



Department  
for Education

# **Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools**

**Review of published policies and  
information**

**Research report**

**October 2018**

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**Social Science in Government**

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# Executive summary

## Chapter One: Introduction

### Context

A priority set out by the Green Paper, ‘Transforming children and young people’s mental health provision’ is to ensure schools are adequately supported to build whole school environments and to develop approaches within which pupils can achieve their full potential.<sup>1</sup> Supporting schools to have a clear offer to promote pupils’ mental health and wellbeing, and to protect them from bullying, are therefore priorities for the Department for Education (DfE).

There are a range of duties to ensure schools take positive action to establish environments where all pupils are supported to engage fully. These duties encourage schools to promote a range of whole-school approaches and activities to develop respectful school communities and to support mental health and wellbeing.

DfE commissioned this study to further understanding of the extent the current content of schools’ published policies and other information demonstrates relevant approaches and activities. This evidence will be used to inform decisions about how schools can best be supported to use existing requirements to strengthen their work in these areas and better meet their statutory duties.

The aim of this project is to provide qualitative analysis of the content of the published policies and information from a sample of schools, to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent are the different policies and types of information available on schools’ websites?
2. To what extent do schools’ published policies and information, individually and collectively, describe the school’s approach to developing a respectful school community<sup>2</sup>?
  - a. To what extent are these activities set within a whole school approach?
  - b. Is there any variation in how and the extent to which policies describe the approach by features of the school e.g. phase, type, region etc.

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<sup>1</sup> DH and DfE (2017) [Transforming children and young people’s mental health provision: a green paper](#)

<sup>2</sup> By respectful school community, it is meant that schools set clear expectations of acceptable behaviour, alongside a well-communicated set of shared values for all at the school which have tolerance and respect at their core.

3. To what extent do schools' published policies and information, individually and collectively, describe the school's approach to promoting and supporting their pupils' mental health and wellbeing?
  - a. To what extent are these activities set within a whole school approach?
  - b. Is there any variation in extent policies describe the approach by features of the school – phase, type, region, etc.

## **Methodology**

Content analysis of the information and policies published on 100 school websites was conducted. The analysis included exploration of policies or information schools are required to publish, as well as exploration of other information or policies on schools' websites where there are no requirements to publish but relate to the research questions.

The sample included 45 secondary schools, 45 primary schools and 10 special schools. The sampling strategy was designed to ensure representativeness of schools with different characteristics and to limit the likelihood of biases.

The review included analysis of 11 relevant school policy areas. A set of indicators were developed to measure the extent each policy area addressed respectful school communities and mental health and wellbeing. Examples from each policy to underpin the categorisations were also recorded to ensure consistent and reliable analysis. Once all policy areas for each school had been reviewed and categorised, general reflections, areas of good practice, examples of innovation, and the overall extent the school website promoted respectful school communities and mental health and wellbeing were also recorded.

## **Limitations of the methodological approach**

This review intended to understand how schools view their statutory duties in relation to mental health and wellbeing and developing respectful school communities. This was a desk-based study only, direct contact was not made with schools to verify whether activities cited within their policies were an accurate representation of what was being implemented, or to check whether they were carrying out activities to promote mental health and wellbeing that were not referred to within their policies.

It is important for the reader to note therefore, that this study does not provide a reliable estimation of all the activities schools are doing to promote mental health and wellbeing, and the limitations set out above should be carefully considered alongside the findings from this study.



## Chapter Two: Overview of schools and availability of policies

A wide variety of schools were reviewed to ensure for a breadth of schools with different characteristics, demographic profiles, and approaches. In total 45 primary schools, 45 secondary schools and 10 special schools were sampled based on geographical region, eligibility of free school meals, urban/rural location, Ofsted rating and school type.

### Availability of policies

There are legislative requirements for schools to publish online policies or information in relation to;

- school behaviour and anti-bullying;
- SEN (a school's SEN Information Report should include Information about the school's policies for making provision for pupils with special educational needs whether or not pupils have Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans);
- equality;
- school values;
- curriculum; and
- Pupil Premium.

There are no legislative requirements to publish online policies in relation to;

- sex and relationship education;
- child protection;
- mental health;
- supporting children with medical conditions; and
- accessibility.

The table below provides a breakdown of the availability of policy documents published on primary and secondary school websites.

**Table 1: Availability of published online policies by school type**

| <b>Policy Area</b>                        | <b>Proportion of primary schools with online published policies (n=45)</b> | <b>Proportion of secondary schools with online published policies (n=45)</b> |
|---|--|--|
| School behaviour                          | 45 (100%)  | 43 (96%)   |
| Anti-bullying                             | 32 (70%)   | 37 (82%)   |
| SEN                                       | 45 (100%)  | 41 (91%)   |
| Equality                                  | 38 (84%)   | 39 (87%)   |
| Sex and relationships education           | 26 (57%)   | 24 (53%)   |
| Child protection                          | 40 (89%)   | 43 (96%)   |
| Values and ethos                          | 45 (100%)  | 45 (100%)  |
| Mental health                             | 2 (4%)   | 1 (2%)   |
| Curriculum                                | 44 (98%)   | 44 (98%)   |
| Pupil premium                             | 40 (89%)   | 43 (96%)   |
| Supporting pupils with medical conditions | 30 (68%)   | 25 (56%)   |
| Accessibility plan                        | 35 (70%)   | 25 (56%)   |

## **Chapter Three: Equality, diversity and tolerance**

### **Introduction**

There are legislative requirements, under the Equality Act 2010, that all schools publish a policy or statement on equality. Schools have a duty to have regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity between different groups and to foster good relations between those groups. The Equality Act defines mental illness as a disability providing it has long-term adverse effects on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Of the 90 primary and secondary schools reviewed, a policy or statement on equality was available for 77 (86%). This included, 38/45 (84%) primary schools and 39/45 (87%) secondary schools. Where policies were not available there was a notice on the website that they were temporarily unavailable for five schools. For eight schools however, there were no indications that a policy on equality existed.

### **Whole-school values and aims**

All schools' policies or statements on equality, that were available for review, made reference to their statutory duties under the Equality Act. However, the extent to which they promoted equality within a whole-school approach was varied. There was evidence for 31/38 (82%) primary schools and 25/39 (64%) secondary schools that their equality policies or statements were embedded within their whole-school values and aims.

There were two key ways in which schools successfully embedded their policies on equality within whole-school approaches. Firstly, schools linked their equality policy to their school values and objectives. Secondly, equality policies formed part of school improvement plans, where policy objectives aligned with school demographics. Four schools had also been awarded an Inclusion Quality Mark for excellent practice in this area.

Where equality policies were not successfully embedded within whole-school approaches, they tended to be generic, citing legislative requirements, but not how these would be implemented, or how the legislative requirements linked to their whole-school values. Seven primary schools (7/38: 18%) and 14/39 (36%) secondary schools provided generic policies. These policies tended to be either very brief (no more than one page), part of local authority wide equality policies, part of Multi-Academy Trusts' equality policies, or from a human resources perspective focussed on employment rights in relation to protected characteristics, with no reference to equalities in relation to pupils.

### **How schools promote equality, diversity, and tolerance**

There were several methods schools adopted to promote equality, diversity and tolerance. These included;

- embedding within teaching and resources;
- using key data indicators to understand the needs and characteristics of the school;
- promoting community cohesion;
- parental engagement; and
- staff training.

### **Overall extent schools' equalities approaches promoted respectful schools and mental health**

The school equality policies reviewed were substantially more likely to promote respectful school communities than mental health and wellbeing. Equality policies were focused on harassment and discrimination under the duties of the Equality Act, but very few made a link with mental health.

In the few cases where this link was made within the policies on equality, it was achieved in the following ways:

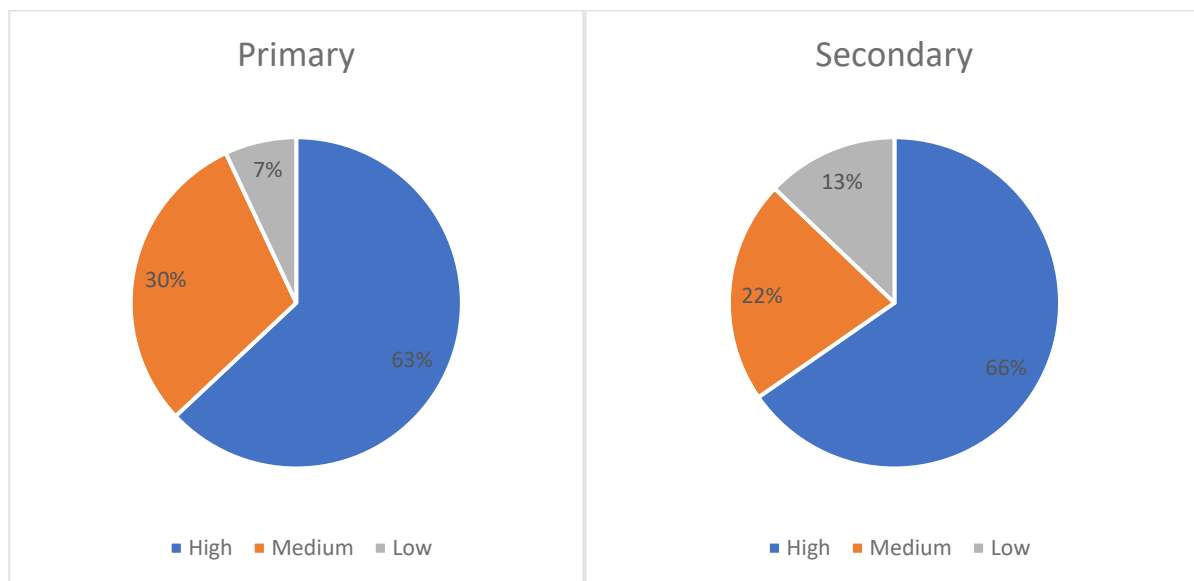
- The policies on equality were part of school improvement plans, whereby measures of wellbeing (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire) were used to monitor the progress and impact of work to promote equalities.

- Policies on equality were underpinned by an ethos to promote wellbeing and to enable pupils to understand the effects and consequences of discrimination, and to equip pupils with the skills to challenge discrimination.

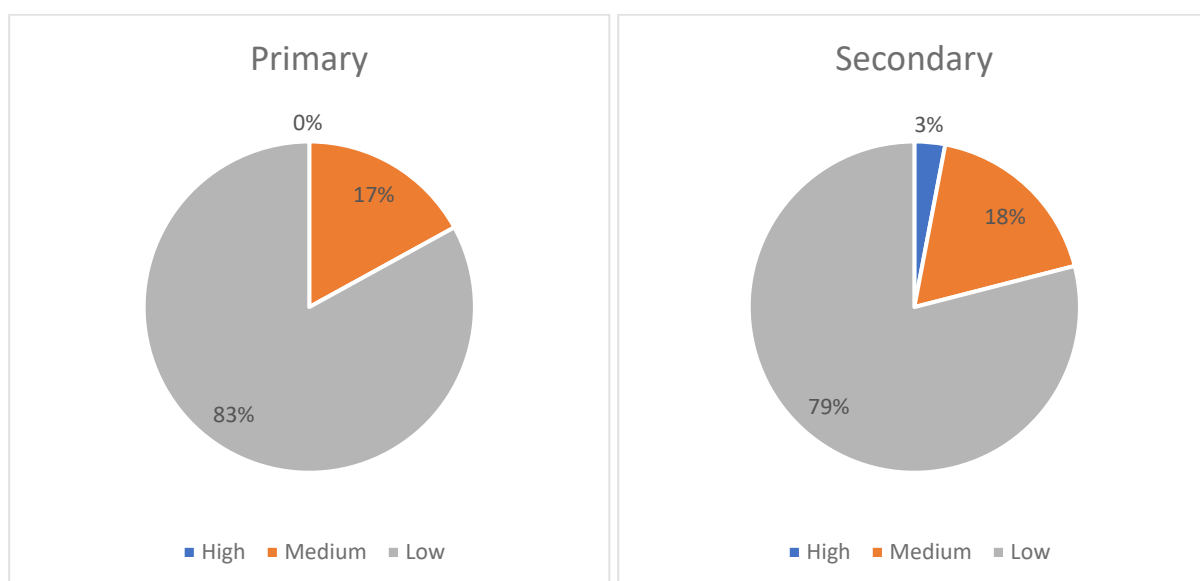
However, there were no examples of schools explicitly regarding mental illness as a disability within their policies on equality.

The pie charts below illustrate the extent the sample of primary and secondary schools promoted respectful school communities and mental health and wellbeing within their policies on equality.

**Figure 1: Pie charts to show overall extent equality policies promoted respectful school communities**



**Figure 2: Pie charts to show the overall extent equality policies promoted mental health and wellbeing**



## Chapter Four: Behaviour and anti-bullying

### Introduction

By law, all state schools must have a behaviour policy in place that includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. The proprietor of an Academy school is required to ensure that a written policy to promote good behaviour among pupils is drawn up and effectively implemented.

On almost all school websites, behaviour policies were available, including all 45 primary schools and 43/45 (96%) secondary schools. Where behaviour policies were not online, in both cases, there was a notice on the website that they were temporarily unavailable.

Anti-bullying policies were available online for 32/45 (70%) primary schools and 37/45 (82%) secondary schools. Anti-bullying policies were mostly stand-alone documents, however in a minority of schools, anti-bullying guidelines were incorporated within the behaviour policy.

### Schools' approaches to promoting positive learning behaviours

Behaviour and anti-bullying policies were the strongest in terms of being embedded within whole-school values. In all but two primary, and two secondary schools, values were clearly articulated throughout the behaviour and anti-bullying policies.

Most schools presented clear expectations of pupils' behaviour which were closely connected to their values, and all behavioural policies promoted at least some degree of positive learning behaviours. All policies also included behavioural strategies that involved rewards for positive behaviours, and forms of sanctions for negative behaviours. Most behaviour policies stated that reward and sanction strategies were implemented throughout the schools and by all staff.

Whilst all behavioural policies adopted a reward/sanction style strategy, the balance between the rewards and sanctions varied between schools. On the whole, primary schools' policies were substantially less focused on sanctions than secondary schools.

There were several different resources, online products or schemes used by schools to record, monitor and promote positive learning behaviours identified within their policies. For some schools however, their policies referred to in-house mechanisms to promote positive behaviour, such as collecting marbles in jars, traffic light systems, the use of red and yellow cards, and behaviour checklists and matrixes.

## **Whole-school behavioural philosophies**

There was evidence of whole-school philosophies that were embedded within behavioural and/or anti-bullying policies. These included;

- restorative approaches;
- nurture approaches;
- shared community approaches; and
- assertive discipline approaches.

## **Evidence informed whole-school programmes and staff training**

Evidence informed programmes, involving whole-school approaches and/or staff training were identified within the behavioural and anti-bullying policies. These were broadly aimed at establishing positive learning environments.

## **How schools prevent and respond to bullying**

Schools adopted several activities to prevent and respond to bullying that were identified within their policies. These included: circle time, anti-bullying weeks, whole-school assemblies; school awareness campaigns; external speakers; school council involvement; and pupil involvement in the development of anti-bullying policies.

Anti-bullying messages and strategies were also embedded within the curriculum. Most commonly, this was part of the PSHE and or SEAL classes. However, a small number of schools implemented messages and strategies to address bullying throughout all elements of the curriculum.

Most anti-bullying policies were focused on procedures the school would take once bullying was recognised, which mostly followed a broad pattern of support for the victim, particularly to promote their confidence and self-esteem, and sanctions for the perpetrator. However, nine secondary schools and two primary school's identified that emotional and social support would be provided to both the victim and the perpetrator.

## **Overall extent schools' behaviour and anti-bullying approaches promoted respectful schools and supported mental health**

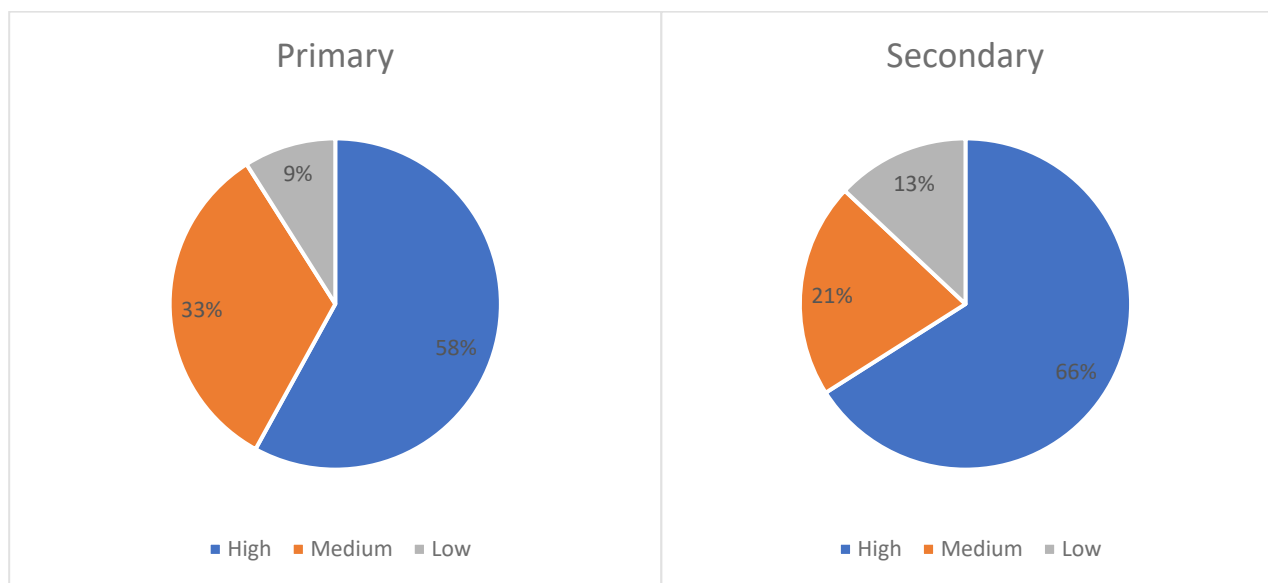
Schools behaviour policies promoted respectful school communities to a higher degree than mental health and wellbeing. Behaviour policies that were rated highly for promoting mental health and wellbeing included the following elements:

- Disruptive behaviour was considered as a possible manifestation of social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Schools focussed on work to promote self-esteem and self-discipline to address disruptive behaviour, rather than to sanction disruptive behaviour.

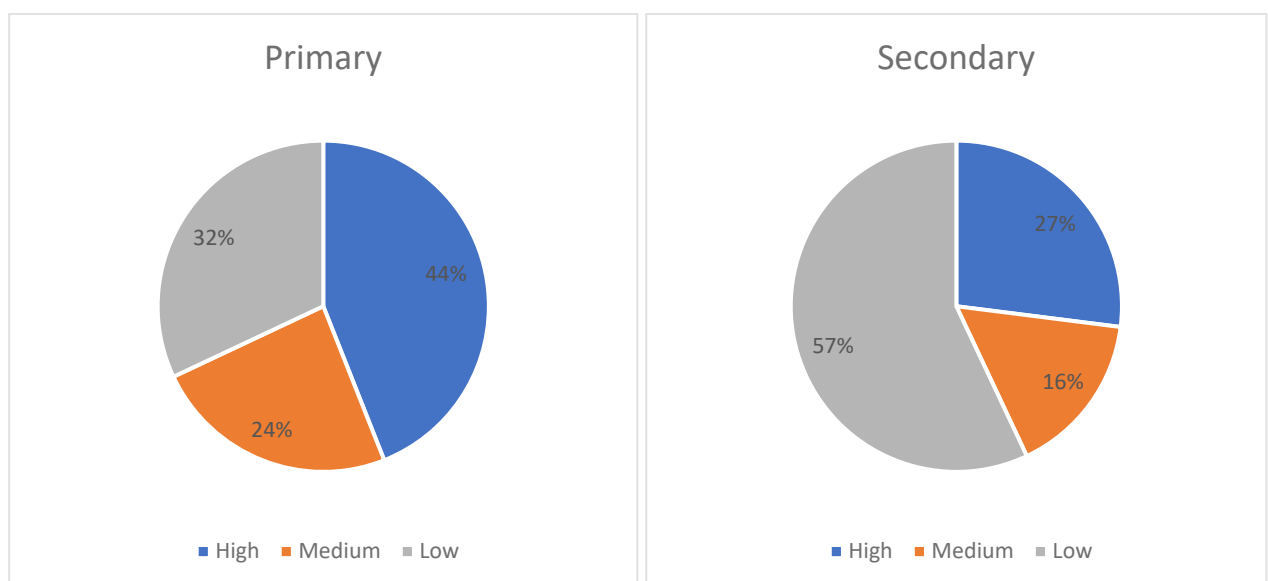
- Schools focussed on trying to understand the underlying causes of pupils' disruptive behaviour and provided one to one pastoral support to address the underlying causes of the behaviour.

