



BULLYING, SCHOOL EXPERIENCES AND WELLBEING: a picture of pupil experience in England 2023



INTRODUCTION

This report is a summary of the findings from the first collection of our pupil bullying and wellbeing questionnaire which forms part of the Anti-Bullying Alliance's [United Against Bullying](#) programme. United Against Bullying is a Department for Education funded programme aiming to support school to improve their whole-school approach to preventing and responding to bullying including the bullying of those most at risk of experiencing it. It is available free to school in England until March 2024.

This questionnaire is from almost 65 thousand pupils across England and was taken from November 2022 to February 2023. Schools provide pupils with access to the questionnaire at the start of the programme to provide us with baseline data. The questionnaire results provide us with a picture of children and young people's experiences of bullying in England, their experiences at school and their wellbeing.

The data was analysed by Goldsmiths, University of London and released in [Anti-Bullying Week 2023](#).

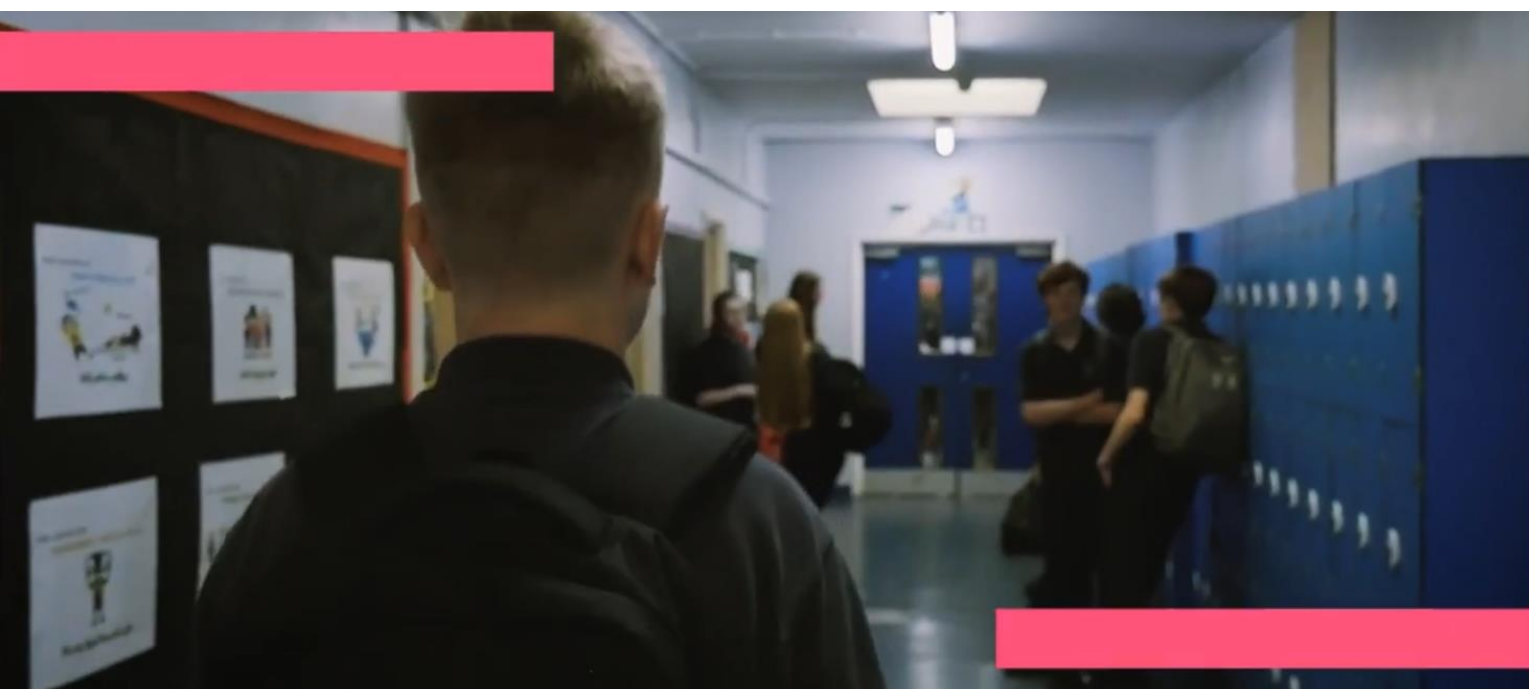
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KEY FINDINGS

- Almost 1 in four pupils (23%) report being frequently bullied in the last few weeks.
- Pupils in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) (28%) and those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) (29%) are significantly more likely to be frequently bullied.
- 6% of pupils report frequently bullying others.
- 5% of pupils report frequently being bullied online.
- Pupils who report being bullied, either face to face or online, have poorer experiences at school than those not being bullied.
- Pupils who report bullying others, either face to face or online, are the most likely to report poor experiences at school.
- Pupils at secondary schools are significantly more likely to report having poor school experiences than primary, infant and other schools.
- Both pupils that are bullied and those that report bullying others are significantly more likely to report that they don't feel they belong at school, they don't get on with their teachers, they don't feel safe at school and they don't like going to school.
- Pupils who have been bullied and those who bully others (both face to face and online) are significantly more likely to report poor wellbeing – with those who bully the most likely to report poor wellbeing.
- Pupils at secondary school have the poorest wellbeing compared to those at primary, infant and other schools.



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ABOUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The primary data source is the Pupil Questionnaire (see Appendix 1), which surveys experiences of children and young people in the participating schools. Baseline data was collected from 65,061 pupils aged between four/five to 18 years of age who attended 335 schools throughout England, between November 2022 to February 2023. The data was analysed to examine school experiences, pupil bullying and pupil wellbeing. We also examined differences by gender, SEND and FSM status, and by school Type.

Demographic data on pupils who filled this in (gender, school year, faith and ethnicity) was available from each school. The questionnaire collects pupil self-report data using 24 items covering three specific areas: School Experience, Pupil Relationships and Wellbeing (see Appendix 1). All items are responded to on a four-point Likert scale ranging from never (0), a little (1), a lot (2) or always (3).

The first section consists of 4 items asking about School Experience: I like going to school, I feel safe at school, I get on well with my teachers and I feel like I belong at school. Each pupil's total score was divided by the number of items to provide a mean score of between 0 and 3, the higher the score (nearer to 3) the more positive the pupil felt about their school.

The second section consisted of 10 items on Pupil Relationships, measuring being bullied, and bullying others. The five items of being bullied experiences (e.g., other pupils stop me from joining in with them) included one item about online experiences of victimisation (other pupils are mean or rude to me online). The five items about bullying others (e.g., I call other pupils mean names) included one item about online bullying behaviour (I am mean or rude to other pupils online). Being bullied and bullying others were analysed separately, and categorised as never, ever, or frequently (bullied, or bullying others). Never meant that the pupil ticked 'never' for all 5 items. Ever meant that the pupil ticked 'a little' or more for at least one item. Frequently meant that the pupil scored 2 or more for at least one item.

The third section consisted of 10 items on Wellbeing which asked questions about emotional and behavioural difficulties such as 'I am calm', 'I feel liked at school', 'I feel lonely', or 'I hit out when I am angry'. Five items were positive, and 5 items were negative. The negative items were reverse coded, and the total scores divided by the number of items to provide a mean score between 0 and 3, the higher the score (nearer to 3) the more positive wellbeing.

We only analysed data from those pupils who answered six or more of the 24 items. On this basis, the total number of pupils who provided valid data was 65,061.

Table 1 below gives the breakdown of pupils by gender, SEND and FSM status.

Gender was almost equally represented. Overall, 15% of pupils had special educational needs or disabled (SEND) and 20% of pupils were in receipt of free school meals (FSM).

Table 2 provides information on school status and school category of all participating schools.

Two thirds of the schools who participated were Academy schools, with over a quarter of schools being Maintained schools. The vast majority of schools were categorised as Mainstream schools.



Table 1: Descriptive statistics (number of pupils, and percentage of total sample) for gender, SEND and FSM

	Total	Gender		SEN/D		FSM	
		Females	Males	Yes	No	Yes	No
Total	65,061	33,878	31,182	9,993	55,068	13,096	51,965
		(52%)	(48%)	(15%)	(85%)	(20%)	(80%)
Secondary	39,115	20,947	18,167	5,983	33,132	7,275	31,840
	(60%)	(54%)	(46%)	(15%)	(85%)	(19%)	(81%)
Primary	23,821	12,011	11,810	3,323	20,498	5,360	18,461
	(37%)	(50%)	(50%)	(15%)	(85%)	(23%)	(77%)
Infant	102	46	56	26	76	16	86
	(0%)	(45%)	(55%)	(26%)	(74%)	(22%)	(84%)
Other	2,023	874	1,149	397	1,626	445	1,578
	(3%)	(43%)	(57%)	(20%)	(80%)	(22%)	(78%)

Table 2: Descriptive statistics (number of pupils, and percentage of total sample) for school status and school category

School Status	Academy	42,754	(66%)
	Free School	721	(1%)
	Independent School	3,474	(5%)
	Maintained School	17,656	(27%)
	Other	456	(1%)
School Category	Mainstream School	63,200	(97%)
	Special School	739	(1%)
	Other	1,115	(2%)
	PRU	7	(0%)

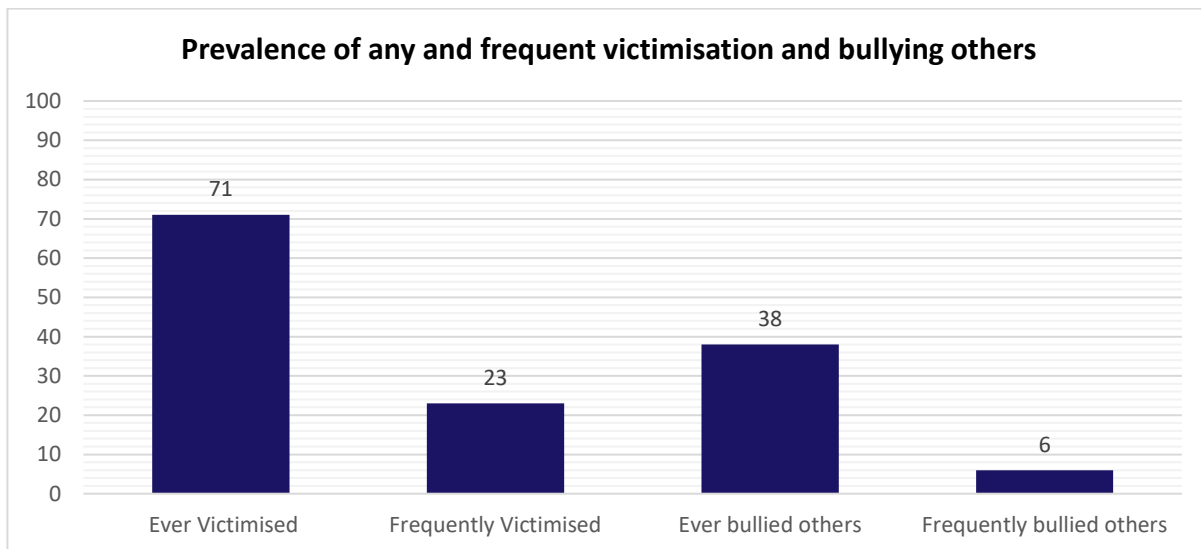


PREVALENCE OF VICTIMISATION AND BULLYING OTHERS

Prevalence of ever and frequent victimisation, and bullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 1. Pupils reported high levels for ever being victimised and relatively high for ever bullying others; however, these might only have been occasional incidents. There are much lower levels of frequent victimisation, and frequently bullying others.

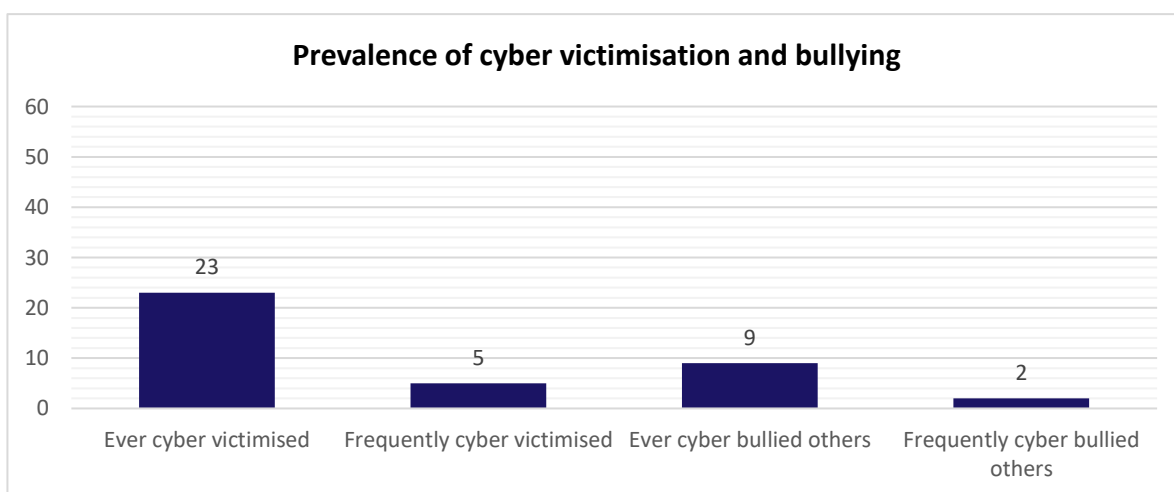
Figure 1 Prevalence of any victimisation and bullying others



Prevalence of ever and frequent cyber victimisation and cyberbullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 2. Nearly a quarter of pupils reported ever being a cyber victim, but much smaller numbers report frequent cyber victimisation, and ever and frequent cyber bullying others.

