collaborate on LGBTQ+ inclusive work with your feeder secondaries. If you do, you'll be ensuring a consistency of approach to inclusion and sending a clear message to your pupils that their new secondary school will also be an environment where they can be themselves. You could hold joint LGBT+ History Month or Pride events, work on shared anti-bullying projects, or collaborate to ensure your policies are consistently LGBTQ+ inclusive.

WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

Despite the best of intentions, you'll almost certainly worry about the reactions of parents, carers and the local community when starting out with this work. But don't let this put you off and be careful not to make assumptions based on the demographics of your school community. Remember that many of the parents and carers will have LGBTQ+ friends, family members, colleagues or neighbours.

The 🖊 **Teachers' Report** (2014) showed that 91 per cent of teachers who have addressed lesbian, gay or bi issues, or different families, received no complaints from parents for doing so. Even in the small number of cases where the work was met with resistance, the majority resulted in parents being more than happy for their children to take part once they'd been given more information about what it involved.

It's good practice to actively involve parents and carers in your school's work. You could inform them about your approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion through newsletters and parents' evenings, telling them about the work that you'll be doing and exactly why you're doing it. Ask parents and carers to sign up to your school policies and ensure they understand their role in the school community. You could try getting them involved in events such as diversity week or LGBT+ History Month.

Having an open door policy enables you to address parents' and carers' concerns when they arise. Have copies of the teaching materials you'll be using available for them to see. This should reassure them that the work is sensitive and age appropriate. Explain that creating a culture of respect is something you take seriously and that all members of the school community are expected to embrace this ethos.

Generally, you'll find parents and carers are more than willing to support the work. Parents and carers don't want their children to be bullied or discriminated against, nor do they want their child to be a bully.

Case study: Parental involvement

This Church of England School had provided training for staff, and shared their plans with their governing body, they ran a parents' meeting to introduce their updated policies. The Headteacher shared the new Anti-Bullying Policy, which now contains explicit reference to transphobic bullying, and highlighted the school's plans to increase awareness of gender stereotypes and LGBTQ+ people with pupils. Parents responded positively to the information, and the way it was shared. Using Jigsaw to teach PSHE has proved very effective at celebrating diversity and drawing discussion on gender stereotyping and gender identity, and a specific transgender lesson was delivered to Years 3-6 to great effect. The school's inclusion day saw each year group wear a different colour to form a rainbow.

INSPECTIONS

Ofsted

Ofsted's 🖉 **Education inspection framework** (2021) states that in judging personal development, inspectors will look at how schools approach 'promoting equality of opportunity so that all pupils can thrive together, understanding that difference is a positive, not a negative, and that individual characteristics make people unique' (for more information, see the Personal Development section of the Ofsted Education inspection framework). They will also look at how schools create 'an inclusive environment that meets the needs of all pupils, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation' (🖉 **Ofsted School inspection handbook**, paragraph 243).

Sources of evidence that can be looked at as part of the personal development judgment include: 'how curriculum subjects such as citizenship, RE, and other areas such as personal, social, health and economic education, and relationships and sex education, contribute to pupils' personal development' and 'pupils' understanding of the protected characteristics and how equality and diversity are promoted' (Ofsted School inspection handbook, paragraph 255).

They also state that schools must provide 'records and analysis of bullying, discriminatory and prejudiced behaviour, either directly or indirectly, including racist, sexist, disability and homophobic/biphobic/transphobic bullying, use of derogatory language and racist incidents' by 8am on the day of inspection (Ofsted School Inspection Handbook, paragraph 78).

Estyn

Estyn's new 🖉 **inspection arrangements** for maintained schools and PRUs ask inspectors to consider how well an education provider:

'develops their curriculum to fully reflect the nature of their context, including designing learning activities that reflect the cultural, linguistic and diverse nature of Wales and the wider world, including how the provider plans for teaching pupils about the history and experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and LGBT+ people' (3.1, Guidance for inspectors: What we inspect).

They will also evaluate the school or PRU's provision for personal and social education, including relationships and sexuality education, and to what extent learners feel 'safe and secure and free from physical and verbal abuse and that they are respected and treated fairly' (2.1, Guidance for inspectors: What we inspect).

Estyn's thematic report '🖉 **Celebrating Diversity and Promoting Inclusion**' highlights examples of best practice in promoting LGBT inclusion across schools and colleges. In the report, Estyn notes that:

'In schools and colleges with a strong culture of inclusion, LGBT learners thrive. In these cases, they feel as confident as their peers to express their feelings and beliefs. They enjoy a strong sense of wellbeing and play a full part in the life of the school or college' (p9, Celebrating Diversity and Promoting Inclusion).