Schools anti-bullying policies tended to be focused on procedures for responding to bullying, therefore they did not represent particularly high levels of promoting respectful schools or mental health and wellbeing. Those that were rated highly for promoting mental health and wellbeing focussed on building resilience, reparation and understanding of bullying behaviour, both from the perspective of the bullied and the bully as possible indicators of mental health needs.

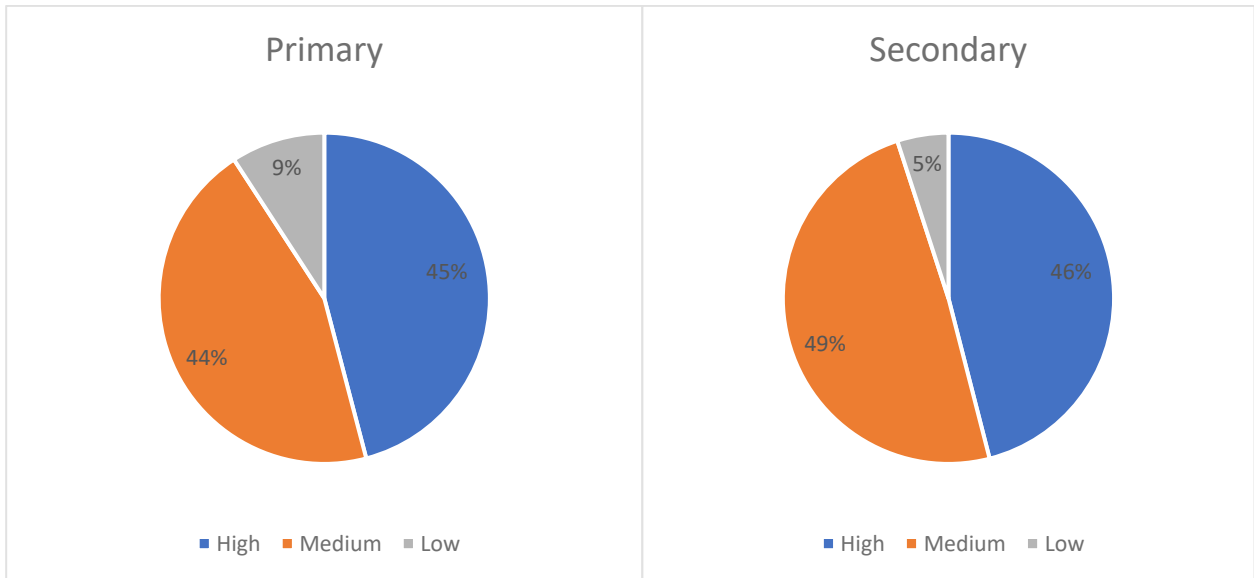
**Figure 3: Pie charts to show the overall extent behaviour policies promoted respectful school communities**



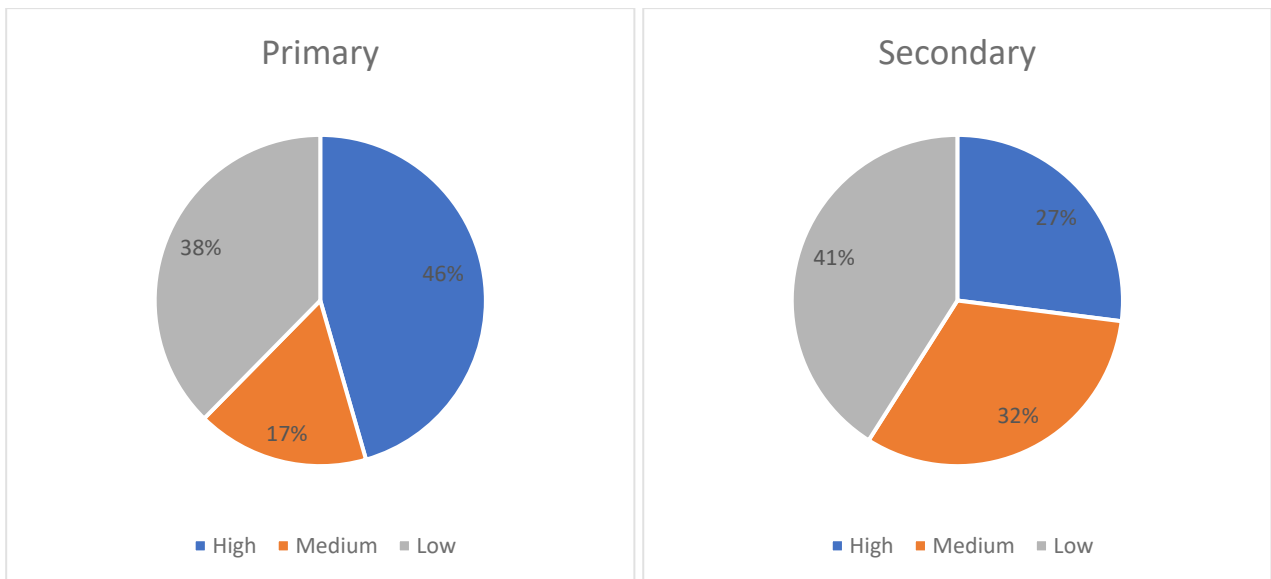
**Figure 4: Pie charts to show overall extent behaviour policies promoted mental health and wellbeing**



**Figure 5: Pie charts to show the overall extent anti-bullying policies promoted respectful school communities**



**Figure 6: Pie charts to show the overall extent anti-bullying policies promoted mental health and wellbeing**





## Chapter Five: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

### Introduction

Enshrined in law, all schools must have regard to the 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'<sup>3</sup> which provides statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities. Schools must consider how pupils with SEN can be supported to achieve the 'best possible educational and other outcomes'.

All primary schools and 91% (41/45) of secondary schools had a Special Educational Needs policy available on their websites. SEN policies were some of the lengthiest and detailed of all the policy documents. They were also all very closely linked to the code of practice and covered in detail schools' legislative duties.

### Promoting whole-school inclusion and wellbeing for pupils with SEN

Whole school inclusion for pupils with SEN was a prominent theme running through the vast majority of SEN policies in both primary and secondary schools. There was evidence within the SEN policies of whole-school approaches to SEN in 30/45 (66%) primary schools and 35/41 (86%). SEN policies in both primary and secondary schools cited a number of different activities they were doing to promote mental health and wellbeing for SEN pupils.

Accessibility is an important consideration for supporting pupils with SEN. There are legislative requirements that schools have an Accessibility Policy, and schools are required to include in their published SEN Information Report the plan prepared by the governing body or proprietor under paragraph 3 of Schedule 10 to the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan)<sup>4</sup>. For 32/45 (70%) primary and 25/45 (56%) secondary schools there was published policies or statements in relation to accessibility online, either as part of their SEN Information Report or as stand-alone policies.

### Overall extent schools' SEN policies promoted respectful schools and supported mental health

There was evidence that 31/45 (69%) primary schools and 21/41 (50%) secondary schools were promoting respectful school communities to at least some extent within their SEN policies. In relation to mental health, there was evidence that 27/45 (60%)

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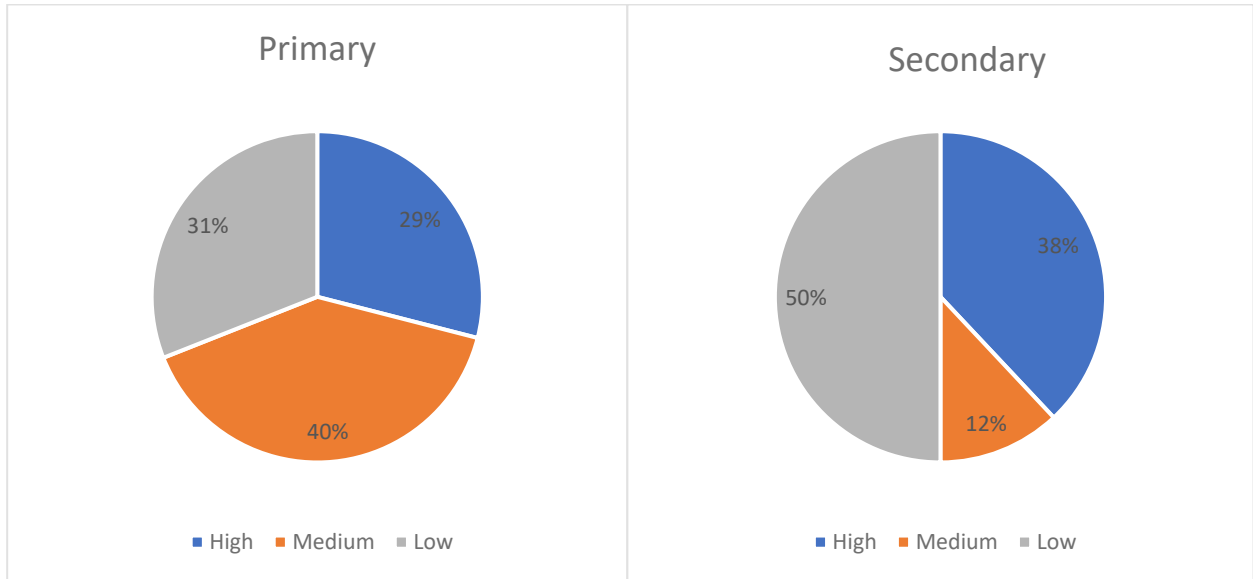
<sup>3</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/398815/SEND\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_January\\_2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

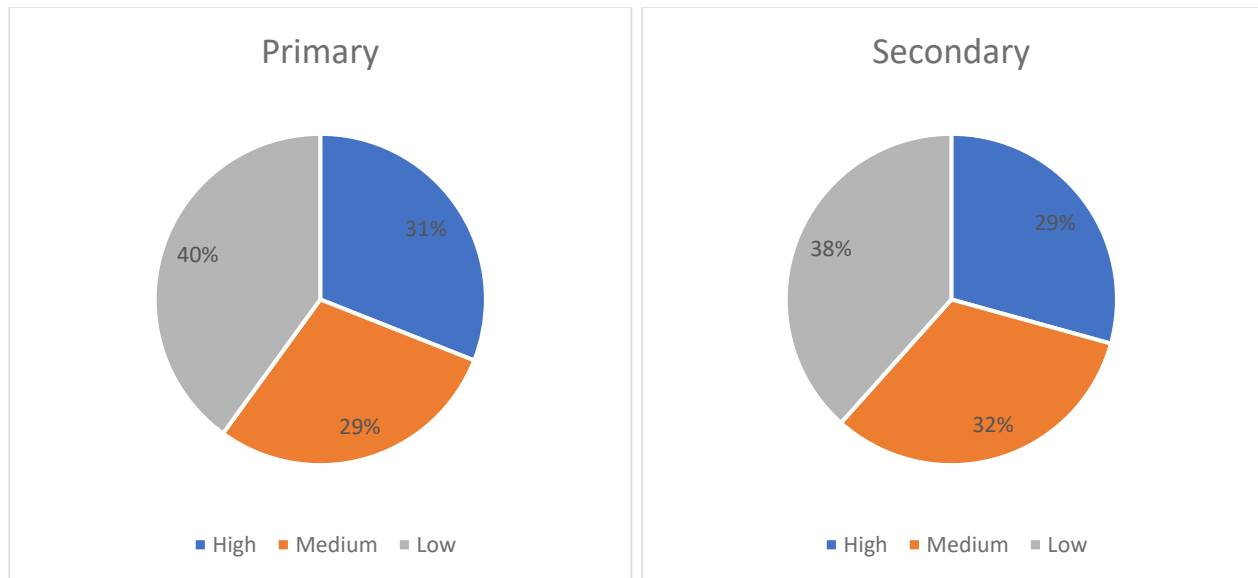
<sup>4</sup> Section 69(3)(b)(iv) Children and Families Act 2014,

primary schools and (25/41: 61%) secondary schools were promoting mental health within their SEN policies.

**Figure 7: Pie charts to show overall extent SEN policies promoted respectful school communities**



**Figure 8: Pie charts to show the overall extent SEN policies promoted mental health and wellbeing**



### Availability of policies in special schools

Special schools are specifically designed, staffed and resourced to provide tailored education to pupils with additional and complex needs to ensure they achieve their highest possible potential. Ten special schools were randomly sampled for this review, including one school from each of the nine geographical regions (London accounting for two). The sample included schools specialising in supporting pupils with complex learning difficulties, disabled pupils with multiple needs, pupils with sight impairments, and pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. The sample included, five schools that were rated Outstanding, four rated Good and one rated as Requires Improvement by Ofsted. The sample also included two schools providing secondary education, three schools providing primary education, and five schools providing both primary and secondary education. The table below shows the availability of policies for sampled special schools.

**Table 2: Availability of published online policies for the sample of special schools**

| <b>Policy area</b>                        | <b>Number of special schools with published online policies</b> |
|---|---|
| Behaviour                                 | 10  |
| Anti-bullying                             | 8   |
| SEN                                       | 10  |
| Equality                                  | 10  |
| Sex and relationship education            | 3   |
| Child protection                          | 10  |
| Values and ethos                          | 10  |
| Mental health                             | 1   |
| Curriculum                                | 10  |
| Pupil Premium                             | 10  |
| Supporting pupils with medical conditions | 6   |
| Accessibility plan                        | 4   |

### **Promoting respectful school communities in special schools**

Respectful school communities appeared to be promoted through the published policies by all special schools in the sample to a high degree, and especially with policies on equality and anti-bullying. Equality policies promoted respectful school communities in the following ways:

- Explicitly identifying mental illness as a disability
- Promoting community cohesion by providing pupils with opportunities to integrate within the community, and by challenging stereotypes about disability and mental illness.
- Raising aspirations of pupils within the school by ensuring equality of opportunities as well as promoting equality of opportunity within wider society.

Anti-bullying policies also promoted respectful schools communities to a high degree. One special school had received an award for being a *Rights Respecting School*, and another had adopted the *Kidsafe* approach to tackle bullying. Other schools embedded their anti-bullying policies within their whole-school ethos and promoted wellbeing as central to the policy.

### **Promoting mental health and wellbeing in special schools**

Similarly, to the promotion of respectful school communities, special schools also all promoted mental health and wellbeing to a high degree, in their published policies. Three of the schools specialised in supporting pupils with complex social, emotional, and mental health needs, and therefore their policies reflected this specialisation. Behaviour

policies were especially strong in relation to the promotion of mental health and wellbeing.

Behaviour policies and strategies were embedded within school values promoting the rights of pupils to learn. They were substantially focused on the promotion of positive learning behaviours and how behaviour and learning can be linked. The behavioural strategies were weighted towards praise and rewards, with very little, or no sanctions. There was a strong focus on raising self-esteem and emotional literacy, to ensure the right types of learning behaviours are reinforced.

## **Chapter Six: Promoting mental health and wellbeing**

### **Introduction**

Currently, there are no duties on schools to have separate mental health policies. Overall, from the sample of 90 mainstream schools, only two primary schools and two secondary schools provided stand-alone and focussed policies on the mental health of pupils.

Whilst very few schools provided mental health policies, there was evidence that at least 25/45 (56%) primary schools and 20/45 (44%) secondary schools were providing some form of mental health support.

Mental health support provided by schools, shown in their policies, was either in the form of targeted support for pupils displaying emotional and behavioural difficulties (12 primary and 6 secondary), universal support to promote pupils' self-esteem and resilience (8 primary and 9 secondary), or a combination of both (5 primary and 5 secondary).

### **School-based targeted support for mental health and wellbeing**

Several support activities were identified in policies that targeted pupils displaying emotional and behavioural difficulties. In secondary schools these included: externally provided counselling, one to one sessions with a school pastoral team member, anger management classes, and targeted individual or small group interventions to raise self-esteem. In primary schools targeted support included: one to one therapeutically based sessions with school staff, externally provided counselling and play therapy, and interventions as part of schools' *Nurture* programmes.

Mostly, targeted mental health support was provided as part of Pupil Premium strategies. Pupils were identified as needing additional support, in the main, if they were displaying overtly disruptive behaviour, or because they were not achieving academic expectations. There was also evidence within the policies that a small number of schools (four primary schools) were using standardised mental health screening tools to identify pupils with additional support needs.

## **School-based universal support for mental health and wellbeing**

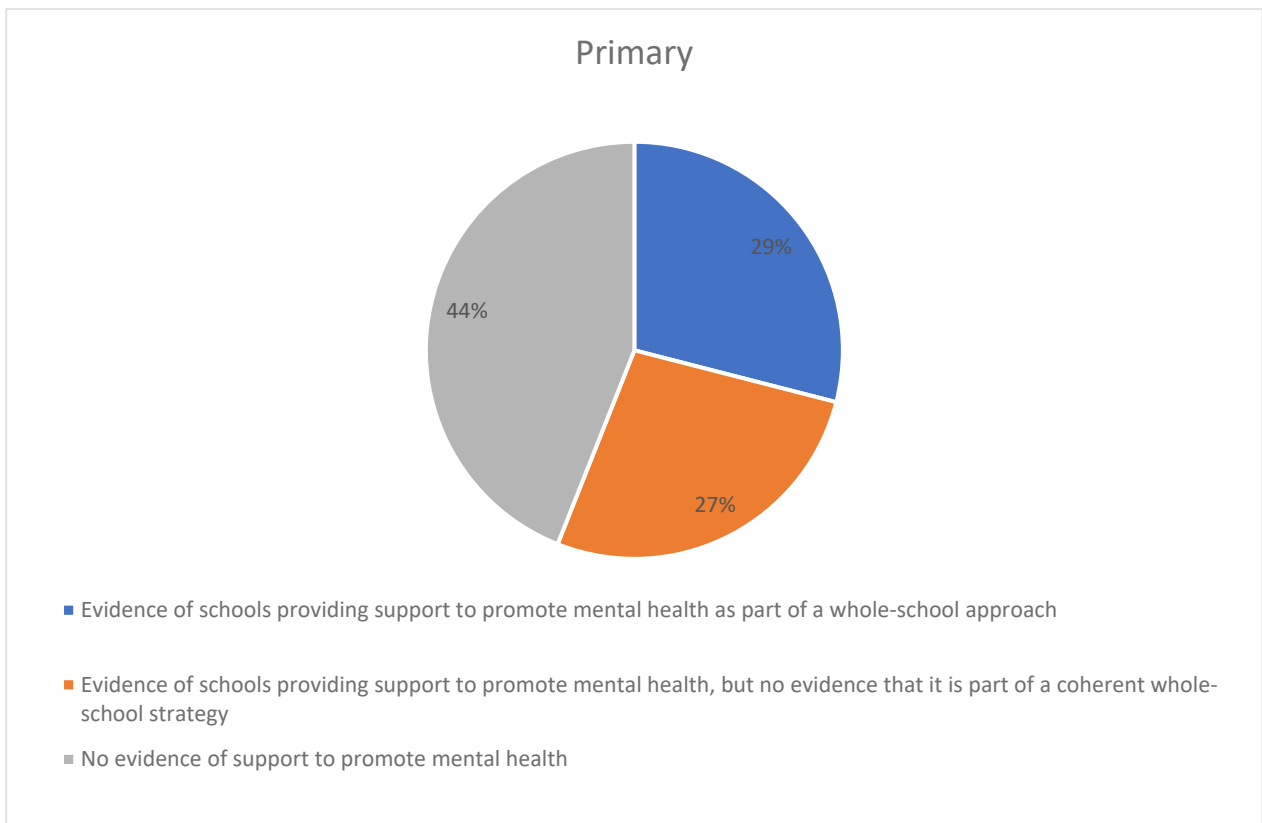
There was evidence in their policies that 13 primary schools and 14 secondary schools were providing some form of universal support or preventative activities to promote mental health and wellbeing. Universal support in secondary schools included school wellbeing centres; school Nurture approaches, school pastoral teams and home liaison workers; embedding mental health education within the curriculum, particularly in PSHE and SEAL programmes; promoting exercise, such as school gym facilities; and engaging with a local farm for pupils to carry out work to raise self-esteem. In primary schools universal support included school Nurture approaches; Forest school approaches; circle time; classes on self-esteem and resilience; and embedding mental health and wellbeing within the curriculum.