Figure 2 Prevalence of cyber victimisation and bullying others

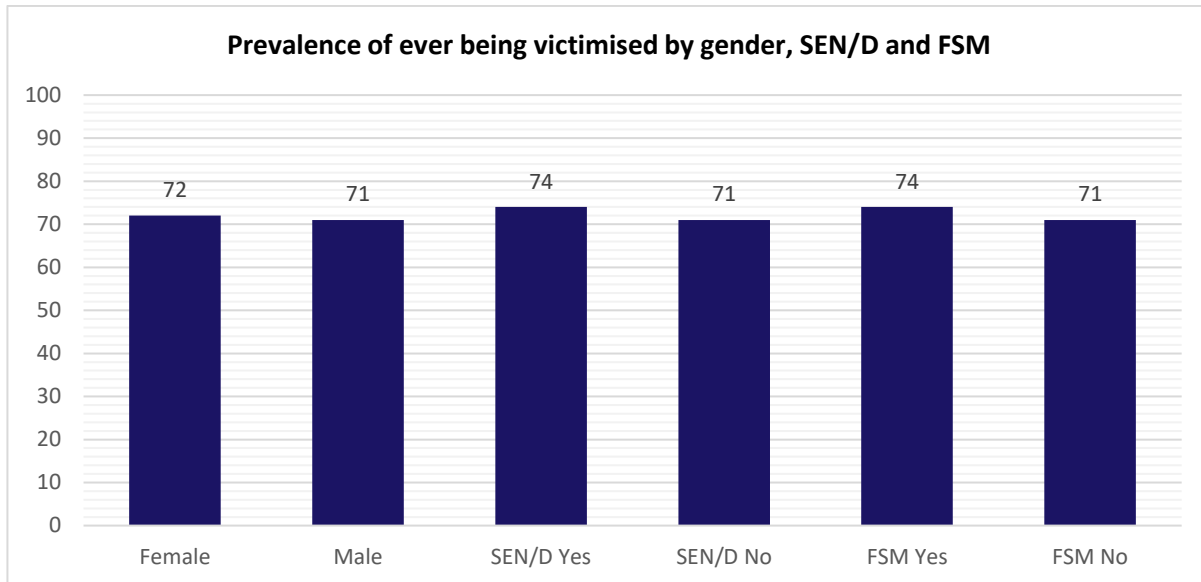


Prevalence of being victimised by gender, SEND and FSM

Ever victimised

The findings are shown in Figure 3. These figures are high for all groups. However, pupils who receive FSM and those with SEND reporting slightly higher levels of ever being victimised.

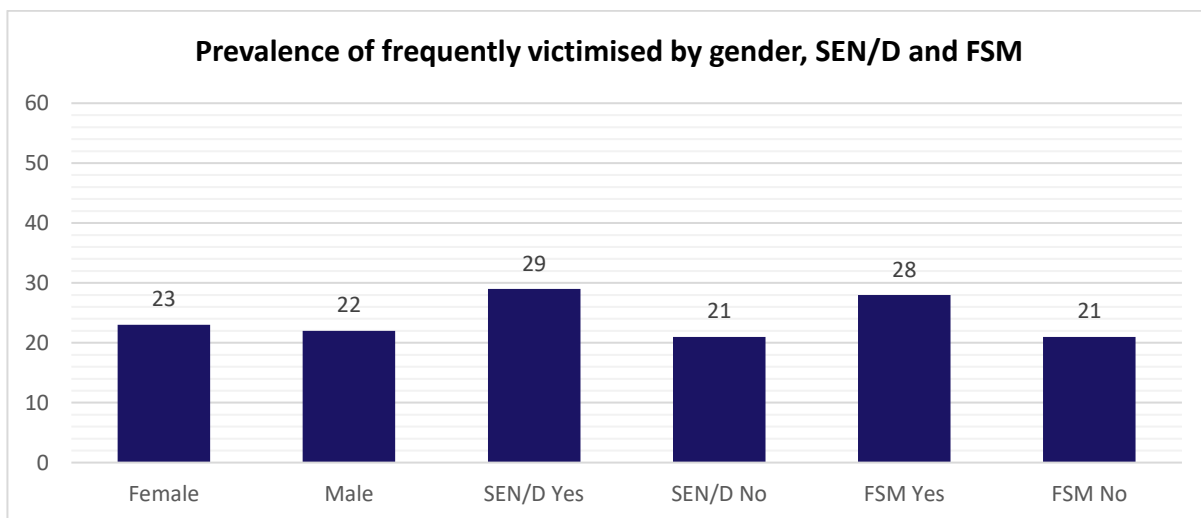
Figure 3 Prevalence of being victimised by gender, SEND and FSM



Frequently victimised

The findings are shown in Figure 4. Those pupils who have SEND reported higher levels than those pupils who did not have SEND; similarly, pupils in receipt of FSM reported higher levels than those not in receipt of FSM.

Figure 4 Prevalence of frequently victimised by gender, SEND and FSM

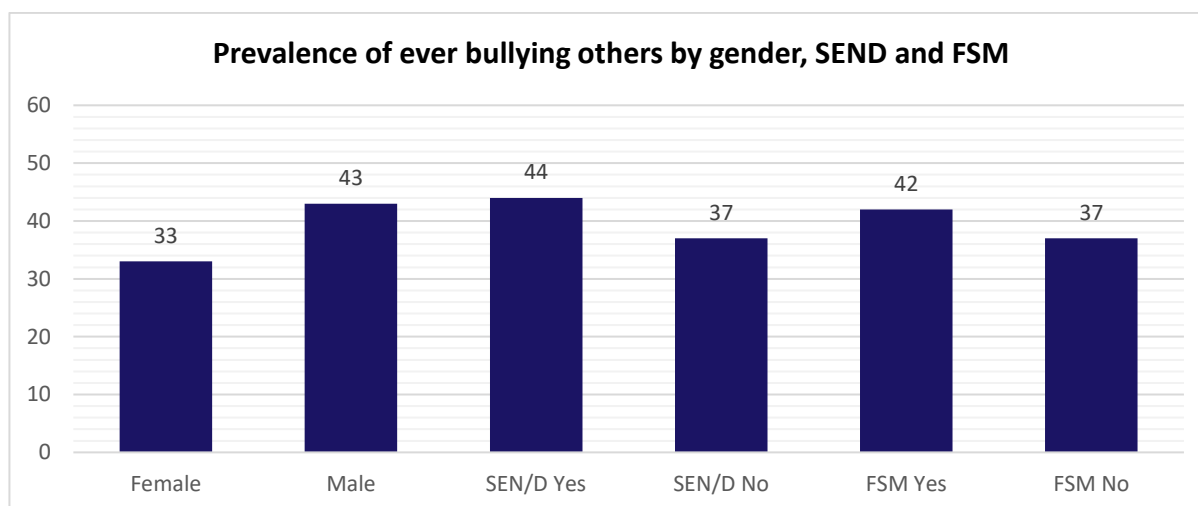


Prevalence of ever and frequently bullying others by gender, SEND and FSM

Ever bullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 5. Males, pupils who have SEND and those in receipt of FSM reported the highest levels of bullying others.

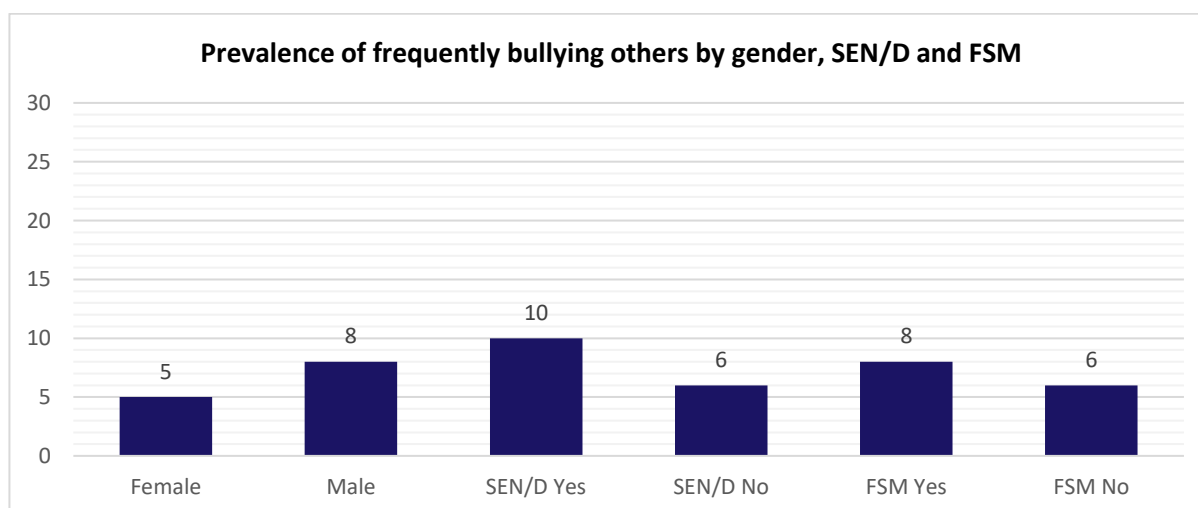
Figure 5 Prevalence of bullying others by gender, SEND and FSM



Frequently bullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 6. Figures are low for frequently bullying others (10% or less); however males, pupils who have SEND and those in receipt of FSM report levels nearly twice that of females, pupils who are not SEND and those not in receipt of FSM.

Figure 6 Prevalence of frequent bullying others by gender, SEND

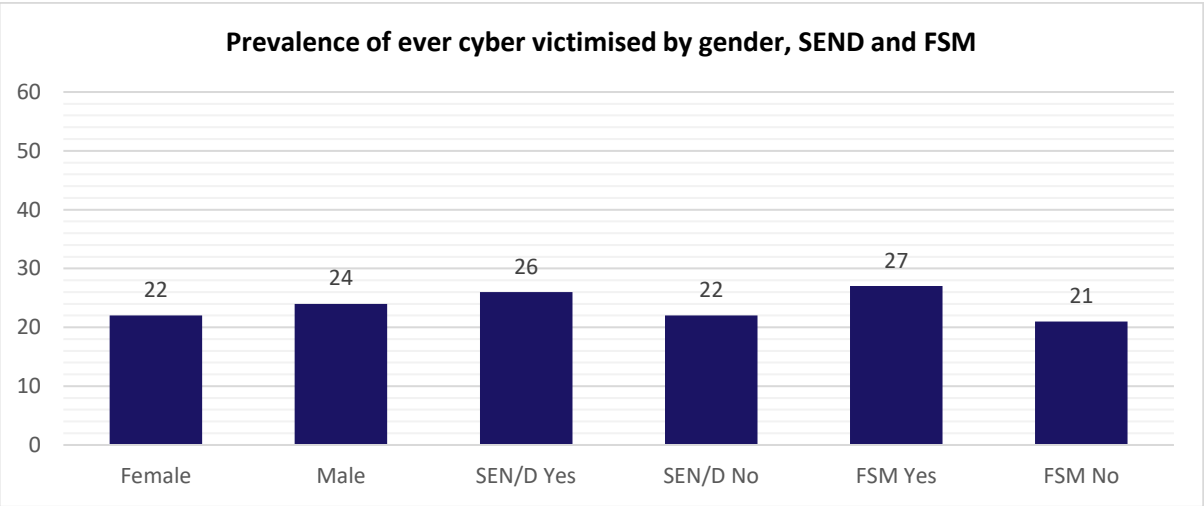


Prevalence of ever being cyber victimised by gender, SEND and FSM

Ever cyber victimised

The findings are shown in Figure 7. About a quarter of pupils report ever being a cyber victim, Males, pupils with SEND and those pupils in receipt of FSM report higher levels of cyber victimisation than females, pupils who do not have SEND and those not in receipt of FSM.

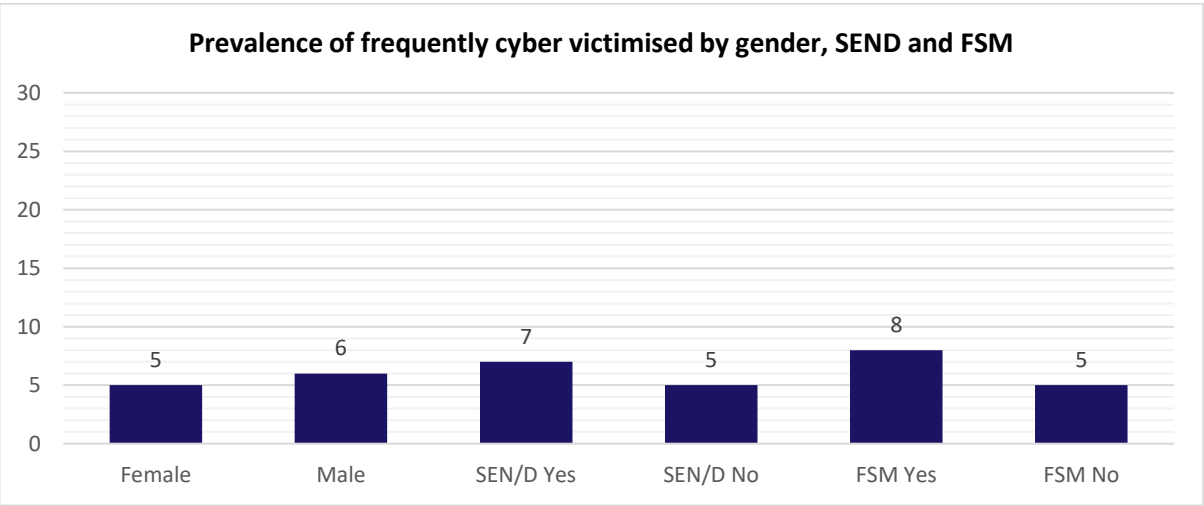
Figure 7 Prevalence of ever cyber victimised by gender, SEND and FSM



Frequently cyber victimised

The findings are shown in Figure 8. The percentage for all groups is low. Males, pupils who identify as SEND and pupils in receipt of FSM report higher levels of victimisation than females, pupils who are not SEND and those not in receipt of FSM.

