

# **CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2011**

## **Anti-Bullying Report Progress Review**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Scrutiny Committee about the Anti-Bullying Strategy's response to recommendations made by the committee last February. (Letter received 02.03.2010) The report provides information about how committee recommendations have been addressed and other key areas of work that have been undertaken over the last year.

The Anti-Bullying Strategy is a collaboration of multi-agency partners which is led by the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator.

1. Update on Performance	Page 2
2. Supporting schools to gather data	Page 2
3. Effective work with multi-agency partners	Page 2
4. Safer Schools Partnerships	Page 2
5. Further development of links with Thames Valley Police	Page 3
6. Issues raised by Thames Valley Police	Page 3
7. Future of Safer Schools Partnerships	Page 4
8. Support for those who bully	Page 4
9. Work with schools to tackle bullying	Page 4
10. Recognising existing pressures on school staff	Page 5
11. Anti-Bullying Week 2010	Page 5
12. Links with schools councils	Page 6
13. Links with Governing Bodies	Page 6
14. Other issues raised by the Committee	Page 6
15. Supporting parents and carers	Page 7
16. Bullying and well-being of teachers	Page 7
17. Cyberbullying	Page 7
18. Other key areas of work	Page 8
19. Junior Citizen programme	Page 8
20. Restorative Approaches	Page 8
21. Support for victims of bullying	Page 8
22. Homophobic Bullying	Page 9
23. Training and ongoing support	Page 9
24. Next steps	Page 9

## 1. Update on Performance

- Detailed performance data was provided to the Committee in Feb 2010. Further details of **Tellus 4** Ofsted data have since become available and due to changes in questions it is difficult to make direct comparisons to previous performance. However:
- **29.8%** of children and young people in Oxfordshire completing the survey reported being bullied inside or outside of school in the last year. (Compared to **28.8%** of respondents across England, and **30.2%** across the South East).
- In Oxfordshire the reported incidence of bullying fell by **28.2%** in comparison to a **21.3%** fall across the country.
- Data suggests that bullying experienced by Oxfordshire young people (1238 young people from 5 secondary and 9 primary schools participated) is in line with national data and statistical neighbours.
- Significant improvement in pupil perception of schools' ability to tackle bullying is evidenced by the fact that **29%** of young people feel their school deals with bullying badly or not very well (compared to **48%** the previous year). Although this provides encouraging signs of the success of the strategy, bullying is still at a level where tackling it needs to remain a priority.

## 2. Supporting Schools to gather data

- Ofsted Tellus 5 and the local Children and Young Person Plan surveys have been cancelled. Legislation placing a duty on schools to record serious and persistent bullying which was due to become law in September 2010 was withdrawn.
- As a result, the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator has been working with the ICT SIMS support team to develop a system to make it easier for schools to record both behaviour incidents and bullying, including whether these are motivated by prejudice. This will support schools to meet duties under the new Equality Act and priorities identified by the new government "to take a strong stand against bullying, especially racist, homophobic and other prejudice-based bullying" and to respond to the emphasis on behaviour, including bullying, which will be included in Ofsted inspections. It will also allow schools to analyse patterns and identify issues that need to be tackled. Schools have been involved in the development of this system and a recently updated version is about to be circulated to pilot schools.(Feb. 2011)
- The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator has worked with partners across the Children Young People and Families Directorate (CYPF) to provide guidance for schools on "Tackling Harassment, Hate Crime and Bullying", relating to prejudice motivated incidents and the need to record this information. This is due to be circulated to pilot schools in February 2011 in order to involve them in finalising the guidance.

## 3. Effective joint working with Multi-Agency Partners

### 4. Safer Schools Partnerships

The committee recommended that the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator should be involved in the establishment and development of Safer Schools Partnerships.

- Thames Valley Police (TVP) appointed a Safer Schools Partnership Co-ordinator for Oxfordshire who took up post in May 2010.

