External Evaluation Report

EqualiTeach: Equally Safe Programme

Embedding best practice in preventing and tackling identity-based bullying and developing tailored, whole-school approaches.

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Executive Summary

Funded by the Department of Education as part of a project to challenge identity-based bullying, both online and in person, the Equally Safe project was delivered in 71 schools across England in the first round. EqualiTeach worked with schools via this anti-bullying programme to deliver the following:

- resources and guidance to audit existing equalities and anti-bullying work
- consultancy to update and strengthen policies in line with the Equality Act 2010
- staff training events covering topics such on creating equal and inclusive environments and tackling identity-based bullying; understanding key terms and key issues in relation to identity-based bullying, dealing with identity-based bullying in line with the Equality Act 2010 using a whole-school approach; and developing policy and curriculum
- Agents for Change events, working with pupils to support them to implement changes in their schools
- action planning meetings and follow up support to ensure change is embedded effectively across the whole school environment

This evaluation collected interview and focus group data from eight representative schools, and survey and documentary data from all eight schools. It found that the programme had far-reaching effects, including:

- challenging identity-based bullying in the participating schools, with greatly increased confidence amongst school staff and pupils
- improved policies designed to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying effectively
- more effective recording systems for monitoring of identity-based bullying
- more diversified school cultures reflecting the background of school community members
- positive impact on the confidence of pupils and staff with regards to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and creating positive change

The recommendations outlined in detail in the report below include:

- Added training for parents and carers
- Inclusion of online bullying in training materials
- Ensuring lead teachers have TLR to enable the programme is properly embedded
- Continued support for Agents for Change (Equally Safe pupil ambassadors)
- Differentiation of training materials regarding age phase and SEND
- The opportunity for both staff and AFCs to network with other EqualiTeach schools to share best practice and resources
- A broader and more representative selection of evaluation focus group pupil participants

Introduction

Identity-based bullying is the focus of the Equally Safe programme because being bullied because of one's background or identity can lead to serious implications for pupils - whether online or in person. However, whilst it is crucial that inclusion work operates to deal with situations where individuals have experienced negative consequences because of their 'protected characteristics' (Euqality Act 2010), a deeper, more preventative and more tailored, whole school approach might be proposed to have further reaching results. EqualiTeach takes this approach, seeking to prevent and tackle identity-based bullying via its Equally Safe programme - which is being introduced to 240 schools across England over a period of three years. This summary report details the results of the Year 1 evaluation, analyses the strengths of the Equally Safe project, and makes recommendations on how it could be further developed in years 2 and 3.

Evaluation Team

The Goldsmiths Department of Educational Studies has a well-established reputation regarding research and research-informed teacher education programmes. Its work focuses on teaching excellence through attention to issues of student voice and creative expression, social justice, inclusion, equalities and community cohesion in schools. The external evaluator and author of this report is experienced in working in schools, originally working as a SEND teacher and senior leader with children and young people, specialising in behaviour support for young people with learning disabilities. Currently, she is conducting PhD research into the inclusion of young people at the intersection of LGBT and SEND.

Description of the project

EqualiTeach is a not-for-profit provider of equality and diversity training and consultancy services for schools, education settings, local authorities and businesses. Established in 2013, its team consists of equality trainers and consultants with an educational, professional background who demonstrate engaging and accessible approach in their work. The key aims of their Equally Safe programme include equipping schools with effective policies and procedures to prevent and tackle identity-based bullying, and empowering young people in their ability to create positive change in their school settings.

The first round of the Equally Safe programme originally consisted of eighty participating schools which eventually reduced to seventy-one participating schools. The first phase of the evaluation involved desk research on documentary evidence from five primary schools and five secondary schools, from five different counties. This was followed by sets of focus groups and interviews with eight of the original ten schools - five primary and three secondary schools in total.

The survey designed for year 1 was distributed to all seventy-one participating schools in regions across all corners of England. The analysis is based on outputs being assessed against the project work plan, with the impacts being assessed against the project aims in order to identify quality indicators and elements of best practice.

The research model focused on four key aspects of the Equally Safe programme which are illustrated in the table below:

Key aspect	Example of activities	Key exemplification emerging from the evaluation
Empowering pupil voice in creating positive change	Agents for Change involved in many initiatives, eg making anti-bullying videos for peers, setting up 'worry' boxes, creating 'friendship' benches, contributing to school newsletters about 'happy news around the school' to encourage community cohesion, having input into child-friendly policies, etc.	Agents for Change Ambassadors reported more confidence in challenging bullying following EqualiTeach training events Pupils felt more knowledgeable concerning the correct use of prejudice-related terminology, especially LGBTIQA+ related
Training	Training involved initial events for school leads, eight 2-hour online twilight training sessions, whole-day events for pupils (Agents for Change Ambassadors) and in-house twilight training for all school staff	Teachers said that as a result of the training they felt more confident in addressing and preventing identity-based bullying (for example, involving racist language) in their school settings both via policy as well as in their practice.
Policy	Consultancy was provided to support schools to strengthen policies to ensure inclusion on the basis of the nine protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010 -this involved behaviour, anti-bullying, uniform, accessibility, Relationship and Sex Education, Special Educational Needs, recruitment and home-school agreements	Schools adapted or created documentation to reflect their commitment to achieving diversity and equality via their policies and prejudice-related incident procedures, and this resulted in school staff feeling more confident in addressing and preventing identity-based bullying

Schools' ability to create positive change	Community celebrations including having more frequent anti-bullying assemblies and more regular discussions about identity-based bullying between pupils and staff	More inclusive curriculum via book collections featuring disabled characters and others representing the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010
	Enabling Agents for Change to take a lead on implementing initiatives regarding prevention of bullying thus empowering 'pupil voice'	Display boards featuring examples of work of the Agents of Change to highlight the importance of anti-bullying efforts for the whole school
	Involving parents in the Equally Safe programme-related initiatives, such as 'parent voice' in an effort to facilitate a whole school community approach to tackling bullying	Updated home/school agreements to involve parents in the whole school initiatives to prevent bullying and increase a sense of belonging to the school community

School contexts

The varied range of primary and secondary schools visited meant that the evaluator was able to compare a substantial scale of discourses regarding prejudice and identity-based bullying. The diverse school range included schools serving faith communities including faith and church schools, mainstream schools with children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), schools in diverse areas and schools with predominantly White working class and first-language English speakers. Some schools reported to the evaluator that they felt already well-skilled in addressing various equality issues and preventing identity-based bullying before they collaborated with EqualiTeach.

Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

Purpose

This evaluation was designed to find out whether the Equally Safe programme has changed schools' approaches to identity-based bullying and reduced incidents of it. It also sought evidence that the programme effectively delivered efficient training, resources and guidance to create networks of schools which are creating equal and inclusive environments and tackling identity-based bullying. Finally, the evaluation was looking for examples of the outcomes and impacts of the key elements described above.

Methodology

The evaluation drew on a range of data: documentary analysis concerning ten schools; around 12 hours of recorded focus groups and interviews with teaching staff and pupils; and a survey distributed to all staff at the seventy-one participating schools.

School visits

Interviews and focus groups were originally scheduled with all ten schools but due to the limited availability of two of the schools, eight schools took part. This involved five primary and three secondary schools in total; a small proportion of the interviews were conducted online due to time constraints regarding school timetables. Each of the interviews and focus groups lasted around 45 minutes. The interviews with teaching staff involved one or two teaching staff (usually with some management responsibilities) and the focus groups involved four to six pupils per group. All schools were spread across the geographical range and each of these mainstream schools had students with SEND. School environments were also noted, including 'welcome' messages in school receptions, posters about inclusion and diversity in classrooms and display of work in corridors.

Before each visit, schools were sent information sheets and consent forms for the participants in interviews and focus groups. These forms were carefully adapted for both primary and secondary pupils to ensure clarity in communicating the purpose of this data collection and the subsequent evaluation. The designated EqualiTeach leads in all the eight schools were asked to select a group of between five and eight pupils from a range of year groups, genders, disabilities, ethnicities, and faith backgrounds. The evaluator also asked for the school leads to include children and young people who might not traditionally have a voice in this situation – such as pupils at risk of exclusion, or children with SENDs. When it came to the actual focus groups, no pupils with SENDs and no pupils at risk of exclusion were included. Often (but not always) they included pupils who had come out as LGBT. Most of the focus groups featured a large number of white pupils with English as their first language.

In total, around 30 pupil participants and 13 staff members agreed to take part in the recorded discussions across the focus groups and interviews. There were 4-7 pupils per focus group and they ranged from Year 5 (aged 9-10) to Year 11 (aged 15-16). All pupil participants were designated Agents for Change Ambassadors for their school. A small number of pupil participants (originally selected to take part in these focus groups) were unable to take part as a result of their timetables and other activities happening on the day.

