

## **External Evaluation Report – Year 2**

### **EqualiTeach: Equally Safe Programme**

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

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## Contents

Page	
3	<b>Executive Summary</b>
4	<b>Introduction</b>
4	<b>Description of the Project</b>
7	<b>School Context</b>
7	<b>Evaluation Purpose and Methodology</b>
7	School Visits
9	Documentary evidence
9	Survey
10	Ethical considerations
10	Limitations
11	Analysing and reporting the evidence
12	<b>Findings, conclusions and recommendations</b>
12	Empowering Pupils – Positive Change
16	Training
19	Policy
21	School visits, and ability to create positive change: curriculum, environment and community
25	<b>Survey</b>
34	<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>
38	<b>Appendices</b>
38	Appendix 1: School Staff Information Sheet - Interview Participation
40	Appendix 2: Consent Form – Staff
41	Appendix 2b: Consent Form – Pupils
42	Appendix 3: Parent/Carer Information Sheet, Informed Consent form and Data protection privacy notice – Pupil Focus Groups
46	Appendix 4: Equalities Monitoring Form – Staff Participants (similar data were collected from pupils)

## Executive Summary

The Equally Safe programme, funded by the Department of Education, is a programme designed to assist schools across England to embed best practice in preventing and tackling identity-based bullying, developing bespoke, whole-schools approaches. The Equally Safe project was delivered to 72 schools across England in its second round. EqualiTeach worked with schools via the Equally Safe project to deliver the following:

- resources for educators and bespoke advice to audit existing equalities and anti-bullying work
- an online networking platform for schools and an online bank of resources, including training materials
- equality consultancy services for education settings to update and strengthen policies in line with the Equality Act 2010
- equality and diversity staff training events with the focus on creating equal and inclusive environments and challenging identity-based bullying; understanding key concepts in relation to tackling identity-based discrimination, dealing with identity-based bullying in line with the Equality Act 2010 using a whole-school approach; and developing policy and curriculum
- interactive events organised for Agents for Change Ambassadors (AFCs) – tailored to fit both primary and secondary phases – working with pupils on engaging activities that encourage understanding and acceptance in order to support them with making changes in their schools
- action planning meetings and follow up support to ensure changes are implemented effectively across the whole school environment

This Year 2 evaluation was based on a sample of six schools. Originally the sample was based on ten schools but only six were able to participate in the data collection process involving interviews (staff) and focus groups (pupils). Beside interviews and focus groups, the overall evaluation also included a survey for staff and documentary data. It found that the programme continues to have wide-ranging end-results, including:

- supporting schools with challenging identity-based bullying effectively
- enhanced policies, tailored to each school setting, to constructively address and tackle bullying type of incidents
- greatly-improved recording systems for monitoring of identity-based bullying
- more diversified school cultures mirroring the background of school community members
- beneficial effect on the self-confidence of pupils and staff with regards to promoting equality, diversity, inclusion and creating positive change

**The recommendations outlined in detail in the report below include:**

- Equally Safe Training for parents and carers
- Continued support for AFCs including networking opportunities with AFCs from other school settings
- Ensuring training materials have more of an intersectional character
- Encouraging schools to make a better use of the online networking platform

- More support for educators when it comes to dealing with parental attitudes and concerns regarding a number of issues, such as cyber bullying, LGBTIA+ inclusion in schools, negative parental influence regarding 'inclusion for all' – i.e.. designing scripts with educators reflecting their daily struggles in this area
- Better support for Equally Safe lead teachers and AFCs in terms of involving whole school communities with the Equally Safe programme
- Better support for policy makers with regards to involving the 'pupil voice' in policy adaptations and including the needs of pupils who express their identity using various accessories in addition to their school uniforms (i.e.. wearing cat ear headbands, tails and artificial whiskers)

## **Introduction**

Tackling and preventing identity-based bullying is the key aim of the Equally Safe programme. This is because being marginalised on the bases of one's background or identity can have a negative impact on pupils' academic progress, emotional wellbeing and mental health. However, whilst it is crucial that inclusion work serves as a tool to manage situations where marginalised individuals have had negative experiences due to their protected characteristics (as listed in the Equality Act 2010), a more bespoke whole-school approach might be more useful in terms of achieving wide-ranging results to ensure equality in education settings. EqualiTeach favours this approach, aiming to both prevent and stop identity-based bullying via the Equally Safe programme. Altogether 240 schools across England are being introduced to this programme on a gradual basis over a period of three years. This summary report details the results of the Year 2 evaluation, analyses the strengths of the Equally Safe project and what improvements have been made by EqualiTeach following the recommendations given in the Year 1 evaluation report (August 2022). This Year 2 report makes recommendations on how the programme could be further developed and improved in Year 3.