## CH7

- A steering group to develop Safer Schools Partnerships, including the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator, was established in September 2010 and meetings were held on 17.09.10, 7.10.10, 25.11.10 & 20.01.11

Benefits include:

- Providing the opportunity to promote and prioritise bullying as an issue to be dealt with by Safer Schools Partnership Officers. (SSPO's). Issues raised by the group have resulted in actions been taken by the SSP team, e.g. concerns raised about bullying on buses to and from school raised in the steering group on 17.09.10 resulted in SSPO's sharing and developing best practice for police supporting schools in tackling this issue on 1.10.10.
- Improved consistency within the SSP team due to the role of the SSP Co-ordinator and input from the steering group.
- Improved communication with the CYPF Directorate about relevant issues and improved support for schools e.g. Cyberbullying: The SSP team have cascaded CEOP (Child Online Exploitation and online Protection Centre) internally, attended relevant training provided by CYPF and we are working in partnership to ensure that schools have correct advice about preserving evidence when incidents take place.

### **5. Further development of links with Thames Valley Police including training** (recommended by the Committee)

- There was already an established process of involving SSPO's in CYPF training that was relevant to their role e.g. They attended training provided on cyberbullying (2009 & 2010) and homophobia (03.10).
- Establishment of the steering group has provided an opportunity to review and make available further relevant training e.g. SSPO's attended local Anti-Bullying Week briefings in October 2010. Relevant training is also to be provided as part of the SSPO's induction programme in March 2011.
- Regular liaison between the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator and the SSP Co-ordinator means that any relevant issues can be dealt with when they arise including effective and efficient signposting to appropriate services.

### **6. Issues raised by Thames Valley Police – and highlighted by the Committee**

- The SSP steering group has provided a forum for discussion about minimum standards for data sharing, as recommended by the committee. This issue was raised as there was an expectation that schools would be required by law to record all incidents of bullying in September 2010 and TVP wanted to improve their own systems for recording bullying, including tracking serial bullying. Due to the change of government, the duty to record did not go ahead so this remains an item for discussion and agreement in line with current developments in supporting schools to collect data. The steering group is also reviewing what data it might be useful to share in order to improve targeting of support to schools. This would be covered by the Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership information sharing protocol.

## **7. Future of Safer Schools Partnerships**

- Recently announced restructuring of Thames Valley Police will result in the loss of the SSP Co-ordinator role and a considerable reduction in SSPO's in schools across the county. The steering group will provide a forum for ensuring that support for schools is available and accessed in a fair and efficient way. It will also monitor the impact of the reduction in the service so that should any future funding become available it would be in a position to recommend how best it should be spent.

## **8. Support for those who bully**

- Guidance (as recommended by the Committee) has been circulated to schools to signpost support that other agencies can provide to tackle the underlying problems of children who bully and advise schools about the effectiveness of sanctions. This will be reviewed following the proposed restructuring of Children's Services.
- The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme has proved to be particularly effective in helping children to develop the skills associated with empathy which drives them to refrain from hurting others and to challenge those that do so. (Primary SEAL Pilot, Hallam et al 2006) Oxfordshire has a well developed SEAL programme provided by partners that supports the Anti-Bullying Strategy. The Healthy Schools Team and the Behaviour Support Service are key partners in this work which is also supported by the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator.
- A range of training, as part of the SEAL programme, has been provided to support schools in working with pupils including those who bully others, for example; Anti-Bullying SEAL (03.10) Peaceful Playtimes (05.10) Whole School Behaviour Policy (11.10) and Peaceful Problem Solving (02.11) and Supporting Vulnerable Children (03.11) This training helps schools to develop good anti-bullying practice and a school ethos where bullying is less likely.
- The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator has organised training on dealing with girls' bullying and friendship issues (03.11) which will provide direct input to help schools and other settings develop effective ways of challenging bullying. Pilot work in schools has also been supported by the Co-ordinator. This work will be evaluated to learn whether it has been effective and should be further developed.
- As part of the Success Project which targets support to vulnerable children, the On Course Project offers alternative education provision to schools for young people at risk of exclusion. Of 84 students worked with in the academic year 2009/10 12% had either received a period of exclusion for bullying or had been referred because of bullying and 14% had been involved in abusive behaviour towards peers which put them at risk of exclusion. The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator has provided Anti-Bullying sessions as part of the programme and is working with the project to develop course materials on bullying. The On Course team support reintegration into school and have evidence of pupils' behaviour significantly improving.