All schools were mixed-gender schools and most pupil participants identified as female. In terms of gender identity, four of the pupil participants identified as non-binary and three of them identified as gender-fluid. Secondary pupil participants were also asked about their sexual orientation: three of them identified their sexual orientation as 'other', two of them opted for the 'would rather not say' option, two identified as lesbian, one pupil identified as pansexual, one pupil identified as bisexual and the rest identified themselves as heterosexual. All staff participants identified as female, and one identified as male. One staff member identified their

sexual orientation as 'would rather not say', two identified as lesbian and the rest identified as heterosexual.

In terms of ethnicity, faith and cultural background, all of the schools were mixed, and the focus groups reflected that. The majority of the pupils and staff participants identified as White British. The rest of the participants identified as White Irish, Black British and Mixed (White and Black Caribbean or other mixed background).

The questioning style during focus groups and interviews was open and the evaluator's approach was participatory and collaborative. The questioning format started with very open questions inviting participants to name and direct the direction of the discussion. Later in the focus group the evaluator picked up on anything that had not yet been covered within her pre-drafted questions protocol. This methodology allowed for trust to be built quickly, for information to emerge organically rather than in response to a prompt- but most importantly, it allowed participants to speak about things that the evaluator had not yet considered. Often their initial questions were exciting and informative data in themselves. Specific questions asked in focus groups and interviews are listed in Appendix 4 below.

Documentary evidence

Each of the ten schools originally selected for an external evaluation carried out in round 1 were asked to submit evidence which consisted of the following:

- policies updated in line with the Equally Safe guidance
- home/school agreements updated in line with the Equally Safe guidance
- evidence of the impact of the training sessions via feedback forms

In addition to the above, on some occasions the evaluator was shown examples of child-friendly policies and newsletters during visits to the eight schools. The evaluator was also present at two Agents For Change training events. One such training event involved primary pupils from schools assigned to the same cluster. The other one involved secondary pupils from the same school but from different year groups. The evaluator took field notes during both training events to use as an additional evidence resource for the dataset.

Survey

The evaluator distributed an online staff survey with eighteen questions for all 71 schools from Year 1. The survey design was informed by the qualitative data collection phase. Survey findings are detailed in this report in the 'Findings' section.

Ethical considerations

This research was ratified by the Goldsmiths Research Ethics and Integrity Scrutiny Committee. This allows the evaluation to utilise the data collected both to evaluate and improve the Equally Safe Programme and to publish findings, bringing a level of validity to the work of EqualiTeach. Using a Research Ethics form also brings the benefit of an institutional check on data collection processes which ensure

confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent, and sensitivity and which also require safeguarding and safe data storage plans.

This type of evaluation project addresses a subject matter that can raise sensitive issues with school students and teachers: people, who, because of the particular context of a school, may be particularly anxious to maintain their anonymity. Since the Equally Safe project is aimed towards a reduction in bullying, the evaluator was careful about ensuring the questioning format was handled with sensitivity and that all participants knew they could withdraw from a focus group/interview at any point if feeling uncomfortable answering questions. In order to adhere to the GPDR guidelines, they were assured their anonymity would be protected. All names of people, schools, and places have therefore been changed in this report. Because of the issues related to confidentiality and sensitivity, it was especially important that all pupil respondents from KS2 upwards had to be able to give informed consent, backed up by the consent of their parents/carers. All staff participants were also issued participant consent sheets prior to the interviews.

The evaluation had to be designed to be sensitive to the emotional well-being needs of all participants. The potential for participants to discuss their own gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as any other protected characteristics that they wanted to talk about, was inherent in the subject matter: these issues can raise concerns related to acceptance or rejection by peers, friends, families. Further, the history of school-related policy around LGBT issues (especially Section 28) has generated a level of anxiety amongst some school staff, and this had to be considered. Taking account of this potential anxiety, the evaluator used open questions in focus groups and interviews. These invited respondents to volunteer the information which they felt comfortable volunteering.

In order to address the need for informed consent, a Participant Information Sheet and a Consent Form were produced for pupils, parents/careers and school staff (see Appendix 1 and 2). The participant information sheets were differentiated accordingly to reflect the age difference between primary and secondary pupils in terms of familiarity with the language/terminology used in these types of forms. In addition to this, an Equality Monitoring form (see Appendix 3) was given to each participant to understand more about the participants' ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation (secondary pupils and staff only) and gender identity. All the documents described above were provided for all participants prior to focus groups/interviews taking part. This was to ensure they had time to read through all of them and fill them in accordingly without rushing their responses. They were all reminded to ask the evaluator any question at any point before/during/after a focus group/interview.

Limitations

As described above, the evaluator was not able to visit the same ten schools whose documentation were checked as part of the desk research earlier on in the evaluation process. Instead, staff and students at eight schools were interviewed; a small proportion of this data collection was conducted online due to changes to schools' timetables (such as unforeseen INSET day training). It should also be stressed that not all pupils from the original list of participants were able to take part in focus groups in the end.

Although time and other constraints made it impossible to do collect a broader sample, the eight schools visited/interviewed online must only be taken as a potentially representative sample. Schools vary so much in terms of demographics, management style, location, and philosophy. However, the sample does have some validity as it represents more than 10% of the schools involved; and schools across the country do share some similar characteristics. It should be pointed out that the survey was submitted to all seventy-one schools to enable them to be part of the evaluation process concerning Year 1 at least on some level. We had 23 responses to the survey from 22 schools, giving the survey itself a good level of validity.

Focus group participants were selected by school leads for the Equally Safe project, mostly teachers with some Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR). This way of identifying focus group participants was deliberately chosen in order to accommodate the complex timetabling, pedagogical and other responsibilities which schools and teachers labour under. The selection process was interesting in itself and produced a good mix of participants across the range of sample schools. However, it should be pointed out that during the focus groups there were no pupil participants with known Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) present. This was despite the fact many schools leads told the evaluator their schools had considerable numbers of pupils with SENDs.

It is important to stress that a number of school leads reported that they felt they did not have enough time to implement all the steps from their EqualiTeach action plans before the end of the school year due to time constraints and busy timetables.

Analysing and reporting the evidence

- outputs were assessed against the project work plan
- impacts were assessed against the project aims
- elements of best practice and quality indicators were identified
- analysis was informed by a literature review of research on similar project work

The evaluator opted for a thematic analysis of the data, seeking common topics which emerged. For example, one consistent theme highlighted the usefulness of the training of the staff and pupils (Agents for Change) in terms of dealing with identity-based bullying. Evidence of Agents for Change groups' confidence in reporting identity-based bullying as well as understanding the terminology around it (eg Islamophobia, biphobia) also emerged. Similarly, staff seemed to highlight the rise in their confidence in reporting identity-based bullying more efficiently, through the use of more specific prejudice-related categories, and more precisely, through a better understanding of the relevant terminology. This has resulted in the sample schools having a clearer picture of the types of identity-based bullying occurring in their settings and expressing more confidence in tackling this issue.

In writing this report, the evaluator looked for indicative quotes from the interview and focus groups' transcripts involving both pupils and staff in order to illustrate and evidence each point. There were many, many quotes which could have been used which addressed the same themes and which said similar things. The quotes chosen

for this report were those which best expressed the ideas and thoughts arising in relation to each theme. They were selected to represent the ideas of as many of the staff and student respondents as possible.

Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

This section will first outline findings relating to empowering pupils, training, and policy before moving on to look at schools' ability to create positive change regarding their curricula, environment, and community.

Empowering Pupils - Positive Change

On each school visit, the evaluator met with a group of pupils who were Agents for Change (AFC) Ambassadors and who were trained with regards to the Equally Safe programme. Many of them related their positive experiences of the AFC training events earlier in the academic year. One of the first things they wanted to share in the focus groups was the fact that they felt more confident with regards to challenging bullying and reporting it. The primary AFCs were especially beaming with enthusiasm when talking about all the fantastic initiatives they had been working on, such as establishing 'friendship' benches around their playgrounds and making their own anti-bullying videos to engage their peers in more collaboration and to raise awareness of identity-based bullying.

The training has seemingly increased pupils' confidence and made them feel more empowered via their voices. Daisy, a Y4 pupil from Wallflower school[1], said:

…I do feel confident about using my voice. I don't worry about anything I say to others.

The programme also seemed to have encouraged pupils' creative thinking when it comes to tackling bullying. They thought of anti-bullying ways that had not been perhaps that much explored in their settings previously. Beatrice, a Y5 AFC ambassador from Jasmine School, explained:

…We're gonna have a poster made…and we think bullying happening in toilets would be good to include. We have gender-based toilets. Bullying can happen in toilets, too…because teachers can't go there. We need to talk about this more.

The pupil participants seemed genuinely at ease with talking about prejudice-related topics and their vocabulary had clearly been enhanced by the terminology they were introduced to at their AFC training events. Most focus groups with the AFC Ambassadors took place with a staff member present. Often the staff members could not resist 'jumping in' with their responses as some of the questions were put forward to the pupils. However, the evaluator always redirected the questions to the pupils once the staff members had their say. It was important to get the young people's views on board. Those focus groups that did not have a staff member present often brought more 'sensitive' information to the surface which was often volunteered by the pupils themselves. Certain areas of identity-based bullying, such

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[1] All names of people and places have been changed for reasons of anonymity

as gender identity, made certain primary AFC Ambassadors question the practices of the staff in their settings and encouraged them to think of suggestions to create change. Here is an example of Adam's comments, a Y5 pupil in Jasmine School:

…Like for Years 4, 5, 6…we have been learning about it [gender identity] but the teachers tell us like…not to tell the younger children about it so that we don't worry them about stuff that is like…in the future.