The report recommends that schools and colleges:

- Review their curriculum and individual course content to consider how well the teaching of diversity and inclusion, including LGBT issues, is integrated into learning experiences (R1)

- Ensure that instances of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying are recorded and that trends are identified and acted upon (R2)

- Ensure that all staff engage in regular training in addressing discrimination and promoting diversity, including issues around LGBT people (R3)

Education Scotland

Within Education Scotland's '🖊 **How Good Is Our School?**' handbook, schools are encouraged to consider the extent to which diversity is celebrated, and how effectively their curriculum is designed to promote equality and diversity and eliminate discrimination (3.1, How Good is Our School?).

Inspectors will often use the Quality Indicators from How Good Is Our School? as a guideline to support their evaluations and inspections. Within the standard full school inspections, the Quality Indicator 3.1 on equality and inclusion is one of only four to be evaluated on a six-point grading scale.

The LGBTI Inclusive Education Working Group's 🖊 **33 recommendations** included recommendations for Education Scotland's inspections. These include recommendations around training for inspectors, development of LGBTI-specific prompt questions for use during inspections, and evaluative approaches towards LGBTI-inclusion (Recommendations 30 to 32, LGBTI Inclusive Education Working Group: report to the Scottish Ministers).

ISI

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) inspect the school's adherence to the Independent School standards (🖊 **The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014**).

Of particular relevance to LGBTQ+ inclusion are the requirements that:

- personal, social, health and economic education 'encourages respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act' (Part 1, 2dii)

- schools 'encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the 2010 Act' and encourage pupils to 'accept responsibility for their behaviour' (Part 2, 5b iii and vi)

- 'bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy' (Part 3, 10)

Inspectors look for evidence of 'the effective promotion of positive behaviour within a wider culture of welfare that has regard to identifying and responding to individuals' needs and views' and, where relevant, at 'the role of boarding in personal development' (🖊 **ISI Inspection Framework** (2019), p13-14).

TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

1

UNDERSTAND YOUR CONTEXT

Take the time to reflect on your school context. What do you already do well in relation to LGBTQ+ inclusion and what could you do better? Are your policies as inclusive as they could be? What do other staff members, governors, the children and their families think about your LGBTQ+ inclusive approach? What are children's experiences of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying and are there any specific areas for you to address? Is the development of your LGBTQ+ inclusive approach included in your school development plan?

2

EXPLAIN LANGUAGE

Encourage staff to explain to children why it's important to use language in its proper context and use child-friendly explanations of what terms such as 'gay', 'bi' and 'trans' actually mean.

3

INCLUDE DIFFERENT FAMILIES

Recognise the difference and diversity of family life by displaying Stonewall's Different Families posters around the school, including different families in the school curriculum, and using storybooks which feature different families.

4

ENCOURAGE PUPILS TO BE THEMSELVES

By actively celebrating difference and diversity, you can challenge stereotypes and make clear to pupils that it's important that they're able to be themselves.

5

LEAD FROM THE TOP

This work doesn't succeed if it's just the responsibility of one individual. Staff doing this work need to know this is a priority of the school leadership. School leaders should also make sure their staff have the training and support they need to feel confident doing this work.

6

SUPPORT TRANSITION TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

You can prepare your pupils for entering secondary school by making clear they don't have to put up with homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying. By engaging with their feeder secondary schools, you can also ensure their policies protect difference and diversity too.

7 INVOLVE THE CHILDREN

Seek children's involvement in work around challenging homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying and celebrating difference. It gets your pupils' input and, just as importantly, their buy-in for the work.

8 ENGAGE PARENTS AND CARERS

Keep parents and carers informed about this work and encourage them to get involved. Being open about efforts to celebrate difference and diversity means it's much less likely you'll experience resistance from parents.

9 REMEMBER YOUR STATUTORY DUTIES

It's your school's responsibility to make sure all of your pupils feel safe and included at school. Remember your responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) and with regards to the Public Sector Equality Duty, your inspecting body's requirements and your nation's curriculum guidance. This alone is strong justification for doing this work, let alone your pupils' well-being and sense of self or the benefits to society in general.

10 LEARN FROM OTHERS

This guide highlights the excellent work many schools are already doing in this area. So, instead of reinventing the wheel, why not learn from the good practice of others?