## **9. Work with schools to tackle bullying**

## 10. Recognising pressures on school staff and communication

- The programme of work developed by the strategy has tried to take into account existing pressures on school staff time as recommended by the committee. The Co-ordinator has therefore worked largely through existing networks both to provide training and to disseminate information. E.g. Anti-Bullying and Restorative Approaches workshops were provided via the Special Needs Co-ordinator Conference (07.10) and an input on recording bullying was provided to the Behaviour and SEAL Secondary Strategic leads at a network meeting (07.10). An Anti-Bullying workshop was also provided at the ICT conference (11.10).
- The Co-ordinator has worked jointly with Healthy Schools to develop a range of Anti-Bullying curriculum materials that support existing objectives that schools already have to meet as part of the SEAL programme. These were made available on a disc as part of training offered as well as providing hard copies of some materials.
- Schools have received communication about Anti-Bullying from a variety of sources including Schools News and the SEAL network. Hard copies of guidance and resources are also available to schools on request. The Co-ordinator is currently writing an Anti-Bullying Tool Kit which will draw together a variety of guidance that has been sent to schools and aims to be both practical and succinct.
- Evaluations of training courses provided have been consistently high and there has been some evidence provided by schools of how materials and resources have been used. e.g. a number of schools have reported on work during Anti-Bullying week using materials provided (Banbury School, Didcot Girls, Gillotts School, Freeland Primary, Northbourne primary, St. Francis Primary, Iffley Mead etc.).

## 11. Anti-Bullying Week 2010

- In order to reduce the burden on schools in terms of Anti-Bullying Week, a series of 4 local twilight briefing sessions across the county were provided by the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator and Healthy Schools Team during October. This provided schools with a variety of information, guidance and resources in advance of Anti-Bullying Week. Free copies of DVD's, lessons, books and guidance were provided to schools that attended.
- The Anti-Bullying Web Pages were extensively developed to provide a wide range of downloadable resources for schools with over 90 items being posted for Anti-Bullying Week. This included lesson plans, film clips and guidance for teachers.
- An Anti-Bullying Student Voice competition was sponsored by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board and the winners indicated the high standard of student led Anti-Bullying Work that is going on in schools. These included a film and rap, stop motion animation entries, reports from school councils on their work, a song and other imaginative work. The winning entries will be posted on the Anti-Bullying web pages alongside other best practice examples to help school learn from each other about what works well to tackle bullying.

## **12. Links with school councils and involving young people**

The committee recommended links with school councils should be developed

- A student Anti-Bullying checklist has been developed to help schools involve young people in Anti-Bullying Work. The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator has worked with a number of primary and secondary schools councils to help them develop their anti-bullying work.
- Healthy Schools promote the work of School Councils, including Anti-Bullying work where they work directly with schools to develop their anti-bullying policies. (97% of schools are either validated or working towards Healthy Schools Status, which requires an up to date Anti-Bullying Policy).
- Healthy Schools' Student Voice conference in November 2010 was attended by over 200 young people. The focus of the conference was pupil learning and included input on Cybersafety and pupil involvement in SEAL.
- Work with School Councils will continue to be a priority for the strategy and is promoted in the Governors' Anti-Bullying Safeguarding return.
- Funding for the Young People's Advisory Group has now ceased, so consulting young people about future priorities for the Anti-Bullying strategy will be achieved through partnership work and consultation of representative youth groups as Children's Voice remains a key priority.

## **13. Links with Governing Bodies**

The Committee recommended that governing bodies should be encouraged to actively monitor bullying in schools.