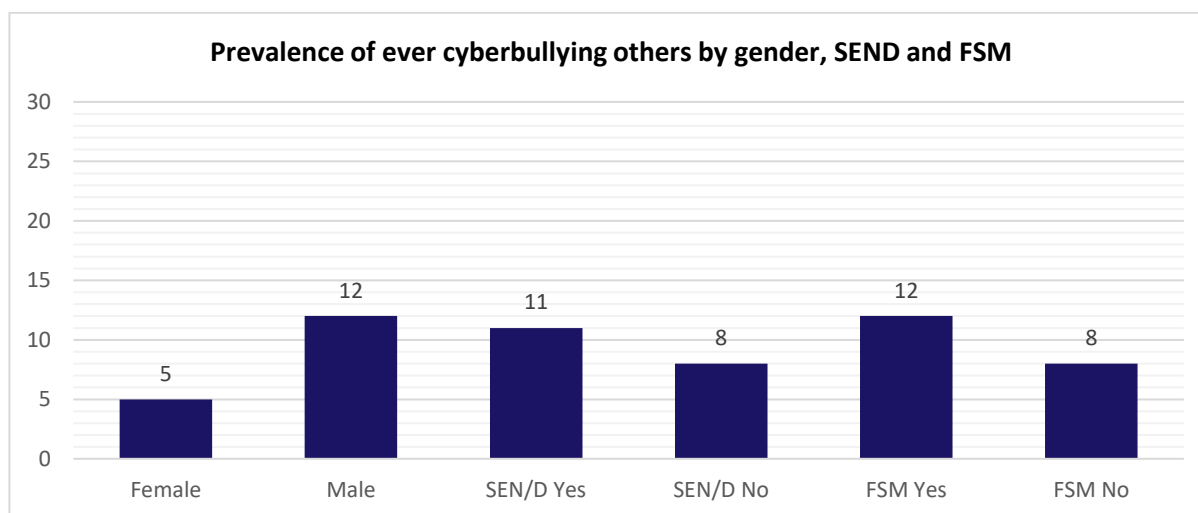
Figure 8 Prevalence of frequently cyber victimised by gender, SEND and FSM



Ever cyberbullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 9. Males reported much higher levels than females; pupils who have SEND reported higher levels than those who did not, similarly pupils in receipt of FSM reported higher levels than pupils not in receipt of FSM.

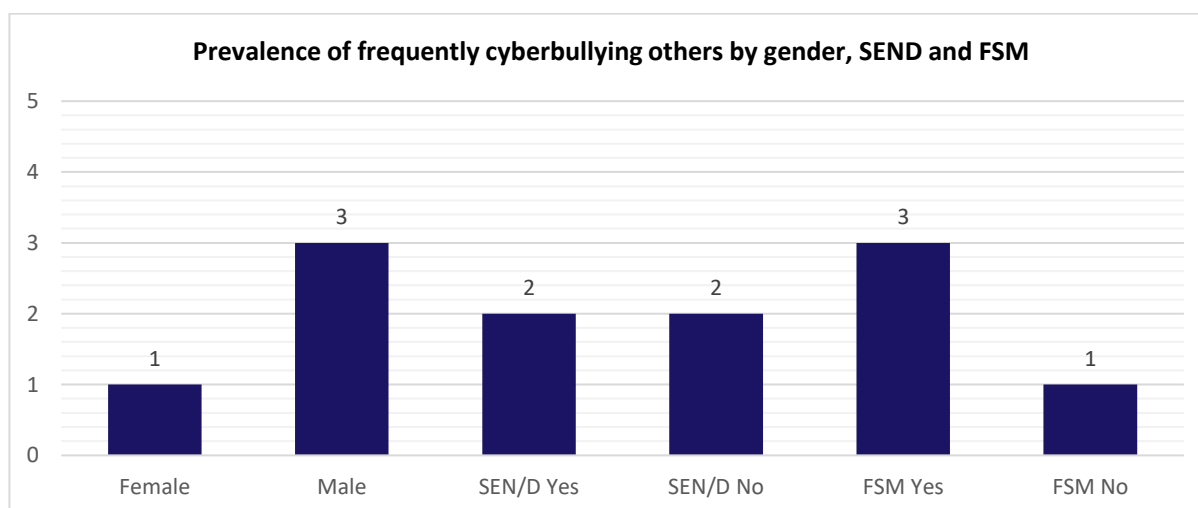
Figure 9 Prevalence of ever cyberbullying others by gender, SEND



Frequently cyberbullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 10. Overall, figures are very low for all groups. However, males, pupils who have SEND and pupils in receipt of FSM report higher levels than females, pupils who did not have SEND and pupils not in receipt of FSM.

Figure 10 Prevalence of frequently cyberbullying others by gender, SEND and FSM

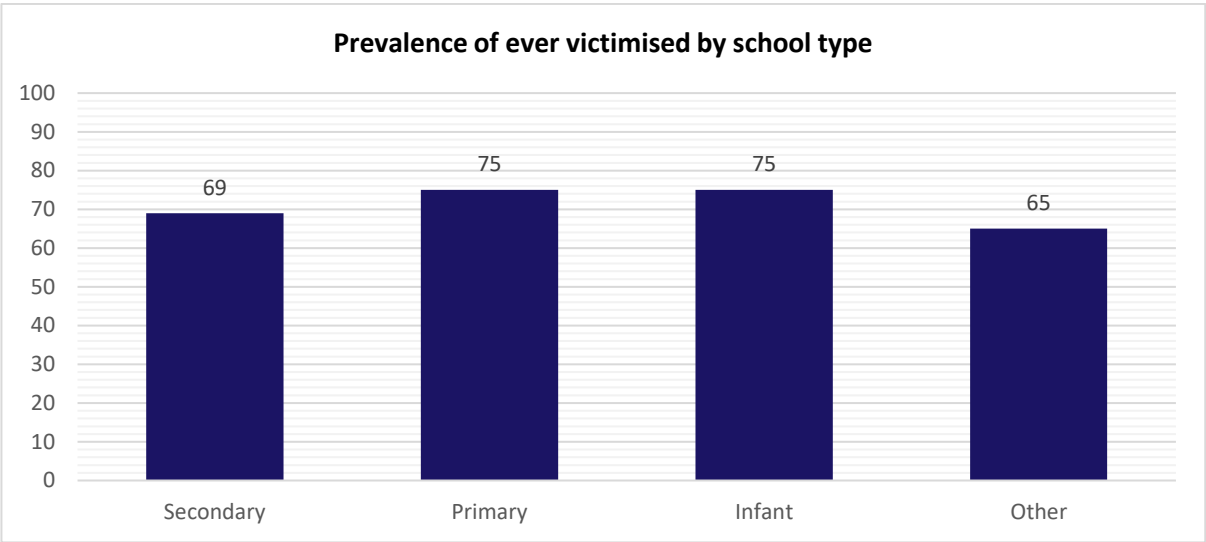


School type and levels of victimisation and bullying experiences

Ever victimised

The findings are shown in Figure 11. The figures are highest for pupils at primary and infant schools followed by secondary school pupils and then pupils from other school types.

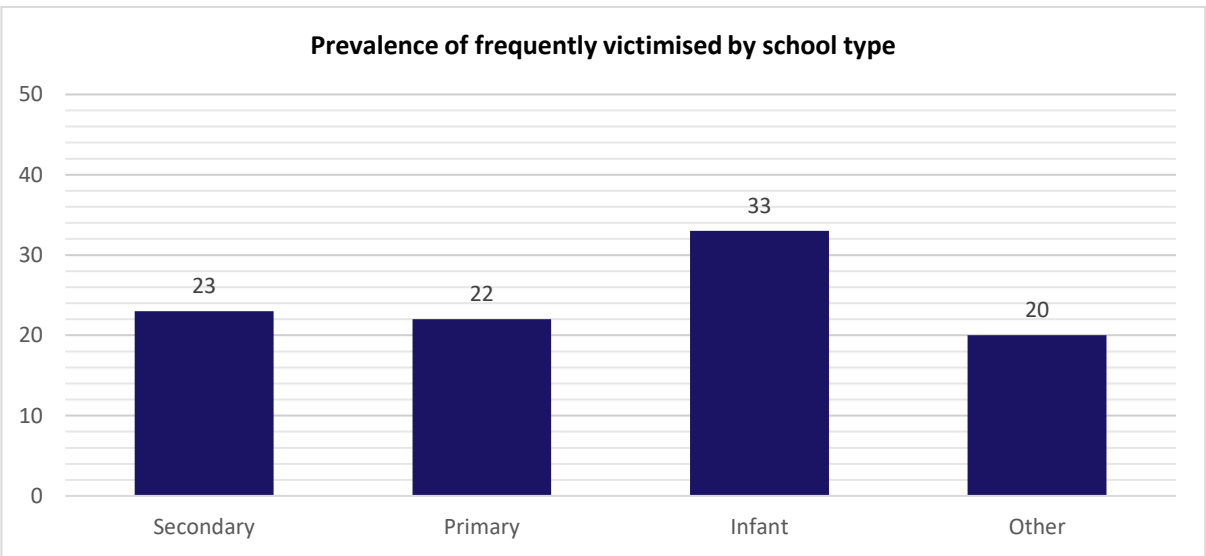
Figure 11 Prevalence of ever victimised by school type



Frequently victimised

The findings are shown in Figure 12. Infant school pupils report higher levels of victimisation than pupils in other school types.

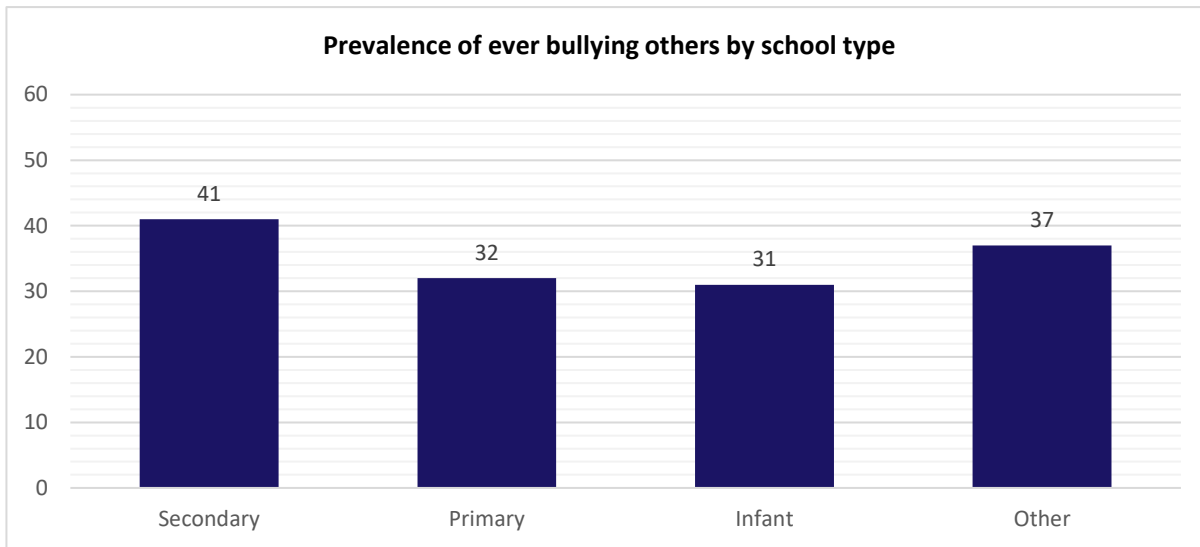
Figure 12 Prevalence of frequently victimised by school type



Ever bullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 13. Infant school pupils report the lowest levels of bullying others, followed by primary, with secondary and other school pupils reporting higher levels.

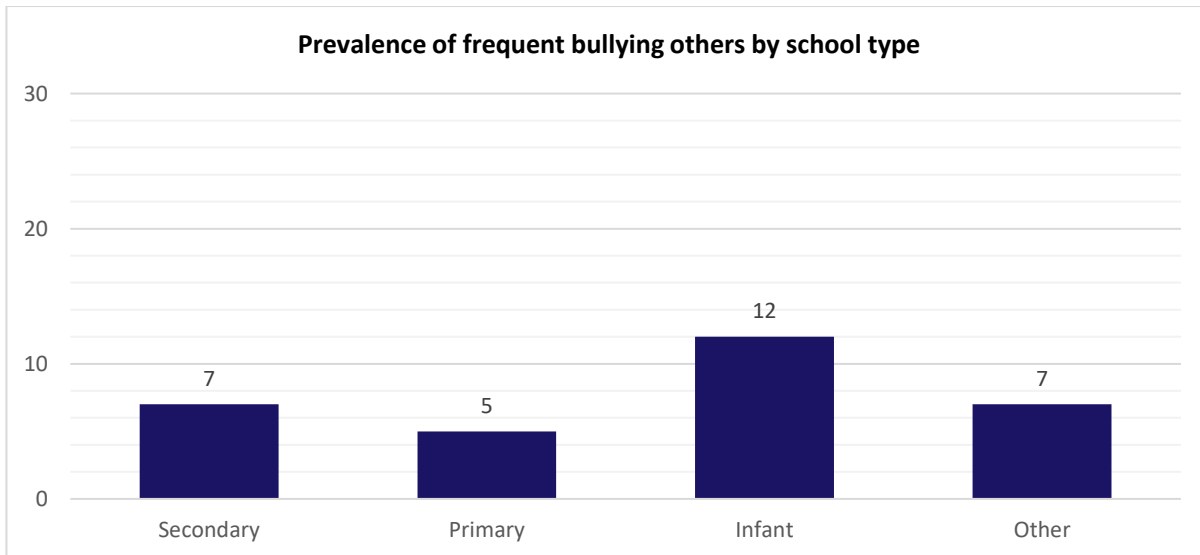
Figure 13 Prevalence of ever bullying others by school type



Frequently bullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 14. Primary school pupils report the lowest levels, followed by secondary and other schools, with infant school pupils reporting higher levels.