## **Evaluation team**

The Goldsmiths Department of Educational Studies has a well-respected reputation regarding research and research-informed teacher education programmes. Its work centres around 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 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (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 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 second round of the Equally Safe programme consists of seventy-two participating schools. The first phase of the evaluation involved desk research on documentary evidence from four primary schools and four secondary schools, from five different countries. This was followed by sets of focus groups and interviews with six of the original ten schools – three primary and three secondary schools in total.

The survey designed for Year 2 was distributed to all seventy-two 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 continues its focus on four key aspects of the Equally Safe programme which are illustrated in the table below:

<b>Key aspect</b>	<b>Example of activities</b>	<b>Key exemplification emerging from the evaluation</b>
Empowering pupil voice in creating positive change	AFCs engaged in new initiatives designed to strengthen their confidence in dealing with identity-based bullying and this includes: having opportunities to get involved in initiatives with the focus on mental health and emotional wellbeing, e.g. monitoring the use of 'monster' boxes with messages from anxious/bullied peers, designing posters with 'inclusion' rules, organising school assemblies to spread the knowledge about 'inclusion for all'; buying and decorating 'friendship' benches using their AFC training-related financial rewards, contributing to creating child-friendly inclusion policies, making anti-bullying presentations/videos to	Following their initial training, Agents for Change Ambassadors reported more self-confidence when it comes to dealing with prejudice and discrimination-related behaviour incidents in their school settings.  Pupils felt a more secure sense of their own identities which includes having a stronger sense of pride in their background and standing up for their values regarding equality and inclusion.

	share with members of their school communities, etc.	
Training	Training involved online workshops for Equally Safe school leads, in-house inclusion and diversity-themed training for all school staff as well as whole day events for AFCs. In addition to this, school staff had the opportunity to engage in the online platform via the EqualTeach website in order to exchange ideas and tips on implementing new anti-bullying initiatives, etc.	Teachers said that as a result of their Equally Safe training, they felt more knowledgeable and more confident regarding their responsibility to address and prevent identity-based bullying which includes: challenging and correctly categorising various types of bullying behaviour, engaging with improved recording systems more effectively as part of their everyday practice.
Policy	Consultancy was provided to support schools to strengthen policies to ensure inclusion on the basis of the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 – this includes behaviour, anti-bullying, uniform, accessibility, Relationship and Sex Education (RSE), SEN and home-school agreements.	Schools enhanced their bullying related procedures, adapted existing policies and/or created additional documentation to reflect their commitment to achieving diversity and equality across their settings. This resulted in school staff feeling more confident in addressing and preventing identity-based bullying.
Schools' ability to create positive change	Engaging school events including having more frequent identity-based assemblies celebrating the protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010; more opportunities for discussions about diversity and inclusion.  Enabling AFCs to enhance their leadership skills by giving them the opportunity to implement initiatives regarding	More diverse curriculum with intersectional aspects; diversity libraries which also include books celebrating 'minority within minority' characters, such as LGBTQIA+ characters with different ethnic backgrounds and/or disabilities.  Pupil Voice Meetings;. Diversity-themed display boards featuring the creative work of AFCs to highlight the importance

	<p>prevention of bullying thus strengthening and empowering 'pupil voice'.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>of their 'bullying prevention' initiatives for the whole school community.</p> <p>Enhanced home/school agreements to involved parents in the whole school initiatives to challenge identity-based bullying and increase the importance of parental and pupil voice.</p>
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### **School context**

The broad spectrum of the sample schools enabled the evaluator to contrast a wide range of discourses regarding prejudice and identity-based bullying. These schools were: schools serving faith communities including faith and church schools, mainstream schools with children and young people with SEND, schools in diverse areas and schools with predominantly White working class and first-language English speakers. Most schools stated that they felt already well-prepared for managing equality-related issues and challenging identity-based bullying prior to the start of their collaboration with EqualTeach.