Beatrice, a Y5 pupil from the same school, seemed to have confirmed this:

We were told not to tell the younger children about that just to like…not worry them and scare them…

Adding to this discussion, Charlie (Y5) seemed worried by these practices in Jasmine school:

…I personally disagree with that statement… we should be telling younger pupils about this so that they don't do it [acts of bullying] before they have a chance to learn about it [prevention of bullying] …and because they should learn to be proud of who they are.

There is evidence that the AFC pupils who took part in the training events for the Equally Safe programme were insightful about bullying prevention. This is evident in the confident ways of voicing these 'sensitive' matters with the evaluator, not afraid to show they disagreed with their teachers over some areas of their practice. However, there was a sense that their feelings were not shared with their teachers directly.

In other schools, there was evidence of better communication and trust built between staff and pupils. In some cases, their AFC training knowledge was praised so highly by their teaching staff that they were asked to assist with adapting procedures and policies in an effort to empower them and thus positively affect their well-being. For example, Violet, from Aconite Academy, commented on being impressed with her Y10 AFCs' anti-bullying knowledge following their AFC training. She added she was very keen on having their input into policies and procedures which directly affected them and their peers:

The AFCs are more comfortable around the terminology and what words are offensive and which aren't… and it's a case of educating other people before we get mad at them… For example, they suggested to have phone calls home first and then punishment as part of our Behaviour Policy.

Violet was also referring to the AFCs' efforts to mentor their peers about bullying by having consultations on the phone first before students get excluded. This was all done in an effort to create more understanding when dealing with challenging situations that young people can sometimes get into purely on the bases of ignorance. Data from many of the sample schools suggests there is great enthusiasm amongst the AFCs regarding efforts to make both themselves and others more educated with regards to bullying. Bluebell, from the Carnation Bloom

School, was very enthusiastic in commenting on their AFCs' growing skill sets regarding communication, networking, leadership and mentoring:

…they got their little notebooks and badges which they still wear now every day…they've really taken that role on board in school and told us about their new ideas…and they've implemented changes in school with their 'worry' boxes in every classroom. They've got an assembly coming…to tell their peers what they do so they will continue that into the next year and then hopefully take on some sort of mentorship with regards to the younger pupils…

The Equally Safe programme has proved to have a positive impact on pupils, in both primary and secondary school settings. It has enabled them to create positive change in regards to preventing and tackling identity-based bullying as well as reporting it using correct terms that they're all familiar which contributes to better consistency in reporting bullying incidents as pupils have more knowledge and feel empowered as a result of the Equally Safe programme.

Training
The evaluator's first encounter with the training on the Equally Safe programme was via an AFC training event attended in the role of an observer. There were two AFC training events altogether, one for primary schools and one for secondary schools. All attendees seemed very engaged with the training content, which included powerful anti-bullying videos that seemed to have left a big impression on those present. These videos talked about the emotional impact of bullying on victims of bullying in such a way that pupils often highlighted this, during focus groups, as one of the most impactful aspects of their AFC training. The trainers seemed to have an inclusive approach to the topics discussed, teaching pupils new terms (eg Islamophobia) and often stressing to them to 'challenge others (bullies) only when it's safe to do so'. They appeared very encouraging when asking pupils to contribute to various discussions taking place, such as creating action plans for their schools. Some children related that they enjoyed the activities, especially the 'gender stereotyping' tasks and 'snowball fight' activity, all related to prevention of identity-based bullying. A combination of playfulness with an easy access to useful information seemed to be the winning method of engaging these pupils in these sometimes sensitive subjects without making them feel anxious.

All the AFC pupil participants were highly positive about the impact of the programme regarding their emotional wellbeing as well as their expanding skill sets as mentioned above. The only area they felt needed more attention was having the opportunity to engage with peers from other year groups, especially in the case of secondary schools where the enthusiasm was weaker compared to the AFC efforts and initiatives evident in primary schools. Fleur (Y9) from Camellia School shared she was concerned about the fact she had not been able to use her AFC training knowledge with her peers:

We did the Equally Safe programme's training because we wanted to make a positive change to make things better but we just haven't been able to use this education we gained from that AFC training session in our day to day school lives.

There were other pupils from secondary schools who talked about a lack of opportunities to implement some of the planned changes they listed in their action plans. Perhaps wider involvement in AFC training regarding young people from different year groups may be an area to consider. Rose from Bellflower School explained:

I think it's fairly spread amongst the staff but the students…not so much!... It's because students haven't been reminded about it time and time again and the workshop that we had only involved twenty students.

The Equally Safe Programme and the training helped many teachers develop their confidence regarding the correct identifyication and recording of identity-based bullying incidents, mainly due to being equipped with the correct terminology and having more specific prejudice-related categories in their reporting systems - which makes for more a precise monitoring of bullying. Lily, a teacher from from Camellia School, explained how the training made her re-think her own approach to dealing with incidents which can be mis-labelled as bullying if it's a case of a gap in knowledge amongst those involved:

Yesterday, we were dealing with a bullying incident and we adopted the anti-bullying pro-forma from EqualiTeach (ET)…you know the one that tells you what to do when a prejudice-related incident occurs. This was an incident about two boys talking about the conversion therapy and they got it completely wrong… So, I said: 'Let me explain what a conversion therapy is!' And it was a good explanation and that was all on that proforma from ET which explains all kinds of prejudice and so on…so this wasn't a punishment – it was a conversation.

The training by the EqualiTeach trainers was highly praised by the staff and so was their support with schools' policies, behaviour-related procedures and recording systems for bullying incidents. All staff also praised the impact of the Equally Safe programme on their pupils' wellbeing, knowledge and 'pupil voice'. Marguerite, a teacher from Ballota School, said:

..what was really good about this programme…is the fact that the children know what bullying really is now…before they thought it was just name-calling and physically hurting each other, but it goes so much deeper than that.

One issue that was repeated throughout the interviews was the fact that some primary and secondary staff felt the training materials needed to be a bit more differentiated in terms of age-appropriateness regarding some of the case studies staff were told about during their training. At Camellia School, a member of the management team shared the following:

… the training might have to differentiate between primary and secondary and there needs to be more training about visible and non-visible SEND.

The issue of tackling online bullying also occurred quite a few times in the interviews with staff. Some staff felt they did not have enough tools or confidence in tackling online bullying which is a type of bullying that was not covered in their training

sessions according to what they told the evaluator. Daisy, an Equally Safe lead from Wallflower Primary School explains:

I don't think we had a specific training session on online bullying…which might have been quite useful to include as well. Maybe some guidance around responding to it as that's kind of a grey area because we can't tell parents what to do about age restrictions and things…and how to give appropriate guidance to parents…because we can't tell them what to do but you can give guidance.

Daisy's colleague adds:

The fact that these things [bullying incidents] happen online adds so much complexity to the issue. We had an incident which involved sexually inappropriate messages being sent and the parents of the children involved felt like everything was resolved…as they felt they dealt with it all adequately. But really they haven't…and we had to step in…and it was so much more complicated as these things happened in the virtual world…we feel (strong intonation) parents want to go into these conversations with us but it's an area to develop and a step on our journey…

Another area of concern seemed to be the area of SEND, which most staff wanted to talk about in more depth. The gap seems to be there in terms of differentiation levels for training on SEND as some staff are more experienced than others when it comes to working with pupils with SEND. Some staff suggested the training could cover SEND also from an intersectional point of view in the future. At Carnation Bloom School, the interviewed teacher went on to explain the issue further:

I don't think the training fully covers SEND. I mean the workshops were really informative, but we already have a very strong Special Educational Needs department and we already know a lot about how to like change your practice to include SEN within the school because the percentage is so high…we haven't learnt that much in terms of 'new' stuff…and there isn't a lot of SEND bullying here…but I don't think intersectionality-linked bullying was covered! It was very much like LGBT/race-based bullying and other than that there wasn't much covered in terms of intersectionality.

The Equally Safe training has proved to have an effective impact on both staff and pupils, in both primary and secondary school settings. As a result of their training staff and pupils feel more confident in preventing, tackling and reporting identity-based bullying using the correct terminology which contributes to better consistency in monitoring as well as preventing bullying in schools. In terms of intersectionality and online bullying, there appear to be certain gaps as pointed out by the staff. Age-group differentiation of training materials was also a reccurring theme in the collected data. However, on the whole the training has raised the schools' abilities to create positive change as a result of the training provided by EqualiTeach.