Figure 14 Prevalence of frequently bullying others by school type

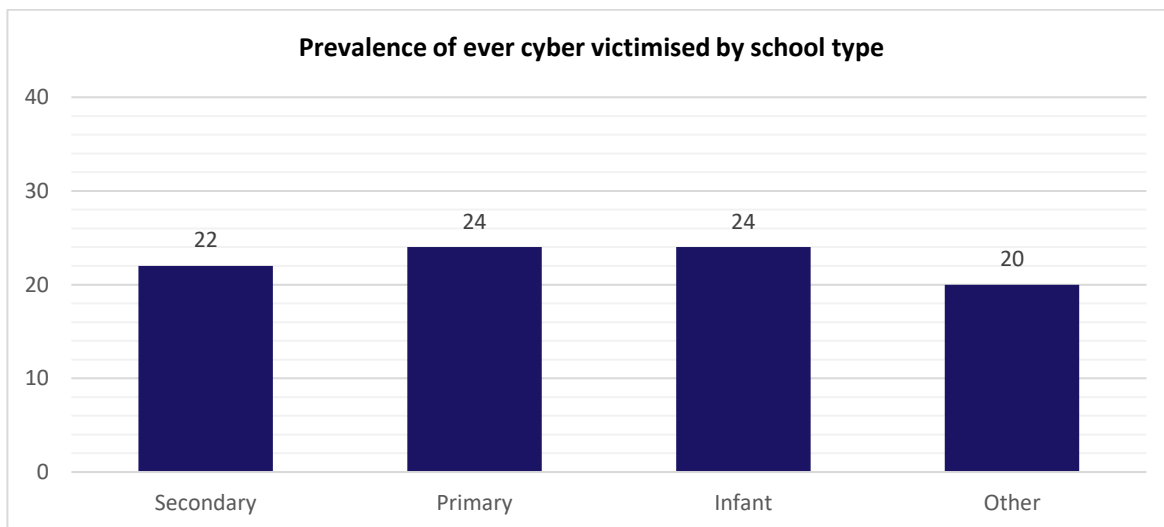


School type and levels of cyber victimisation and cyberbullying experiences

Ever cyber victimised

The findings are shown in Figure 15. Nearly a quarter of pupils at primary and infant schools reported being a cyber victim, whilst pupils at secondary and other schools reported lower levels of victimisation.

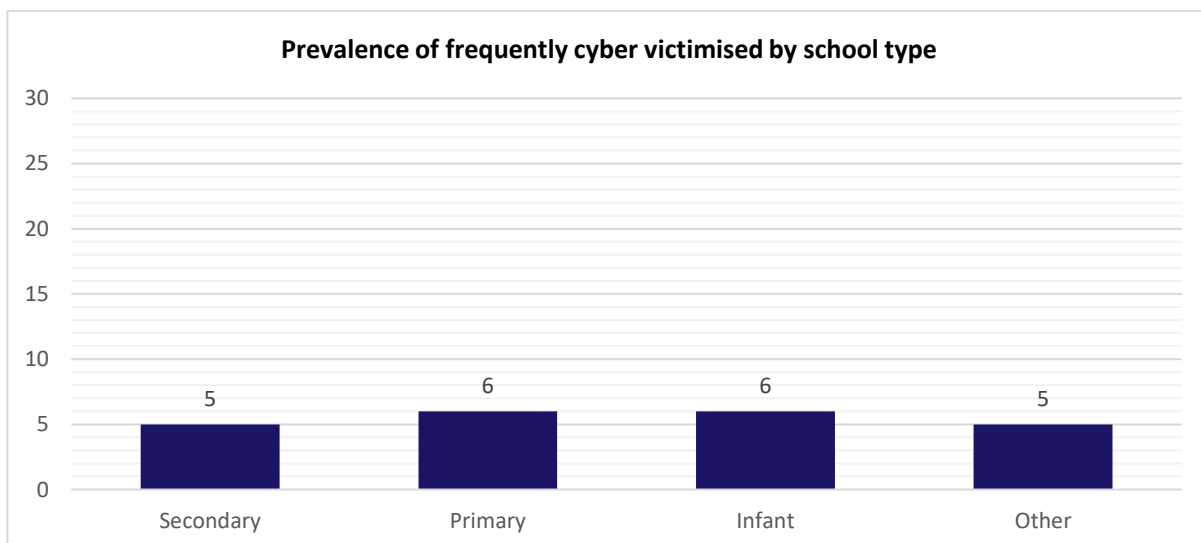
Figure 15 Prevalence of ever cyber victimised by school type



Frequently cyber victimised

The findings are shown in Figure 16. Frequent cyber victimisation is low for all school types.

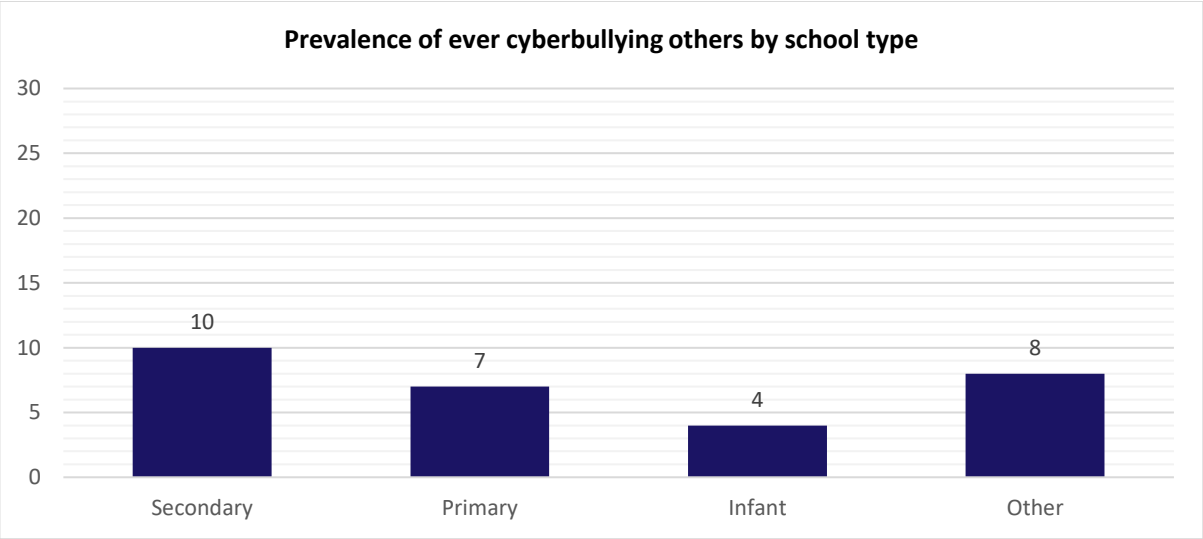
Figure 16 Prevalence of frequently cyber victimized by school type



Ever cyberbullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 17. Infant school pupils report the lowest levels, followed by primary, other and secondary school types.

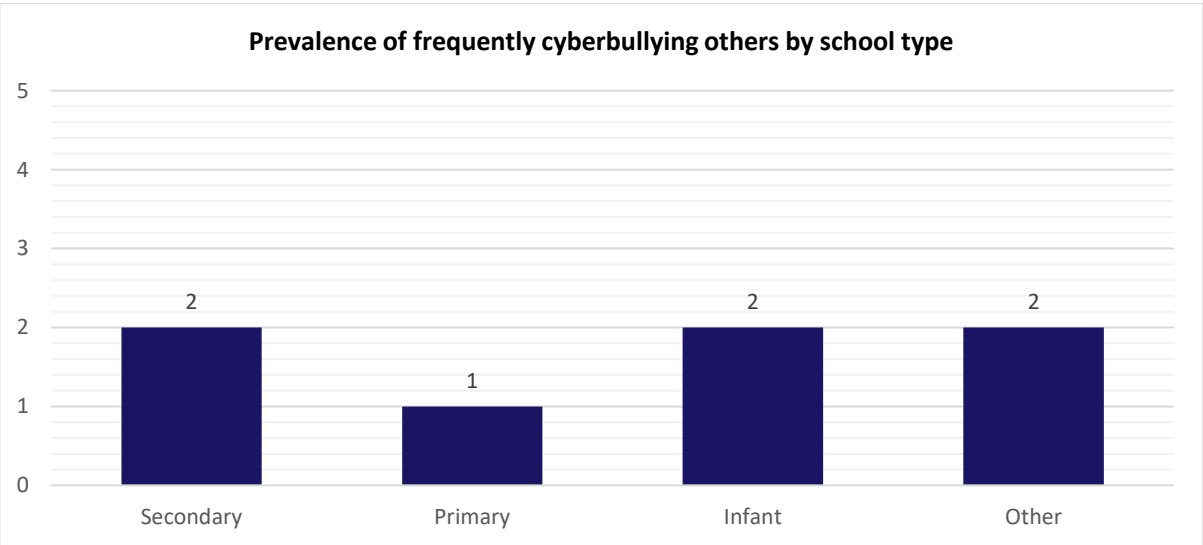
Figure 17 Prevalence of ever cyberbullying others by school type



Frequently cyberbullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 18. The figures are very low for all school types.

Figure 18 Prevalence of frequently cyberbullying others by school type

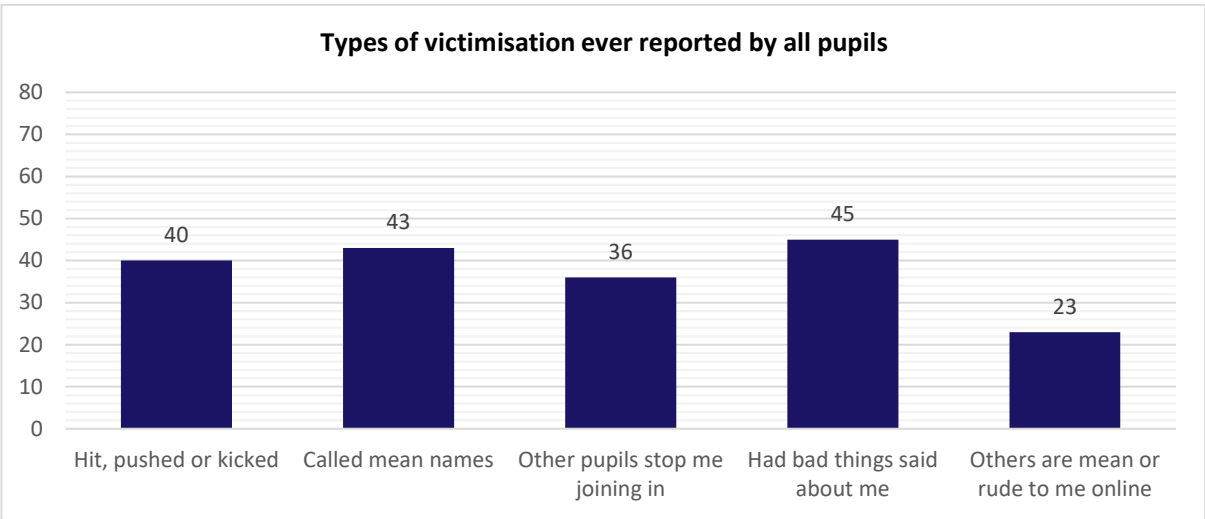


Types of ever and frequent victimization and bullying experiences

Ever victimised

The findings are shown in Figure 19. Victims reported having 'bad things said about me' the most, then 'being called mean names', being 'hit, pushed or kicked', 'stop me joining in' and the least type reported was 'others are mean or rude to me online'.

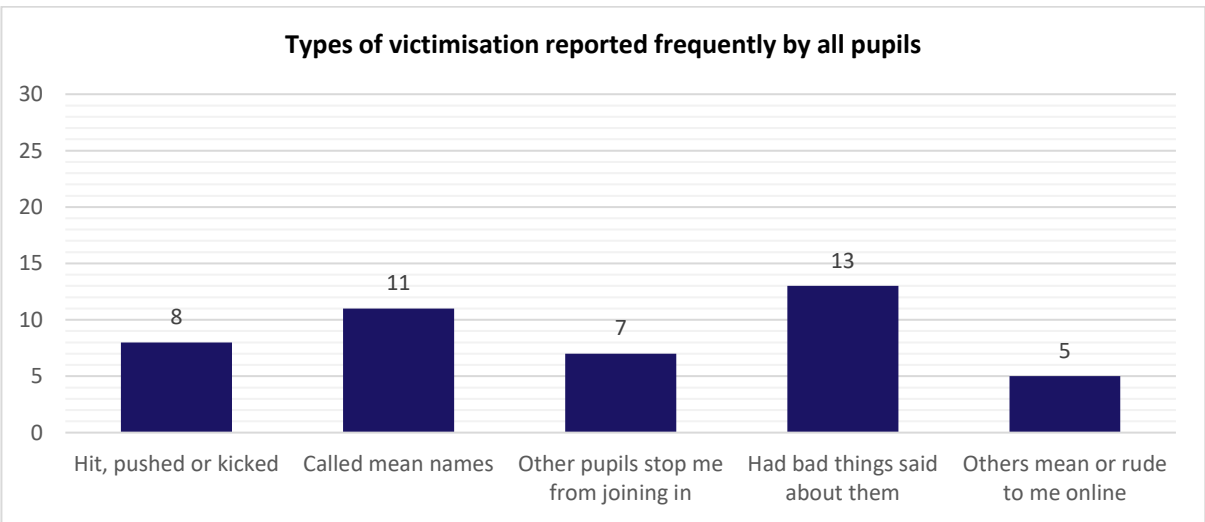
Figure 19 The types of victimisation ever experienced by all pupils



Frequently victimised

The findings are shown in Figure 20. Having bad things said about them was the most frequent type, followed by being called mean name; others being mean or rude to me online was the least frequent.