### **Evaluation purpose and Methodology**

#### **Purpose**

This evaluation aimed to find out whether the Equally Safe programme has altered schools' attitudes and ways of preventing and managing incidents of identity-based bullying. It also looked for evidence that the programme constructively delivered the following: staff and AFC training, resources and networking guidance to develop more inclusive environments and to fight identity-based bullying effectively. Finally, the evaluation searched for examples of the outcomes and impacts of the main aspects as described above.

#### **Methodology**

The evaluation drew on a range of data: documentary analysis concerning six schools; around nine hours of recorded focus groups and interviews with teaching staff (and on occasions with schools leaders) and pupils; and a survey distributed to all staff at the seventy-two participating schools.

#### **School visits**

Invites for interviews and focus groups were sent out to all of the original ten sample schools but due to the limited availability of some of the schools only six were able to take part and this included two sets of online interviews and focus groups (two

schools requested to participate in the data collection via online interviews and focus groups). The interviews and focus groups involved three primary and three secondary schools. Each of these mainstream schools had a population of students with recorded SEND. School environments were also observed during school visits, including diversity-themed displays in corridors and posters about inclusion.

Schools were sent information sheets and consent forms for the participants prior to the interviews and focus groups taking place. These forms were differentiated according to the primary/secondary levels of the pupils participants to ensure clarity in communicating and this included explaining the aim of this data collection and key details of the subsequent evaluation. The designated Equally Safe lead teachers in all the six schools were asked to select a group of between three and seven pupils from a range of year groups, genders, disabilities, ethnicities and faith backgrounds. The evaluator also asked for the lead teachers to include children and young people who might be regarded as 'extra vulnerable' due to having two or more of the nine protected characteristics, i.e., LGBT+ pupils with SEND and/or pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). Despite the fact, that all of the six sample schools had a considerable population of pupils with recorded SEND (as stated by them), the actual focus groups consisted of only a relatively small number of pupils with recorded SEND. However, the overall number of LGBT+ pupil participants with recorded SEND was a little higher compared to the previous data collection process in 2022. Most of the focus groups featured neurotypical, White pupil participants with English as their first language.

In total twenty-six pupil participants and twelve staff members agreed to take part in the recorded discussions as part of the focus groups and interviews. This is a slightly higher number of participants compared to the year before. There were three to seven pupils per focus group and they ranged from Year 5 (aged 9-10) to Year 10 (aged 14-15). A vast majority of the pupil participants were designated AFCs creating a positive change in their settings. There were four sets of 'in person' interviews and focus groups and two sets of online interviews and focus groups altogether. Both methods of conducting these interviews and focus groups proved to be effective in collecting the much needed data. The pupil participants did seem to be willing to share their views with a lot of enthusiasm each time and the evaluator got the impression that taking part in focus groups was the perfect opportunity for them to not only share their thoughts about the programme but also reflect on their 'before and next' steps towards creating positive change in their school.

All schools were mix-gendered. The equality monitoring forms revealed that in terms of gender identity, two of the pupil participants identified as non-binary and two identified as gender-fluid. Secondary pupil participants were also asked about their sexual orientation: one of them identified as 'other', two identified as lesbians, one identified as pansexual, one identified as bisexual, one identified as gay and the rest identified themselves as heterosexual. One of the staff participants identified as male, and the rest identified as female. One staff participant 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 to some extent. The majority of the pupils and staff identified as White British. The rest of the participants identified as White Irish, Black British, Asian British and Mixed (White and Black Caribbean or other mixed background). Six pupil participants were



disabled (autism, dyslexia and ADHD were the most prevalent neurotypes). Three pupil participants had the SEND/LGBT+ intersection.

As in the previous year, the questioning style during the focus groups and interviews remained open and the evaluator's approach was participatory and collaborative. The questioning format began with open questions inviting participants to name and lead on the direction of the discussion. Later in the focus groups the evaluator picked up on anything that had not yet been covered within her pre-drafted questions protocol. For example, the participants would be asked semi-structured questions of an intersectional character to reflect on the fact that certain protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 can interlink with each other. Often the pupil participants' initial questions were exciting and useful data in themselves. This methodology allowed for trust to be built swiftly and with ease, for information to surface organically rather than in response to a prompt. It enabled the participants to talk about things that the evaluator had not yet considered.