Policy
Teachers and members of the management teams were supported to develop their school policies to respond to incidents of identity-based bullying more effectively. They took care to include all protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010. Policies which were changed in the ten sample schools included those relating to

equalities, behaviour and discipline, uniform and reporting systems. Home/School agreements were also updated and schools were provided with 'Parent Voice' documents they could adapt and use to better support their relationships with them in an effort to achieve a whole school community change. The act of updating the policies meant that the school leads for the EqualiTeach programme presented their updates to the head teachers and governors and embedded a key element of sustainability into the project. This all had a positive impact on many areas of school life, particularly on pupil and staff willingness and ability to challenge prejudice-related language and bullying; but also on the success, quality and authenticity of educators' own pedagogical practice.

The evaluator listened for evidence relating to how the teachers and managers thought about the changes proposed by EqualiTeach representatives following a policy audit. The evaluator also looked for evidence of the impact of these changes as she interviewed teaching staff and members of the senior management teams who were directly involved with implementing the Equally Safe programme. In addition to this, the evaluator was given access to a number of staff/pupil/parent questionnaires and 'Student Voice' documents for the sample schools which pointed out some of the key areas the schools needed support with at the start of the Equally Safe (ES) project. At Aconite Academy, the evaluator asked Violet, a member of the senior management team to share any gaps found in their policies regarding religion and gender identity aspects following the policy audit carried out by EqualiTeach:

I originally thought that our policies were OK. We had them all available on our website. Our head teachers knew about them. Our governors knew about them. The parents knew about them, the teachers knew… but actually, when I was working with our EqualiTeach rep, we noticed that some of them were a little outdated. So for example, like the uniform policy…I thought it was OK, but there were certain elements that we didn't include, like for example, if we had Muslim children and they were wearing the headscarf…that wasn't included in our policy before, you know…and also things like gender…covering the sort of boys that wanted to come in wearing a skirt…we just automatically presume that it's best to put it [skirts] down as girls when girls can wear trousers so why boys can't wear skirts if they want to? So we focused on implementing the non-gender aspects into our uniform policy as much as possible and changed our wording slightly to make sure that it's a bit more relevant. So this experience with ET has been brilliant as it has made us look at our policies in a lot more detail and challenge our own pre-conceptions regarding gender stereotypes and it was really eye-opening.

Perhaps in filling this gap, EqualiTeach consultancy regarding school policies has helped educators challenge their own ways of thinking in terms of inclusion.

Positive changes regarding gaps in policies have also had an impact on the reporting systems of the schools. For example, Violet from Aconite Academy highlighted how much more effective their reporting systems were following the update of their behaviour procedures and policies.

…so we now record more minor incidents on CPOMS. Extra tabs were created for where and what type of bullying has taken place. The language has reflected these changes, too. As for the different categories, we have homophobic, transphobic,

racist, religious discriminatory language and then categories for other prejudice-related incidents.

Occasionally, a member of staff who did not hold a senior management position struggled to push through the policy changes needed. This seemed to have something to do with a perception about how the Equally Safe programme initiatives could be a distraction from the work required to prepare for their Ofsted inspection which was likely to happen in the current academic year. At Bellflower Academy, Rose was asked by the evaluator about what she had done over the previous few months as part of the Equally Safe programme, regarding policies and AFC initiatives. Rose described:

I don't feel like the whole Equally Safe programme is very spread because I don't have any kind of senior role in the school. I'm a teacher and I don't have any kind of extra responsibilities or any extra time to do anything… They [EqualiTeach] reviewed our policies and made some changes and things like that which I passed onto the management…but because again… (sighing)…I'm not in a position of responsibility, I don't really have a lot of influence and there isn't much I can really do. So I would really recommend that EqualiTeach asks schools to have Equally Safe leads in place who are management to be able to make these changes. I don't have any time for it, no TLR…and I find it very stressful or did – at least at the beginning.

However, this was a very small exception. Most of the Equally Safe leads in schools were part of the management teams or had some level of Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR) to be able to establish themselves as knowledgeable advisors in the work of policy development following their guidance from EqualiTeach. At Balloon Flower School, Aaron, an Equally Safe lead for his school as well as a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) was asked about the level of support from governors and others. Aaron answered:

So initially, when we first started, it was just myself and my colleague… but since then we've run a whole staff training for teachers, TAs and lunch time supervisors. Governors are aware and very supportive. And the nice thing as well is…we have one of our very own governors becoming an Equally Safe lead and was giving the twilight CPD to our staff!

By the end of the of the policy-updating process, staff felt they were able to talk in detail about those policies which had been updated, and the process through which this happened. The ease with which the school leads for the ES programme were able to obtain headteachers' and governors' approval to update the policies is further proof that the culture in the sample schools have been changing for the better in terms of creating more robust policy systems in place.

School visits, and ability to create positive change: curriculum, environment and community

Curriculum
The Equally Safe programme encourages school staff to embed diversity across all aspects of the school culture in order to tackle identity-based bullying. This includes curriculum. People aligned with the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010

should be represented in such a way as to make them as ubiquitous as possible. This involves especially people from underrepresented groups, such as people who are LGBT+ or/and from the SEND category. The Equally Safe programme has promoted diversity, equality and inclusion in many ways and has shone a light on vulnerable categories of people, such as transgender pupils and pupils with SEND. When the evaluator asked Lily, an Equally Safe lead from Camellia (secondary) School, about how she felt the programme has helped her school in terms of diversifying its environment, she replied:

There have been a few developments. With regards to assemblies, we're focusing on more diverse issues, and we've included individuals from different types of diversity areas. They read articles and do discussions, write blogs afterwards…so the students have seen different diverse individuals [role models] every week and so it's not just your usual Martin Luther King topic… we cover people from all sorts of areas, like Frida Kahlo for Art projects. She was disabled and bisexual.

Violet, an ES lead from Aconite Academy, talks about including her secondary students in diversifying the curriculum with her:

In general, there is more of a platform for them to be heard and voice anything that is of an issue to them.

Her AFC pupils seemed to confirm this positive impact of the ES programme on their curriculum. Leilani explains:

Yeah, I feel like people are more educated on sexuality and things like that… so they're less likely to be offensive to make you feel weird or uncomfortable. After we started with the PowerPoint presentations in lessons…about gender identity and stuff…and we did it for the whole pupil cohort…I've noticed a positive change in the awareness about different aspects of identity, including disability. That was our idea.

Azaela adds:

I feel like there are more Pride badges and flags around and we could celebrate other things throughout the year in a similar fashion. I feel confident going into school now because we are more open about topics.

This positive impact of the programme on the curriculum overhauls and a change in attitudes towards diversifying the curriculum content seems to be evident in other schools as well. However, in very few cases, the evaluator discovered a gap in this area. Despite the fact, that the evaluator was able to talk to schools that claim to be 'very LGBT and SEND inclusive', there were some pupil and staff responses that suggest some schools might benefit from continued support from EqualiTeach. When the evaluator asked one lesbian secondary pupil from Camellia School about feeling represented in her curriculum, she responded:

Sometimes, the assemblies that are on stuff we like learnt in class…well, they're not very effective and I just remember like people in class laughing about it. It makes other people who are affected by these things like really upset and like…not safe. Sometimes in PSHE we talk about racism and sexual orientation…but not that much.

The curriculum changes and overhauls carried out following the start of a collaboration with EqualiTeach and their Equally Safe programme have been largely positive with the exception of a small number of schools where there is still some room for improvement despite EqualiTeach interventions. Some school staff members have been confident in continuing to make positive changes in this regard. However, they also suggested that having an Equally Safe school buddy scheme could be of benefit to many of them – to compare ideas and encourage each other. When the school has less diversity amongst its pupils, it appears that the task of diversifying the curriculum and the culture, in general, is not easily achieved. Some educators from this type of school have told the evaluator that the type of bullying that occurs a lot does not always relate to identity or diversity. It can be rather an issue related to teenage age, hormones and body changes. Sexism and body-shaming are two aspects of bullying the schools are not covering that much in their curriculum or assemblies. This is despite the fact they admitted to the evaluator these types of bullying occur a lot amongst secondary students. This could be another reason why having a school buddy scheme available to EqualiTeach schools could benefit those involved in the Equally Safe programme anti-bullying initiatives. Bullying relating to body-shaming could potentially be addressed under the Equality Act's protected sex and gender characteristics.

Environment
Making the school environments not just diversified but also safe is a priority for all of the schools. This is one key reason why schools have joined the Equally Safe programme. Many have reported that there has been an improvement in the behaviour of their pupils overall. This is partially due to having better recording and monitoring systems in place thanks to EqualiTeach resources, such as lists of prejudice-related bullying categories and relevant terminology information. Both primary and secondary settings seem to have an opinion that behaviour has improved since starting with the Equally Safe programme. Margueritta from Ballota School has praised the behaviour of pupils in her primary school with enthusiasm:

Yes, the behaviour has definitely improved… I think initially, children just thought bullying was hurting each other but now they are so much more aware! [laughing] I am honestly so happy about the fact that we can now build and monitor bullying and behaviour patterns so much more easily because we're using better recording systems. This makes our environment very safe, too.