Figure 20 The types of victimization reported frequently by all victims

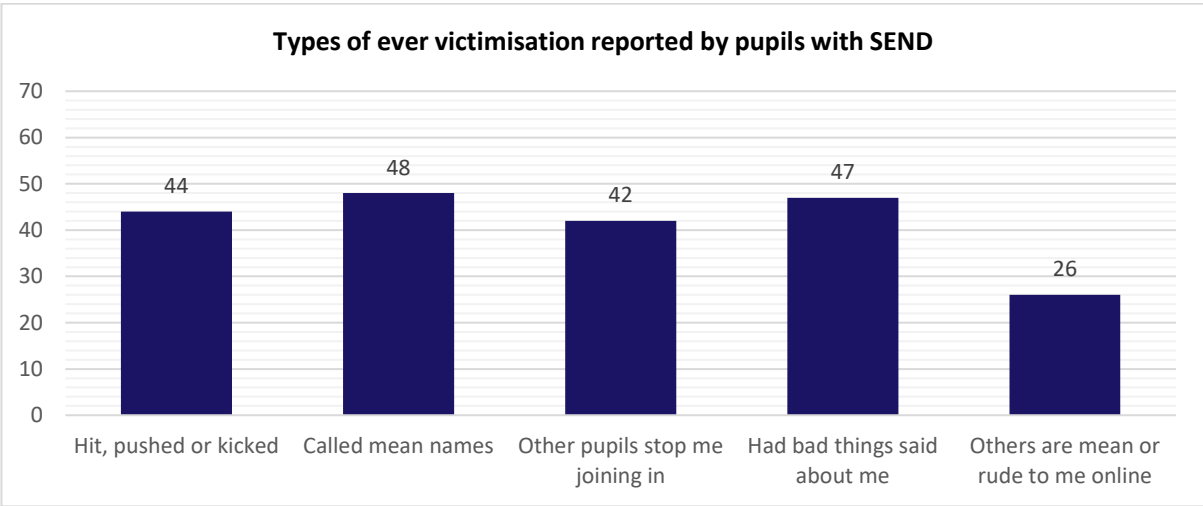


Types of victimisation ever and frequently reported by pupils with SEND

Ever victimised

The findings are shown in Figure 21. Pupils who identified as SEND reported experiencing levels of victimisation equally for being 'hit, pushed or kicked', 'called mean names', 'stop me joining in' and 'saying bad things about me'; there were much lower levels for 'others being mean or rude to me online'.

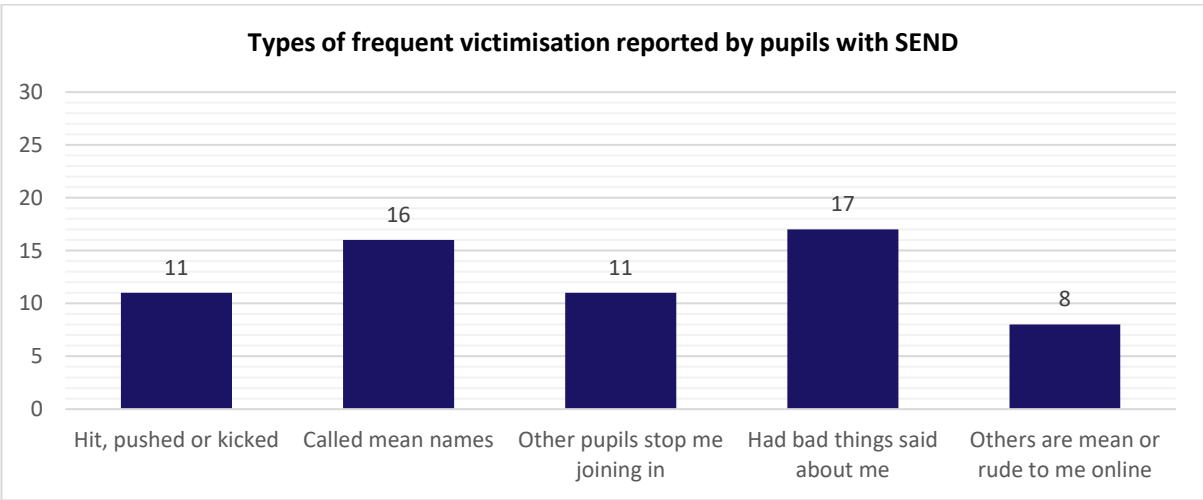
Figure 21 The types of victimisation reported ever by pupils with SEND.



Frequently victimised

The findings are shown in Figure 22. Pupils who identified as SEND experienced higher levels of frequent victimisation equally for 'being called mean names' and 'having bad things said about them'. 'Others being mean or rude to me online' was the lowest reported type.

Figure 22 The types of victimization reported frequently by pupils with SEND

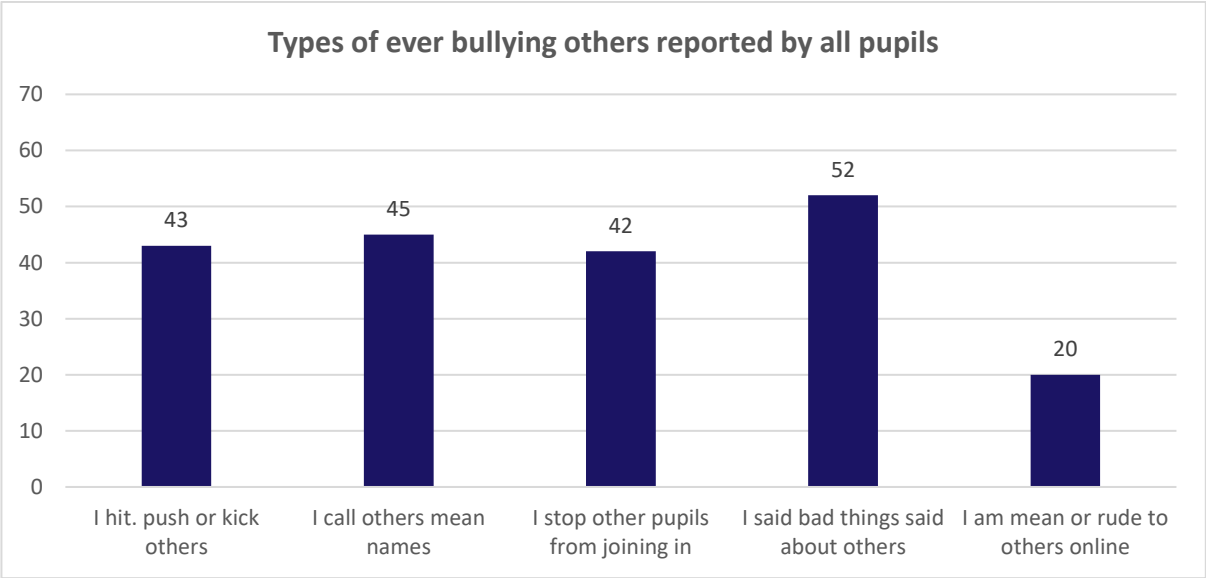


Types of bullying others ever and frequently reported by all pupils

Ever bullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 23. Most of the types showed similar percentages of over 20%; the lowest level was for 'I am mean or rude to others online'.

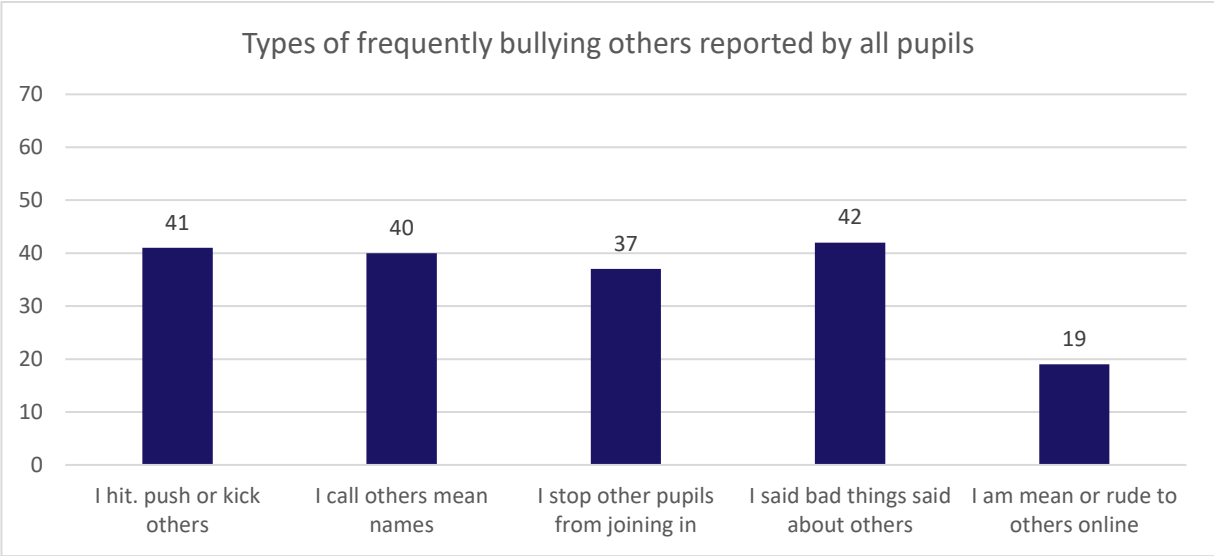
Figure 23 The types of bullying others reported ever by all pupils



Frequently bullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 24. Nearly all types of bullying others reported the same percentages, with slightly less reported for online bullying.

Figure 24 The types of bullying others reported frequently by all pupils

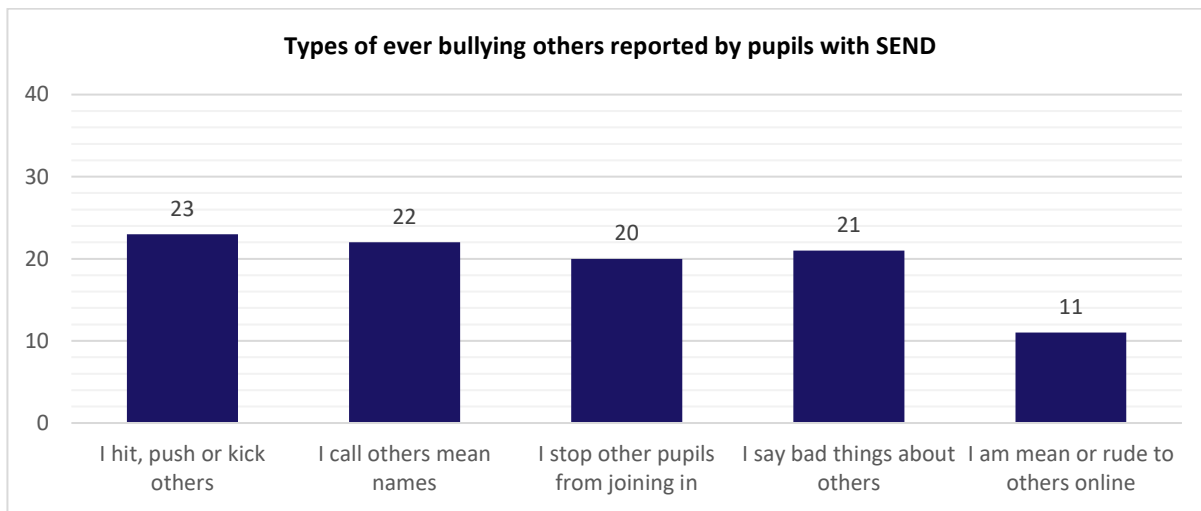


Types of bullying others ever and frequently reported by pupils with SEND

Ever bullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 25. Levels were highest for 'I hit, push or kick others' and 'I call others mean names'. Slightly lower levels were reported for 'I stop others joining in' and 'I say bad things about others'. 'I am mean or rude to others online' was the least frequent type of bullying.

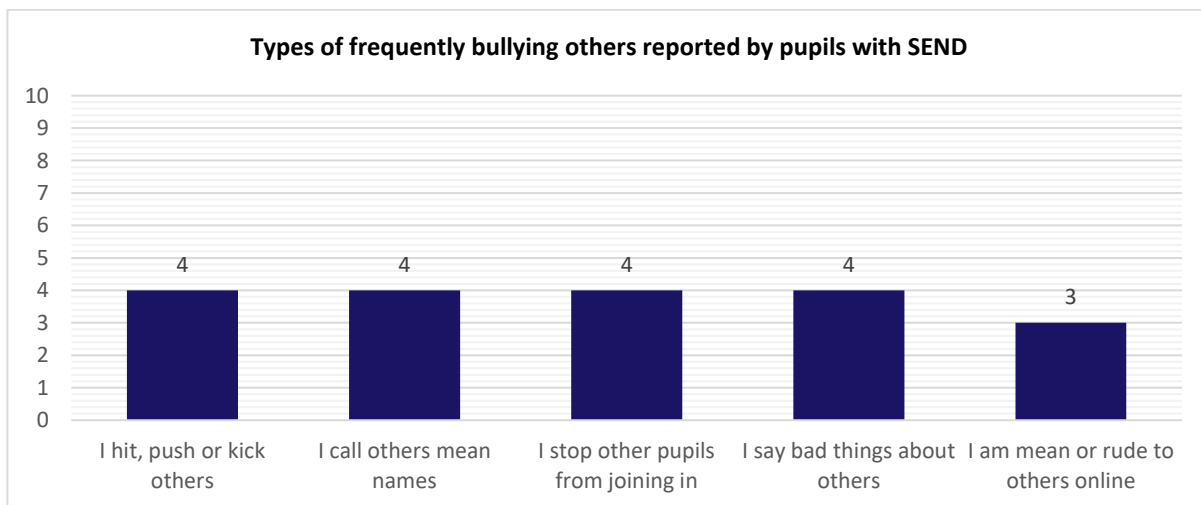
Figure 25 The types of bullying reported for ever bullying others, pupils with SEND



Frequently bullying others

The findings from this are shown in Figure 26. Levels are quite small for all types.