## **Evidence of whole-school strategies to promote mental health and wellbeing**

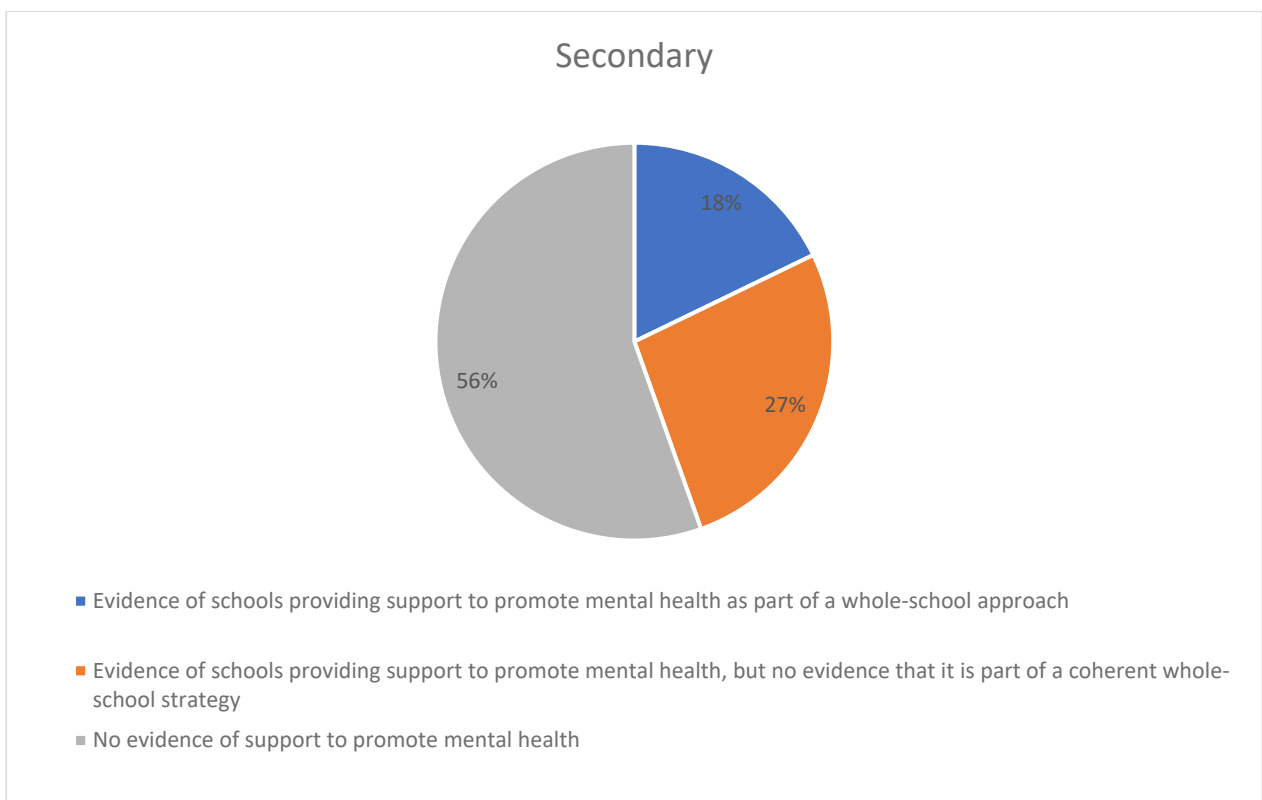
As noted above, there was evidence within the policies that at least 25 primary schools and 20 secondary schools were providing some form of support for pupils' mental health needs. However, the extent to which those schools appeared to be doing this as part of a whole-school, coherent approach or strategy to promote mental health and emotional wellbeing was varied. The pie charts below illustrate the extent mental health provision was part of whole-school approaches.

There was evidence in their policies that 13 primary schools and eight secondary schools were showing excellent practice in providing support to promote the mental health and emotional wellbeing of their pupils as part of whole-school coherent strategies or approaches.

**Figure 9: Pie chart to show the extent mental health provision was part of whole-school approaches in primary schools**



**Figure 10: Pie chart to show the extent mental health provision was part of whole-school approaches in secondary schools**



## **Chapter Seven: Conclusions and considerations for future development**

### **Introduction**

This review explored the information and policies published on 45 secondary schools, 45 primary schools and 10 special schools' websites in relation to the extent the published information promoted respectful school communities, and mental health and wellbeing.

This review intended to understand how schools view their statutory duties in relation to mental health and wellbeing and developing respectful school communities. This was a desk-based study only, direct contact was not made with schools to verify whether activities cited within their policies were an accurate representation of what was being implemented, or to check whether they were carrying out activities to promote mental health and wellbeing that were not referred to within their policies.

It is important for the reader to note therefore, that this study does not provide a reliable estimation of all the activities schools are doing to promote mental health and wellbeing, and the limitations set out above should be carefully considered alongside the findings from this study.

### **Considerations for future development of policy and practice**

This review identified a variety of approaches, interventions, and support stated within schools' policies that can contribute towards the promotion of mental health and wellbeing. However, there was limited reference within these policies that they were part of wider whole-school strategies. This suggests that schools would benefit from further awareness, advice and resources to enable stand-alone interventions to be further embedded within coherent whole-school strategies that promote the mental health and wellbeing of all pupils.

The schools reviewed for this study had coherent strategies in place for pupils with SEN. The SEN policies indicated that SENCo's regularly accessed training, and schools were working collaboratively with one another as part of clusters or networks to share resources, expertise, and best practice. However, the mental health needs of pupils with SEN, and how mental health needs can constitute SEN were not consistently addressed across SEN policies. This suggests that training accessed by SENCo's should emphasise mental health to a greater degree to enable SENCo's to develop their specialisation in this area further. This should be both in relation to the mental health needs of pupils with SEN and how mental health can constitute SEN.

Equality, diversity and tolerance were themes within the values and aims of the schools reviewed. There were some examples of excellent practice in this area, including four schools that had received awards. However, a number of schools provided generic



equality policies citing legislative duties only or policies that were focussed on employment rights. Whilst these schools were operating within the law, there was no evidence that they were promoting a culture of inclusion and tolerance within their policies. This suggests that the achievement of inclusion awards can be effective ways of developing strong inclusive cultures within schools. Therefore, further consideration should be given to how these awards can be more widely accessed by schools, and by ensuring schools have adequate advice, resources and training to do so.

Most evidence-informed approaches and interventions to promote mental health and wellbeing were identified within schools' behaviour policies. This indicates that schools were identifying pupils' additional emotional and psychological needs by the extent of their disruptive behaviour. Additionally, most evidence informed practice identified in this review related to behaviour management techniques. This suggests that further advice, training and resources might be necessary to enable schools to more comprehensively understand the links between mental health and behaviour, and to enable schools to address these needs more holistically. It might also be helpful for schools to further their awareness of risk factors relating to mental illness, particularly where pupils are not behaving in overtly disruptive ways, such as pupils who might be suffering with anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicidal thoughts.

To further enable schools' awareness of mental health, and to fully underpin how schools' policies can promote the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, it might be helpful if there was a shift in the discourse of guidance and training from behaviour and behaviour management, to a focus on mental health, wellbeing and building emotional resilience.

### **Considerations for future research**

Much of the mental health and wellbeing provision identified within the schools' policies was funded using Pupil Premium allocation. Further research could explore the proportions of Pupil Premium funds used to provide support for pupils' mental health needs. Exploration could include analysis of relationships between Pupil Premium spend and outcomes for pupils across a number of indicators, including wellbeing and attainment. For example, is there a relationship between high spend and high cost interventions such as targeted counselling and better outcomes, or are schools investing in more preventative strategies, at a lower cost, more successful in promoting whole-school mental health and wellbeing?

This review identified 13 primary schools and eight secondary schools showing excellent practice to promote mental health and wellbeing across whole-school approaches, according to their published policies. Further exploration of these schools, including making contact with them for further information about implementation, could provide

useful case studies to share with schools to promote best practice and evidence informed commissioning.

Several approaches, interventions, programmes, schemes, training and resources implemented by schools have been identified in this review. A list of these has been provided in Annex D. It has not been possible within the scope of this study to explore the evidence base in relation to the effectiveness of these. Further research is required to fully explore the strength of the evidence base in relation to programmes and approaches currently being implemented by schools, and to understand further the enablers to effective implementation. Schools need to be better supported to make evidence informed choices about mental health support. A centrally held resource database signposting schools to information about resources, approaches and programmes that can promote mental health, and that holds information about their effectiveness, and enablers to implementation would be a helpful tool for schools.

# Chapter One: Introduction

## Context

A priority set out by the Green Paper, ‘Transforming children and young people’s mental health provision’ is to ensure schools are adequately supported to build whole school environments and to develop approaches within which pupils can achieve their full potential.<sup>5</sup> Supporting schools to have a clear offer to promote pupils’ mental health and wellbeing, and to protect them from bullying, are therefore priorities for the Department for Education (DfE).

There are a range of duties to ensure schools take positive action to establish environments where all pupils are supported to engage fully. These duties encourage schools to promote a range of whole-school approaches and activities to develop respectful school communities and to support mental health and wellbeing. For example, action to promote good mental health; a positive, respectful ethos and environment; support for pupils with mental health problems; and thorough and appropriate responses to incidents of bullying and harassment. Some of these duties are accompanied by a requirement to publish a policy or information on schools’ websites.

DfE have commissioned this study to further understanding of the extent the current content of schools’ published policies and other information demonstrates relevant approaches and activities. This evidence will be used to inform decisions about how schools can best be supported to use existing requirements to strengthen their work in these areas and better meet their statutory duties.

The aim of this project is to provide qualitative analysis of the content of the published policies and information from a sample of schools, to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent are the different policies and types of information available on schools’ websites?
2. To what extent do schools’ published policies and information, individually and collectively, describe the school’s approach to developing a respectful school community<sup>6</sup>?
  - a. To what extent are these activities set within a whole school approach?

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<sup>5</sup> DH and DfE (2017) [Transforming children and young people’s mental health provision: a green paper](#)

<sup>6</sup> By respectful school community, it is meant that schools set clear expectations of acceptable behaviour, alongside a well-communicated set of shared values for all at the school which have tolerance and respect at their core.

- b. Is there any variation in how and the extent to which policies describe the approach by features of the school e.g. phase, type, region etc.
3. To what extent do schools' published policies and information, individually and collectively, describe the school's approach to promoting and supporting their pupils' mental health and wellbeing?
  - a. To what extent are these activities set within a whole school approach?
  - b. Is there any variation in extent policies describe the approach by features of the school – phase, type, region, etc

## Methodology

To allow for thorough exploration and comprehensive understanding of the research questions, within the required timeframe, content analysis of the information and policies published on 100 school websites was conducted. The analysis included exploration of policies or information schools are required to publish, as well as exploration of other information or policies on schools' websites where there are no requirements to publish but relate to the research questions. A detailed overview of the methodology adopted for this study can be found in Annex A.

A stratified random sample of schools was extracted from GOV.UK School's Information Service<sup>7</sup>. The sampling strategy was designed to ensure representativeness of schools with different characteristics and to limit the likelihood of biases. The sample included, 45 secondary schools, 45 primary schools and 10 special schools. The sample of schools included an even distribution of schools across geographical region, levels of deprivation, and Ofsted rating. The sampling strategy also ensured that local authority maintained schools, academies, free schools and faith schools were adequately represented. For a full overview of the sampling strategy see Annex A.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/?SelectedTab=Groups>

The review included analysis of the following 11 policy areas (see Annex C for further information about each policy area, and relevance to the review):

- School behaviour including anti-bullying
- SEN
- Equality
- Sex and relationships
- Child protection
- School values and ethos
- Mental health
- Curriculum
- Pupil Premium
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Accessibility plan
- Other relevant policies and information were also recorded where appropriate.

For each of the policy areas listed above, the following coding categorisations were applied:

- Timeliness of the policy and extent kept up to date
- Evidence of staff training and specialisms
- Evidence of collaboration with other schools
- Evidence based programmes/interventions or models implemented
- Extent of collaborative working with parents and families
- Extent of collaborative working within the community and with outside agencies
- Extent that the school aligns policy with specific needs and characteristics of the school and its pupils
- Evidence of whole-school/systemic approaches underpinning policy area

The indicators above were used to categorise the extent the policy or information addressed respectful school communities and mental health and wellbeing, according to a scale of high, medium or low. Examples from each policy to underpin the categorisations were also recorded to ensure consistent and reliable analysis. Once all policy areas for each school had been reviewed, general reflections, areas of good practice, examples of innovation, and overall extent the school website promoted

respectful school communities and mental health and wellbeing was also recorded. For a full overview of the content analysis coding framework see Annex B.

## **Methodological considerations**

### **Generalisability**

Classic statistical generalisation would require a representative random sample of 379 schools, based on an estimate total school population of 24,000, to achieve a 95% confidence level. To extract the level of detail necessary from school websites to comprehensively address the research questions, this sample would not have been proportionate for the needs and timescales of this study.

Nevertheless, generalisation is an important consideration for DfE to gain maximum value for investment by ensuring insights from this study can be recognised as important sources of evidence to inform practice and policy. Therefore, an analytical generalisation approach, more commonly adopted for qualitative research, was utilised for this study. This approach focussed on the extrapolation of broad themes, activities and approaches taken by schools, allowing for the development of typologies accounting for the variation between schools with different characteristics. Examples of good practice were also identified which can be generalised to the wider school population. Descriptive statistics showing school characteristics have also been provided within this report to complement the qualitative findings.

### **Saturation**

Flexibility was built into the design of this study to allow for regular review of saturation, at intervals of data collection from every 25 schools. At each point, DfE had the option to continue or stop data collection, with the costs and timeframes adjusted to reflect this. This flexibility allowed for transparency within the research process as well as ensuring maximum value for investment. Saturation was achieved at around review of 100 schools in most policy areas and achieved earlier (at around 50 schools) for SEN and Child Protection policy areas, where the majority were based very closely on national guidance. Saturation had not occurred by 100 schools within the Pupil Premium area, where schools were commissioning and/or carrying out a wide variety of activities to promote mental health and wellbeing. Future research could explore further Pupil Premium activity in relation to promoting pupils and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

## Advantages and limitations of the methodological approach

The approach adopted for this study was not reliant on the recruitment of schools. Schools can be very difficult to recruit to take part in research. Studies that rely on the active participation of schools, such as interviews with school staff, surveys and observations use a substantial amount of resources and researcher time to contact, follow-up and convince to engage with the research. The recruitment process can also lead to biases forming in the sample, as the more research minded schools tend to be keener to engage with research than other schools. This study, however extracted data from published policies and information only, negating the need to recruit schools. Therefore, the sample quota and sampling strategy could be achieved without difficulty.

This review intended to understand how schools view their statutory duties in relation to mental health and wellbeing and developing respectful school communities. This was a desk-based study only, direct contact was not made with schools to verify whether activities cited within their policies were an accurate representation of what was being implemented, or to check whether they were carrying out activities to promote mental health and wellbeing that were not referred to within their policies.

As far as possible using the published information, evidence was sought to substantiate statements within the policies. For example, a school simply stating that they 'take a whole-school approach to mental health' without further evidence to support the statement, such as the methods of implementation, and what the approach entailed, would not have provided enough evidence to support the categorisation of a whole-school approach being adopted.

Nevertheless, it is important for the reader to note, that this study does not provide a reliable estimation of all the activities schools are doing to promote mental health and wellbeing, and the limitations set out above should be carefully considered alongside the findings from this study.

## Chapter Two: Overview of schools and availability of policies

### Introduction

A wide variety of schools were reviewed to ensure for a breadth of schools with different characteristics, demographic profiles, and approaches. Forty-five primary schools, 45 secondary schools and 10 special schools were sampled based on geographical region, eligibility of free school meals, urban/rural location, Ofsted rating and school type. The table below provides a breakdown of the sample. Further information about the sample of special schools reviewed can be found in Chapter Five.

**Table 3: Primary and secondary schools sample**

|                      | <b>Final primary schools sample</b> | <b>Final secondary schools sample</b> |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | 45                                  | 45                                    |
| <b>Region</b>        |                                     |                                       |
| North East           | 5                                   | 5                                     |
| North West           | 5                                   | 5                                     |
| East Midlands        | 5                                   | 5                                     |
| West Midlands        | 5                                   | 6                                     |
| East of England      | 5                                   | 5                                     |
| London               | 5                                   | 5                                     |
| South East           | 5                                   | 5                                     |
| South West           | 5                                   | 5                                     |
| Yorkshire and Humber | 5                                   | 5                                     |
| <b>Deprivation</b>   |                                     |                                       |
| High                 | 15                                  | 13                                    |
| Med                  | 15                                  | 18                                    |
| Low                  | 15                                  | 14                                    |
| <b>Location</b>      |                                     |                                       |
| Urban                | 34                                  | 41                                    |
| Rural                | 11                                  | 4                                     |
| <b>Ofsted</b>        |                                     |                                       |
| Outstanding          | 13                                  | 14                                    |
| Good                 | 20                                  | 15                                    |
| Requires improvement | 12                                  | 15                                    |
| <b>Type</b>          |                                     |                                       |
| Academy              | 17                                  | 29                                    |
| Free school          | 2                                   | 1                                     |
| Maintained school    | 26                                  | 15                                    |
| Faith school         | 12                                  | 5                                     |



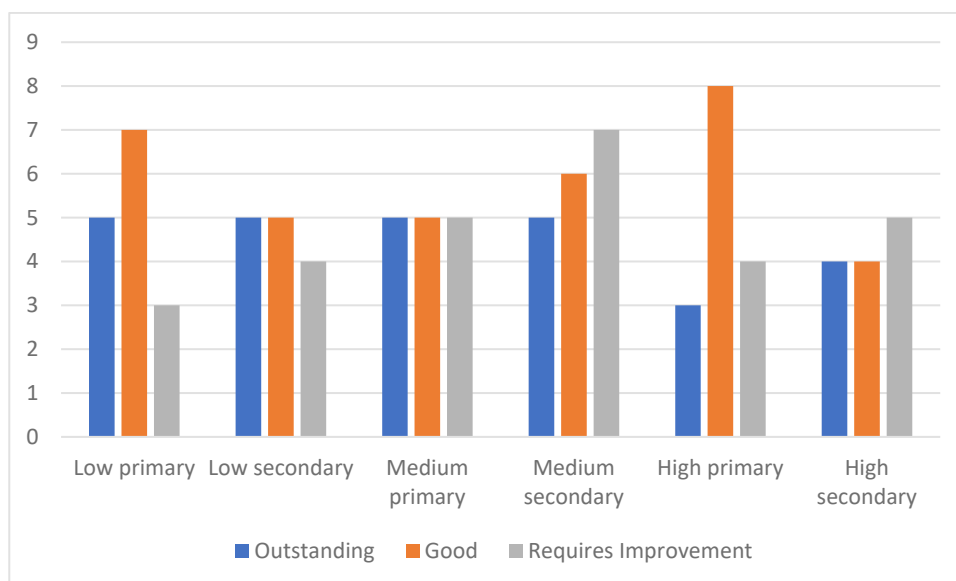
The primary school sample included 17 academies, 26 LA maintained, and two free schools. The sample also included 12 faith schools, which were; Roman Catholic (three schools); Church of England (seven schools); Muslim (one school); and Sikh (one school).

The secondary school sample included 29 academies, 15 LA maintained schools, and one free school. The secondary school sample also included five faith schools which were; Christian (one school); Jewish (one school); Roman Catholic (two school) and Church of England (one school). The table and chart below illustrate the distribution of free school meal eligibility by Ofsted ratings for sampled schools, showing a relatively even distribution.

**Table 4: Proportion of free school meal eligibility by Ofsted ratings for sample primary and secondary schools**

| Ofsted rating               | Proportion of free school meal eligibility |               |                |                  |              |                |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
|                             | Low primary                                | Low secondary | Medium primary | Medium secondary | High primary | High secondary |
| <b>Outstanding</b>          | 5  | 5             | 5              | 5                | 3            | 4              |
| <b>Good</b>                 | 7  | 5             | 5              | 6                | 8            | 4              |
| <b>Requires Improvement</b> | 3  | 4             | 5              | 7                | 4            | 5              |

**Figure 11: Proportion of free school meal eligibility by Ofsted ratings for sample primary and secondary schools**



## Availability of policies

The table below provides a breakdown of the availability of policy documents published on primary and secondary school websites. There are legislative requirements for schools to publish online policies and information in relation to; school behaviour and anti-bullying; SEN (a school's SEN Information Report should include information about the school's policies for making provision for pupils with special educational needs whether or not pupils have EHC Plans); equality; school values; curriculum; and Pupil Premium. There are no legislative requirements to publish online policies in relation to; sex and relationship education; child protection; mental health; supporting pupils with medical conditions; and accessibility, although it is good practice to do so.

**Table 5: Availability of published online policies by school type**

| <b>Policy Area</b>                        | <b>Proportion of primary schools with online published policies (n=45)</b> | <b>Proportion of secondary schools with online published policies (n=45)</b> |
|---|--|--|
| School behaviour                          | 45 (100%)  | 43 (96%)   |
| Anti-bullying                             | 32 (70%)   | 37 (82%)   |
| SEN                                       | 45 (100%)  | 41 (91%)   |
| Equality                                  | 38 (84%)   | 39 (87%)   |
| Sex and relationships education           | 26 (57%)   | 24 (53%)   |
| Child protection                          | 40 (89%)   | 43 (96%)   |
| Values and ethos                          | 45 (100%)  | 45 (100%)  |
| Mental health                             | 2 (4%)   | 1 (2%)   |
| Curriculum                                | 44 (98%)   | 44 (98%)   |
| Pupil premium                             | 40 (89%)   | 43 (96%)   |
| Supporting pupils with medical conditions | 30 (68%)   | 25 (56%)   |
| Accessibility plan                        | 35 (70%)   | 25 (56%)   |

# Chapter Three: Equality, diversity, and tolerance

## Introduction

The Equalities Act 2010 requires that all public bodies publish information to demonstrate that they have due regard for the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it by:
  - a. Removing or minimising disadvantage suffered by people due to their protected characteristic
  - b. Taking steps to meet the needs of those with certain protected characteristics where these are different to the needs of other people, including taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities
  - c. Encouraging people with certain characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their proportion is disproportionately low
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

These duties also reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Student, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equalities Act 2010.