Stonewall's School and College Champions programme is designed to help you do just that, creating a network of schools and colleges to share best practice with one another.

Case study: A rural primary school

A log book at this rural primary school helped bring about a shift in culture as it captured complaints made by children when they were called gay. They no longer tolerated insults and expected their complaints to be heard and acted upon. But when it became apparent that pupils thought that it meant the word 'gay' was banned completely, school leaders realised that work needed to be done to explain the diversity of family relationships to pupils.

CASE STUDIES

Case study: Challenging gender stereotypes

This Methodist primary school bolstered its commitment to LGBT inclusion by removing gendered behaviours, like asking children to line up in 'boys' and 'girls' queues or stipulating gender specific school uniform items, and building new, unisex toilets. New books, Stonewall lesson plans, assemblies and a 'Diversity Week' which looked at challenging stereotypes, were supplemented by 'Be You' discussion groups and a visit from a local LGBT support group.

Case study: Celebrating differences

Pupils at this junior school, discussed why people's differences should be accepted after their teacher had read them You Are Special and And Tango Makes Three. Each year, they have a lesson on what makes the perfect family, the out take from which is always 'no family is perfect, but mine is perfect for me.' Stereotypes were broken down in various ways, such as encouraging boys to knit and girls to do judo. And when one staff member had civil partnership with their partner, the school children made a celebratory card, signed by all the pupils.

Case study: Tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language

At one primary school with over 700 pupils, staff and PSHE lessons are focused on challenging pupils on the hurtful and negative use of the word 'gay', and on any instances of homophobia. Using Stonewall's Different Families, Same Love posters led to breakthroughs in understanding of the diversity of family life as the resource material wasn't only concerned with sexuality. Stonewall's resources have been incorporated into the PSHE&C curriculum. The work has been led by SLT during assemblies, making it both high status and highly effective. Pupils were prepared for leaving for secondary school by looking at stereotyping and being shown how they could challenge homophobic bullying if they saw or experienced it.

Case study: Inclusive books

Books played a big part in diversity work at this school. Books reflecting same-sex relationships were brought into the classroom and, alongside Different Families Same Love material, were used to start discussions about their own families. Year Fives then looked at books from the 1960s and 1970s and were encouraged to discuss how families were portrayed then compared to those from the 1990s. A local LGBT charity ran workshops with Year 6 pupils on same-sex relationships and shifted perceptions quite dramatically. The school has been commended by inspectors for 'gaining recognition for its pioneering work in tackling homophobia.

Case study: Trans inclusion policies

This primary school has written and developed a practical guide for other primary schools who are supporting pupils who transition to their preferred gender in school. The practical guide, made available on the school's website, recommends that schools work closely with parents and offer choices throughout the individual's social transition and that pupils lead the way (including deciding when to use a new name and using the toilets they felt most comfortable with).

The guide advises that schools should identify adults that the pupil feels most comfortable speaking to and ensure that parents can contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team whenever they need to. Feedback on the guidance has highlighted that successful transition happen when Headteachers lead from the front and the child is at the centre of the process feeling that school is on their side and is a safe space to be.

Schools wishing to be in contact with any best practice schools should contact **education@stonewall.org.uk**

WORKING WITH STONEWALL

Stonewall's **School & College Champions programme** is a network of primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and settings across the country working together and with Stonewall to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and to work in a more LGBTQ+-inclusive way. Find out more about membership here. We have a range of **e-learning courses** available for schools, colleges and Children and Young People's Services. If you have any questions or would like to know more, please visit our website. Can't find what you're looking for? Drop us an email at **education@stonewall.org.uk**

Stonewall's **Children and Young People's Services Champions programme** supports local authority Children and Young People's Services and Public Health, as well as children and young people's organisations, to put LGBT inclusion at the heart of their work. For more information visit **www.stonewall.org.uk/children-and-young-peoples-services-champions-programme** or email **cyps@stonewall.org.uk**.

RESOURCES

Different families, same love - posters, stickers and postcards

Families come in all different shapes and sizes, from the conventional nuclear family to single parents, adoptive parents and children being raised by grandparents.

Around 20,000 young people in Britain are growing up with same-sex parents and many children have lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans parents or family. Our Different Families, Same Love materials are an excellent starting point to celebrate different families, and to talk with pupils about how every family is special and unique.

Creating an LGBTQ+-inclusive primary curriculum

Creating an LGBTQ+-inclusive primary curriculum is full of ideas to help you embed LGBTQ+ inclusion within your curriculum.