Figure 26 The types of bullying reported for frequently bullying others by pupils with SEND



SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

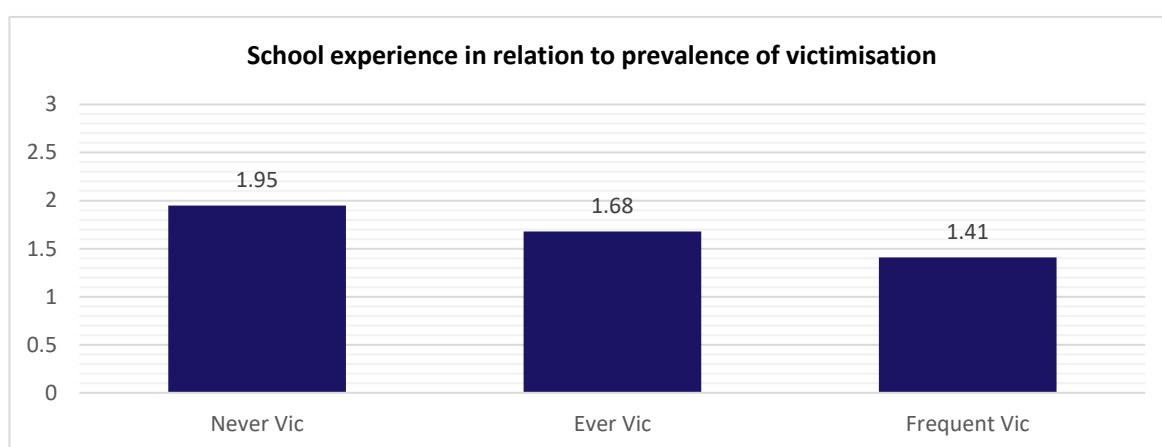
School Experience was assessed by four items in the Pupil Questionnaire. The higher the score (between 0 and 3), the more positive the pupils felt about their school experience.

School experience in relation to victimisation and bullying others

School experience and victimisation

The findings are shown in Figure 27. Pupils who reported not ever being victimised had the highest scores and those frequently victimised the lowest scores. Showing poorer school experiences for those being victimised.

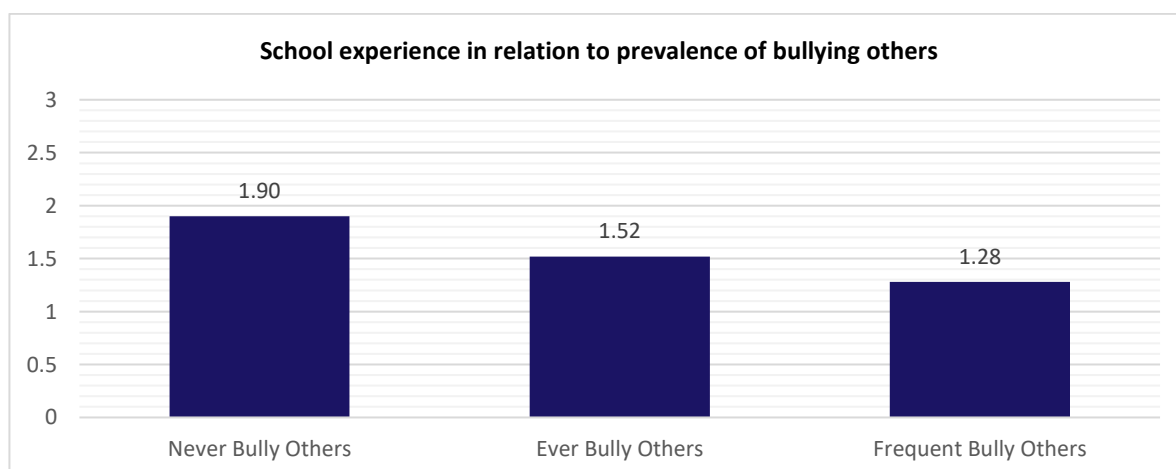
Figure 27 School experience in relation to victimisation



School experience and bullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 28. Pupils who reported not bullying others had the highest score, and those who frequently bullied others had the lowest. Showing poorer school experiences for those bullying others.

Figure 28 School experience in relation to bullying others

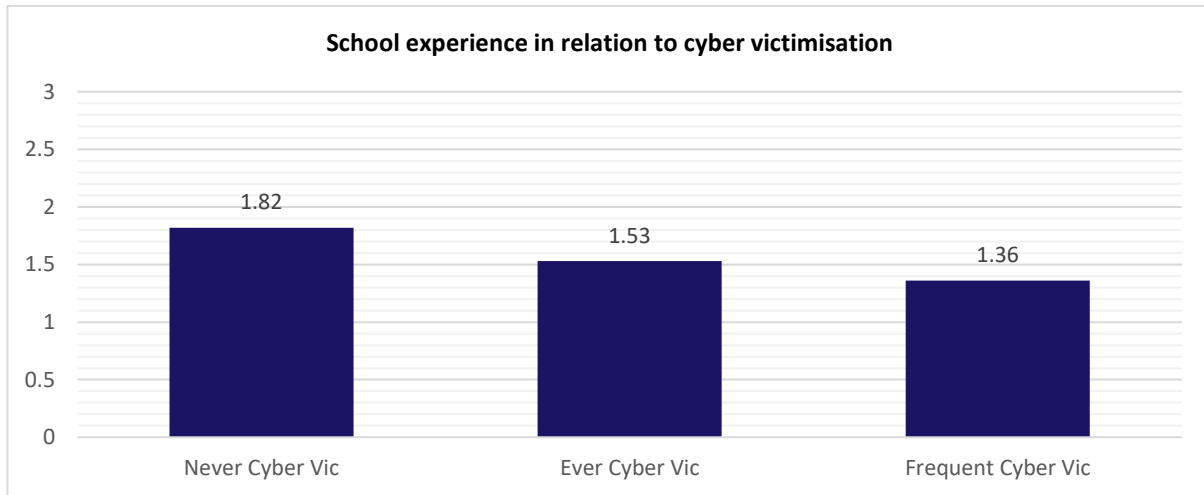


School experience in relation to cyber victimisation and cyberbullying others

School experience and cyber victimisation

The findings are shown in Figure 29. Overall scores were generally higher for those who were not cyber victims. Showing poorer school experiences for those being victimised online.

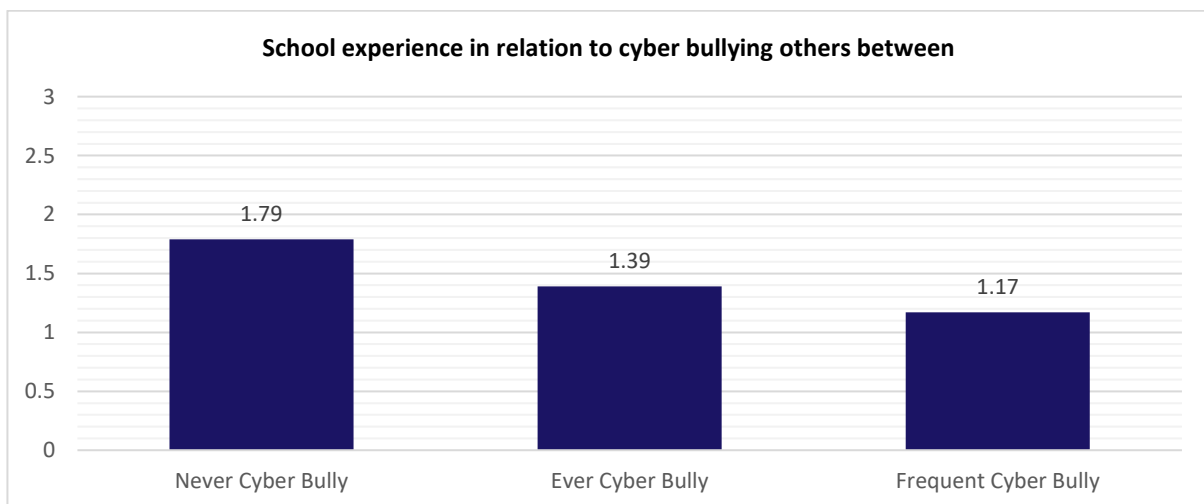
Figure 29 School experience in relation to cyber victimisation



School experience and cyberbullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 30. Pupils who reported not being a cyber bully had higher school experience scores than those pupils who reported ever or frequent cyberbullying. Showing poorer school experiences for those bullying others online.

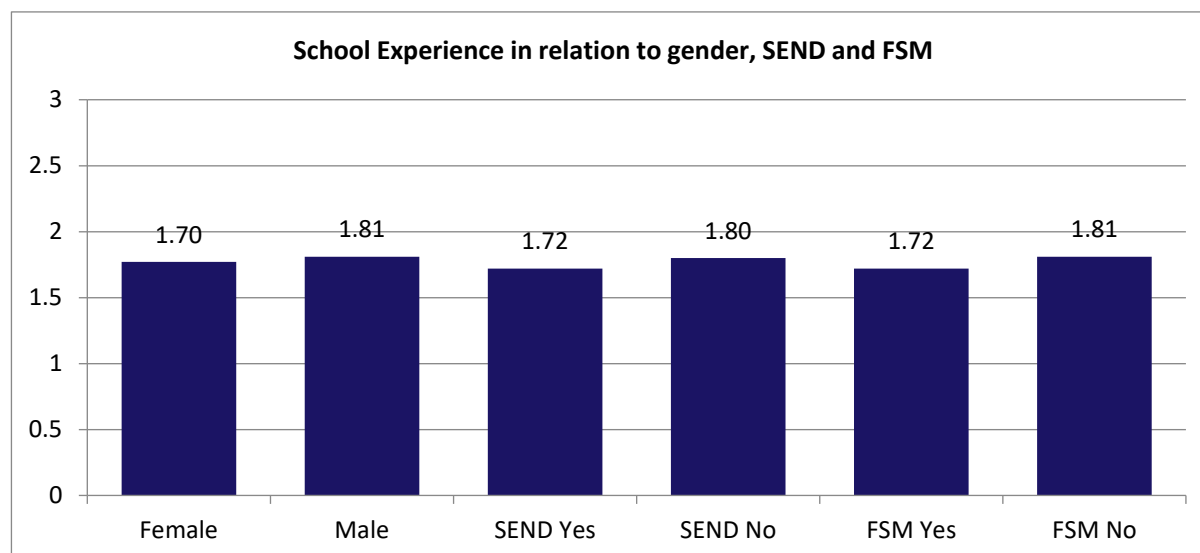
Figure 30 School experience in relation to cyberbullying others



School experience in relation to gender, SEND and FSM

The findings are shown in Figure 31. Differences between groups are quite small. Who don't have SEND, those not in receipt of FSM and male pupils had the highest positive feelings about school; those in receipt of FSM and with SEND had the lowest.

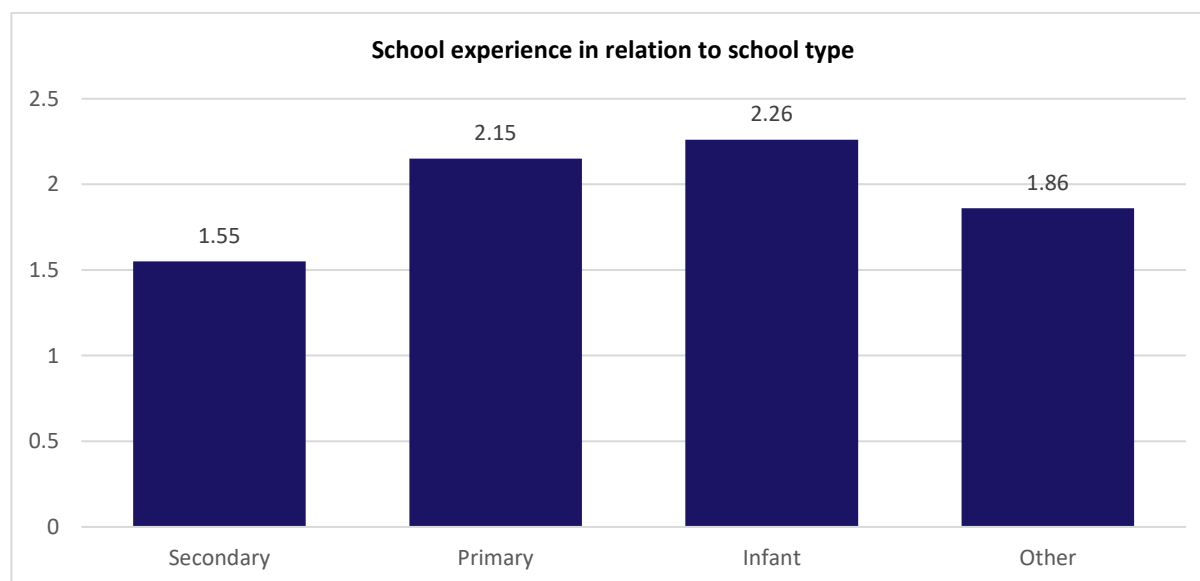
Figure 31 School experience by gender, SEND and FSM



School experience in relation to school type

The findings are shown in Figure 32. Pupils who attended infant and primary school reported much higher positive feelings about school compared to pupils at secondary and other school types, with secondary school pupils reporting the lowest levels.

Figure 32 School experience by school type



School experiences by type of experience

School Experience consists of four items in the Pupil Questionnaire: 1) *I like going to school*, 2) *I feel safe at school*, 3) *I get on well with my teachers* and 4) *I feel like I belong at school*

School experience: I like going to school

Figure 33. Mean scores for 'I like going to school' by being a victim of bullying.