The Act ensures that individuals and groups with protected characteristics are not treated unfairly. Protected characteristics included in the Act are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief, including lack of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The Equality Act considers mental impairment is as a disability, providing it has long-term adverse effects a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. It regards both the effects or symptoms of an illness, as well as diagnosis, therefore most mental illnesses are thought of as an impairment based on the Act.

There are legislative requirements that all schools publish a policy or statement on equality. Schools have a duty to have regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity between different groups and to foster good relations between those groups.

Of the 90 primary and secondary schools reviewed, a policy or statement on equality was available for 77 (86%). This included, 38/45 (84%) primary schools and 39/45 (87%) secondary schools. Where policies were not available there was a notice on the website that they were temporarily unavailable for five schools. For eight schools however, there were no indications that a policy on equality existed. The following sections explore findings from the content of policies or statements for the 77 secondary and primary schools where they were available for review.

## Whole-school values and aims

The Equality Act provides a framework for schools to support a commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that schools continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups.

It is important that children and young people understand equality, and understand both how they should be treated, and how they should treat others. Teaching these topics can create a safe place for pupils to explore, discuss, challenge and form their own opinions and values. The knowledge and respect of rights that pupils can gain from this, combined with understanding, respect and tolerance for difference, can empower them to tackle prejudice, improve relationships and promote their emotional wellbeing. To ensure the full benefits of equality education, it is important to promote a school environment that respects the rights and differences of both pupils and teachers, which are essential outcomes that support the Government and Ofsted's strong focus on improving pupil behaviour and safety, tackling bullying and helping pupils achieve.<sup>8 9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See, Department for Education (2013) *Equality Act 2010: advice for schools*. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

<sup>9</sup> See, Department for Education (2015) *School inspection handbook*. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015>

All schools' policies or statements on equality referred to their statutory duties under the Equality Act. However, the extent to which equality was promoted within a whole-school approach was varied. There was evidence for 31/38 (82%) of primary schools and 25/39 (64%) secondary schools that their equality policies or statements were embedded within their whole-school values and aims.

There were two key ways in which schools successfully embedded their policies on equality within a whole-school approach. Firstly, schools linked their equality policy to their school values and objectives. Secondly, equality policies formed part of school improvement plans, where policy objectives aligned with school demographics.

Four schools (two primary and two secondary) had also been awarded the *Inclusion Quality Mark* for excellent practice in this area. *Inclusion Quality Mark* provides schools with a nationally recognised framework. The IQM team help schools evaluate and measure how they are performing, and when they are successful, their achievement is recognised through a system of awards that provide external validation of their inclusive status. There are over 5,500 schools in the UK who have either received an IQM Inclusive School Award or are actively working towards meeting the standard required.

An example of a primary school successfully embedding their Equal Opportunities Policy within their whole-school approach is cited below.

***Primary School, Equal Opportunity Policy***

***[FSM: low; Ofsted: Outstanding]***

*The policy included objectives set out for different minority groups, including: disability [no explicit inclusion of mental health]; gender; religion and belief; sexual orientation and gender identity; and age. For each minority group the policy set out plans for how the school would tackle unlawful discrimination, advance equality, and foster good relations and cohesion. The school had also consulted with community groups and representatives of minority groups in the development of the policy. The school prioritises its commitment to issue of equality, diversity and tolerance:*

*'It is the responsibility of our governing body to monitor the effectiveness of this Equal Opportunities policy. The governing body does this by: monitoring the progress of pupils of minority groups and comparing it to the progress made by other pupils in the school; monitoring the staff appointment process, so that no-one applying for a post at this school is discriminated against; taking into serious consideration any complaints regarding equal opportunity issues from parents, staff or pupils; monitoring the school behaviour and exclusions policy, so those pupils from minority groups are not unfairly treated.'*

The secondary school cited below embedded their Equality Policy within their school improvement agenda:

**Secondary School, Equality Policy**

**[FSM medium; Ofsted Outstanding]**

*'We aim to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the Trust feel proud of their identity and are able to participate fully in school life. At the [Trust], we believe that diversity is a strength, which should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit here. To promote positive attitudes to difference and good relationships between people with different backgrounds, genders, cultures, faiths, abilities and ethnic origins*

*All staff will strive to provide material that gives positive images based on race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender identity and disability, and challenges stereotypical images. All staff, teaching and support, should view dealing with incidents as vital to the well-being of the whole school. One of the school initiatives in 2017 was to promote the emotional resilience, positive mental wellbeing and physical wellbeing of our students through curriculum opportunities.'*

*This policy was part a 12-month improvement plan which involved several different areas of equality that they wanted to achieve, including parental sessions, records of all incidents, and the identification of early indicators of success.'*

Where equality policies were not successfully embedded within a whole-school approach, they tended to be generic, citing legislative requirements, but not how these would be implemented, or how the legislative requirements linked to their whole-school values. Seven primary schools (7/38: 18%) and 14/39 (36%) secondary schools provided generic policies. These policies tended to be either very brief, (no more than one page), part of local authority wide equality policies, part of Multi-Academy Trusts' generic equality policies, or from a human resources perspective focussed on employment rights in relation to protected characteristics, with no reference to equalities in relation to pupils.

## **How schools promote equality, diversity, and tolerance**

There were several methods schools adopted to promote equality, diversity and tolerance. These included:

- Embedding within teaching and resources
- Using key data indicators to understand the needs and characteristics of the school

- Promoting community cohesion
- Parental engagement
- Staff training

Firstly, schools were adapting their curriculum and using resources that embedded learning about equality, diversity and tolerance within their curriculum. Whilst Citizenship and PSHE more naturally lend themselves to learning about equality, diversity and tolerance, some schools had taken this further, by embedding equality into all subject areas. This was part of a whole-school approach promoting the rights of pupils, their emotional wellbeing, and helping them make sense of the wider world. Overall, there was evidence that six secondary schools, and eight primary schools had embedded their policies on equality within their curriculum. One example is a secondary school who included sections in their Equality Policy on the relevant legislation, how this connects to their whole school values, and how equality, diversity and tolerance is taught and promoted throughout each subject area, including: Creative Arts; English; Humanities; Enterprise; Languages; Maths; Physical Education; PSHE; Technology; Science; and Learning Support/SEN. The example below is taken from the school's Creative Arts section, detailing how equalities are promoted within this department:

***Secondary School, Equality Policy***

***[FSM: Low; Ofsted; Outstanding]***

*The Creative Arts Department aims to offer all pupils equality of opportunity and an education enhanced with social, historical and cultural heritage through both its formal and extended enrichment programme. Pupils come to the school from a rich diversity of backgrounds, experiences and cultures. Our curriculum and teaching practice seeks to foster positive attitudes to counter anti-social behaviour which intentionally or unintentionally works against individuals or groups and to eliminate discriminatory practice. The Creative Arts Department plays a vital role in providing an inclusive curriculum that celebrates diversity of culture, social, class, gender, race, disability [no explicit reference to mental health], sexual orientation, age, religious belief, and identity. The Department sensitively deals with issues regarding stereotypes, community dynamics, cultural adhesion and challenges preconceptions, social injustice and intolerance.*

*Art, Music and Drama expose and celebrate pupils' heritage and addresses a range of art forms from diverse cultures and countries, especially targeting African and South Asian cultures, as well as artists and performers addressing concepts regarding ethnic diversity. The department continues to acquire and access resources to accommodate this development. To this end, we welcome the opportunity to work with community arts organisations [...] who seek to expose*



*pupils to the rich diversity within South Asian cultures. The Creative Arts Department endeavours to build bridges between different communities and promotes cultural awareness; it is through these shared experiences that individuals can build a sense of community.*

*Within the Department, pupils are encouraged to work together and understand the dynamics of shared responsibility, choice and debate. Stereotypes are challenged and social issues are explored through various art forms. The Creative Arts provides a platform to gain an appreciation for diversity and celebrate enrichment of our own experiences through exploring these areas. Joint collaborative curriculum opportunities within Key Stage 3 address issues that seek to foster empathy and understanding; topics have included immigration and the challenges of experiencing a foreign environment, as well as unemployment and social stigma. Pupils actively engage with art forms that address social injustice and seek to address these concepts within their own performances or art work with the aim of gaining a greater understanding of their own identity.*

*The Creative Arts Department aims to provide a fulfilling learning environment that challenges creativity regardless of gender. All pupils are expected and encouraged to work practically, developing their own potential within the Arts areas. Through developments within ICT and technology provision, we are ensuring that both male and female students can proactively engage with concepts and skills, and generate valued, independent work. Within the curriculum we have actively sought to address the male-centred historical portrayal of the Arts and actively promote and identify historical and contemporary female practitioners that explore concepts and issues with integrity. Additionally, the department actively promotes and develops enrichment programmes that will encourage Asian boys to explore and celebrate their cultural heritage and identity.*

*The Creative Arts Department has an active role in ensuring pupils with Special Needs the ability to confidently access and explore a range of artistic forms. For pupils with Special Needs, the Creative Arts must be an environment that fosters an atmosphere of exploration, where risk-taking is promoted and fostered and teaching and learning supports their individual progress. As a result, emphasis is on developing a curriculum that supports and encourages pupils to interact and access tasks whereby they are able to produce outcomes of integrity and worth.*

*Within a heavily resource dependent department, Art, Music and Drama need to be mindful that pupils have access to resources and a range of enrichment programmes for those who are financially deprived. To this end, pupils on Pupil Premium have access to Arts resources, Theatre performances, subsidised Music Tuition and Artist in Resident Workshops.*

In primary schools equalities were promoted within the curriculum, as well as during whole school assemblies, on displays around the school, and during circle time. Below is an example of how a primary school had implemented their Equality Policy:

***Primary School, Equality Policy***

***[FSM: Low; Ofsted: Good]***

*The Equality Policy was implemented through teaching and learning by:*

*Using contextual data to improve the ways in which we provide support to individuals and groups of pupils;*

*Monitoring achievement data by ethnicity, gender and disability and action any gaps;*

*Taking account of the achievement of all pupils when planning for future learning and setting challenging targets;*

*Ensuring equality of access for all pupils and prepare them for life in a diverse society;*

*Using materials that reflect the diversity of the school, population and local community in terms of race, gender and disability, without stereotyping;*

*Promoting attitudes and values that will challenge racist and other discriminatory behaviour or prejudice;*

*Providing opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own culture and celebrate the diversity of other cultures;*

*Seeking to involve all parents in supporting their child's education;*

*Encouraging classroom and staffroom discussion of equality issues which reflect on social stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning;*

*Including teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population, which are inclusive and reflective of our pupils.*

Secondly, schools were using data to inform their Equality Policy and its objectives, this included data on community demographics; data on pupil demographics; and demographic data on parents to help promote their inclusion. Often, within secondary schools this was part of school improvement agendas, as outlined in the example below:

## **Secondary School, Equalities Policy**

**[FSM: High; Ofsted: Requires Improvement<sup>10</sup>]**

*'[Our] school is a community school whose Governors and staff are and remain utterly committed to the thriving of all young people in our care. [We] have a diverse population of students and are a community school located in a diverse local community. The Governors and staff recognise that compliance with their legal duties under the Equalities Act ensures that the needs of this population are better met and, through fulfilling the Equalities Act duties, [...] staff and governors will better represent the wider community that we serve.'*

*The Equality Policy went on to provide an in-depth exploration of local demographic data to underpin the policy's objectives.*

Overall there was evidence that five secondary and five primary schools used demographic data relating to pupils, parents and the wider community to inform their policies on equality. In addition to this, several schools also used data to monitor the progress of pupils with protected characteristics, which formed part of wider school strategies to promote inclusion involving SEND and Pupil Premium. For example, one academy secondary school's data monitoring had indicated a rise within the school of homophobic language, therefore their Equality Policy had been amended to reflect this, and to ensure there were learning opportunities for pupils to raise awareness about homophobia.

Thirdly, schools were taking a number of active steps to promote community cohesion, and parental engagement which were also part of school strategies to promote inclusion. These activities included, in primary schools; holding Grandparent groups, parenting programmes and other parental engagement activities, including parenting groups specifically for non-English speakers; ensuring information sent home was in a format and language parents would understand, taking an active role with local charities and local charitable fundraising; and in faith schools, taking an active role in community faith-based activities. In secondary schools activities included; young people taking part in community service; young people fundraising for local charities; and local faith and community groups coming in to school to give talks to promote community cohesion.

Lastly, there was evidence that 14 primary and 20 secondary schools had implemented staff training to promote equality. However, within the policy documents, there was very little evidence of what the staff training entailed, or whether training was delivered by

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<sup>10</sup> Most recent Ofsted Inspection monitoring visit found improvements had been made and described schools as 'Good'.

external providers, or in-house. In the majority of cases, where there was evidence of staff training, it was part of the induction process for new staff, rather than whole-school training. There were no examples of staff specialisms in relation to equality. However, one school had engaged with a pupil equality group to help the school address homophobic bullying, and to provide the school with a planned approach to inclusion.

## **Overall extent schools' equalities approaches promoted respectful schools and mental health**

Where school equality policies were available, they were given a researcher rating of the overall extent they promoted respectful school communities, and mental health and wellbeing based on the criterion stated in Annex B. School equality policies were substantially more likely to promote respectful school communities than mental health and wellbeing. The policies were focussed on harassment and discrimination under the duties of the Equality Act, but very few made a link with mental health and wellbeing. In the few cases where this link was made within the policies on equality, it was achieved in the following ways:

- The policies on equality were part of school improvement plans, whereby measures of wellbeing (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire) were used to monitor the progress and impact of work to promote equalities.
- Policies on equality were underpinned by an ethos to promote wellbeing and to enable pupils to understand the effects and consequences of discrimination, and to equip pupils with the skills to challenge discrimination.

However, there were no examples of schools explicitly regarding mental illness as a disability within their policies on equality.

An example of a school promoting mental health within their Equality Policy is provided below:

## **Secondary Academy, Equal Opportunities Policy**

**[FSM: high; Ofsted: Outstanding]**

*The aims of the Equal Opportunities Policy are to:*

*Respect, embrace and value differences between people. Prepare pupils for life in a diverse society.*

*Make the Academy a place where everyone, taking account of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, feels welcomed and valued.*

*Promote good relations between different racial and cultural groups within the Academy and within the wider community.*

*Ensure that an inclusive ethos is maintained.*

*Acknowledge the existence of racism and take steps to prevent it.*

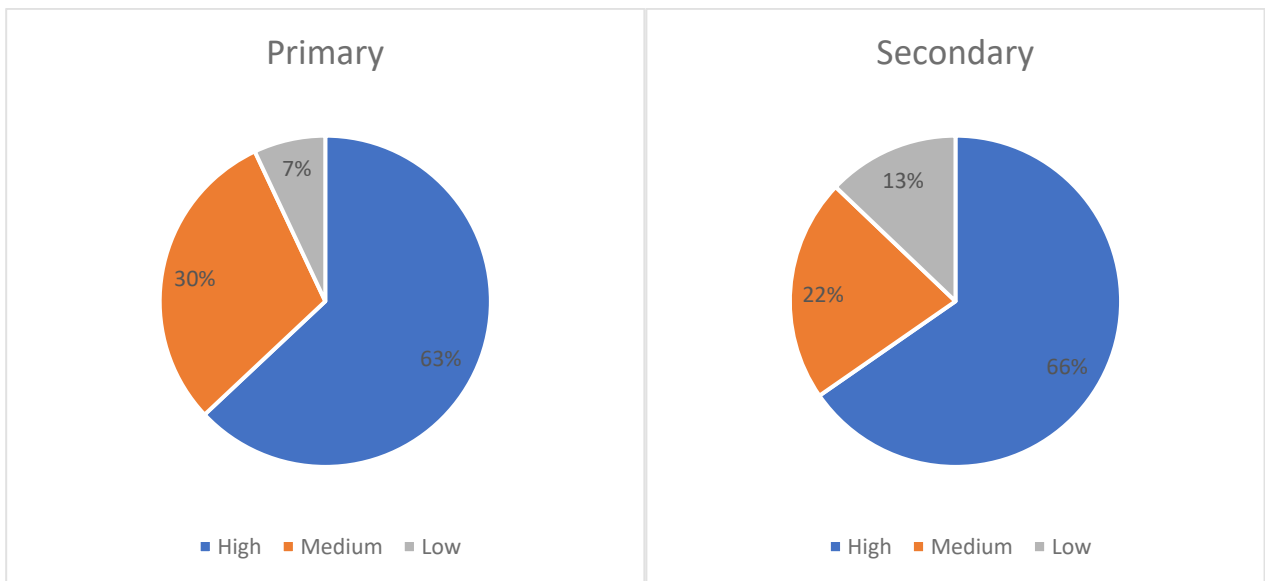
*Our curriculum supports pupils to be accepting of one another's lifestyles and beliefs, as well as exploring shared values. The curriculum enables pupils to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice and discrimination. We tackle prejudices relating to racism and xenophobia, including those that are directed towards religious groups and communities, such as anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. A team of therapists who support our young people and help them to express and deal with their emotions and difficulties.*

The table and pie charts below illustrate the extent the sampled schools' policies on equality promoted respectful school communities and supported mental health and wellbeing.

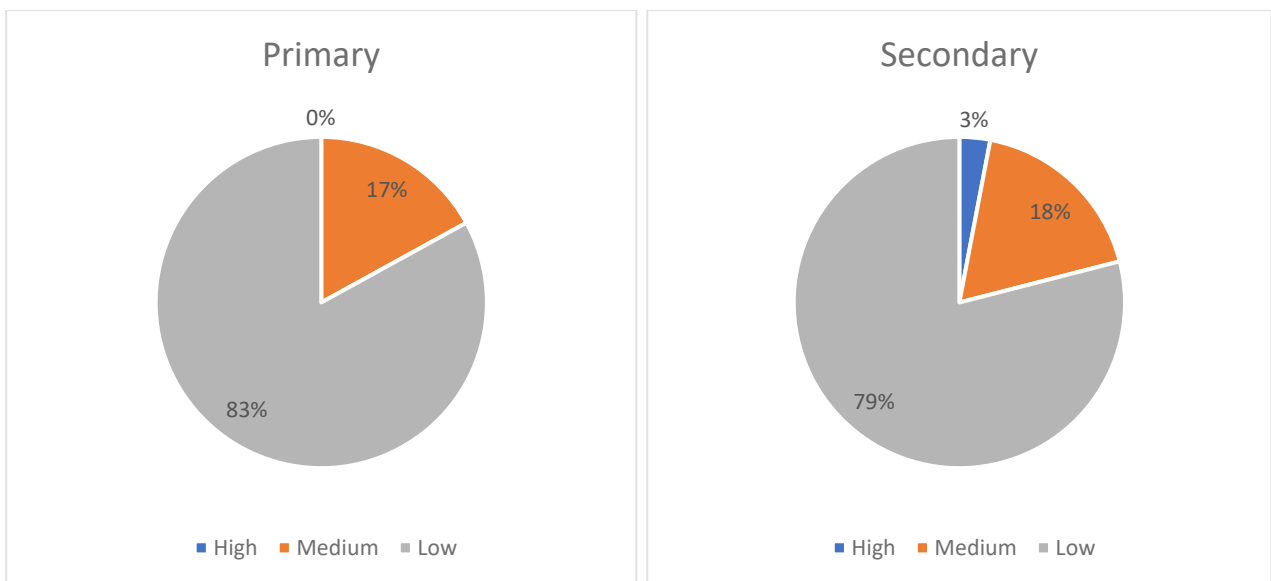
**Table 6: Overall extent Equality policies promoting respectful school communities and mental health and wellbeing**

| <b>Researcher rated category</b> | <b>Overall extent equality policies promoted respectful school communities</b> |                  | <b>Overall extent equality policies promoted mental health and wellbeing</b> |                  |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------|
|                                  | <b>Primary</b>   | <b>Secondary</b> | <b>Primary</b>   | <b>Secondary</b> |
| High                             | 24 (63%)   | 26 (66%)         | 0  | 1 (3%)           |
| Medium                           | 11 (30%)   | 9 (22%)          | 6 (17%)  | 7 (18%)          |
| Low                              | 3 (7%)   | 5 (13%)          | 32 (83%)   | 31 (79%)         |
| Total                            | 38 (100%)  | 39 (100%)        | 38 (100%)  | 39 (100%)        |

**Figure 12: Pie charts to show overall extent equality policies promoted respectful school communities**



**Figure 13: Pie charts to show the overall extent equality policies promoted mental health and wellbeing**



# Chapter Four: Behaviour and anti-bullying

## Introduction

By law, all state schools must have a behaviour policy in place that includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils.