### **Documentary evidence**

Each of the sample schools for the second round of evaluation have provided evidence which included the following:

- policies updated in line with the Equally Safe guidance
- parent/pupil/staff survey data
- home/school agreements updated in line with the Equally Safe guidance
- evidence of the impact of the training sessions via feedback forms as well as survey-based responses

In addition to the above, during her school visits the evaluator was often presented with examples of child-friendly policies (child-friendly language and suggestions for behaviour-related sanctions), leaflets about AFCs' efforts and inclusion-related work, printed diversity-themed presentations and copies of newsletters. The evaluator also continued to observe the quality of the training resources provided to school staff. For example, she attended three staff training events (two online and one in person) and two AFC events (both in person) and each time she was presented with Equally Safe training materials. The evaluator also took field notes during and after each visit to obtain additional evidence for the dataset.

### **Survey**

The evaluator distributed an online survey for staff from the 72 participating schools as for Year 2 evaluation. The survey design was informed by the qualitative data collection phase. The survey findings are detailed in this report in the 'Survey' section (p. 25).

### **Ethical considerations**

This research was ratified by the Goldsmiths Research Ethics and Integrity Scrutiny Committee. This allows the evaluation to utilise the collected data to evaluate and further improve the Equally Safe programme and to publish findings, bringing a level of validity to the work of EqualTeach. Using a Research Ethics form also brings the

benefit of an institutional check on data collection processes which ensure anonymity, informed consent, confidentiality and sensitivity and which also require safeguarding and safe data storage plans.

This kind of evaluation addressed a subject matter that can raise sensitive issues with pupils 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 at 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 any of the questions. In order to adhere to the GDPR 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 their interviews.

The evaluation had to be designed to be sensitive to the emotional wellbeing 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 wished to discuss, was inherent in the subject matter: these issues can raise concerns related to acceptance or rejection by peers, friends, families. Furthermore, 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 taken into consideration. Taking into account this potential anxiety, the evaluator used open questions in focus groups and interviews. These invited respondents to volunteer the information which they felt comfortable disclosing.

To ensure the need for informed consent would be addressed, a Participant Information Sheet and a Consent Form were shared with pupils, parents/carers and school staff (see Appendix 1 and 2). The participant Information Sheets were adapted to reflect either the primary or the secondary phase/age of the pupil participants. In addition to this, an Equality Monitoring form (see Appendix 3) was given to each participant to gain information about the participants' disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation (secondary pupils and staff only), gender and gender identity. All the documents described above were provided for all participants prior to their focus groups/interviews. The reason behind doing 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 questions at any point before/during/after their focus group/interview.

## **Limitations**

As described above, the evaluator was not able to interview participants from all of the original ten sample schools. However, she checked the evidence (the desk research stage) of all of the original ten schools at the start of the Year 2 evaluation. Eventually, six sample schools were available for interviews and focus groups; a small proportion of this data collection was conducted online due to unforeseen circumstances (i.e., train strikes which prevented the evaluator from being able to

travel to schools). It should also be stressed that a small number of pupils from the original list of selected pupil participants were unable to take part in focus groups in the end.

As schools' limited availability and other aspects made it difficult to collect a broader sample, the six schools that were interviewed must only be taken as a potentially representative sample. Schools vary a great deal in terms of demographics, management style, location, and philosophy. However, the sample does have some validity as it represents almost 10% of the schools involved; and schools across the country do share some similar characteristics. It should be pointed out that the survey was distributed to all seventy-two schools to enable them to be part of the evaluation process in this way at least - as the evaluator did not have the capacity to interview them all. We had twenty-five responses to the survey from twenty-two schools, giving the survey a good level of validity.

Focus group participants were selected by Equally Safe lead staff who were actively engaged with the Equally Safe project. These staff were mostly teachers with Teaching and Learning Responsibilities (TLR). However, all participant schools were asked to select participants with various protected characteristics as listed in the Equality Act 2010, including those with various intersections. 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 there was only a small number of pupil and staff participants with intersections, such as the LGBT+/SEND intersection. A similar situation like this occurred during the first evaluation process and this phenomenon seems to continue despite the fact the evaluator interviewed participants were all from schools with cohorts of pupils with (recorded) SEND.

It is important to stress that many school staff participants reported that they struggled to find the time to implement all the steps from their Equally Safe action plans mainly due to having multiple responsibilities as part of their roles.