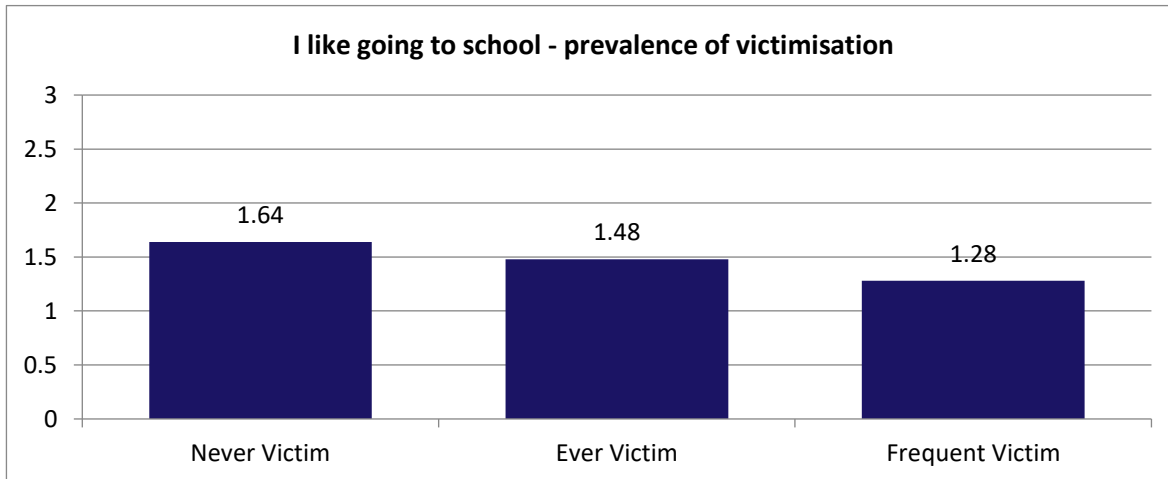
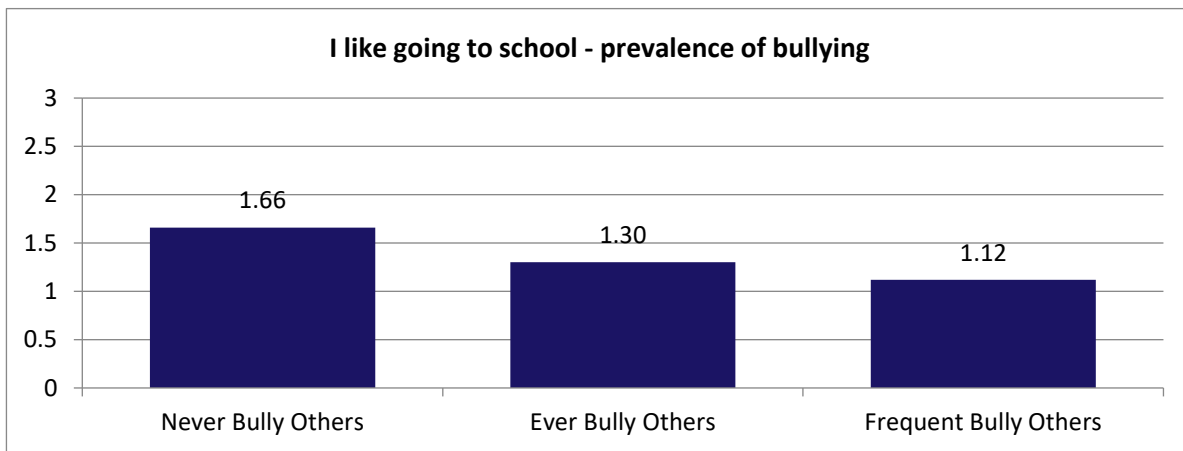


Figure 34. Mean scores for 'I like going to school' in relation to bullying others.



School experience: I feel safe at school

Figure 35. Mean scores for '*I feel safe at school*' in relation to being a victim of bullying.

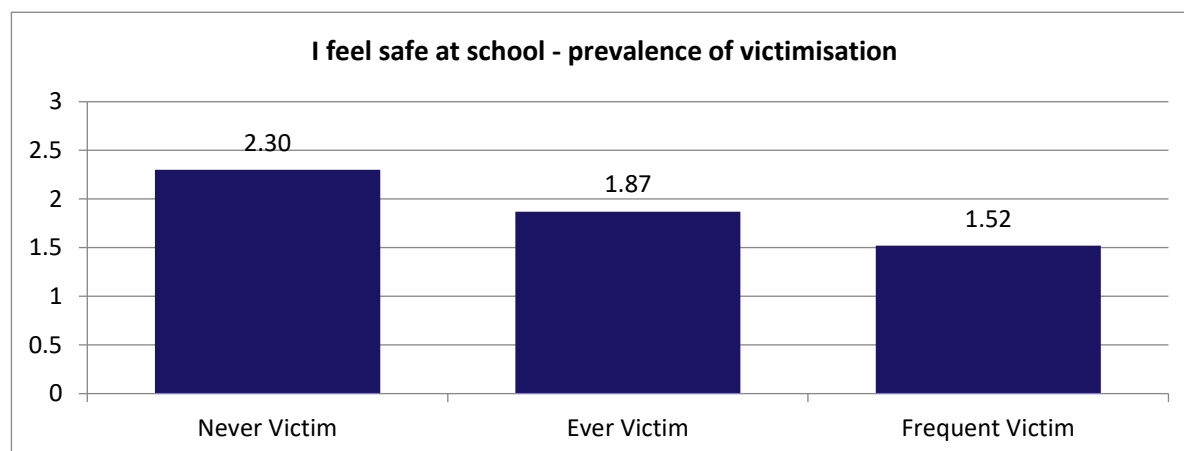
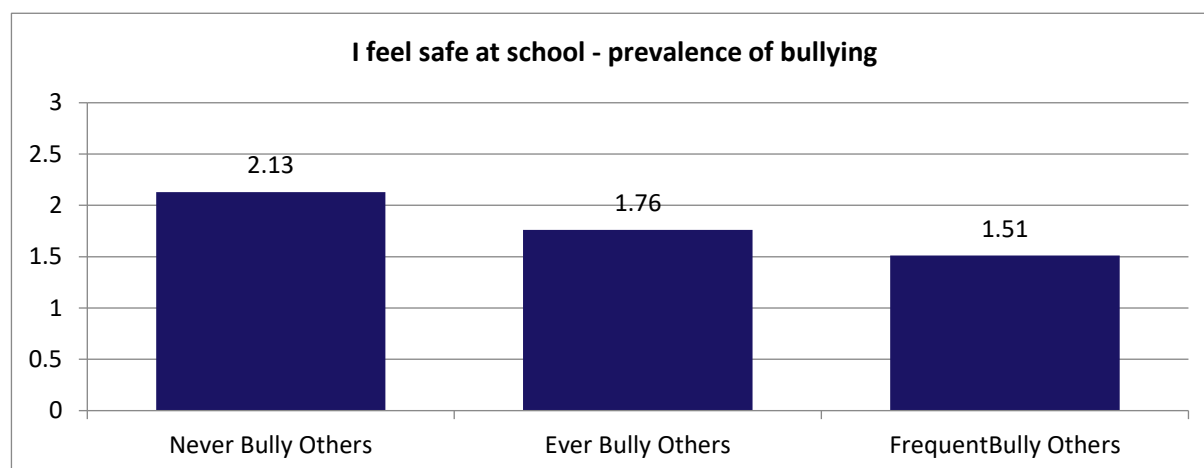


Figure 36. Mean scores for '*I feel safe at school*' in relation to bullying others.



School experience: I get on well with my teachers

Figure 37. Mean scores for '*I get on well with my teachers*' in relation to being a victim of bullying.

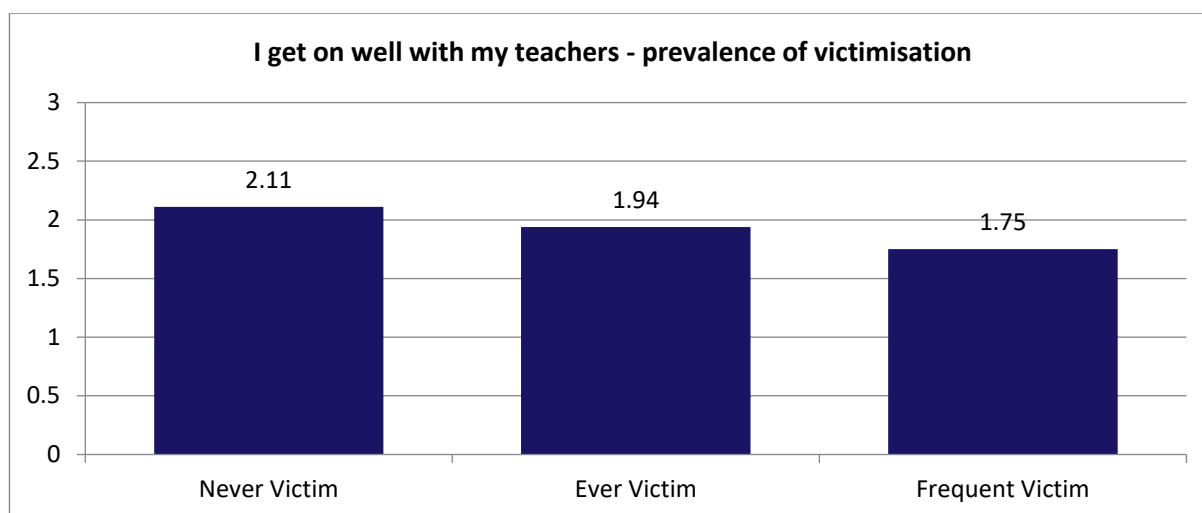
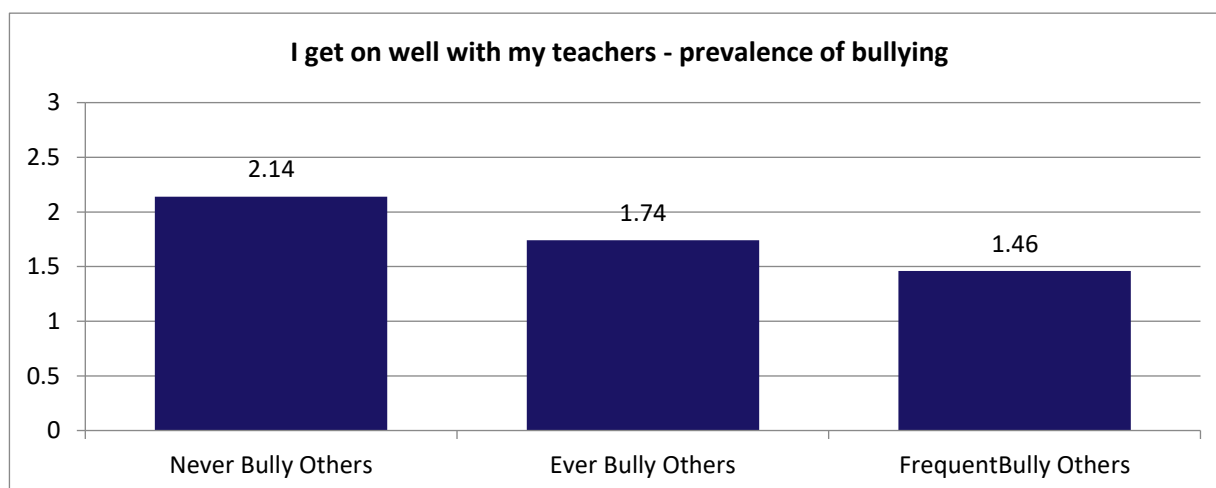


Figure 38. Mean scores for '*I get on well with my teachers*' in relation to bullying others.



School experience: I feel like I belong at school

Figure 39. Mean scores for '*I feel like I belong at school*' in relation to being a victim of bullying.

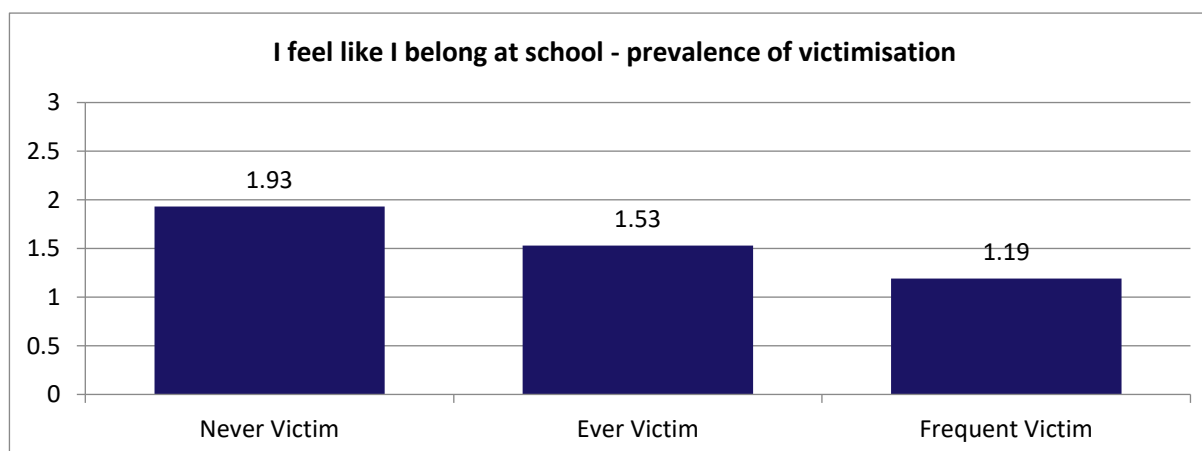
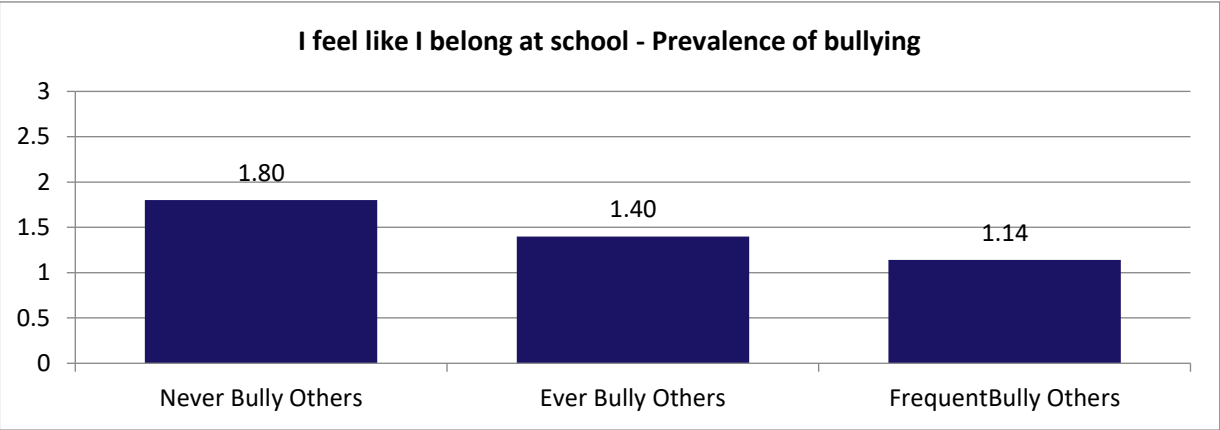


Figure 40. Mean scores for 'I feel like I belong at school' in relation to bullying others.