This policy is decided by the school, and all teachers, pupils and parents must be told what it is. In maintained schools, the headteacher must set out measures in the behaviour policy which aim to:

- promote good behaviour, self-discipline and respect;
- prevent bullying;
- ensure that pupils complete assigned work; and
- regulate the conduct of pupils.

The school's behaviour policy must be published on its website (School Information (England) Regulations 2008).

The proprietor of an academy school is required to ensure that a written policy to promote good behaviour among pupils is drawn up and effectively implemented. The policy must set out the disciplinary sanctions to be adopted if a pupil misbehaves. The proprietor is also required to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented. Information about the school's behaviour policy must be made available to parents on request. While academies are not required by law to publish their behaviour policy on their website, it is good practice to do so.<sup>11</sup>

On almost all school websites, behaviour policies were available, including all 45 primary schools and 43/45 (96%) secondary schools. Where behaviour policies were not online, in both cases, there was a notice on the website that they were temporarily unavailable.

Anti-bullying policies were available online for 32/45 (70%) primary schools and 37/45 (82%) secondary schools. Anti-bullying policies were mostly stand-alone documents, however in a minority of schools, anti-bullying guidelines were incorporated within the behaviour policy.

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<sup>11</sup> Department for Education (2016) Behaviour and discipline in schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff. Available from:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/488034/Behaviour\\_and\\_Discipline\\_in\\_Schools\\_-\\_A\\_guide\\_for\\_headteachers\\_and\\_School\\_Staff.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/488034/Behaviour_and_Discipline_in_Schools_-_A_guide_for_headteachers_and_School_Staff.pdf)

## Schools' approaches to promoting positive learning behaviours

Behaviour and anti-bullying policies were the strongest in terms of being embedded within whole-school values. In all but two primary, and two secondary schools, values were clearly articulated throughout the behaviour and anti-bullying policies.

The majority of schools presented clear expectations of pupils' behaviour which were closely connected to their values, and all behavioural policies promoted at least some degree of positive learning behaviours. All policies also included behavioural strategies that involved rewards for positive behaviours, and forms of sanctions for negative behaviours. Most behaviour policies also stated that reward and sanction strategies were implemented throughout schools and by all school staff.

Rewards identified within the behaviour policies for primary schools included: some form of merits/points, class treats, recognition of positive behaviour in assemblies and through letters home, added responsibilities and more informal and ad-hoc praise. In secondary schools rewards included: points, vouchers, entry to the prom, activities such as days out, added responsibilities, recognition in assemblies, school councils, informing parents, and being given a higher school status for continued positive behaviour.

Sanctions identified within the behaviour policies for primary schools included: reflection/time out, informing parents, and privileges being taken away, such as participating in class treats. Similarly, in secondary schools sanctions included: isolation time, detention, right to attend the prom and other school activities removed and informing parents. Exclusions were always cited as a last resort, or for the most severe behaviour.

Whilst all behavioural policies adopted a reward/sanction style strategy, the balance between the rewards and sanctions varied between schools. On the whole, primary schools' policies were substantially less focussed on sanctions than secondary schools.

There were several different resources, online products or schemes identified within the policies by schools to record, monitor and promote positive learning behaviours.

In primary schools these included:

- *It's Good to be Green* (used by at least eight primary schools)
- *Class DoJo* (one primary school)
- *123 Magic* (two primary schools)
- *Marvellous Me* (two primary schools)



Other primary schools' policies referred to in-house mechanisms to promote positive behaviour, such as collecting marbles in jars, traffic light systems, the use of red and yellow cards, and behaviour checklists and matrixes. For example, one primary academy's policy was developed with an Educational Psychologist:

***Primary Academy, Behaviour Policy***

***[FSM: medium; Ofsted: Good]***

*'Our whole school approach to behaviour is based on Positive Behaviour Support. [Our] Behaviour Matrix was developed with the Trust's Educational Psychologist [...] and [our] Behaviour Team. The behaviour matrix defines our school rules and makes explicit what this looks like around school. Pupils who behave appropriately are rewarded while those whose behaviour is inappropriate face a series of clearly established consequences.'*

In secondary schools, resources, online products or schemes referred to in behaviour policies included:

- *Go4Schools* (used by at least four schools)
- *IRIS* (one school)
- *Behaviour Watch* (one school)
- *SIMS* (one school)

Secondary schools' behaviour policies also cited in-house models to promote positive behaviour and to sanction negative behaviour. An example of an in-house developed model in a secondary school to promote positive learning behaviour is provided below:

## **Secondary Academy and Sixth Form College, Behaviour and Inclusion Policy**

**[FSM: low; Ofsted: Good]**

*'We strongly believe that positive behaviour leads to success, not only academically in the classroom but also as we are preparing young people for their lives ahead. Growth Mindset research conducted by Dr Carol Dweck concluded that praising ability actually lowered students' IQs whereas praising effort raised them. She also said that praising children's intelligence harmed their motivation because, although children love to be praised, especially for their talents, as soon as they hit a difficulty their confidence diminishes, and their motivation is severely reduced. In response to Growth Mindset research the approach taken is aimed at recognising students who demonstrate behaviours and attitudes beyond those ordinarily expected by everyone. Meaning, students are recognised for going 'above and beyond.' This recognition should not be directed at the achievement of an outcome (e.g. achieving the A\*) but for the process in getting to the end goal.'*

### **Whole-school behavioural philosophies**

There was also evidence of a number of whole-school philosophies that were embedded within behavioural and/or anti-bullying policies. These included: restorative approaches; nurture approaches; shared community approaches; and assertive discipline approaches.

#### **Restorative approaches**

Six primary and five secondary schools indicated within their behaviour/anti-bullying policies that they had adopted a restorative approach. Restorative approaches are a collective term for a range of flexible responses, ranging from informal conversations through to formal facilitated meetings. Restorative approaches work to resolve conflict and repair harm. They encourage those who have caused harm to acknowledge the impact of what they have done and give them an opportunity to make reparation. They offer those who have suffered harm the opportunity to have their harm or loss acknowledged and amends made.<sup>12</sup> A report published by the Department for Education gave whole-school restorative approaches the highest rating of effectiveness at

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<sup>12</sup> See Thompson, F. and Smith, P. K. (2011) *The Use and Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Strategies in Schools*. Department for Education. Available from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/182421/DFE-RR098.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182421/DFE-RR098.pdf)

preventing bullying, with a survey of schools showing 97% rated restorative approaches as effective.<sup>13</sup>

## **Nurture approaches**

There was evidence that nine primary schools and six secondary schools adopted a nurture approach to promoting positive behaviours. Nurture groups are small, structured teaching groups for pupils showing signs of behavioural, social or emotional difficulties, particularly those who are experiencing disruption or distress outside of school. They aim to provide a predictable environment in which pupils can build trusting relationships with adults and gain the skills they need to learn in larger classes. There is an emphasis on the systematic teaching of behavioural and social skills, on learning through play, and on sharing 'family-type' experiences, such as eating food together.<sup>14</sup> An example of a nurture approach taken by a primary school, and how it links within their behavioural strategy is provided below:

### ***Primary School, Behaviour and Relationships Policy***

***[FSM: high; Ofsted: Requires Improvement<sup>15</sup>]***

*Whole school [rules], which have been drawn up with staff, children and the school community outline the 3 levels of behaviours, rewards and sanctions, to the children and the opportunity for good behaviour to be rewarded. In addition to the whole school behaviour and rewards the additional systems are in place to teach children about relationships and behaviour:*

*Collective Worship and the 7 safety messages;*

*Children work with holistic therapist to develop relaxation strategies;*

*Weekly Superstars Assembly;*

*SEAL Award and Top Table;*

*"I've been Spotted" awards in Superstars;*

*Y6 Roles and Responsibilities; and*

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>14</sup> Ofsted (2011) *Supporting children with challenging behaviour through a nurture group approach*. Ofsted. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-children-with-challenging-behaviour>

<sup>15</sup> School rated 'Good' by Ofsted in the behaviour/welfare area

*Notes home for parents to provide a consistent and positive whole school language which all adults working in our school adhere to.*

*This is combined with support for children with the school's Behaviour Manager and Learning mentors as well as where appropriate children may be given a place in the school's Nurture Class. For some children with more severe emotional and behavioural difficulties, who may be at risk of exclusion, it may be necessary to meet with parents and outside agencies to construct a Pastoral Support Programme (PSP).*

### **Shared community approach**

There was evidence that two schools adopted a shared community approach to behaviour and anti-bullying (one primary and one secondary). Within this approach, bullying is seen as a community wide issue. Whilst schools are an important part of the community and can be viewed as a focal point in countering bullying behaviour, bullying is placed in a wider community context and in addition to the school, considers the role of other community organisations.<sup>16</sup> An example of this approach is outlined below:

#### ***Catholic Primary School, Positive behaviour policy***

***[FSM: high; Ofsted: Outstanding]***

*'The vision of our schools is of a community publicly committed to tackling the problem of bullying together. This guidance aims:*

*To promote a shared approach to bullying across the community*

*To raise awareness of bullying; and*

*To promote safe, happy and friendly environments*

*A policy and programme of practice shared across the community by all our schools has a number of advantages:*

*It shows that the community will not tolerate bullying of any kind*

*It shows that the community is working together to tackle bullying*

*It provides a network of support throughout the member organisations.*

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<sup>16</sup> Byrne, B.J. (1997). Bullying: A community approach. *Irish Journal of Psychology*. 258-266.

*It shows parents that schools are working with the community to provide safer schools.*

*It helps the problem be tackled rather than moved from school to school or street to street.*

*It is a positive action against bullying aiming for a safer, happier and friendlier environment.'*

Another example of a shared community approach is provided below:

### **Secondary School, Behaviour Policy**

**[FSM: high; Ofsted: Good]**

*A core principle of the Behaviour policy is: 'The school believes in the promotion of positive relationships, both in school and in the wider community.' The school encourages local community members and groups to send letters about students' positive behaviour and respectful actions within the community. In addition the school, 'Works with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.'*

### **Assertive discipline approach**

Two schools (both primary) identified within their behaviour policies that they had adopted an assertive discipline approach to behavioural strategies. Assertive discipline was developed in the 1970s by Canter and Canter as an approach to education, which sets limits on pupil behaviour and provides negative consequences for inappropriate behaviour. It is a structured, systematic approach designed to assist educators in running an organised, teacher-lead classroom environment.<sup>17</sup>

### **Evidence informed whole-school programmes and staff training**

A number of evidence informed programmes, involving whole-school approaches and/or staff training were identified within the behavioural and anti-bullying policies, that were broadly aimed at establishing positive learning environments. These are outlined below.

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<sup>17</sup> Render, G. F., Padilla, J. N., & Krank, H. M. (1989). Assertive Discipline: A critical review and analysis. *Teachers College Record*, 90(4), 607-630.

**Team Teach:** Bespoke de-escalation and positive handling training for children and young people's services. There was evidence of five schools (primary) providing staff training in this approach.

**Peacemakers Organisation:** *Peacemakers'* trainers work with both school staff and pupils to develop skills, knowledge, behaviour and systems that develop peaceful learning environments. There was evidence of one primary school working with Peacemakers and implementing this approach.

**Kidsafe UK:** *Kidsafe UK* provides training, lesson plans and resources to give confidence to school staff to deliver fun, age appropriate, preventative, safeguarding programmes directly to pupils. Once staff have been trained, schools become *Kidsafe* registered. There was evidence that one primary school was *Kidsafe* registered.

**Norfolk Steps:** The Norfolk Steps Team, is part of Norfolk County Council, providing training and consultancy to schools and services to support a therapeutic ethos, early intervention and professional responses to complex, challenging or high-risk behaviours. Schools are accredited by the *Steps* approach. There was evidence that one secondary school had staff trained in this approach.

**Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (MAPA®):** MAPA® is an accredited course from the Nurture Group Network, working in partnership with the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI Europe) and the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD). The course is aimed for teaching staff who work with children and young people who have social, emotional and behavioural needs to improve practice and confidence when dealing with aggression in the classroom. There was evidence that one secondary school had staff trained in this approach.

**Thrive Approach:** The Thrive Approach draws on insights from neuroscience, attachment theory and child development to provide a way of working with children and young people that supports social and emotional development. In particular, the Approach aims to work in a targeted way with children and young people who have struggled with difficult life events to help them re-engage with life and learning. There was evidence that one primary school had staff licensed in this approach. One of the objectives for this school was to have all teaching staff licensed in the Thrive approach over the next two years.

**Five R's Framework, SEAL and the Respectful Schools initiative:** there was evidence that two schools (one primary and one secondary) had adopted the Five R's framework, six schools were implementing the SEAL programme (one secondary and five primary), and one school was implementing the Respectful School's Initiative.

## How schools prevent and respond to bullying

Schools referred to a number of activities to prevent and respond to bullying within their behaviour and anti-bullying policies, these included: circle time, anti-bullying weeks, whole-school assemblies; school awareness campaigns; external speakers; school council involvement; and pupil involvement with developing anti-bullying policies.

Anti-bullying messages and strategies were also part of the curriculum. Most commonly, this was part of the PSHE and or SEAL classes. However, a small number of schools implemented messages and strategies to address bullying throughout all elements of the curriculum. Examples of schools successfully achieving this are provided below:

### ***Primary School and Nursery, Anti-bullying policy***

***[FSM: Medium; Ofsted: Requires improvement]***

*The anti-bullying policy supported the school ethos and referred extensively to how it was implemented throughout the school, and across all subject areas. For instance, it stated that during P.E children can learn about teamwork and relationships. During dance children can express themselves and communicate their ideas.*

### ***Secondary Comprehensive School, Anti-bullying Policy***

***[FSM: high; Ofsted: Requires Improvement]***

#### ***Raising awareness of Bullying through teaching and learning***

*Bullying is addressed within a wide range of lessons throughout the school curriculum. These include Drama, English, RE, PSHE, Learning for Life (L4L) days and Tutorial Periods.*

*On L4L days bullying awareness is covered in a range of different ways across all year groups, highlighting the effect of bullying and advice to students if they find themselves in a 'bullying' situation.*

*Assemblies will sometimes address the differing forms of bullying through staff or student presentations which may include use of film clips, literature or drama.*

*Whole school support of the national 'Anti-Bullying' week – incorporating any competitions promoted by this national event.*

*Frequent awareness of e-safety within ICT lessons, tutorial periods and assemblies.*

*Training and awareness raising with all our year 7 parents during transition re e-safety.*

*The definition of bullying and the procedures for dealing with bullying will be promoted on the school website.*

Most anti-bullying policies were focussed on procedures the school would take once bullying was recognised, which mostly followed a broad pattern of support for the victim, particularly to promote their confidence and self-esteem, and sanctions for the perpetrator. However, nine secondary schools and two primary schools identified that emotional and social support would be provided to both the victim and the perpetrator. Action to prevent bullying was mostly included within schools' behaviour policies, whereas procedures for responding to incidents of bullying tended to be included within standalone anti-bullying policies.

## **Overall extent schools' behaviour and anti-bullying approaches promoted respectful school and mental health**

Where school behaviour and anti-bully policies were available, they were given a researcher rating of the overall extent they promoted respectful school communities, and mental health and wellbeing based on the criterion stated in Annex B. Schools behaviour policies were promoting respectful school communities to a higher degree than mental health and wellbeing. Schools anti-bullying policies tended to be focussed on procedures for responding to bullying, therefore they did not represent particularly high levels of promoting respectful schools or mental health and wellbeing.

Behaviour policies that were rated highly for promoting mental health and wellbeing included the following elements:

- Disruptive behaviour was considered as a possible manifestation of social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Schools focussed on work to promote self-esteem and self-discipline to address disruptive behaviour, rather than to sanction disruptive behaviour.
- Schools focussed on trying to understand the underlying causing of pupils' disruptive behaviour and provided one to one pastoral support to address the underlying causes of the behaviour.



For example:

**Secondary Academy, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy**

**[FSM: medium; Ofsted: Requires Improvement]**

*The school places emphasis on understanding the emotional aspects of learning and ensuring that children build self-esteem. Targeted support is provided for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH).*

*Some pupils experience SEMH needs for a variety of reasons, e.g.: early childhood experience, environmental factors, inconsistent parenting, bereavement, bullying/discrimination and disaffection.*

*Pupils are identified through different school systems, such as: pupil progress meetings, SEND, and through concerns raised by staff and/or parent/carers. [The] academy investigates the concerns to gain an understanding of the cause and nature of the misbehaviour and consideration is given to how the underlying causes will be addressed through intervention and support.*

In terms of anti-bullying policies, those that were rated highly for promoting mental health and wellbeing focussed on building resilience, reparation and understanding of bullying behaviour, both from the perspective of the bullied and the bully as possible indicators of mental health needs. For example:

**Secondary school, Anti-bullying policy**

**[FSM: low; Ofsted: Requires Improvement]**

*Strategies to work with pupils struggling to make friends to boost confidence and self-esteem. Establish support mechanisms to help children who are being bullied. This could be an assigned group of staff or a group of pupils formed through a peer support scheme. Peer support schemes such as buddying, peer listening, or peer mediation can create a happier, friendlier environment and offer much needed support to children who have problems. Bullying often takes place in groups. Children have a choice of watching from the margins, joining in, trying to remain uninvolved or trying to help those being bullied. Acknowledge and reward children who help prevent bullying. Using additional support to help those students that find making and keeping friends difficult. Having friends is one of the best defences against bullying, but not everyone has the right social skills to make friends easily. Teaching assertiveness skills and confidence-building to individuals, small groups and classes may be a way to make more children make friends.*

**Catholic College, Anti-bullying Policy**

**FSM: medium; Ofsted: Requires Improvement]**

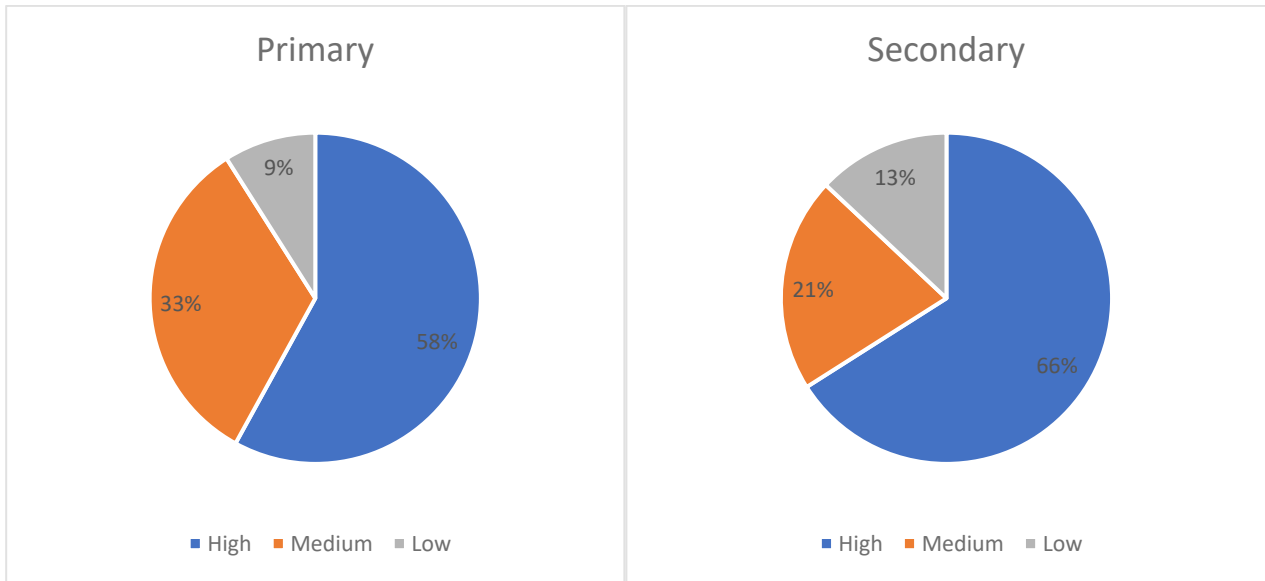
*The policy refers to pupils feeling safe in school and the PSHE/Citizenship programme which incorporates topics relevant to the issues surrounding bullying. The programme ranges from work on friendships, relationships, stereotyping and increasing self-esteem to the explicit exploration of the nature of the bully and bullying, advice on what to do if bullied, and promoting collective responsibility in facing the bullies. The policy also makes reference to understanding the behaviour of the bully and understanding this behaviour in the context of possible traumatic life events. The policy states that the victim may need support through sessions with the school counsellor, or if his/her academic progress has been affected, s/he may need the intervention of the Pastoral Leaders. The policy also states that the bully may need to be punished but also, he or she may need to see the counsellor to help modify the behaviour. He or she may need to be encouraged to take part in positive activities.*

The tables and pie charts below illustrate the extent the sample of primary and secondary schools' behaviour and anti-bullying policies promoted respectful school communities and supported mental health and wellbeing.