Some concerns about safety of a couple of school environments emerged via the interviews with the evaluator who spoke to two secondary schools who have a large community of LGBT+ students, some of whom also identified as disabled. Despite the fact that the evaluator was told these schools were very LGBT inclusive and had a high percentage of pupils with SEND – not many of the AFC pupils present at the focus groups identified as LGBT+ and none of them had an identified SEND. This was confirmed by the data from the Equality Monitoring forms the pupils were asked to fill in at the start of the focus groups. One lesbian pupil (Y9) from Camellia school shared the following information about her school environment's safety:

There was this one girl who was really homophobic towards me and I was really panicking. I reported this to my head of the year and she's told me I was being

dramatic. This happened before we started with the Equally Safe programme…but still…I remember how she told me it was my fault this happened because I, apparently, overreacted and she's given me three detentions for it…it's been going on for a long time and it's not small…it's like continuous…less so now…but still it's there and I got into trouble for it! I can't trust my head of the year anymore. She still works here. I did try to stand up for myself back then but I think in that situation…there wasn't much I could really do. I did not feel safe and I still don't fully feel safe now.

Her friend (Y9) who was present during the focus group added:

I don't think many students know we're AFCs…it's not like…made very clear to them what we've done…and if anybody knew we were AFCs then we could go to the whole school and be like: If this is happening then this is what you do…

When the evaluator discussed these comments with the staff from Camellia School , she was told the students would be given more of a platform in the future to implement their AFC ideas. When the evaluator asked Fleur and Lily what had been the barrier for them in this regard so far, she got this response from Fleur:

That takes some guts and confidence to be able to stand up and share your views but we've had some assemblies where students were leading…so I think there are opportunities for them to do that with regards to their AFC work. They're very comfortable about talking to adults about diversity topics and so on…but when it comes to talking to their peers there is a shift and I think it's because they're worried about how other people are going to receive it…just general anxiety about it is the issue…

Fleur's response seems to suggest that some Equally Safe leads have underestimated the importance of encouraging students to have a voice. This is the case only in a very small number of the sample schools but is a worrying one as the students clearly need some guidance on how to overcome their confidence issues and their teachers could play a vital role in this. For example, co-presenting on sensitive topics with them could be a good start and talking about certain topics, such as homophobia, more openly and more frequently as part of their daily school life. As seen in the other sample schools. The evaluator got the impression there seem to be a certain gap in the communication and trust between the staff and the students in the case of this school. One other school expressed similar issues, however, this time it was regarding having a 'safe' space for LGBT+ pupils, many of whom also had SEND. None of these students were present during the focus group. However, Rose, a secondary teacher from Bellflower school, was more than happy to explain the complexities behind this issue:

So we have like…lots of LGBT students here but there was no Pride celebration this month at all…and that's usually a really good opportunity to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community and the fact that we have LGB and also trans students…should mean something. These students don't feel safe to be around the school and they want to be in this one space because they get shouted at…and they get bullied and not really supported by some of the staff. I've selected like the 'well-behaved' kids for you for the focus group…if you know what I mean. I'm only telling you this as I know

my name and everything I say will stay confidential but I think this is good data for your research and it's the truth.

This particular feedback was of note in comparison to the fact that all the staff in the session were wearing rainbow lanyards to communicate to visitors that they were LGBT-inclusive. Ash (Y8) shed more light on the issue of LGBT bullying and why it seems to persist in this particular school:

Well...it's difficult because obviously you can't just go to the teachers…and say: 'this person bullies me'… because they'll know that it's you [reporting on them]… so they'll do it more…I've seen people do it.

Community
Perhaps because of its broad approach to equalities and community cohesion and school environment, the Equally Safe project was found to have positive effects on schools' wider efforts to create positive change by involving families, carers, and governors in their anti-bullying efforts. Some staff shared they feel more ready for their next Ofsted visit as they now have more robust inclusion policies in place. It has helped schools to create stronger relationships with other schools within their Trusts. This was achieved by equipping the Equally Safe leads with so much knowledge that they felt confident enough to offer to share information on the Equally Safe programme with others within their Trusts. Cassia, an Equally Safe lead based in the primary Jasmine School, shared the following:

We are a part of a Trust and I know some schools have signed up later because I had to talk about it [the training received] on the headteachers' forum…so I was asked to say...you know…what we do and this was done in an effort to encourage the other schools to get involved. I explained to them that in our case…before the ET programme... we thought: 'yes, we are a Catholic school and there was a point when we ended up in a bit of a grey area when we were asking ourselves: Do we explain to our children what a lesbian is? What a gay couple is?'...because of the faith…there were some reservations at first but EqualiTeach worked really closely with our Trust and explained to them and us that yes…we can say these things without crossing the boundaries!

Cassia's colleague shared the enthusiasm and the pride in how their school has changed for the better in terms of inclusion regarding LGBT+ people:

I think it's all because of the training…these positive changes…because we are confident now - thanks to it, so it's now rubbing off on others too.

When asked about parental awareness of the Equally Safe programme, most schools were largely positive, but they also stated that they haven't had the opportunity to put all of the planned changes in place regarding parents just yet. This is mostly because of time constraints. However, many of them have plans to do that in the next academic year. As Poppy from Wallflower School explains:

I'd highly recommend the Equally Safe project and training to parents, too. I mean…it would be great for family involvement as a lot of them are informed via newsletters and so on but more could be done…going forward...but we haven't had

the time to put everything in place…we will try next year. We'd also like to have an academy council representative regarding this… Is there going to be further involvement from EqualiTeach? That continued guidance would be appreciated by us.

Poppy was clearly keen on having future support from EqualiTeach which included involving parents. Schools made efforts to include parents and carers by adapting their home/school agreements and releasing the 'parent voice' information to them as well as sharing information about the project in their newsletters. Despite this, a small number of the sample schools felt they needed more time to properly engage parents in their Equally Safe efforts. Some suggested some sort of Equally Safe training for parents in the future might be helpful in cases where parents have a negative impact on students' views which can lead to bullying at school. In some cases, the intention to involve parents in ET initiatives is complicated by the fact there is a lack of interest from parents as is the case in Balloon Flower School. Aaron, a member of the school's leadership team, explains:

Parents' involvement [laughs]…I am sorry about the laugh. We've tried! We really did! I don't know if you're aware of the context of our school…so we are in one of the most deprived parts of the country…we're talking the bottom 10% actually, in terms of adult outcomes…so there are lots of problems, lots of issues…our parents' own experience of school impacted on their view of our school system today…it's very negative…it can rub off on their children…these views…We've had a distinct lack of parental engagement, so what we have done is…we've published information about the Equally Safe project in our newsletter but to judge…as to actually how much of that they read or take forward…it's hard to answer as we have lots of parents who just don't engage…I tried the governors and they've been very honourable with that! So yes, these are the main problems we have as a school.

One area where the sample schools are indicating the need to have more support with parents over bullying issues is the area of online bullying. This could be a way to help schools bond with parents more and the evaluation showed most school staff would welcome tools from EqualiTeach regarding this type of bullying. Here is an insightful extract from Tegan's interview, who is one of the Equally Safe leads in Camellia School:

Most parents have been great about receiving the information… about the Equally Safe project, but… We get a number of complaints from parents about online bullying…we haven't done that much work with EqualiTeach regarding parents but we feel that if we reached out to them about this…I'm sure they would be helpful…They were helpful with the EDI policy. I have to say their model policies were very helpful! It's about everyone in the school community, including our parents. To be honest... some parents are incredibly hostile to LGBT issues.. even when it comes to LGBT books being ordered for our library… They're saying: 'It's absolutely disgusting…what you're doing! You're promoting LGBT+…' And I said: 'No, it's not promoting, this is coming from the children, that's what they're interested in. What are you worried about? If you had a child identifying in this way… How would you feel if they weren't represented in their school?'…[sighs]…You see, these parents' views can have a negative impact on our young people. However, since we've had the Equally Safe training…well, we feel more confident to talk to parents

about this now! However, maybe if they had some training as well…I don't know…it's just an idea. It would be easier to talk to them...you know… everyone having the same level of knowledge and understanding…it makes it easier to get on [laughs]…

The Equally Safe programme embeds sustainable change into schools through its focus on training, policy, curriculum and environment. The adaptations to the policies have had a positive impact on changing the sample schools' cultures for the better. The reactions of the staff and children and young people involved with this project have been mainly positive. One area that needs more attention is parents, carers and families. This is despite the fact that there have been a number of significant steps taken by schools to involve parents and carers in their Equally Safe initiatives. Areas to think about include time constraints for schools and the need to develop creative and empathic approaches to drawing in more parental interaction with projects sucha s these. Perhaps parents could benefit from having the same level of knowledge of identity-based bullying and the associated terminology as the trained staff and students. It could help with parents being able to tackle online and other types of bullying together with their children's schools in a more effective way. Even stronger cohesion between families and schools in this area could greatly benefit the students who need good anti-bullying role models around them, both at school and at home. However, the Equally Safe project has established initial firm foundations in this area by setting up the schools with the right documentation to share with parents, such as the 'parent voice' documentation. Schools have also been very active in sharing relevant information about the programme with parents and carers via newsletters and in some cases via making videos featuring AFCs and their anti-bullying messages to everyone in the school communities.