PUPIL WELLBEING

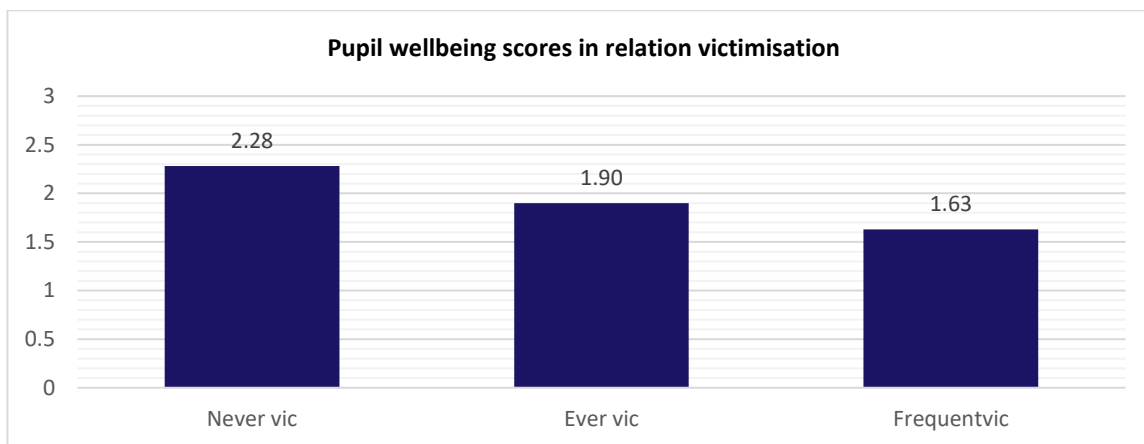
The Wellbeing scale consisted of 10 items, with five items being reverse coded. The higher the score (between 0 and 3), the more positive was reported wellbeing.

Pupil wellbeing in relation to victimisation and bullying others

Pupil wellbeing and victimisation

The findings are shown in Figure 41. Pupils who reported not ever being victimised reported the highest scores for pupil wellbeing. Pupils who reported frequent victimisation reported the lowest wellbeing scores. Therefore, pupils who are victimised have poorer wellbeing.

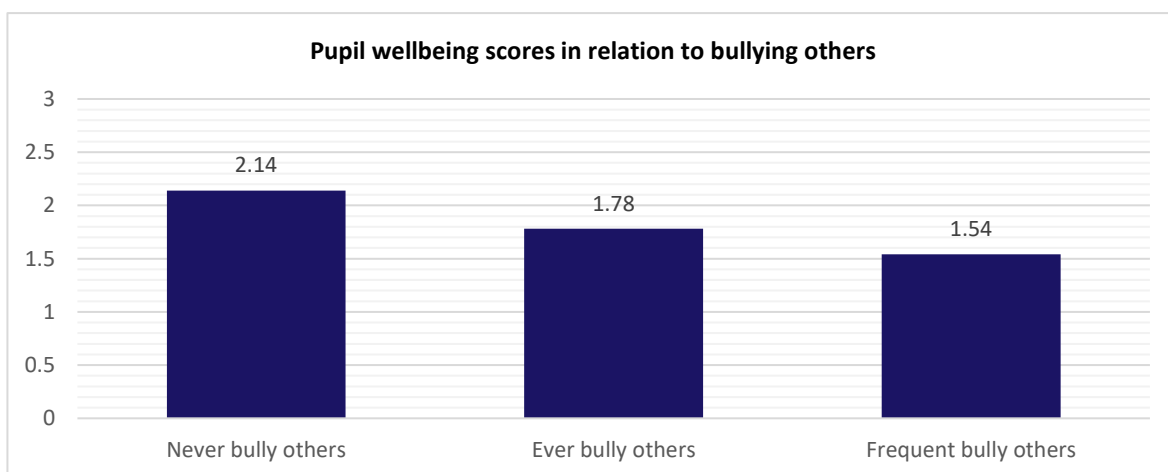
Figure 41 Wellbeing scores in relation to victimisation



Pupil wellbeing and bullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 42. Pupils who never bullied others reported the highest wellbeing scores. Pupils who reported frequently bullying others had the lowest wellbeing scores. Therefore, pupils who bully others have poorer wellbeing.

Figure 42 Wellbeing scores in relation to bullying others



Pupil wellbeing in relation to cyber victimization and cyberbullying others

Pupil wellbeing and cyber victimisation

The findings are shown in Figure 43. Pupil wellbeing scores are noticeably higher for pupils who have never been a cyber victim. They are lowest for pupils who were frequently a cyber victim. Therefore, pupils who are victimised online have poorer wellbeing.

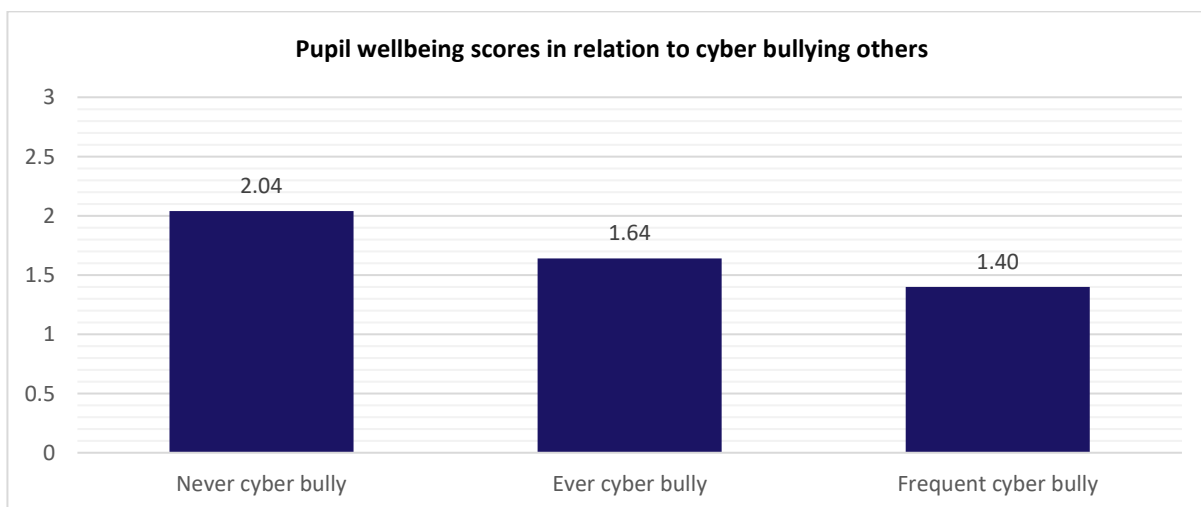
Figure 43 Pupil wellbeing scores in relation to being a cyber victim



Pupil wellbeing and cyber bullying others

The findings are shown in Figure 44. Pupil wellbeing was much higher for pupils who had never been a cyber bully compared to pupils who ever cyber bullied, pupils who frequently cyber bullied others had the lowest scores. Therefore, pupils who bully others online have poorer wellbeing.

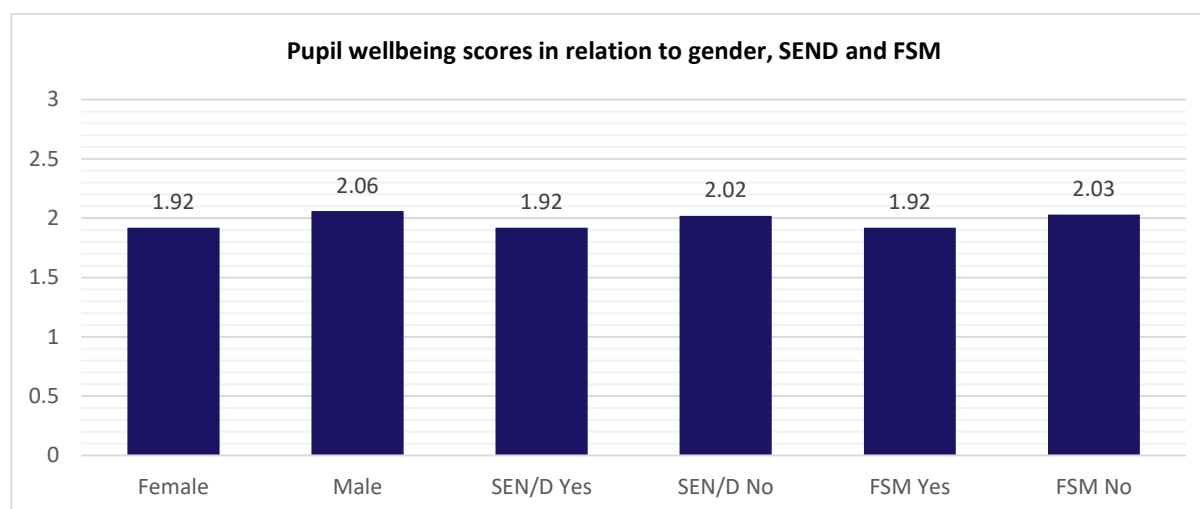
Figure 44 Pupil wellbeing scores in relation to cyberbullying others



Pupil wellbeing in relation to Gender, SEND and FSM

The findings are shown in Figure 45. Male pupils and those not with SEND and not in receipt of FSM reported higher levels of pupil wellbeing than females, and pupils with SEND and in receipt of FSM.

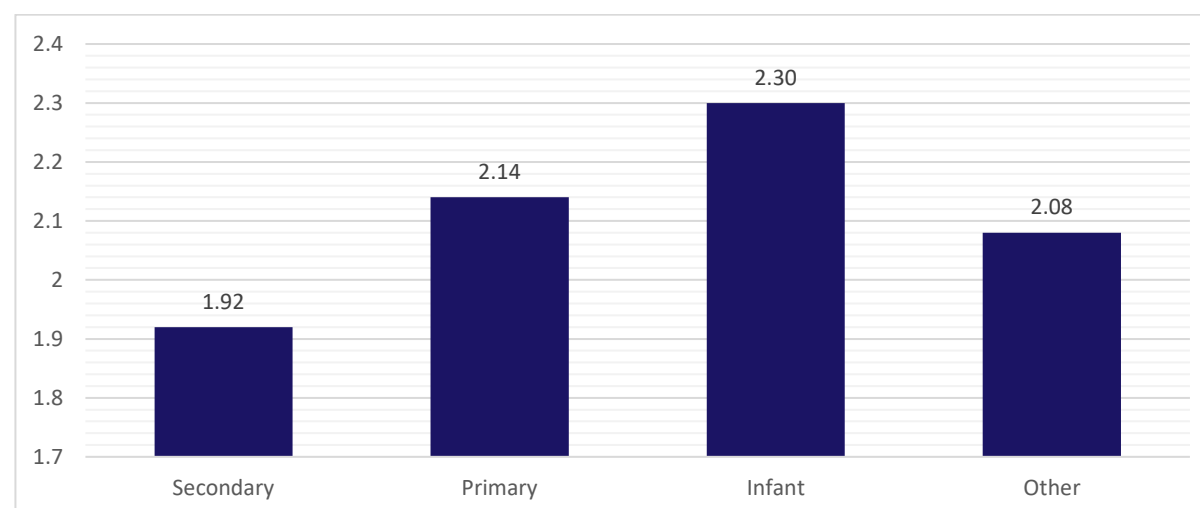
Figure 45 Pupil wellbeing scores in relation to gender, SEND and FSM



Pupil wellbeing in relation to type of school

The findings are shown in Figure 46. Pupils at Infant schools reported the highest levels of wellbeing, followed by pupils from primary and other school types, with secondary school pupils having the lowest scores.

Figure 46 Wellbeing scores by School type



APPENDIX 1: THE ANTI-BULLYING ALLIANCE'S PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

Below is a short three-part questionnaire about ***your life in school, and wellbeing generally, over the last few weeks***. Please read every question, it is important you answer carefully about how you really feel. There is more information at the end if you want to talk about anything with an adult. **This is not a test, and there are no right or wrong answers, you just need to tick the answer that fits best for you.** Your answers on this questionnaire are private. Please answer as many questions as you can.

PART ONE: SCHOOL

	Never	A little	A lot	Always
I like going to school				
I feel safe at school				
I get on well with my teachers				
I feel like I belong at school				

PART TWO: PUPIL RELATIONSHIPS

Your answers on this questionnaire are private. Please answer as many questions as you can.

	Never	A little	A lot	Always
I am hit, pushed or kicked by other pupils				
I am called mean names by other pupils				
Other pupils stop me from joining in with them				
Other pupils say bad things about me when I'm not there				
Other pupils are mean or rude to me online				
I hit, push or kick other pupils				
I call other pupils mean names				

I stop other pupils joining in with me				
I say bad things about other pupils when they aren't there				
I am mean or rude to other pupils online				

PART THREE: WELLBEING

These questions are about your feelings generally, whether at home or at school or elsewhere. Your answers on this questionnaire are private. Please answer as many questions as you can.

	Never	A little	A lot	Always
I am calm				
I sleep well				
I feel lonely				
I worry a lot				
I wake up in the night				
I hit out when I am angry				
I break things on purpose				
I am kind				
I feel liked at school				
I am happy				