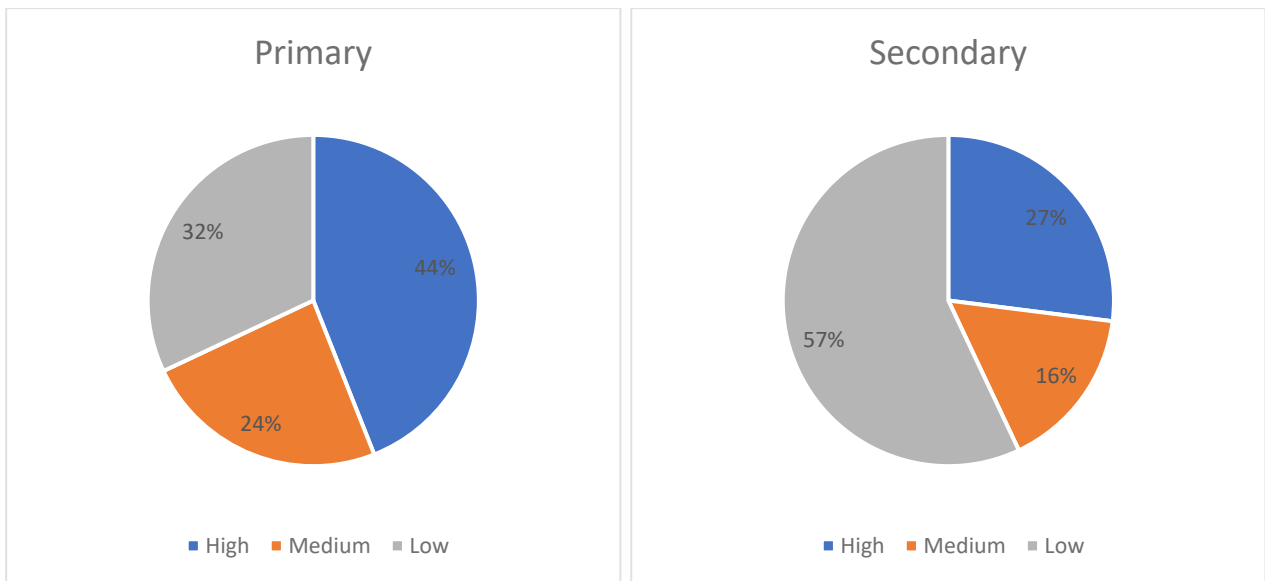
**Table 7: Overall extent behaviour policies promoted respectful school communities and mental health and wellbeing**

| Researcher rated category | Overall extent behaviour policies promoted respectful school communities |           | Overall extent behaviour policies promoted mental health and wellbeing |           |
|---------------------------|--|-----------|--|-----------|
|                           | Primary  | Secondary | Primary  | Secondary |
| High                      | 26 (58%)   | 28 (66%)  | 20 (44%)   | 12 (27%)  |
| Medium                    | 15 (33%)   | 9 (21%)   | 10 (24%)   | 7 (16%)   |
| Low                       | 4 (9%)   | 6 (13%)   | 15 (32%)   | 24 (57%)  |
| Total                     | 45 (100%)  | 43 (100%) | 45 (100%)  | 43 (100%) |

**Figure 14: Pie charts to show the overall extent behaviour policies promoted respectful school communities**



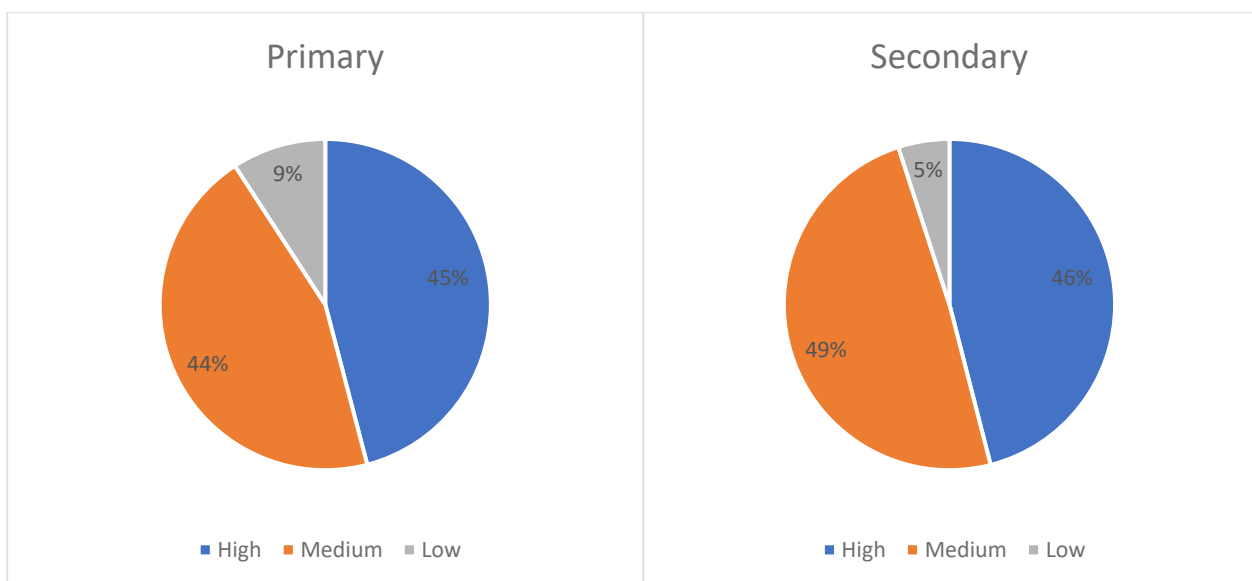
**Figure 15: Pie charts to show overall extent behaviour policies promoted mental health and wellbeing**



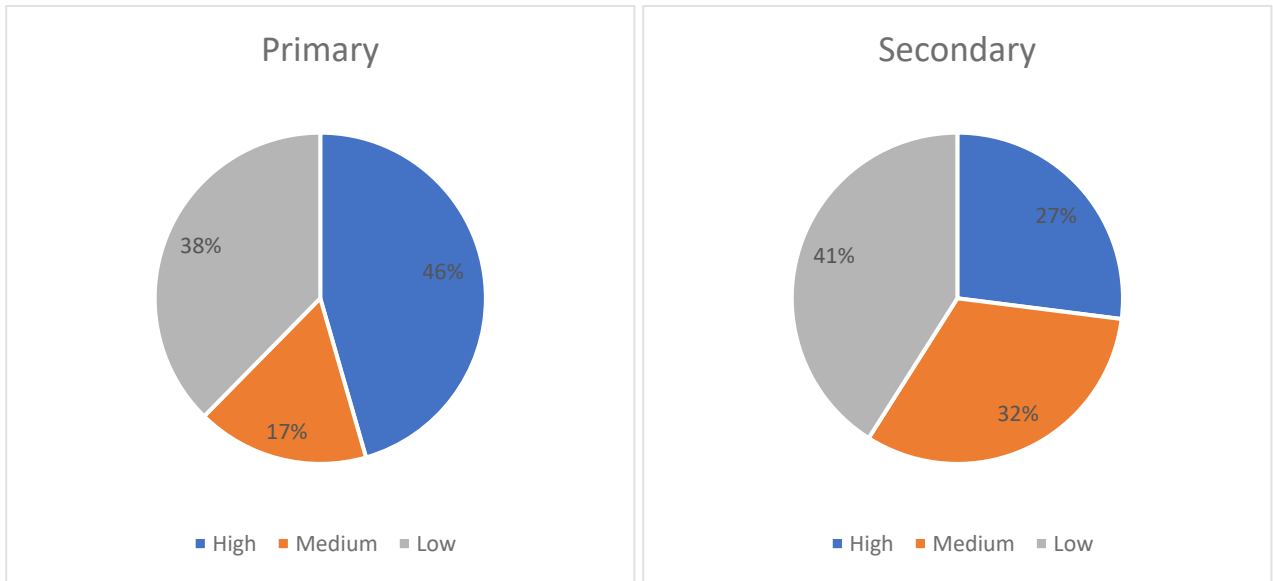
**Table 8: Overall extent anti-bullying policies promoted respectful school communities and mental health**

| Researcher rated category | Overall extent anti-bullying policies promoted respectful school communities |           | Overall extent anti-bullying policies promoted mental health and wellbeing |           |
|---------------------------|--|-----------|--|-----------|
|                           | Primary  | Secondary | Primary  | Secondary |
| High                      | 15 (45%)   | 17 (46%)  | 15 (46%)   | 10 (27%)  |
| Medium                    | 14 (44%)   | 18 (49%)  | 5 (17%)  | 12 (32%)  |
| Low                       | 3 (9%)   | 2 (5%)    | 12 (38%)   | 15 (41%)  |
| Total                     | 32 (100%)  | 37 (100%) | 32 (100%)  | 37 (100%) |

**Figure 16: Pie charts to show the overall extent anti-bullying policies promoted respectful school communities**



**Figure 17: Pie charts to show the overall extent anti-bullying policies promoted mental health and wellbeing**



# Chapter Five: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

## Introduction

Enshrined in law, all schools must have regard to the ‘Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years’<sup>18</sup> which provides statutory guidance for organisations working with and supporting children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities. Schools must consider how pupils with SEN can be supported to achieve the ‘best possible educational and other outcomes’.

Special educational provision should be matched to the pupil’s identified SEN. SEN are generally thought of in the following four broad areas of need and support:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Sensory and/or physical needs

The code of practice also sets out that all schools should adopt a graduated approach with four stages of action: assess, plan, do and review. This cycle of action should be revisited in increasing detail and with increasing frequency, to identify the best way of securing good progress. At each stage parents should be engaged with the setting, contributing their insights to assessment and planning. Intended outcomes should be shared with parents and reviewed with them, along with action taken by the setting, at agreed times. The graduated approach should be led and co-ordinated by the setting SENCO working with and supporting individual practitioners in the setting.

Pupils with more complex needs should receive a co-ordinated assessment process and the implementation of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, which should be reviewed at least yearly.

All primary schools and 91% (41/45) of secondary schools had a Special Educational Needs policy available on their websites. Of the four secondary schools where they were not available, there was an error message indicating that they were temporarily unavailable for two schools, one school had some information about SEN available but

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/398815/SEND\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_January\\_2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

not in the form of a policy document, and there was no indication that a policy existed for one school.

SEN policies were some of the lengthiest and detailed of all the policy documents. They were also all very closely linked to the code of practice and covered in detail schools' legislative duties.

## Promoting whole-school inclusion and wellbeing for pupils with SEN

Whole school inclusion for pupils with SEN was a prominent theme running through the vast majority of SEN policies in both primary and secondary schools. There was evidence of whole-school approaches to SEN in 30/45 (66%) primary schools and 35/41 (86%) secondary schools. For these schools, SEN policies were very closely linked to school values. Where there was no evidence that the SEN policies were part of whole-school approaches, they tended to be very generic, citing legislative duties only.

An example of a school embedding their SEN policy to their whole school values is described below:

### **Primary School, SEN Policy**

**[FSM: Low; Ofsted: Good]**

*'The school ethos values all pupils and celebrates diversity of experience, interest and achievement. All pupils need to experience praise, recognition and success and SEND pupils have equal entitlement to this. The school's aims are therefore the same for all pupils.'*

Accessibility is an important consideration for supporting pupils with SEN. There are legislative requirements that schools have an Accessibility Policy, and schools are required to include in their published SEN Information Report the plan prepared by the governing body or proprietor under paragraph 3 of Schedule 10 to the Equality Act 2010 (accessibility plan).<sup>19</sup>

For 32/45 (70%) primary and 25/45 (56%) secondary schools policies or statements in relation to accessibility were published online, either as part of their SEN documents or as stand-alone policies. Largely, these policies focussed on the physical access of the school grounds for disabled pupils, such as toilet facilities and the playground. Access to

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<sup>19</sup> Section 69(3)(b)(iv) Children and Families Act 2014,

the curriculum, in terms of differentiation and support was also a key theme running through SEN and accessibility documents.

SEN policies in both primary and secondary schools cited a number of different activities they were doing to promote mental health and wellbeing for SEN pupils. These included, specialised staff training in speech and language; dyslexia; ADHD; Autism; and bereavement. SEN policies also cited a number of different outside agencies they could refer to for additional support, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health teams, Occupational Therapy, Educational Psychology, and the school nurse. Parental engagement was also a prominent theme.

Several schools also noted that they were adhering to Quality First Teaching standards, and SEN policies were linked to schools' approaches, such as the Nurture approach. SEN pupils from one school were also able to access the 'Happy to be Me' programme, where staff members had been trained.

An example of a secondary school successfully promoting the mental health needs of SEN pupils within their policy is provided below:

***Secondary School and Sixth Form,***

***[FSM: medium; Ofsted: Good]***

*The school SEN policy included a section on Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH). Their provision to address mental health needs includes: personalisation team; pastoral support plans; access to regular, supported homework clubs; exam revision booster sessions; small group or 1:1 support for SEMH, including social skills, self-esteem, anger management, and drug awareness; horticulture; pupil profiles including strategies to support classroom teachers; individual counselling; individual reward system; peer mentoring; supported Inclusion Unit; advice and support from a range of external agencies, including the Early Intervention and Inclusion Team, Behaviour Support Service, and Educational Psychology Service; Aggression Replacement Therapy; and art counselling.*

An example of a primary school successfully promoting the mental health needs of SEN pupils within their policy is provided below:



### **Catholic Primary School, SEN Policy**

**[FSM: high; Ofsted: Outstanding]**

*The SEN policy includes a separate section on promoting mental health and wellbeing, and the support the school offers to improve the emotional, mental and social development of pupils with special educational needs.*

*'[The] school recognises that some children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in different ways. These may include: becoming withdrawn or isolated; or displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour.*

*These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as: Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD); Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD); or Attachment Disorder (AD).*

*It is also recognised by the school that children may display certain behaviours as a result of self-esteem or other issues such as neglect. [We] have clear processes to support children and young people and this is linked to Safeguarding and behaviour policies. These policies include detail on how the school manages effects of any disruptive behaviour so that it does not adversely affect other pupils.'*

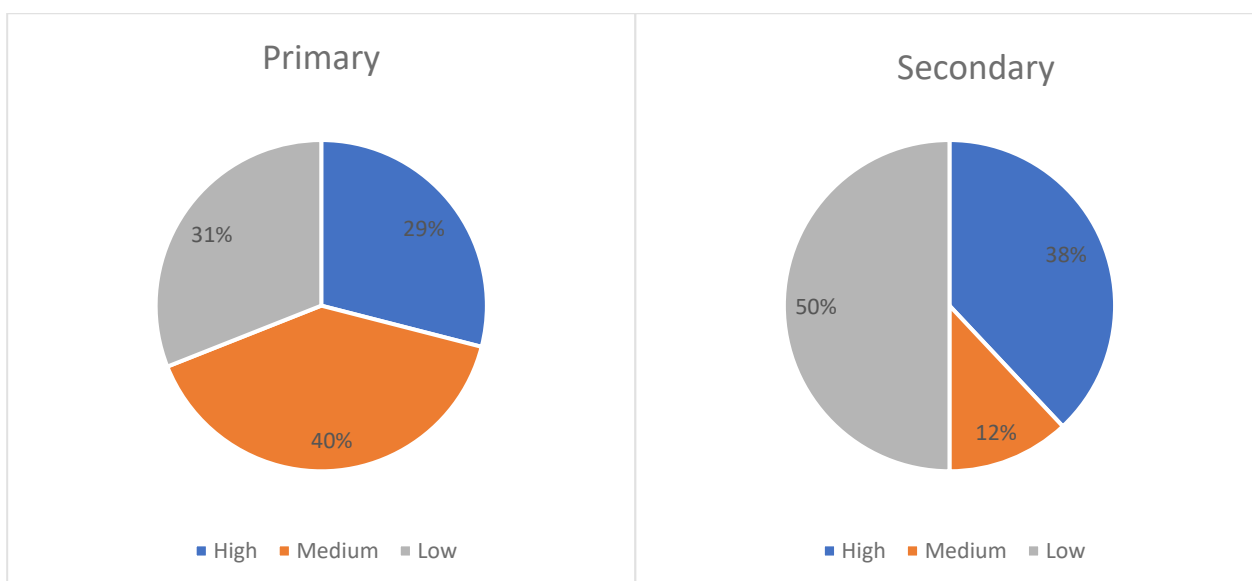
## **Overall extent schools' SEN policies promoted respectful schools and mental health**

The overall extent to which primary and secondary schools were promoting respectful schools and mental health is displayed in the table below, based on the researcher ratings provided in Annex B. There was evidence that 31/45 (69%) primary schools and 21/41 (50%) secondary schools were promoting respectful school communities to at least some extent within their SEN policies. In relation to mental health, there was evidence that 27/45 (60%) primary schools and 25/41 (61%) secondary schools were promoting mental health within their SEN policies.

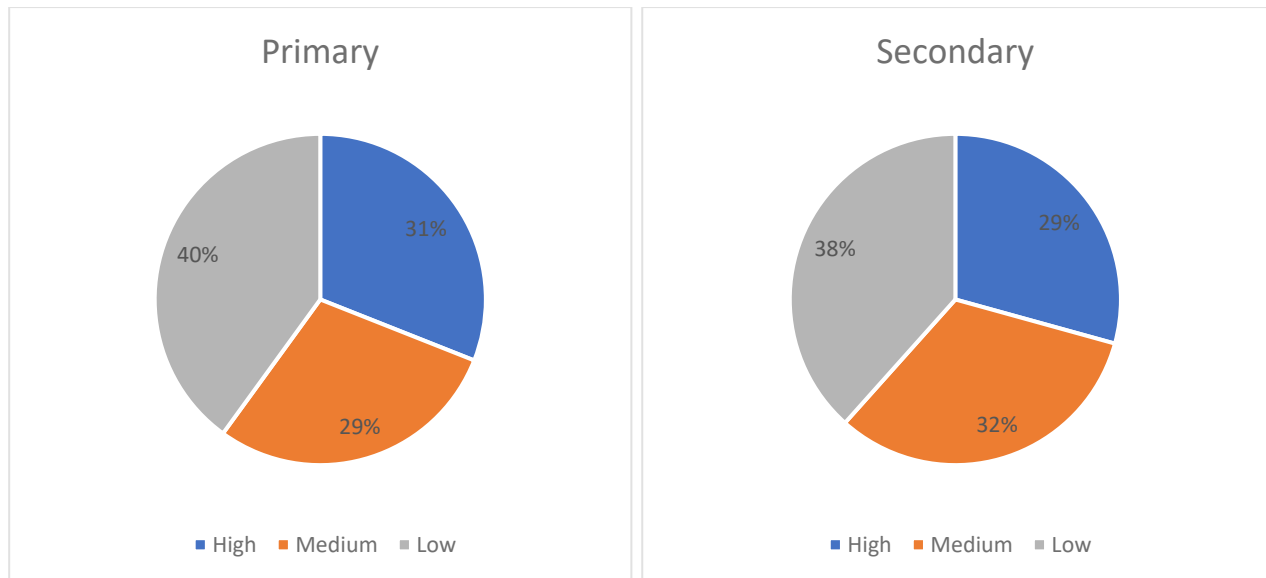
**Table 9: Extent SEN policies promoted respectful schools and mental health**

| Researcher rated category | Overall extent SEN policies promoted respectful school communities |                  | Overall extent SEN policies promoted mental health and wellbeing |                  |
|---------------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------|
|                           | Primary  | Secondary        | Primary  | Secondary        |
| <b>High</b>               | 29% 13   | 38% 16           | 31% 14   | 29% 12           |
| <b>Medium</b>             | 40% 18   | 12% 5            | 29% 13   | 32% 13           |
| <b>Low</b>                | 31% 14   | 50% 20           | 40% 18   | 38% 16           |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>45 (100%)</b>   | <b>41 (100%)</b> | <b>45 (100%)</b>   | <b>41 (100%)</b> |

**Figure 18: Pie charts to show overall extent SEN policies promoted respectful school communities**



**Figure 19: Pie charts to show the overall extent SEN policies promoted mental health and wellbeing**



## **Provision in special schools to promote mental health and wellbeing**

Special schools are specifically designed, staffed and resourced to provide tailored education to pupils with additional and complex needs to ensure they achieve their highest possible potential. Ten special schools were randomly sampled for this review, including one school from each geographical region (London accounting for two). The sample included schools specialising in supporting pupils with complex learning difficulties, disabled pupils with multiple needs, pupils with sight impairments, and pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. The sample included, five schools that were rated Outstanding, four rated Good and one rated as Requiring Improvement by Ofsted. The sample also included two schools providing secondary education, three schools providing primary education, and five schools providing both primary and secondary education. The table below shows the availability of policies for sampled special schools.