Survey

The survey was sent to all 71 EqualiTeach schools participating in Year 1. The intention was that every member of staff would complete it. It found a general trend of support for the programme, with the staff expressing their newfound confidence in dealing with identity-based bullying. It was also very supportive in terms of the Equally Safe programme's impact in the areas of policy and training. There were 23 participants in the survey with 91.3% of them identifying as female, 4.3% identifying as male and 4.3% identifying as non-binary. Response rates are in the table below:

Staff roles of survey respondents	Number of survey respondents
Senior Leadership Team Member	8
Middle Leadership Team Member	6
Teacher (with no identified TLR)	2
Teaching Assistant	1
Unknown	6
Total:	23

The respondents were between the ages of 34 and 51. Data shows that 20 respondents identified their school by name and 3 respondents were from the same school. 50% of the identified schools were primary and 50% of the identified schools were secondary. The identified schools were situated in all areas of England, with the majority in the South East of England.

95.7% of respondents were involved with the Equally Safe project 'a lot' and 4.3% of them were involved 'a little'. 100% of the respondents had heard of the project. This data shows a very good level of whole school approach regarding participation in the Equally Safe project concerning the respondents' schools.

Respondents were asked: Have you noticed a positive change in the behaviour in your school since the start of the project? The data shows the following:

Yes – a lot	Yes – a little	No - not much	No – not at all	Not sure
39.1%	52.2%	0%	4.3%	4.3%

Respondents were also asked: 'Do you think the programme has improved pupils' confidence in their ability to create positive change in your school?'

Yes – a lot	Yes – a little	No - not much	No – not at all	Not sure
56.5%	39.1%	4.3%	0%	0%

Staff participating in this survey seem to be of the opinion the programme has increased the confidence of the children and young people in their schools regarding creating positive change. Perhaps this is also a contributing factor to the changes in pupils' much-improved behaviour as seen in the data above.

Respondents were asked: 'How useful has the Equally Safe programme proved to be in educating children and young people about different types of prejudice-related incidents?' 47.8% of the respondents found the programme very useful and 52.2% found the programme useful. This data supports the positive findings related to improved behaviour and increased confidence in pupils when it comes to creating positive change in their schools. This is further supported by fact that the survey also shows that 34.8% of the respondents think the Equally Safe programme proved to be very useful in educating children and young people about anti-bullying practices and 65.2% think it has proved to be useful. In addition to this, 21.7% of respondents think students have found this programme to be excellent, 43.5% of respondents think students have found the project very good and 30.4% think students have found the Equally Safe project to be good. 4.3% stated they think students have found the project to be fair.

Staff seem to have a high level of confidence in the Equally Safe programme and the data shows that 17.4% of respondents think the staff in their school have found the Equally Safe project to be excellent, 47.8% think their colleagues have found it to be very good, 26.1% think the staff in their schools have found the project to be good and 8.7% think the project has been found to be fair. None of the respondents rated it as not good which is a sign the programme has had a largely positive impact on the school staff engaged with it.

The respondents have also been asked about the staff training regarding the Equally Safe programme, the differentiation of the training materials, EqualiTeach support with policy changes, levels of support regarding engagements with parents/carers and support with networking with other schools. The responses are shown in the tables below:

How did you find staff training from EqualiTeach?	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Not good
	43.5%	47.8%	8.7%	0%	0%

Some of the positives highlighted by the respondents in the feedback section included 'training got better with each session' - especially with regards to pace and timing - and the training reps were 'knowledgeable and friendly'. Overall, the respondents have found the training engaging, including the twilight sessions. One respondent commented on preferring to do training in person to engage in 'more discussions' and another one commented they would prefer polls to break out rooms for time efficiency.

How did you find differentiation of training materials regarding primary and secondary?	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Not good
	14.3%	47.6%	23.8%	14.3%	0%

This is another positive set of data, but the feedback comments highlighted an area for improvement. One respondent's feedback comment stated they would like to have more case studies relating to primary schools and one commented they weren't sure about the differentiation.

How did you find ET support with policy changes?	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Not good
	65.2%	21.7%	13%	0%	0%

The data regarding support with policy changes is again positive suggesting the programme has been effective in this key area as well. This was also confirmed by the data from interviews with the staff. The comments include the following: 'really helpful comments and annotations on our policies – all very clear'; 'the rep was prompt and efficient'.

How did you find ET's support with engagement with parents/carers?	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Not good
	8.7%	47.8%	21.7%	17.4%	4.3%

As seen in the data this is an area that needs more attention regarding the Equally Safe programme. The feedback comments by respondents show there is a need by schools to have more support in letting parents and carers know what the purpose of the programme is. One respondent suggested having a video link or a PowerPoint,

which would explain the work EqualiTeach do with schools, in order to engage parents/carers more. Another respondent seemed to be of the view that the 'parent voice' document was too long and it needed to be adapted for the parents. This table supports the findings from the interviews which also highlight the same area – parental engagement – as an area of need. In contrast to the data from the interviews, there are no comments regarding online bullying which is what some of the staff talked about during the interviews.

How did you find ET's support with regards to networking with other schools?	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Not good
	8.7%	47.8%	21.7%	17.4%	4.3%

This table is identical to the one before it in terms of responses. This is clearly another area that needs more attention . The feedback comments speak for themselves: one respondent thought the training sessions provided 'little opportunity to network', another one stated 'it would've been nice to be given a linked school to compare and share ideas with' and one other said the networking was only via 'Zoom meetings', suggesting they would welcome some networking opportunities face to face. The mention of a buddy school scheme occurred quite a few times in the interviews and supports the findings of the survey regarding this table. In addition to this, the survey confirmed that 65.2% of respondents wished they had a school buddy scheme in place and 34.8% said 'no' to having a school buddy scheme. The majority would like this type of scheme to compare ideas with other schools that are also engaged in the Equally Safe programme and offer support to each other, especially once their collaboration with EqualiTeach comes to an end.
The survey showed that staff training and the help with policy adaptations from EqualiTeach have had a very positive effect.

Next, the staff were asked about: 'What type of prejudice/incidents would you like more guidance on from EqualiTeach?' The table below shows their responses:

What type of prejudice/ incidents would you like more guidance on from ET?	Racism	Sexism	Ageism	LGBTQA+	Disability	Religion	Online	Other
	4.3%	8.7%	0%	21.7%	4.3%	4.3%	30.4%	26%

The table above shows that the top three categories of prejudice/incidents schools still need support with are online-based, LGBTQA+ and 'other' (body shaming and other). Online-based bullying and LGBT+ related prejudice were also two of the main themes that occurred in the interview/focus group data. It is worth noting that 21.7% who selected the 'Other' option opted for 'body-shaming' as part of their response. Body-shaming appeared to be an issue for some secondary educators who were

interviewed as well as a number of students participating in the focus groups. The evaluator was under the impression this type of bullying was well-known in the sample secondary schools but not always well-addressed by teachers as reported by the students. It seemed a distressing type of bullying to talk about for many. Judging by the data, this might be an area of focus in future training sessions for AFCs from secondary schools as young people are more image-conscious in secondary settings, and so types of bullying often vary in secondary schools, depending on the age of groups involved.

The staff were asked the following: 'To what extent does the Equally Safe programme offer information for prejudice-related bullying with regards to different intersections?' This question was put to them with regards to 3 types of intersection: LGBT/SEND, LGBT/Race and SEND/Race. See below:

LGBT/SEND	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Not good
	21.7%	21.7%	39.1%	17.4%	0%
LGBT/Race	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Not good
	21.7%	26.1%	39.1%	13%	0%

SEND/Race	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Not good
	21.7%	21.7%	39.1%	17.4%	0%

LGBT/SEND and Race/SEND intersections scored 82.5% of positive responses each. The LGBT/Race intersection had the most positive responses with 86.9%. The data suggest areas linked to the SEND category of identity-based bullying need slightly more focus in terms of race and LGBT which was also highlighted in some of the interviews with school staff.

Conclusions and recommendations

The Equally Safe programme appeared to address a gap in teachers' knowledge and confidence in relation to preventing and tackling identity-based bullying. The positive effects of the programme are evident in all key areas, including policy, training and creating positive change in schools together with students who feel empowered and more confident as a result of being part of the Equally Safe project.

Gender-neutral uniforms, posters, wall displays, and equality statements in foyers all served powerfully to develop an inclusive environment in which both staff and students feel represented and safer. Adapting school policies to bring them into line with the Equality Act 2010 also impacted significantly and sustainably in many areas of school life, particularly in relation to behaviour management related to identity-based bullying. In addition, it meant that the Equally Safe project became visible at all levels of school management. The survey found a general trend of support for the programme, with teaching staff expressing their newfound confidence in dealing with identity-based bullying and expressing this through feedback, both in interviews and in the survey.