### **Analysing and reporting evidence**

- outputs were addressed 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 policy audits in terms of ensuring the correct ways of categorising incidents related to identity-based bullying and harassment. This also involved the use of appropriate terminology. Evidence of AFCs' feelings of empowerment and becoming more knowledgeable and confident with regards to identifying and reporting bullying incidents. Pupils also felt more confident in their use of the correct terminology (e.g.,

LGBT+ inclusion language) and felt very proud of their cultural backgrounds and individual characteristics.

In preparing this report, the evaluator searched for indicative quotes from the interview and focus group transcripts involving both pupils and staff in order to provide examples for each point. There were numerous quotes which could have been selected and which addressed similar things/corresponding themes. The quotes selected 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 pupil participants as possible.

## **Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

This section will first outline findings that relate to empowering pupils including training and policy – before moving onto looking at the schools’ ability to create positive change regarding their curricula, environment and community.

### ***Empowering Pupils – Positive Change***

During each focus group, the evaluator met with a group of pupils who were Agents for Change Ambassadors – trained with regards to the Equally Safe programme. Many of them shared their enthusiastic views about their AFC training during which they also got the opportunity to meet with AFCs from other schools. One of the first things they wanted to share in the focus groups was the fact that they felt more knowledgeable and more confident with regards to challenging, categorising and reporting different kinds of identity-based bullying. The level of enthusiasm about the programme was slightly higher amongst the AFCs from primary schools compared to the AFCs from secondary schools. The initiatives of the AFCs based in primary school settings involved: painting ‘friendship’ benches set in their playgrounds, developing creative ways of including more introverted peers in playground games and activities, making anti-bullying presentations for school assemblies in order to share their knowledge about equality, inclusion and the concept of diverse identities with their peers. There was also a big emphasis on the many benefits of the programme on the mental health and emotional wellbeing which is something that was mentioned by the pupil participants often (primary and secondary pupils).

The training has positively impacted the pupils’ confidence and level of knowledge regarding terminology and effective ways of challenging bullying which have also been positive for pupils’ mental health. Francis, a Y5 pupil from Scilla school<sup>1</sup>, said:

*...So, we have set up monster boxes in each class so that everyone can share if they're like...being bullied. This way no one worries about saying the wrong thing in front of others. They won't be in trouble if they use the monster boxes as they don't have to write their names down. We check the boxes at the end of each day.*

The pupil is explaining the issue of pupils’ fear of being outed by their peers for reporting bullying incidents to the staff. This seems to be an issue in primary and secondary schools. The programme seemed to have encouraged AFCs’ creative

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<sup>1</sup> [All names of people and places have been changed for reasons of anonymity](#)

side in terms of reporting bullying incidents in safe (anonymous) ways. They also thought of original ways of looking after their peers' emotional wellbeing that includes those pupils whose first language is not English. Alice, a Y5 AFC pupil from Clover School, explained:

*So, our worry box is now actually a teddy bear with a zipping mouth for the messages. ...and we write things on a piece of paper and we use this toy every day. It helps those who are lonely and sad because...maybe they are bullied. And everyone can draw if they want to, they don't have to write things down. Especially if they don't have good English! Like we have some children from Ukraine here. They are still learning English ...and so they can draw instead.*

The pupil participants seemed confident and very knowledgeable in terms of prejudice-related information and terminology. Their AFC training was clearly beneficial to them and many of them wore their AFC badges with pride. Most focus groups with the AFCs took place with some staff present, some took place without any staff present - choosing to leave the room to give the AFCs space to talk freely. The evaluator noticed that the data from focus groups with AFCs, who had no staff present with them, generated a more "organic" type of data. There was a sense of some of the gatekeepers appearing at times slightly uncomfortable with some of the topics discussed in the focus groups, such as gender identity. At one point, the evaluator was informed that even though the topic of gender identity was not omitted from the assemblies or the curriculum it was a topic that many pupils made fun of. Jake, a Y10 pupil from Rondeletia School explained why:

*I know a transgender person in this school and he had a great time here at first but now he doesn't really come to school. I think it's because he keeps getting judged on his appearance and it's because of his gender identity. He was harassed about it before and it's not because we don't talk about this topic of gender identity enough. It's quite the opposite! We talk about it so much that some idiots make fun of the trans students. They like to tease them by saying stuff like: So, what do you identify as today?...*