**Table 10: Availability of published policies for sample of special schools**

| <b>Policy area</b>                        | <b>Number of special schools that published online policies</b> |
|---|---|
| Behaviour                                 | 10  |
| Anti-bullying                             | 8   |
| SEN                                       | 10  |
| Equality                                  | 10  |
| Sex and relationship education            | 3   |
| Child protection                          | 10  |
| Values and ethos                          | 10  |
| Mental health                             | 1   |
| Curriculum                                | 10  |
| Pupil Premium                             | 10  |
| Supporting pupils with medical conditions | 6   |
| Accessibility plan                        | 4   |

## **Promoting respectful school communities in special schools**

Respectful school communities were promoted within the policies of all special schools in the sample to a high degree, and especially within policies on equality and anti-bullying.

Equality policies promoted respectful school communities in the following ways:

- Explicitly identifying mental illness as a disability
- Promoting community cohesion by providing pupils with opportunities to integrate within the community, and by challenging stereotypes about disability and mental illness.
- Raising aspirations of pupils within the school by ensuring equality of opportunities as well as promoting equality of opportunity within wider society.

Below is an example of a school equality policy:

***Secondary School, community special school, Equality Policy***

***[Ofsted: Outstanding]***

*Through our teaching and learning [...] we aim to: To promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through all appropriate curricular and extra-curricular opportunities; to reduce prejudice and increase understanding of equality through direct teaching across the curriculum; to move beyond deterministic notions of fixed ability and to model teaching and learning behaviours that avoids labelling children; to promote cultural development; to tackle prejudice and promote understanding in relation to people with disabilities both in school and the wider community; to eradicate prejudice related bullying in relation to the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010 and understanding through a rich range of experience, both in and beyond the school.*

Anti-bullying policies also promoted respectful schools communities to a high degree. One special school had received an award for being a *Rights Respecting School*, and another had adopted the *Kidsafe* approach to tackle bullying. Other schools embedded their anti-bullying policies within their whole-school ethos and promoted wellbeing as central to the policy. The example provided below shows how anti-bullying messages were promoted:

***Academy special school, Understanding bullying policy***

***[Ofsted: Outstanding]***

*The school is also committed to ensuring that all children and young people receive a curriculum that enriches their lives and promotes a respectful and caring ethos in preparation for adult life. Including: PHSCE and SRE Lessons; A whole school focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural which is embedded in the school curriculum; 'Have A Say' which is celebrated annually; and 'Anti-Bully week' which is celebrated annually nationwide in November. Work for this is evidenced and kept on file.*

## **Promoting mental health and wellbeing in special schools**

Mental health and wellbeing were promoted within the published policies to a high degree in all special schools in the sample. Three of the schools specialised in supporting pupils with complex social, emotional, and mental health needs, and therefore their policies

reflected this specialisation. Behaviour policies were especially strong in relation to the promotion of mental health and wellbeing.

Behaviour policies and strategies were embedded within school values promoting the rights of pupils to learn. They were substantially focussed on the promotion of positive learning behaviours and how behaviour and learning can be linked. The behavioural strategies were weighted towards praise and rewards, with very little, or no sanctions. There was a strong focus on raising self-esteem and emotional literacy, to ensure the right types of learning behaviours were reinforced. For instance, the school in the example below embedded their policy within their values:

***College, community special school, Behaviour Policy***

***[Ofsted: Requires Improvement]***

***Emotional Intelligence***

*Central to our ethos is the belief that emotions, and the behaviour they manifest, can be managed in a way that allows everyone to engage fully with each other and with learning. We believe that all members of our learning community can reach this 'emotionally intelligent' state and that herein is the key to a happier and more fulfilled life. We further believe that there are emotions and behaviours that are inherently healthy and desirable. These constructive states of mind include qualities such as: kindness, integrity, resourcefulness, creativity, compassion, tolerance, self respect, generosity, truthfulness, loyalty, sincerity, love and friendship. We recognise that most of our learners have attachment disorders and that challenging and rejecting behaviours are to be expected and depersonalised by staff.*

***Positive Emotional Leadership***

*To support our ethos we aim to adopt an approach that can most accurately be described as 'positive emotional leadership'. This method centres on everyone being encouraged to express positive emotions and behaviours as an antidote to negative ones. At its core are a range of verbal, non-verbal and systemic interactions designed to reinforce the healthy and desirable that in practice will involve monitoring and adapting our language and actions so they empower the people around us, not undermine them.*

*We are aware that positive emotional leadership requires energy and commitment. However, based on our knowledge and understanding, we fundamentally believe that the most effective way to disarm and change a person's behaviour is to change the way in which we habitually respond to the emotions that drive them.*

# Chapter Six: Promoting mental health and wellbeing

## Introduction

The Government's recent Green Paper, *Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision* focuses on earlier intervention and prevention, with the aim of ensuring children and young people showing early signs of distress are always able to access the right help, in the right setting, when they need it. The Green Paper recognises the vital role that schools, and colleges play in identifying mental health needs at an early stage, referring young people to specialist support, and working jointly with others to support young people experiencing problems.<sup>20</sup>

Currently, there is no duty on schools to have a separate mental health policy, however there are duties on schools to promote and protect the welfare of their pupils, as set out by Government guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education'. There are also duties on schools to ensure pupils with additional educational needs, including those in relation to mental health, are provided with adequate support to learn, as set out in, 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years'.

Overall, from the sample of 90 mainstream schools, only two primary schools and two secondary schools provided stand-alone and focussed policies on the mental health of pupils. An additional four secondary schools provided a page on their website including the contact details of mental health organisations.

Whilst very few schools provided mental health policies, it was apparent within the published policies that at least 25/45 (56%) primary schools and 20/45 (44%) secondary schools were providing some form of mental health support. This was either in the form targeted support for pupils displaying emotional and behavioural difficulties (12 primary and 6 secondary), universal support to promote pupils' self-esteem and resilience (8 primary and 9 secondary), or a combination of both (5 primary and 5 secondary).

## School-based targeted support for mental health and wellbeing

A number of support activities were identified within the policies that targeted pupils displaying emotional and behavioural difficulties. In secondary schools these included: externally provided counselling, one to one sessions with a school pastoral team

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/transforming-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-provision-a-green-paper>

member, and anger management classes. One school had also collaborated with *The Girls Network* to raise self-esteem, and another school had implemented an intervention group.

In primary schools targeted support included: one to one therapeutically based sessions with school staff, externally provided counselling and play therapy, and interventions as part of schools' *Nurture* programmes. One school was also implementing the *Happy to be Me* programme to raise self-esteem, and another school was implementing the *Thumbs Up* programme also to raise self-esteem.

Mostly, targeted mental health support was provided as part of Pupil Premium strategies. Pupils were identified as needing additional support, in the main, if they were displaying overtly disruptive behaviour, or because they were not achieving academic expectations. However, there was evidence of a small number of schools (four primary schools) using standardised mental health screening tools. These included the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Boxall Profile Assessment.

*The Boxall Profile* is a resource for the assessment of children and young people's social, emotional and behavioural development. It is a two-part checklist, which is completed by staff who know the pupil best. It identifies the levels of skills the pupil possess to access learning.<sup>21</sup> For example:

***Church of England Primary School, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy***

***[FSM: medium; Ofsted: Outstanding]***

*'Children will be placed in a nurture group if they are identified as having an emotional behavioural need. Before joining a group, an accurate assessment of the pupil's needs is constructed using the Boxall Profile assessment.'*

## **School-based universal support for mental health and wellbeing**

It was cited within the policies that 13 primary schools and 14 secondary schools were providing some form of universal support or preventative activities to promote mental health and wellbeing. Universal support in secondary schools included, school wellbeing centres; school Nurture approaches, school pastoral teams and home liaison workers; embedding mental health education within the curriculum, particularly in PSHE and SEAL

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<sup>21</sup> <https://boxallprofile.org/>



programmes; promoting exercise, such as school gym facilities; and engaging with a local farm for pupils to carry out work to raise self-esteem.

In primary schools universal support included; school *Nurture* approaches; Forest school approaches; circle time; classes on self-esteem and resilience; and embedding mental health and wellbeing within the curriculum. For instance, promoting the importance of positive relationships in PE through teamwork, encouraging pupils to hold their own assemblies on each area of the SEAL programme, and incorporating mental health into classes on healthy living and healthy lifestyles.

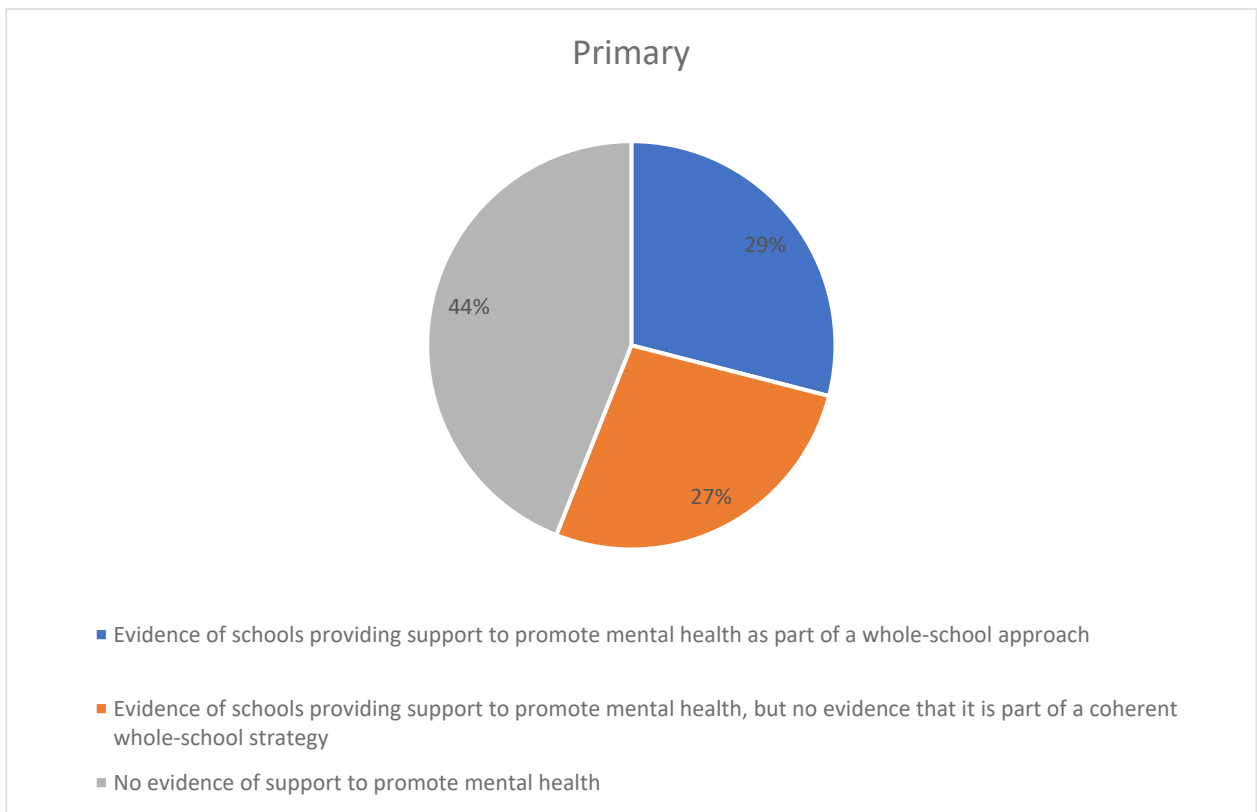
## Evidence of whole-school strategies to promote mental health and wellbeing

As noted above, 25 primary schools and 20 secondary schools were providing some form of support for pupils' mental health needs cited within their published policies. However, the extent to which those schools were doing this as part of a whole-school, coherent approach or strategy to promote mental health and emotional wellbeing was varied. The table below provides a breakdown of the extent mental health provision was part of whole-school approaches.

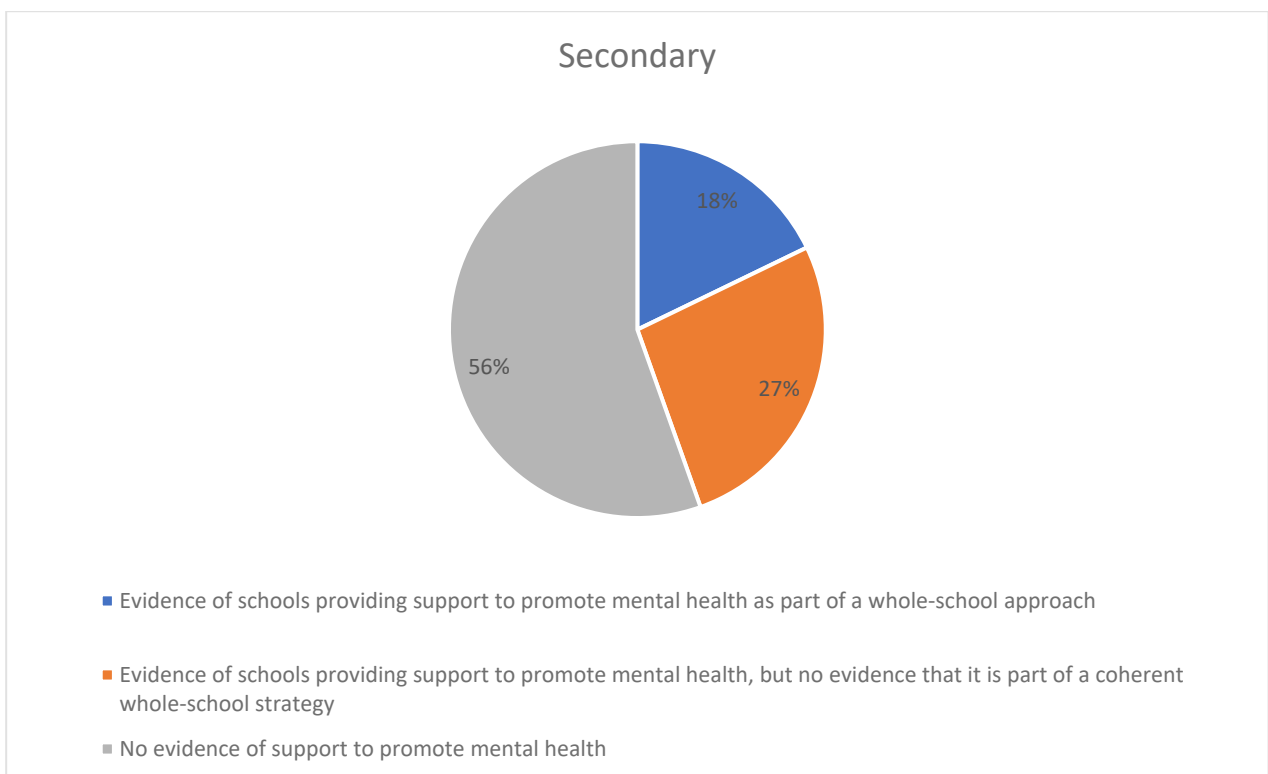
**Table 11: Extent mental health provision part of whole-school approaches**

|   | <b>Primary schools<br/>(n=45)</b> | <b>Secondary schools<br/>(n=45)</b> |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Evidence of schools providing support to promote mental health as part of a whole-school approach                                   | 13 (29%)                          | 8 (18%)                             |
| Evidence of schools providing support to promote mental health, but no evidence that it is part of a coherent whole-school strategy | 12 (27%)                          | 12 (27%)                            |
| No evidence of support to promote mental health   | 20 (44%)                          | 25 (56%)                            |

**Figure 20 Pie chart to show the extent mental health provision was part of whole-school approaches in primary schools**



**Figure 21: Pie chart to show the extent mental health provision was part of whole-school approaches in secondary schools**



According to the published policies, it appeared that 13 primary schools were showing excellent practice in providing support to promote the mental health and emotional wellbeing of their pupils as part of whole-school coherent strategies or approaches. These included, six with Outstanding Ofsted ratings, four with Good ratings, and two with Requires improvement. Of these 13 schools, five had high free school meals eligibility, four medium and three low.

Four of these 13 schools had implemented a whole-school *Nurture* approach, one had implemented a whole-school *Thrive* approach, one was implementing the *Happy to be Me* programme, and one was implementing the *Thumbs Up* programme. One of the schools had a standalone mental health policy, and two schools had been recognised by national award programmes for excellent practice in relation to inclusion and progress with raising aspirations for disadvantaged pupils.

An example of a primary school showing evidence within its policies of excellent practice in this area is provided below:

### ***Catholic Primary School***

#### ***[FSM: high; Ofsted: Outstanding***

*'[We are] an oversubscribed Catholic Primary, based in [...] - one of the most highly deprived areas of the country. The area notoriously has a problem with drugs, gangs and crime, many of our children witnessing this on a regular basis or being directly affected by this activity. As a result, our children enter school below national expectation with the majority being significantly below national expectations. The socio-economic background of our area is one of high numbers of unemployment. Some of our families do not value education, many of them having limited educational experiences; often never completing formal qualifications. This leads to limited life chances and, to some of our families living in extreme poverty with a lack of aspirations or feeling the need to invest in education. It is our strong belief that recruitment of the right people in all areas of school has majorly contributed to the success of our school. We have very talented and able staff that have shared and are willing to share with other colleagues and schools. As an IIP award School we create an environment where all are given support to achieve the schools and their own personal professional targets which will benefit the children in our care. There are certain priorities that have been identified which we feel will enable our pupils to fulfil their Mission Statement.'*

*The Pupil Premium strategy is underpinned by research findings showing what best benefits raising attainment for disadvantaged children. Interventions*

*implemented by the school include: one to one intervention in mornings to help children with persistent absenteeism get to school; breakfast club; social and emotional support and one to one tuition. There are dedicated mentors working with parents to support children going to school, and the school also provides the Thumbs Up programme and works with Barnardo's delivering sessions on life skills and mental wellbeing.*

According to the published policies, it appeared that eight secondary schools were showing excellent practice in providing support to promote the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils that was part of coherent whole-school approaches. These schools included, three with high eligibility for free school meals, four with medium eligibility, and one with low eligibility. Three of the schools had Outstanding Ofsted ratings, three had Good ratings and two have been rated as Requires improvement. Two of the schools had also received awards for excellent practice in relation to inclusion, and one had a specialised mental health policy in place. One of the schools had a specialised Wellbeing Centre, one was implementing intervention groups and one had an onsite gym which was used to promote wellbeing. An example of a secondary school providing excellent practice according to its policies in this area is provided below:

***Secondary Academy and Sixth Form College***

***[FSM: low; Ofsted: Good]***

*The Academy refers equality, diversity and tolerance throughout the website and all the policies reviewed were underpinned by the school's values. The school also has a page on the website which supports values, morals beliefs and respect. The school also implements a short-term intervention group which aims to give pupils strategies to help them overcome barriers to learning, including those relating to emotional and social difficulties. The website also draws on research which underpins a lot of the school's ideas for social and emotional support.*

# Chapter Seven: Conclusions and considerations for future development

## Introduction

This review explored the information and policies published on 45 secondary schools, 45 primary schools and 10 special schools' websites in relation to the extent the published information promoted respectful school communities, and mental health and wellbeing.

This review intended to understand how schools view their statutory duties in relation to mental health and wellbeing and developing respectful school communities. This was a desk-based study only, direct contact was not made with schools to verify whether activities cited within their policies were an accurate representation of what was being implemented, or to check whether they were carrying out activities to promote mental health and wellbeing that were not referred to within their policies.

It is important for the reader to note therefore, that this study does not provide a reliable estimation of all the activities schools are doing to promote mental health and wellbeing, and the limitations set out above should be carefully considered alongside the findings from this study.

## Considerations for future development of policy and practice

This review identified a variety of approaches, interventions, and support stated within schools' policies that can contribute towards the promotion of mental health and wellbeing. However, there was limited reference within these policies that they were part of wider whole-school strategies. This suggests that schools would benefit from further awareness, advice and resources to enable stand-alone interventions to be further embedded within coherent whole-school strategies that promote the mental health and wellbeing of all pupils.

The schools reviewed for this study had coherent strategies in place for pupils with SEN. The SEN policies indicated that SENCo's regularly accessed training, and schools were working collaboratively with one another as part of clusters or networks to share resources, expertise, and best practice. However, the mental health needs of pupils with SEN, and how mental health needs can constitute SEN were not consistently addressed across SEN policies. This suggests that training accessed by SENCo's should emphasise mental health to a greater degree to enable SENCo's to develop their specialisation in this area further. This should be both in relation to the mental health needs of pupils with SEN and how mental health can constitute SEN.

Equality, diversity and tolerance were themes within the values and aims of the schools reviewed. There were some examples of excellent practice in this area, including four schools that had received awards. However, a number of schools provided generic equality policies citing legislative duties only or policies that were focussed on employment rights. Whilst these schools were operating within the law, there was no evidence that they were promoting a culture of inclusion and tolerance within their policies. This suggests that the achievement of inclusion awards can be effective ways of developing strong inclusive cultures within schools. Therefore, further consideration should be given to how these awards can be more widely accessed by schools, and by ensuring schools have adequate advice, resources and training to do so.