EqualiTeach's whole-school approach to promoting diversity, equality and inclusion and preventing identity-based bullying is very much valued by the staff and students. This helped to dissipate the stigma that can be easily attached to anyone

representing any of the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. As well as this, the programme encouraged schools to expand on their community celebrations and assemblies which helped to transform schools into places where both staff and students feel more appreciated and more represented than ever before. The evaluation also found that whilst the focus of the Equally Safe programme was on challenging identity-based bullying and preventing it from happening in schools, it had a wider impact, led by students and staff, on challenging various areas of prejudice and celebrating wider diversity in their schools, families and communities. Pupils who participated in the Equally Safe training took their roles as Agents for Change Ambassadors seriously which was evident in the many initiatives they listed in their action plans. Furthermore, this role has equipped them with new skills and confidence and empowered their 'pupil voice'. From some of the things they talked about it the focus groups, it is suggested tht pupils' open-mindedness – usually more developed than that of parents and carers – was partially due to their consumption of social media and reality TV.

Finally, the Equally Safe project can be seen to have impacted schools' capacity as centres of excellence in relation to inclusion work. This has made many of them feel more prepared for Ofsted visits and established them as local experts, ready to advise networks of schools within their Trusts and local areas.

Recommendations
Ideas for continued guidance from EqualiTeach
The respondents felt strongly about having continued guidance from EqualiTeach once their collaboration stops – with 73.9% selecting the 'yes' option in their responses. 26.1% of respondents felt confident enough to continue their Equally Safe work without having continued guidance from ET. Many contributed feedback comments in this section with the attention being mostly on the following:

- Advice is needed as schools progress through the training stage – especially regarding implementing policies
- More training materials to be supplied for schools to share with colleagues
- Having an EqualiTeach buddy school to exchange ideas with as a way of continued guidance
- Termly checks by EqualiTeach to provide any needed support/updates to ensure the project's longevity
- Having a point of contact if things need to be discussed before acting upon any ideas regarding tackling bullying

It is recommended that EqualiTeach extend the training to include more school community members, in particular **parents, carers** and wider pupil cohorts, to make the impact of the Equally Safe programme more far-reaching.

The future Equally Safe training might also usefully address the issue of **online bullying and 'sensitive' issues, such as sexism (secondary schools) and gender identity (primary schools)** which are topics that are either difficult to talk about for teachers and parents or staff feel they don't have enough tools to be able to talk about 'sensitive' topics with total confidence. The data suggests there is a mixture of apprehension and genuine nervousness amongst staff regarding gender identity, especially. Some of the primary educators are not sure if this topic is

appropriate for primary pupils and fear upsetting the parents and so training might be one way to dissipate the fear amongst staff and parents. In order to address barriers to the safety for all the LGBT+ pupils, EqualiTeach could consider a programme of post-programme checks with schools to ensure the aims of the programme are well-known to all of the school community members and there is consistency in staff approaches to inclusion regarding LGBT+ pupils.

The roles of the Equally Safe leads would ideally be distributed to members of the leadership teams or **teachers with TLR** to ensure the work involved reaches leadership teams and thus leads to a whole-school approach in implementing the programme.

EqualiTeach could consider **supporting AFCs with continued guidance** regarding their initiatives - some teachers face time constraints or focusing more on policies and staff training than the work of AFCs. Primary schools recognised the importance of letting AFCs lead on many of the Equally Safe initiatives listed in their action plans. This level of support for AFCs from parents and staff was less evident in secondary schools.

Differentiation of the training materials needs more attention and focus regarding age phase and SEND, especially with regards to **intersectionality**. Many of the sample schools had a large proportion of students with SEND, who were also LGBT+ in some cases, and from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. There could be a pre-training questionnaire given to staff to assess their training needs in these areas.

It is recommended that schools are encouraged by EqualiTeach to set up participants for **focus groups who represent a wider selection of the protected characteristics** present in their schools, especially students with SEND and students with intersectional characteristics. It is also recommended teachers are asked not to intervene in focus groups with students if present, but to remain in the role of observer or to be present specifically for safeguarding purposes. This is to enable student participants to have the platform to speak freely, without interruptions and hesitations.

The programme has generated a good range of knowledge for staff and students regarding identity-based bullying. Many of them are keen to share ideas with other schools engaging in this project. However, many don't feel they have had an opportunity to properly **network with other EqualiTeach schools** just yet and have expressed their interest in EqualiTeach setting up a school buddy scheme for schools from Year 1 as part of continued guidance in the future to ensure the work continues. Together with other schools, EqualiTeach could add to their bank of resources for schools entering this programme in Year 2 and Year 3 as many schools are keen on sharing ideas, including the AFCs who expressed a keen interest in visiting other schools to compare ideas or mentor each other's peers to fight against identity-based bullying together. This would also enable schools to expand on their existing networks and develop approaches specific to their local contexts.

Appendices:

Appendix 1. School Staff Information Sheet – Interview Participation

School Staff Information Sheet:
Interview Participation

You are being invited to take part in an interview as part of the external evaluation of EqualiTeach's Equally Safe project. The key aim is to identify what makes the anti-bullying programme successful and explore how it may be adapted for use with primary and secondary pupils in schools across England.

Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?
Identifying the impact of the Equally Safe programme on you and members of your school community.

Why have I been invited to participate?
You have been invited to participate because you are involved with the Equally Safe programme via your school community, and you potentially have some important information about the impact of this programme so far, possibly including ideas for 'what could work better'.

Do I have to take part?
No. *It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to do so, you can keep a copy of this information sheet, and you will need to give your consent in response to questions at the beginning of the interview.*

Can I withdraw from the study?
Yes, you can leave the interview at any time without giving a reason for doing so.

What will happen if I take part?
If you choose to take part, you will answer asked questions as part of an interview activity which will relate to your experience of the Equally Safe programme in your school setting. The questioning format will start with open questions, so you'll have a chance to think about your views and share experiences. The interview should take less than an hour to complete.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?
All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any ensuing reports or publications.

With respect to personal data, please see the Data Protection Privacy Notice below. The data collected will be kept on a password protected computer and only accessed by the researchers. After the period of data collection, only anonymised versions of the data will be kept.
Data from the whole study may be collected into anonymised datasets, in which no individual can be identified. These datasets may be retained indefinitely in a central data repository, Goldsmiths Research Online, for the benefit of future research.

Limits to confidentiality
Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases, Goldsmiths may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies or agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
The findings of this research will be published after the completion of the whole project and might be presented through an academic journal article. Copies of the materials used will be made available to you. The results from this project will be used to evaluate and improve the Equally Safe programme. In addition, a survey will be designed to measure baseline for schools starting in years 2 and 3, with a paired survey to measure direction travelled at the end of each year.

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering whether to take part in this research study.

Consent Form - staff

Please tick the appropriate boxes	Yes	No
I understand the study information contained in this document.		
I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study. It is my choice to take part. I understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can stop being part of the study at any time, without having to explain.		
I understand that if I do decide to stop being part of the study after first publication of the information, it will not be possible to delete the information.		
Participation in this project involves one interview. Each interview should take less than an hour. I understand the above.		
I understand that the interviews will be audio recorded.		
Use of the information in the study	**Yes**	**No**
I understand that information I provide will be shared in an academic journal article, university papers, and at workshops, public events, and other media, including social media and the general population.		
I understand that personal information shared with the researcher will remain confidential, and that no information identifying me will be published.		
I agree that the things I say in the interviews can be included in the books, papers and presentations the researcher will write about this project.		

Signatures		
School staff name [IN CAPITALS]	School staff signature	Date
Researcher name [IN CAPITALS]	Researcher signature	Date
KLAUDIA MATASOVSKA		
Study contact details for further information		
Klaudia Matasovska, PhD student (Department of Educational Studies), email: kmata005@gold.ac.uk Dr Anna Carlile (supervisor), Head of Department of Educational Studies, tel: 0207 7172296 email: a.carlile@gold.ac.uk		

Appendix 2b. Consent Form – Pupil Participants

Taking Part in a Focus Group

Last term, EqualiTeach came to deliver an Agents for Change event at your school. We would like to find out what you thought about the event, such as what you liked and what could be improved. This will help EqualiTeach to know if the events have been successful and what they can do to improve them in the future.

We would like to invite you to take part in a focus group, where we will ask you some questions. The focus group should last between 30 and 45 minutes.

The person who carries out the focus group with you, the researcher, will make sure anything you say will be anonymised and very few people will know you took part. She will record what you say and write up a summary of what everyone has said, which won't include any names. But, if you tell the researcher something that would make her worry about your safety, then she would have to tell someone else.

Consent Form: YOUNG PERSON

Please tick the appropriate boxes	Yes	No
I understand the information above.		
I have been able to ask questions about the focus group and my questions have been answered clearly.		
I would like to take part in the focus group.		
I understand that what I say will be recorded.		
I agree that the things I say in the focus group can be used in the researcher's reports and in other reports in the future.		