Ramita, a lead teacher for the Equally Safe programme who is from the same school as Jake, confirmed this. With a hint of anxiety in her voice she explained how this type of bullying amongst pupils has altered her colleagues' attitudes to "handling" the topic of gender identity as time went on:

*If you talk about this topic too much it can have an adverse effect on everything. There are some young people here who will use it as an excuse to do name-calling and ask silly questions when... around transgender students. So, it becomes a bullying game basically. They won't be direct about this, oh no - they'll use gender-neutral language and everything but they'll use it in a way that is mocking the other students. See what I mean? They'll question our trans students in a way that can be categorised as harassment really... Some colleagues have now reduced the amount of time they discuss gender identity with their students because it's making things worse - talking about it too much. I don't know...maybe the staff should be given some scripts on this by the ET reps. Can you ask them?...*

In an effort to add something positive to this discussion, Lucie (Y10) suggested that EqualiTeach would run workshops for the school's whole pupil cohort to further educate them about gender identity and to do so in a way that would (possibly) improve things:

*...like we have found the EqualiTeach reps so helpful when we did our training. There is not enough time for us to talk to all of the students here. This is a big school. It would be good to have the reps to visit our school and do some workshops for all the year groups. We have some trans students who are autistic as well and...like it's much harder to make them feel safe because they're already made fun of because of their autism.*

Lucie was implying that it was out of the AFCs' hands to do something for the peers who had more than one protected characteristic, and therefore, were more vulnerable to bullying. It is clear that there is a gap in the training materials regarding intersectionality. Both Ramita and Lucie have revealed that neither AFCs nor Equally Safe school leads feel confident in effectively tackling bullying involving pupils with the LGBT+/SEND intersection. Both of them indicated further help from EqualiTeach reps would be welcomed regarding the issue of bullying of trans pupils with SEND. This is concerning given the fact that the autistic population is on the rise in mainstream schools and autistic people are three times more likely to identify as transgender, according to the existing literature about the LGBT+/SEND overlap.

In other schools, there was evidence of a more effective communication between staff and pupils. In some cases, the AFCs' training knowledge was praised so highly by the staff that they did not need to use a "hands-on" approach with their AFC group. Anna, a primary teacher from Begonia School said the following:

*Without prompting, they created an assembly PowerPoint presentation to show everyone who they are, what their role is...you know...how to fight bullying and so on. They focus a lot on kindness. I am very proud of them!*

Many AFCs expressed they felt more informed about various aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion following their Equally Safe training. They stressed they felt it would be good to have the opportunity to network with other schools' AFCs too. Edith (Y5) explained:

*We need to teach more children about this...but also talk to other Agents for Change because I want to see what they do differently... maybe they do things even better than us!*

Edith was referring to her AFC group's wishes to mentor their peers more effectively and perhaps do so using some tips from AFCs from other schools. This shows a deep sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of their peers and it is nice to see that the Equally Safe programme has inspired AFCs to enhance their social, emotional and communication skills as well. Bluebell (Y5) from Magnolia School was also very enthusiastic about involving wider pupil cohorts via several AFC initiatives:

*We have all this information now but we have to talk to others about it very often and*

*it's a bit exhausting. So, we've made this kindness tree with messages about being good to each other and all the other children can add their own positive messages.*

It is good to see that some schools choose to focus on spreading the message of kindness and doing good deeds for others rather than just putting emphasis on how to prevent and stop bullying. In other words, some schools put a lot of effort into preventing bullying with a lot of positive reinforcement and many AFCs' initiatives, such as 'kindness trees', prove to be very efficient, especially when adopting the whole-school approach.

The evaluator asked all of the pupil participants about their understanding of the concept of intersectionality. Many pupils were surprised at hearing this term, clearly unaware of its meaning. It became apparent that intersectionality is something that was not really covered in the AFC training materials and some of the interviewed AFCs were too immature (due to their age) to make the necessary links between the protected characteristics by themselves. Given the fact, that a large number of schools have pupils with various intersections, this was a little surprising to the evaluator. This also indicates a gap in the pupils' knowledge which the Equally Safe programme could address better going forward.