- Following the committee meeting last February a letter was sent out to all Headteachers and Governors to inform them of the support available to schools from the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator.
- The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator has liaised with Governor Services and the Safeguarding Education Team to develop an Anti-Bullying appendix for inclusion in the Annual Governors' Safeguarding Return which is to be included from this year. This will challenge governors to effectively monitor anti-bullying policy and practice and be aware of available resources and support. It will also provide invaluable data to help shape the support that is offered to schools in the future.
- Relevant training has been circulated to governors and the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator has designed specific Anti-Bullying training for governors which has recently been made available.
- An article on bullying to update Governors about recent developments is due to be published later this year.
- Governor Services web pages have linked to Anti-Bullying web pages and the Co-ordinator is to help review Anti-Bullying content of Safeguarding training for governors.
- The current system for parental complaints involves parents writing to the Chair of Governors if they are not satisfied with how bullying has been dealt with by the school. The Co-ordinator supports this process by providing advice to schools and governors and by offering to mediate between parents and schools in difficult cases.

## **14. Other issues raised by the Committee**

## **15. Supporting Parents/Carers**

- The committee recommended that a leaflet for parents should be developed. Guidance has been provided to schools so that they can develop their own leaflets for parents that include information on promoting resilience as well as information about how their school deals with bullying. Parents were consulted about the content of this guidance. Examples of parent leaflets have been made available to schools in the good practice section of the Anti-Bullying Web Pages. An electronic copy of the Parent Line Plus leaflet “What can I do if my child is being bullied” is also available to download and this had previously been sent and promoted to schools as it is available free to all parents.
- A parent information leaflet on cyberbullying is being developed as part of the Junior Citizen Programme which will be made available to all schools in an electronic format so that it can be printed off for parents or placed on school websites. Parents/Carers were consulted about the content of the scenario and will be involved in the development of the leaflet.
- Anti-Bullying Training and resources have been provided for CYPF parenting workers including group workers and those based in schools (11.10). The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator has developed a family SEAL Anti-Bullying session for parents and children including the development of resilience to bullying. The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator is working with Home Schools Community Links workers so that this session can be used for work with parents/carers. Training has also been provided for Parent Partnership and the Family Information Service. Evaluations of training received have been consistently high.

## **16. Bullying and well-being of teachers and school staff**

- The Anti-Bullying Strategy recognises the importance of challenging the bullying of teachers (as recommended by the Committee) and ensuring the well-being and safety of staff. Physical and verbal abuse of school staff is now being monitored by the Inclusive Practice Development Officer. Schools with significant incidents are supported to put mitigation in place in order to resolve the situation. Restorative intervention is one of the methods considered for repairing the harm caused by these incidents and cases can be referred to the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator.
- The County Council Staff Care Service provides a range of support to staff for work based and/ or personal problems including bullying. This support includes individual counselling and mediation and is available to all County Council staff including teachers. The possibility of partnership work with the service is being investigated.
- The Cyberbullying of school staff has been an area of growing concern and the Cybersafety conference this year will therefore provide staff with guidelines on how to prevent and respond to cyberbullying by pupils.

## **17. Cyberbullying**

- As recommended by the Committee, Cyberbullying has remained a priority for the strategy. Direct support to individual schools has been provided by the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator, HOST, ICT and Thames Valley Police.

## CH7

- The conference, co-ordinated by Healthy Schools, “Safeguarding Pupils and Staff in a Digital World” is due to take place 28.02.11.

