

United Against Bullying School Case Study: Supporting SEND pupils

How St. Mary's Primary supported SEND pupils

Context of our anti-bullying work

Our school has a much higher percentage of SEN than other settings we have 28% at SEN support level and we have 14% of children with EHCPs in our school which is four times higher than the national average. As the figures for pupils with SEND experiencing bullying are always higher, we wanted to do some specific work on communicating about bullying and supporting our pupils who have felt bullied.

What we hoped to achieve

We wanted to have a greater understanding of the best way to support SEND children who have experienced bullying behaviour and we wanted to provide effective aftercare and follow up support to improve the pupils' well-being.

We have come up with a range of individual anti-bullying approaches which tailor for the individual SEND needs of our pupils.

The action we took

- We have promoted our anti-bullying policy in assembly and within classes so that all children are aware of the processes- A child friendly version is displayed in all areas of the school which the Junior Leadership Team have helped to correct.
- We have a range of ways for SEND pupils to report their bullying concerns- they have a communication box in class, they can talk to well-being ambassadors and they know who the well-being champion is.
- Parents are clear on who to talk to about bullying in the school as the children and communication on the subject comes from the anti-bullying champion.
- We have trained pupil well-being ambassadors to allow children to report to peers where they feel unable to report to adults
- We have trained teachers using the anti-bullying alliance videos so they are more able to support and spot bullying behaviour towards our SEND pupils.
- We have had trauma-informed schools training to encourage connection before correction to enable our pupils with SEND to feel comfortable with reporting incidences of bullying behaviour.

- We have explained and used our action planning format with parents to allow parents to see clearly the steps we are taking to prevent bullying
- For children with attachment needs, we have provided quality time with the anti-bullying champion to allow them to discuss their needs each week.
- We have developed a use of visuals and comic strip conversations to enable pupils to communicate the exact details of an incident to allow us to pinpoint what happened exactly.
- We have followed this up with social stories to support both the ringleader and the target
- With our ASC children, we use comic strip conversations and concrete language to help them to articulate all of the events which led up to the bullying behaviour.
- We have developed a 'shine a light' approach to discussing incidents with pupils who have additional needs as sometimes we know that the child needs help understanding the thoughts and feelings of people other than themselves to understand situations and intentions.
- After a bullying incident has been reported, we have found anti-bullying check-ins to be a useful technique to ensure aftercare for the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour. A weekly check in with the anti-bullying ambassador or an informal check in where needed has been implemented for those SEND pupils who need the follow up support.
- Some of our LAC children have inadvertently become ringleaders due to their experiences and we have implemented systems to support them with this behaviour. We have check-ins with them, we use visuals and comic strip conversations to explain their behaviours and the impact it has on others. We also have a virtual school teacher who works specifically on teaching social skills to the children.
- We have set up a review system with parents as well where we check in with parents about How things are after a set amount of time.
- We have increased supervision in the playground when needed to support our pupils with SEND who have experienced bullying.
- We have a DEN area where pupils can go when needed.

Impact and outcomes of the work

- Since the implementation of the policy and our work on supporting pupils with SEND we have helped the following pupils:
- A Y3 pupil with attachment who experienced bullying in March- continues to check in with the anti-bullying ambassador weekly. She never misses a meeting and is now drawing her own check-in grids to bring to the meeting which always say 0 out of 10 for worries etc. so that she can move onto a positive play time with the champion instead.

- A LAC pupil, who also has ASC, has reported to the anti-bullying champion about his experience of people being unkind and he has allowed her to her talk to the class about it and continues to check in with the anti-bullying ambassador.
- The antibullying ambassador has successfully used visuals in order to explain how incidences have not been bullying on occasion as well.
- Parents of pupils who have had action plans in place have reported that bullying has stopped and that they feel things are much better now for their pupils.
- A social story about friendships has allowed a pupil with ASC needs to realise how he needs to initiate play and use his hands safely allowing him to form friendships.
- A parent thanked us for taking seriously her bullying complaint and dealing with it so quickly and effectively.
- Another pupil with ASC was offered a different area of the inside of the classroom to use to limit his interactions with a child who he considered a bully. He now independently chooses when he needs this.
- We supported another LAC child with this ringleader behaviours by increasing adult support and providing a buddy.
- Another SEN pupil reported feelings of being bullied and we offered her support from the well-being ambassador. We then worked with the mum who said that she thought Kyra was confused about what bullying meant and we shared the definition and educated her further around the definition of bullying.
- Our questionnaire results suggest that children feel less lonely and have reported less incidences of being physically hurt.

What we have learned

- The importance of using visuals and comic strip conversations to fully unpick any incidences of bullying with children with SEND and all children is a highly important tool to ensuring that all pieces of the jigsaw are uncovered and that the true story can be reported both to the parent of the target and the parent of the ringleader.
- The importance of aftercare- regular check ins and after support such as ELSA and counselling is sometimes needed to ensure pupils with SEND needs feel listening to and supported.