Signatures		
Your Name [IN CAPITALS]	Your Signature	Date
Researcher name [IN CAPITALS]	Researcher signature	Date
KLAUDIA MATASOVSKA		

Appendix 3. Parent and Carer Information Sheet: Focus Groups

Parent and Carer Information Sheet: Focus Groups for your Child

Your child is being invited to take part in a focus group about EqualiTeach's anti-bullying project, Equally Safe, which is taking place at the school.

The key aim is to identify what makes the anti-bullying Equally Safe Programme successful and explore how it may be adapted for use with primary and secondary pupils in schools across England.

Before you decide whether or not you give consent for your child to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. There is also a young person version of this form available to your child so that they can access the same information in a child-friendly way and give their consent too.

Why has your child been invited to participate?
Your child has been invited to participate because they are involved with the Equally Safe Programme via your school community, and your child potentially has some important information about the impact of this programme so far, possibly including ideas for 'what could work better'.

Does your child have to take part?
No. *It is entirely up to you and your child to decide whether or not they take part. If you both consent, you and they can keep a copy of this information sheet.*

Can my child withdraw from the study?
Yes, they can leave the focus group at any time without giving a reason for doing so. It is up to them if they want to be in this study. No one will force or pressure them to be part of the study.
We will make sure that no one is identifiable from their answers.

What will happen if my child takes part?
They will answer questions as part of a focus group activity which will relate to their experience of the Equally Safe Programme in their school setting. The questioning format will start with open questions so they'll have a chance to think about/contribute their views and share experiences with other participants present. The focus group should not take longer than 45 minutes to complete.

Will what my child says in this study be kept confidential?
All the information that we collect about your child during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. They will not be able to be identified in any ensuing reports or publications.

With respect to personal data, please see the Data Protection Privacy Notice on the next page. The data collected will be kept on a password protected computer and only accessed by the researchers named at the top of this sheet. After the period of data collection, only anonymised versions of the data will be kept.

Data from the whole study may be collected into anonymised datasets, in which no individual can be identified. These datasets may be retained indefinitely in a central data repository, Goldsmiths Research Online, for the benefit of future research.

Limits to confidentiality

Please note that assurances on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases, the organising situation, Goldsmiths, University of London, may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies or agencies.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The findings of this research will be published after the completion of the whole project and might be presented through an academic journal article. Copies of the materials used will be made available to you. The results from this project will be used to evaluate and improve the Equally Safe Programme, and to bring a level of validity to the work of EqualiTeach.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is organised by the Department of Educational Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London. The research has been approved by the researcher's supervisor at Goldsmiths.

If you have any concerns about your participation or about the study in general, you should first contact the research supervisor, Anna Carlile (020 7717 2296, a.carlile@gold.ac.uk).

Informed Consent Form

Please tick the appropriate boxes	Yes	No
I understand the study information contained in this information sheet.		
I consent for my child to take part in this focus group.		
I understand that the focus group will be audio recorded.		
Use of the information in the study	**Yes**	**No**
I understand that information provided by my child will be shared in an academic journal article, university papers, and at workshops, public events, and other media, including social media and the general population.		
I understand that personal information collected about my child that can identify them, such as their name or where they live, will not be shared.		
I agree that the things my child says in the focus group can be included in the books, papers and presentations the researcher will write about this project.		
Future use and reuse of the information by others	**Yes**	**No**
I give permission for the information collected about my child in this project to be kept in a database called the Goldsmiths Online Repository so it can be used for future research and learning.		

Signatures		
Parent/Carer's Name [IN CAPITALS]	Parent/Carer's signature	Date
Researcher name [IN CAPITALS]	Researcher signature	Date
KLAUDIA MATASOVSKA		

Study contact details for further information
Klaudia Matasovska, PhD student (Department of Educational Studies), email: kmata005@gold.ac.uk
Dr Anna Carlile (supervisor), Department of Educational Studies, tel: 0207 7172296 email: a.carlile@gold.ac.uk

Data Protection Privacy Notice

The General Data Protection Regulation [GDPR] and Goldsmiths Research: guidelines for participants

Please note that this document does not constitute, and should not be construed as, legal advice. These guidelines are designed to help participants understand their rights under GDPR which came into force on 25 May 2018.

Your rights as a participant (data subject) in this study
The updated data protection regulation is a series of conditions designed to protect an individual's personal data. Not all data collected for research is personal data.

Personal data is data such that a living individual can be identified; collection of personal data is sometimes essential in conducting research and GDPR sets out that data subjects should be treated in a lawful and fair manner and that information about the data processing should be explained clearly and transparently. Some data we might ask to collect falls under the heading of **special categories data**. This type of information includes data about an individual's race; ethnic origin; politics; religion; trade union membership; genetics; biometrics (where used for ID purposes); health; sex life; or sexual orientation. This data requires particular care.

Under GDPR you have the following rights over your personal data[2]:

- *The right to be informed*. You must be informed if your personal data is being used.
- *The right of access*. You can ask for a copy of your data by making a 'subject access request'.
- *The right to rectification.* You can ask for your data held to be corrected.
- *The right to erasure*. You can ask for your data to be deleted.
- *The right to restrict processing*. You can limit the way an organisation uses your personal data if you are concerned about the accuracy of the data or how it is being used.
- *The right to data portability*. You have the right to get your personal data from an organisation in a way that is accessible and machine-readable. You also have the right to ask an organisation to transfer your data to another organisation.
- *The right to object*. You have the right to object to the use of your personal data in some circumstances. You have an absolute right to object to an organisation using your data for direct marketing.
- *How your data is processed using automated decision making and profiling*. You have the right not to be subject to a decision that is based solely on automated processing if the decision affects your legal rights or other equally important matters; to understand the reasons behind decisions made about you by automated processing and the possible consequences of the decisions, and to object to profiling in certain situations, including for direct marketing purposes.

Please note that these rights are not absolute and only apply in certain circumstances. You should also be informed how long your data will be retained and who it might be shared with.

How does Goldsmiths treat my contribution to this study?
Your participation in this research is very valuable and any personal data you provide will be treated in confidence using the best technical means available to us. The university's legal basis for

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[2] https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/

processing your data[3] as part of our research findings is a "task carried out in the public interest". This means that our research is designed to improve the health, happiness and well-being of society and to help us better understand the world we live in. It is not going to be used for marketing or commercial purposes.

In addition to our legal basis under Article 6 (as described above), for **special categories data** as defined under Article 9 of GDPR, our condition for processing is that it is "necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes".[4]

If your data contributes to data from a group then your ability to remove data may be limited as the study progresses, when removal of your data may cause damage to the dataset.

You should also know that you may contact any of the following people if you are unhappy about the way your data or your participation in this study are being treated:

- Goldsmiths Data Protection Officer – dp@gold.ac.uk (concerning your rights to control personal data).
- You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office at https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/

This information has been provided by the Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee with advice from the Research Services and Governance and Legal Teams.
Version: October 2018

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[3] GDPR Article 6; the six lawful bases for processing data are explained here: https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/lawful-basis-for-processing/

[4] Article 9 of the GDPR requires this type of data to be treated with great care because of the more significant risks to a person's fundamental rights and freedoms that mishandling might cause, eg, by putting them at risk of unlawful discrimination.

Appendix 4. Equalities Monitoring Form – Staff Participants

Equalities Monitoring Form
Strictly Private and Confidential

Post:

Collecting equalities information helps us to ensure that we are reaching all sectors of the community and helps us to identify and reduce potential barriers to involvement. We separate this information from the rest of your application form. The information you give is confidential, held in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations and will not be seen by anyone involved in the data-collection process, other than the researcher who will keep the information anonymous. Please, provide details about yourself by answering the questions below.

Disability
The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Do you consider yourself have a disability under this definitio ☐ Yes ☐ No

Your age is

16 to 24 ☐   25 to 44 ☐   45 to 64 ☐   65 to 74 ☐

Please describe your ethnicity

White:

British	☐
Irish	☐
Gypsy/Traveller	☐
Any other white background	☐

Black or Black British:

Caribbean	☐
African	☐
Any other Black background	☐

Asian or Asian British:

Indian	☐

Mixed:

White and Black Caribbean	☐

Pakistani	☐	White and Black African	☐
Bangladeshi	☐	White and Asian	☐
Any other Asian background	☐	Any other mixed background	☐

Chinese or other ethnic group:

Chinese	☐
Any other ethnic group	☐

Please tick the appropriate box to show your **relationship status**

Married	☐	In a civil partnership	☐
Divorced	☐	Civil partnership has been legally ended	☐
Widowed	☐	Single	☐
Living with Partner	☐	Separated	☐

Please describe your sexual orientation

Heterosexual	☐	Gay or lesbian	☐
Would rather not say	☐	Bisexual	☐

Please describe your **gender**

Man	☐	Woman	☐
Non-binary	☐	Genderless	☐

Is your **gender identity** the same as the one that you were assigned at birth?

Yes	☐	No	☐
Would rather not say.	☐		

Please describe your religion of belief

Buddhist	☐	Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and other Christian denominations)	☐
Hindu	☐		
Muslim	☐	Would rather not say	☐
Sikh	☐	No religion	☐
Jewish	☐	Other religion or belief	☐

Thank you for completing this form