### **18. Other key areas of work**

#### **19. Junior Citizen/Cyberbullying in primary schools**

- Junior Citizen is a free child safety education programme aimed at Year 6 which aims to teach children about safety by exposing them to risk in a strictly controlled environment. It is co-ordinated by the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and well used by primary schools. Last year **174** out of **233** Oxfordshire primary schools attended the programme (**75%**).
- The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator has worked with the Junior Citizen Co-ordinator to help develop a “Cyberbullying Scenario”. Supporting materials for teachers and an information leaflet for parents is being developed. Healthy Schools Team and the Parent Involvement Worker have also supported this work. The scenario was launched on January 17<sup>th</sup> 2011 and has already been experienced by **611** children from **22** primary schools. Last year **4532** children from **174** schools visited the programme which means that the majority of Year 6 children in Oxfordshire schools will have a greater awareness of cyberbullying.
- This initiative is also supported by the Safer Schools Partnership who provide officers to help with the programme and the SSP Co-ordinator has helped promote the programme with schools.

#### **20. Restorative Approaches**

- Oxfordshire Restorative Approaches Strategic Group are committed to developing Restorative Practice across the county to tackle crime, conflict and bullying. Restorative practice has proved successful in reducing re-offending, repairing relationships and resolving conflict.
- The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator has worked with other partners, particularly the Youth Offending Service, to develop Restorative Approaches in schools. A pilot project is being developed at St. Birinus School in Didcot. Eight senior members of staff have received full restorative training and whole school inset training has also been provided. Ongoing consultation and training is being provided to support the school to develop effective ways of managing conflict and bullying. The pilot is being evaluated to measure effectiveness.
- The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator is a restorative trainer and is working jointly with the Senior Practitioner (Restorative Justice) from the Youth Offending Service to develop and deliver a programme of restorative training to schools and settings. Direct support to schools to resolve specific incidents is also provided.
- Thames Valley Police SSP Officers also offer schools support with running restorative meetings, including when bullying has taken place.

#### **21. Support for Victims of Bullying**

- As well as prioritising work to tackle those who bully others, a key priority for the strategy is to support those who are victims of bullying. The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator is a member of the SAFE project consortium group which works to support young people who have been severely affected by crime or



## CH7

bullying by providing a programme of up to 6 sessions of individual support based on Protective Behaviours. Of **96** young people referred to the project in 2010 **55 (57%)** were referred due to bullying or assault/abusive behaviour by peers.

- The project (originally a Home Office pilot as part of the Youth Crime Action Plan) produced a book and resource pack to help those working with young people support them more effectively. The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator has jointly run training with the Youth Offending Service and since Dec 2009 more than 60 practitioners have received training to help them support young people more effectively. A further training course for staff in schools and youth settings is being offered during March 2011. Free copies of the book and resource pack will be provided.
- PCAMHS (Primary Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) provides a service for children and young people under the age of 18 to help with behavioural, emotional and mental health issues. PCAMHS report that they work with a significant number of young people who are bullied. The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator has provided training for PCAMHS on dealing with bullying and also provided consultation on individual cases.

### **22. Homophobic Bullying**

- Work to support schools to tackle homophobic bullying has continued as part of the national "Education Champions" programme and further training and resources have been provided. The focus this coming year is to support primary schools to promote diversity and inclusion of "Different Families", training and resources are to be provided at the SEAL training day on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

### **23. Training & Ongoing Support from the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator**

- As will be evident throughout this report the provision of training remains a priority for the strategy. As well as the training referred to elsewhere, Anti-Bullying inset training is available for both schools and settings. A multi-agency Anti-Bullying training day is provided as part of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board specialist safeguarding training. This was piloted (11.10) and is due to be run again in March.
- Support is offered to both schools and youth settings to review and develop anti-bullying policy and practice and to develop innovative work. Advice and support is also available to deal with specific incidents, including dealing with concerns from parents.

### **24. Next Steps**

- The Scrutiny Committee recommendations have helped to shape the current work plan and priorities. The current Anti-Bullying Strategy is due to be refreshed in August 2011 and future developments will depend on the outcome of the proposed restructuring of Children's Services.
- The proposed restructure, in relation to early intervention "hubs" will require support to develop their anti-bullying practice. The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator is engaged in supporting the workforce development strategy to meet these requirements.

CH7

- Further work will focus on supporting schools to measure impact of strategies and approaches in relation to anti-bullying.

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