Most evidence-informed approaches and interventions to promote mental health and wellbeing were identified within schools' behaviour policies. This indicates that schools were identifying pupils' additional emotional and psychological needs by the extent of their disruptive behaviour. Additionally, most evidence informed practice identified in this review related to behaviour management techniques. This suggests that further advice, training and resources might be necessary to enable schools to more comprehensively understand the links between mental health and behaviour, and to enable schools to address these needs more holistically. It might also be helpful for schools to further their awareness of risk factors relating to mental illness, particularly where pupils are not behaving in overtly disruptive ways, such as pupils who might be suffering with anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicidal thoughts.

To further enable schools' awareness of mental health, and to fully underpin how schools' policies can promote the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, it might be helpful if there was a shift in the discourse of guidance and training from behaviour and behaviour management, to a focus on mental health, wellbeing and building emotional resilience.

## **Considerations for future research**

Much of the mental health and wellbeing provision identified within the schools' policies was funded using Pupil Premium allocation. Further research could explore the proportions of Pupil Premium funds used to provide support for pupils' mental health needs. Exploration could include analysis of relationships between Pupil Premium spend and outcomes for pupils across a number of indicators, including wellbeing and attainment. For example, is there a relationship between high spend and high cost interventions such as targeted counselling and better outcomes, or are schools investing in more preventative strategies, at a lower cost, more successful in promoting whole-school mental health and wellbeing?

This review identified 13 primary schools and eight secondary schools showing excellent practice to promote mental health and wellbeing across whole-school approaches, according to their published policies. Further exploration of these schools, including making contact with them for further information about implementation, could provide useful case studies to share with schools to promote best practice and evidence informed commissioning.

Several approaches, interventions, programmes, schemes, training and resources implemented by schools have been identified in this review. A list of these has been provided in Annex D. It has not been possible within the scope of this study to explore the evidence base in relation to the effectiveness of these. Further research is required to fully explore the strength of the evidence base in relation to programmes and approaches currently being implemented by schools, and to understand further the enablers to effective implementation. Schools need to be better supported to make evidence informed choices about mental health support. A centrally held resource database signposting schools to information about resources, approaches and programmes that can promote mental health, and that holds information about their effectiveness, and enablers to implementation would be a helpful tool for schools.

## Annex A: Methodology

To allow for a thorough exploration and comprehensive understanding of the research questions, within the required timeframe, content analysis of the information and policies published on 100 school websites was conducted. The analysis included exploration of policies or information schools are required to publish, as well as exploration of other information or policies on schools' websites where there are no requirements to publish but relate to the research questions.

### Sampling

A stratified random sample of schools was extracted from GOV.UK School's Information Service<sup>22</sup>. The sampling strategy, set out in the table below, was designed to ensure representativeness of schools with different characteristics and to limit the likelihood of biases.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/?SelectedTab=Groups>



Table 12: Sampling strategy

| Variable                                 | Minimum targets |           |             |
|--|-----------------|-----------|-------------|
|  | Primary         | Secondary | Special/PRU |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             | 45              | 45        | 10          |
| <b>Region</b>                            |                 |           |             |
| North East                               | 5               | 5         | 1           |
| North West                               | 5               | 5         | 1           |
| East Midlands                            | 5               | 5         | 1           |
| West Midlands                            | 5               | 5         | 1           |
| East of England                          | 5               | 5         | 1           |
| London                                   | 5               | 5         | 1           |
| South East                               | 5               | 5         | 1           |
| South West                               | 5               | 5         | 1           |
| Yorkshire and Humber                     | 5               | 5         | 1           |
| <b>Deprivation (% free school meals)</b> |                 |           |             |
| High                                     | 10              | 10        |             |
| Med                                      | 10              | 10        |             |
| Low                                      | 10              | 10        |             |
| <b>Location</b>                          |                 |           |             |
| Urban                                    | 30              | 30        |             |
| Rural                                    | 10              | 5         |             |
| <b>Ofsted</b>                            |                 |           |             |
| Outstanding                              | 10              | 10        |             |
| Good                                     | 10              | 10        |             |
| Requires improvement                     | 10              | 10        |             |
| <b>School type</b>                       |                 |           |             |
| Academy                                  | 15              | 15        |             |
| Free school                              | 2               | 2         |             |
| Maintained school                        | 15              | 15        |             |
| Faith school                             | 5               | 5         |             |

## Content analysis

This project utilised a desk-based, qualitative review of the content of the 100 sampled schools' published policies and other information available from each school's website. The review included analysis of the following 11 policy areas (see Annex 1 for further information about each policy area, and their relevance to the review):

- School behaviour including anti-bullying
- SEN

- Equality
- Sex and relationships
- Child protection
- School values and ethos
- Mental health
- Curriculum
- Pupil Premium
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Accessibility plan
- Other relevant policies and information were also recorded where appropriate.

Qualitative content analysis of this nature can be broadly defined as, ‘an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models, without rash quantification.’<sup>23</sup>

The analytical approach adopted for this study broadly followed deductive category application, which consisted of applying pre-determined categories to texts within policy documents. Coding rules were formulated to determining exactly what circumstances a policy could be coded with a category.<sup>24</sup>

For each of the 11 policy areas identified as relevant for this review, the following coding categorisations were applied (the full coding framework is provided in Annex B):

- Timeliness of the policy and extent kept up to date
- Evidence of staff training and specialisms
- Evidence of collaboration with other schools
- Evidence based programmes/interventions or models implemented
- Extent of collaborative working with parents and families
- Extent of collaborative working within the community and with outside agencies
- Extent that the school aligns policy with specific needs and characteristics of the school and its pupils

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<sup>23</sup> Mayring, Philipp (2000). Qualitative Content Analysis. *Qualitative Social Research*, 1(2), Art. 20, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0002204>.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*

- Evidence of whole-school/systemic approaches underpinning policy area

These indicators were then used to formulate deductive categorisation of the extent the policy or information addresses respectful school communities and mental health and wellbeing. To determine this, the following categorisation rules were applied:

- Overall degree policy or information promotes respectful school communities (high/medium/low)

Categorisation rules:

- High – Strong evidence the policy/information promotes respectful school communities, including tolerance, respect, understanding of difference and the promotion of values
- Medium - Some evidence the policy/information promotes respectful school communities, including tolerance, respect, understanding of difference and the promotion of values
- Low – Little or no evidence policy/information promotes respectful school communities, including tolerance, respect, understanding of difference and the promotion of values.

- Overall degree policy or information promotes positive mental health and wellbeing (high/medium/low)

Categorisation rules:

- High –Strong evidence of the promotion of positive mental health, including identification of risk factors, ways to strengthen protective/resilience factors, promotion of healthy relationships between pupils; between staff and pupils, and between the school and families. Clarity of expectations on behaviour and anti-bullying, whole school involvement in promoting positive mental health.
- Medium - Some evidence of the promotion of positive mental health, including identification of risk factors, ways to strengthen protective/resilience factors, promotion of healthy relationships between pupils; between staff and pupils, and between the school and families. Some clear expectations on behaviour and anti-bullying, part school involvement to promote mental health
- Low – Little or no evidence of the promotion of positive mental health, including identification of risk factors, ways to strengthen protective/resilience factors, promotion of healthy relationships between pupils; between staff and pupils, and between the school and families.

Unclear expectations on behaviour and anti-bullying. Unclear responsibilities to promote mental health.

Examples from each policy to underpin the categorisations that were applied were also recorded to ensure consistent and reliable analysis. Once all policy areas for each school had been reviewed and categorised, general reflections, areas of good practice, examples of innovation, and overall extent the school website promoted respectful schools and mental health and wellbeing were also recorded.

For a full overview of the coding proforma developed for this study see Annex B.

# Annex B: Content analysis coding framework

## Recorded for each school

From School's Information Service (GOV.UK)

- School name
- Weblink
- Phase of education
- Region
- Deprivation (% FSM decoded)
- Urban/rural decoded
- Type

## Policy areas:

- School behaviour including anti-bullying
- SEND
- Equality
- Sex and relationships
- Child protection
- School values and ethos
- Mental health
- Curriculum
- Pupil Premium
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Accessibility plan

## The following information to be extracted for each of the policy areas

- Policy published (Yes/No)
- Date published
- Date reviewed
- Evidence of staff training (Yes, all staff; Yes, some or identified staff members; No)
- Evidence of staff specialisms/expertise (Yes; No)
- Examples/notes staff specialisms
- Evidence of collaboration with other schools/networks/clusters (Yes/No)
- Examples/notes collaboration with other schools
- Evidence based programmes/interventions or models implemented (Yes/No)
- Examples/notes evidence-based programmes/interventions or models
- Parental engagement (High/medium/low)
- Coding definitions:
  - High –Parents/carers fully consulted with policy/information. Evidence of strong partnerships between school and parents/carers in relation to policy area.

- Medium - Some consultation with parents/carers. Limited evidence of partnerships between school and parents/carers in relation to policy area.
- Low – Very little or no evidence of parent/carer consultation. Little or no evidence of partnerships between school and parents/carers in relation to policy area.
- Examples/notes parental engagement
- Community/outside agency engagement (high/medium/low)

Categorisation rules:

- High –Strong evidence of community/other agency partnerships in relation to policy area
- Medium - Some evidence of community/other agency partnerships in relation to policy area
- Low – Little or no evidence of community/other agency partnerships in relation to policy area
- Examples/notes community engagement
- Policy/ information personalised to needs or characteristics of school/pupils (high/medium/low)

Categorisation rules:

- High – Strong evidence that policy/information has been adapted/personalised to specific needs/characteristics of school and/or pupils
- Medium - Some evidence that policy/information has been adapted/personalised to specific needs/characteristics of school and/or pupils
- Low – Little or no evidence that policy/information has been adapted/personalised to specific needs/characteristics of school and/or pupils.
- Examples/notes personalised to needs or characteristics of school/pupils
- Evidence of whole-school/systemic approaches (high/medium/low)
  - Categorisation rules:
  - High – Strong evidence whole-school/systemic approaches are adopted in relation to policy area
  - Medium - Some evidence whole-school/systemic approaches are adopted in relation to policy area
  - Low – Little or no evidence whole-school/systemic approaches are adopted in relation to policy area
- Examples/notes whole-school/systemic approaches
- Extent to which policy/information addresses respectful school communities (High/medium/low)

Categorisation rules:

- High – Strong evidence the policy/information promotes respectful school communities, including tolerance, respect, understanding of difference and the promotion of values
- Medium - Some evidence the policy/information promotes respectful school communities, including tolerance, respect, understanding of difference and the promotion of values
- Low – Little or no evidence policy/information promotes respectful school communities, including tolerance, respect, understanding of difference and the promotion of values
- Examples/notes policy/information addresses respectful school communities
- Extent to which policy/information addresses positive mental health and wellbeing (High/medium/low)

Categorisation rules:

- High –Strong evidence of the promotion of positive mental health, including identification of risk factors, ways to strengthen protective/resilience factors, promotion of healthy relationships between pupils; between staff and pupils, and between the school and families. Clarity of expectations on behaviour and anti-bullying, whole school involvement in promoting positive mental health.
- Medium - Some evidence of the promotion of positive mental health, including identification of risk factors, ways to strengthen protective/resilience factors, promotion of healthy relationships between pupils; between staff and pupils, and between the school and families. Some clear expectations on behaviour and anti-bullying, part school involvement to promote mental health
- Low – Little or no evidence of the promotion of positive mental health, including identification of risk factors, ways to strengthen protective/resilience factors, promotion of healthy relationships between pupils; between staff and pupils, and between the school and families. Unclear expectations on behaviour and anti-bullying. Unclear responsibilities to promote mental health.
- Examples/notes information/policy promotes mental health

### **General coding for each school, following review of all policies/information**

- Overall degree school website promotes respectful school communities (high/medium/low)

Categorisation rules:

- High – Strong evidence the policy/information promotes respectful school communities, including tolerance, respect, understanding of difference and the promotion of values

- Medium - Some evidence the policy/information promotes respectful school communities, including tolerance, respect, understanding of difference and the promotion of values
- Low – Little or no evidence policy/information promotes respectful school communities, including tolerance, respect, understanding of difference and the promotion of values
- Examples/notes degree website promotes respectful school communities
- Overall degree website promotes positive mental health (high/medium/low)

Categorisation rules:

- High –Strong evidence of the promotion of positive mental health, including identification of risk factors, ways to strengthen protective/resilience factors, promotion of healthy relationships between pupils; between staff and pupils, and between the school and families. Clarity of expectations on behaviour and anti-bullying, whole school involvement in promoting positive mental health.
- Medium - Some evidence of the promotion of positive mental health, including identification of risk factors, ways to strengthen protective/resilience factors, promotion of healthy relationships between pupils; between staff and pupils, and between the school and families. Some clear expectations on behaviour and anti-bullying, part school involvement to promote mental health
- Low – Little or no evidence of the promotion of positive mental health, including identification of risk factors, ways to strengthen protective/resilience factors, promotion of healthy relationships between pupils; between staff and pupils, and between the school and families. Unclear expectations on behaviour and anti-bullying. Unclear responsibilities to promote mental health.
- Examples/notes website promotes mental health
- Additional reflections/notes
- Examples of good practice



## Annex C: School policy areas relevant to this review

| Policy Area                                | Legislation?            |  | Government guidance?  | School required to write policy / information? | Publication requirements?                           |   | How is the requirement relevant to this review?   |   |
|--|-------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|
|  | Maintained Schools      | Academies                                |   |  | Maintained Schools                                  | Academies   | Respectful school communities   | Supporting mental health  |
| School Behaviour (including anti-bullying) | Yes                     | Yes                                      | Yes<br>For <a href="#">behaviour</a> and <a href="#">anti-bullying</a>  | Yes  | Yes - online  | Yes - online  | Yes - Setting clear expectations of behaviour at the heart of developing a respectful school community.   | Yes – consideration on how bullying can impact on CYP mental health, including online bullying  |
| SEND                                       | Yes                     | Yes                                      | Yes   | Yes  | Yes - online  | Yes - online  | Yes – how school supports SEND pupils can help promote understanding of difference  | Yes – MH needs can constitute an SEND and should be supported   |
| Equality                                   | Yes                     | Yes                                      | <a href="#">Yes</a>   | Yes  | Yes - online  | Yes - online  | Yes – Public Sector Equalities Duty: Schools have a duty to have regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups | Yes - MH disorders can result in a disability; MH problems more common for some protected groups.   |
| Sex and Relationships Education            | Yes (secondary schools) | No but must have regard for the guidance | <a href="#">Yes</a>   | Yes  | No, but many chose to                               | No  | Yes – if healthy relationships, bullying are covered  | Yes – If MH topics are covered  |
| Child Protection                           | Yes                     | Yes                                      | Yes<br>Child Protection Policy requirements are shown within safeguarding guidance<br><a href="#">KCSIE</a> – PG14&15 | Yes  | It must be made available (not specifically online) | It must be made available (not specifically online) | Yes –Children Act 1989 - Bullying should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer, significant harm.  | Yes – Mental health difficulties or illness could pose a risk to child safety, especially with regards to self-harm or challenging behaviours |

| Policy Area      | Legislation?       |           | Government guidance?  | School required to write policy / information? | Publication requirements? |              | How is the requirement relevant to this review?   |  |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------|---|--|---------------------------|--------------|---|--|
|                  | Maintained Schools | Academies |   |  | Maintained Schools        | Academies    | Respectful school communities   | Supporting mental health   |
| Values and Ethos | No                 | No        | No  | Yes – a statement                              | Yes - online              | Yes - online | Yes – could reflect a whole school approach, focus on cohesion and respect  | Yes – could reflect a whole school approach, focus on wellbeing as well as achievement |
| Mental Health    | No                 | No        | No  | No   | No                        | No           | Yes – work to promote wellbeing; could reflect intersection with other policies   | Yes – if exists should set out approach to MH  |
| Curriculum       | Yes                | Yes       | No  | Yes  | Yes – online              | Yes - online | Yes - Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society (usually referred to as SMSC) ; and</li> <li>• prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later <i>life</i>.</li> </ul> | Yes – As for respectful school communities   |
| Pupil Premium    | No                 | No        | Yes – <a href="#">Pupil Premium: funding and accountability for schools</a> | Yes  | Yes – Online              | Yes - Online | No  | Yes - Pupil premium can be used to provide support for MH and wellbeing                |

| Policy Area                               | Legislation?       |           | Government guidance?   | School required to write policy / information? | Publication requirements?                              |  | How is the requirement relevant to this review? |  |
|---|--------------------|-----------|--|--|--|--|---|--|
|   | Maintained Schools | Academies |  |  | Maintained Schools                                     | Academies                              | Respectful school communities                   | Supporting mental health   |
| Supporting Pupils with medical conditions | Yes                | Yes       | Yes – <a href="#">supporting pupils at schools with medical conditions</a> | Yes  | No, but should be available to parents <sup>25</sup> : | No, but should be available to parents | No  | Yes - MH disorders can result in a disability and MH can result in ongoing absence. May include details on links to CYP returning from Tier 4 inpatient CAMHS / hospital schools |
| Accessibility plan                        | Yes                | Yes       | No   | Yes  | No   | No                                     | No  | Yes - How pupils with a disability are supported to access curriculum  |

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<sup>25</sup> “Governing bodies should ensure that all schools develop a policy for supporting pupils with medical conditions that is reviewed regularly and is readily accessible to parents and school staff”

## Annex D: School resources, schemes, interventions, programmes, training, and approaches identified in this review

|  | Weblinks  |
|--|---|
| <b>Equality</b>                          |   |
| Envision project                         | <a href="http://www.envision.org.uk/">http://www.envision.org.uk/</a>   |
| Inclusion Mark award                     | <a href="http://iqmaward.com/">http://iqmaward.com/</a>   |
| <b>Mental health and wellbeing</b>       |   |
| Happy to be Me                           | <a href="http://happysecretseducation.co.uk/Training-Packages-for-Schools/Self-esteem-Nurture">http://happysecretseducation.co.uk/Training-Packages-for-Schools/Self-esteem-Nurture</a>   |
| The Girls Network                        | <a href="https://thegirlsnetwork.org.uk/">https://thegirlsnetwork.org.uk/</a>   |
| Thumbs Up                                | <a href="http://www.thumbsupprogramme.co.uk/">http://www.thumbsupprogramme.co.uk/</a>   |
| Place2Be; Place2Talk                     | <a href="https://www.place2be.org.uk">https://www.place2be.org.uk</a>   |
| Peacemakers Org                          | <a href="http://www.peacemakers.org.uk/">http://www.peacemakers.org.uk/</a>   |
| THRIVE approach                          | <a href="https://www.thriveapproach.com">https://www.thriveapproach.com</a>   |
| Marvellous Me approach                   | <a href="https://marvellousme.com">https://marvellousme.com</a>   |
| <b>Behaviour</b>                         |   |
| It's good to be green behaviour scheme   | <a href="https://www.primaryteaching.co.uk/goodtobegreen">https://www.primaryteaching.co.uk/goodtobegreen</a>   |
| Team Teach                               | <a href="http://www.teamteach.co.uk">www.teamteach.co.uk</a>  |
| Kidsafe approach bullying                | <a href="https://www.kidsafeuk.co.uk">https://www.kidsafeuk.co.uk</a>   |
| Dojo points                              | <a href="https://www.classdojo.com">https://www.classdojo.com</a>   |
| 123 Magic approach                       | <a href="https://www.123magic.com">https://www.123magic.com</a>   |
| Go4Schools resource                      | <a href="http://www.go4schools.com">www.go4schools.com</a>  |
| Norfolk step approach                    | <a href="https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/education-and-training-0-25/early-years/early-years-inclusion/behaviour">https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/education-and-training-0-25/early-years/early-years-inclusion/behaviour</a> |
| IRIS software system to record behaviour | <a href="https://www.iris.ac">https://www.iris.ac</a>   |
| MAPA training for behaviour              | <a href="http://www.crisisprevention.com/MAPA/Training">www.crisisprevention.com/MAPA/Training</a>  |
| Behaviour Watch system                   | <a href="https://gb12.behaviourwatch.co.uk/">https://gb12.behaviourwatch.co.uk/</a>   |
| SIMS                                     | <a href="https://www.capita-sims.co.uk">https://www.capita-sims.co.uk</a>   |

|                            | <b>Weblinks</b>   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Standardised scales</b> |   |
| SDQ                        | <a href="http://www.sdqinfo.org/a0.html">www.sdqinfo.org/a0.html</a>  |
| EExAT (scale)              | <a href="http://earlyexcellence.com/eexat/">http://earlyexcellence.com/eexat/</a>   |
| WELLCOMM (scale)           | <a href="https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/products/wellcomm">https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/products/wellcomm</a>   |
| AET model (Autism)         | <a href="http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/resources/person-centred-planning-toolkits.aspx">http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/resources/person-centred-planning-toolkits.aspx</a> |
| Boxall Profile Assessment  | <a href="https://boxallprofile.org">https://boxallprofile.org</a>   |



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