The 'minority within minority' category of pupils, which also covers pupils with LGBT+/SEND intersection, was one of the more popular topics in the focus groups – despite the fact that a majority of the pupil participants did not have this intersection. Sylvia (Y9) from Crocus School was one of the few pupil participants with the LGBT+/SEND intersection as she is both autistic and transgender. She explained about her experience with the training she received to become an Agent for Change Ambassador:

*They were dipping more...let's say...into the LGBT+ thing rather than giving equal focus to SEND and LGBT+ together, if I'm honest. I think they definitely could have focused on it more. I'm autistic and trans and me being autistic makes me... I can easily come off as weird to others. Let's just say that...*

Sylvia's peer Emma, a Y9 pupil who is also autistic and who identifies as gay seemed to be in agreement with Sylvia's comments and she added:

*They don't know why but you know... difficult people will kind of realise that someone's different and they'll test their patience and very quickly! Because it's not taught a lot in schools, people basically assume things about others.*

There is a clear need for the Equally Safe training sessions and materials (for pupils/staff) to include more intersectional aspects. There is a gap in school community members' knowledge regarding this area as seen in the responses of the AFCs. Lack of understanding about SEND (and other protected characteristics) can lead to bullying and prejudice. Furthermore, this category of pupils are already very vulnerable. When talking to the staff about this, it was the evaluator's impression that the risk of bullying was not really discussed with their disabled students or students with the LGBT+/SEND intersection. The particular intersection is one that schools appear to be the least comfortable with and this was evident during the Year 1 evaluation process too.

The Equally Safe programme has proved to have a positive effect on pupils, in both primary and secondary schools. Being well informed regarding the individual protected characteristics and the concept of identity-based bullying has inspired the pupils to design a number of creative interventions to educate their peers about identity-based bullying as well as focus on positive reinforcement as a way of preventing bullying incidents. They were clearly more confident due to their new (Equally Safe) knowledge and were also able to identify areas they felt they (and their peers) had some information gap in, such as intersectionality.

### ***Training***

The evaluator observed a couple of training events for both pupils and staff as part of the Year 2 evaluation. She attended one AFC training event for primary schools and one for secondary schools. Pupils were enthusiastic and seemed very engaged with the AFC training content which included impactful anti-bullying videos that seemed to have left a big impression on those present. Pupils were also encouraged by the reps to ask questions during these interactive training sessions which the pupils happily took advantage of. They especially wanted to ask questions linked to gender identity, religion and sexual orientation. During one of the AFC events that the evaluator visited, she noticed that the secondary pupils had showed a lot of interest in learning about the different gender categories as well as types of sexual orientation. Despite the impressive efforts of the reps to answer all their questions, it became apparent that there was a certain level of “information overload” for the secondary pupils. In addition to being informed about various terms linked to gender identity categories, the secondary pupils were also introduced to many terms regarding sexual orientation. Due to the large volume of information, students were a little confused and shared this with the evaluator during the event. It became evident that certain terms regarding sexual orientation were confusing and difficult to memorise for pupils because they were identical in their meaning and yet they sounded different (i.e., omnisexual and pansexual – both terms refer to people’s sexual orientation that involves attraction towards people of all genders and sexes). The secondary pupils would likely benefit from a reduced volume of the information regarding the gender and sexual orientation categories as pupils found it difficult to memorise the meaning of them all. In the case of neurodivergent pupils (i.e., dyslexia) absorbing this volume of information could prove to be even more difficult.

The evaluator also attended one staff twilight training event and two online training workshops for the Equally Safe lead teachers. The online workshops for staff focused on a particular aspect related to identity-based prejudice in depth. The training information the evaluator had the opportunity to observe included useful tips regarding the correct use of neurodiversity-affirming language, dealing with prejudice-related incidents including examples of reasoning and enquiry types of questions and managing SEND-related type of bullying incidents. The trainers had an inclusive approach to the topics discussed and introduced the attendees to various scripts on how to deal with bullying incidents in different situations. A few times the staff respondents mentioned that they would welcome the opportunity to design scripts directly with the EqualTeach team. They suggested this to ensure the scripts would be more reflective of the kinds of situations they are faced with on a regular basis. For example, one of the issues that was highlighted frequently was the concern about dealing with parents from “strict” religious backgrounds who might prefer for their children to be removed from any lessons with the LGBT+/RSE



content. The other concerns of the staff were around negative parental influence regarding children's views on 'inclusion for all', i.e., some parents being openly homophobic.