An introduction to supporting LGBTQ+ children and young people

This guide provides an overview of some of the key ways school and college staff can support LGBTQ+ children and young people and create an LGBTQ+ inclusive learning environment.
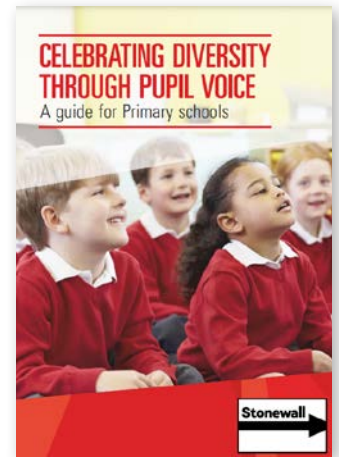
Celebrating diversity through pupil voice

Celebrating diversity through pupil voice is packed full of ideas to help you get your learners involved in leading work to celebrate difference in your school.
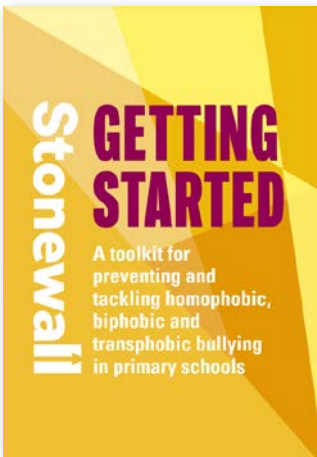
Getting started toolkit: primary

This toolkit sets out five key steps for preventing and tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and language in primary schools. It includes many of the practical resources that schools need to begin their work on LGBTQ+ inclusion, including school surveys, scripts and a pupil-friendly anti-bullying policy template.

LGBTQ+ inclusive books for children and young people

Stonewall's book list for schools, colleges, parents, and carers is full of hand-selected a wide range of LGBTQ+ inclusive books for children and young people to enjoy. Since we first released our book lists, there has been enormous growth in LGBTQ+ inclusive children's and young adult literature. We regularly review new books and update the list at least once a year, so it's good to check back on every now and then.
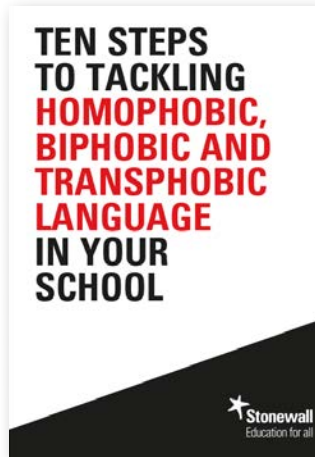
Ten steps to tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language in your school

This guide outlines 10 clear steps that will help staff to address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and includes definitions and examples of hurtful language.
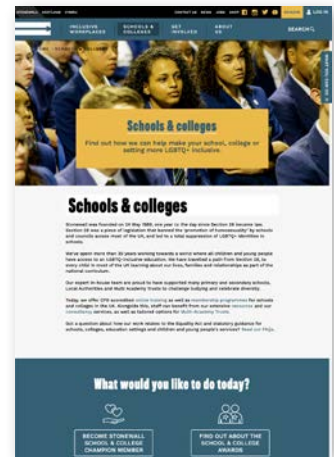
Lesson packs, posters and much more besides

You'll find a wide range of primary-specific lesson packs, assembly resources and posters on our website. We release a number of new resources each year, so our website is worth bookmarking!

All of our education resources can be found on the Stonewall website: www.stonewall.org.uk

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource is produced by Stonewall, a UK-based charity that stands for the freedom, equity and potential of all lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace (LGBTQ+) people.

At Stonewall, we imagine a world where LGBTQ+ people everywhere can live our lives to the full. Founded in London in 1989, we now work in each nation of the UK and have established partnerships across the globe. Over the last three decades, we have created transformative change in the lives of LGBTQ+ people in the UK, helping win equal rights around marriage, having children and inclusive education. Our campaigns drive positive change for our communities, and our sustained change and empowerment programmes ensure that LGBTQ+ people can thrive throughout our lives. We make sure that the world hears and learns from our communities, and our work is grounded in evidence and expertise. To find out more about our work, visit us at www.stonewall.org.uk

Stonewall is proud to provide information, support and guidance on LGBTQ+ inclusion; working towards a world where we're all free to be. This does not constitute legal advice, and is not intended to be a substitute for legal counsel on any subject matter.

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