Harpreet, a teacher from Rondeletia School, expressed her concerns around having a "sufficient enough" script to work with when dealing with parents who wanted to remove their child from assemblies and lessons with LGBT+ inclusion-related content. She explained:

*If we could prepare some scripts around this difficult topic with the help of the ET reps...that would be good. You see, this year was the first time we organised an assembly with the LGBT+ content in mind...because it was the LGBT+ month – in February. We were worried about certain religious parents that we have in our school community. For example, I don't know how to talk to a parent who might be concerned about this...or they openly disagree with it. Some openly admit they don't respect LGBT+ values...so we will be holding a meeting soon and luckily for me there will be another colleague there with me – he has been here longer than me and knows the parents very well.... but if I didn't have him...I don't feel that confident yet. I don't know how to talk to them on my own about these sensitive topics.*

It was good to see that Harpreet has acknowledged this because she cares about enhancing her inclusive practice but clearly lacks confidence when dealing with parents with anti-LGBT+ views which can have a detrimental effect on their offspring. The opposing views may also be formed due to a lack of understanding on the parents' side. Perhaps training for parents regarding the Equally Safe programme might be one way forward. Harpreet's pupil (Y10) who was present seemed to think parental training by ET reps might be one way to tackle the issue and she also hinted that AFCs might benefit from refresher courses too. She explained:

*It's because some parents may not have enough information on this. But even our knowledge [AFCs' knowledge] can be a little lost after a while. A refresher type of training could work! I have forgotten some terms and stuff already...*

Despite the fact that the Equally Safe training has enabled school communities to engage in a more accurate monitoring of bullying incidents and has also greatly enhanced their knowledge regarding inclusion, there is clearly some room for improvement too. Parental training was mentioned both by pupil and staff participants on a number of occasions and it is clearly an area that needs more attention from EqualiTeach trainers for a number of reasons. Rose, a member of the leadership team in Magnolia School, was very passionate about this point when she stated the following:

*I have put out a request for parental involvement when I first started with the programme. It was quite an important thing to do - to have them on our side by actively involving them...but I got one response! If EqualiTeach organised some training for them in the future that would be very useful to all of us here. It's not just their homophobic views but also some of them can't understand the term 'bullying'. Some parents can quite easily say their child is being bullied and it's probably not the case at all! Their child has a falling out with her friend which is what happens sometimes. The parents call that...bullying!*

Rose's statement is similar to Adam's (Y5) who is an AFC in his school and who expressed his thoughts by saying:

*One of the children in Year 3 said that his dad told him that there shouldn't be same-sex relationships...it's wrong, he said. Some parents need to have the same training as I did.*

Aside of suggestions from pupils and staff regarding the need for parental training on inclusion, the overall training efforts by EqualTeach have been praised highly, especially in relation to its positive impact on pupils. This is also evident in the following response from Hanna, a teacher in Clover School:

*...as a result of the whole staff training, everyone now understands the importance of the 'pupil voice' concept. Our children feel empowered and we don't need to push them to create positive change in our school. All of their Agents for Change ideas are completely pupil-lead!*

One issue that was also highlighted in the previous report is the fact that a small number of primary and secondary staff felt the training materials needed to be more differentiated to be either primary-specific or secondary-specific. A number of interviewed staff felt there was too much of an overlap between the two phases and openly objected to this during the interviews. At Crocus School, Helen, a member of the leadership team, told the evaluator the following:

*What's needed is basically more differentiation between primary and secondary... a lot of things they were talking about online, well...it just did not relate to us.*

However, many school staff felt quite the opposite. For example, Abby, a teacher from Begonia School, explained:

*This training that we had...that was brilliant and pretty much everything was age-appropriate and relevant to our setting. The training resources were great and highly useful.*

The issue of tackling online bullying was one of the more dominant topics the interviewed staff wanted to highlight to the evaluator. Some were anxious to have more guidance from EqualTeach on how to work on tackling online bullying together with parents. Diana, an Equally Safe lead teacher from Begonia School said:

*Look, they know what they're doing. I was very impressed with their training materials. They also spoke about cyber bullying...but if I'm honest I think it would benefit parents to have some training too. Sometimes, the parents think to themselves...'I know, I'll take that to school... they'll deal with that!' We're expected to help them deal with that, even though it happens when they're not in school... Last year, we had this incident when a parent told us her child created a fake Twitter account impersonating one of the teachers! So eventually, it was through blood and sweat and tears...that we dealt with it but...it was tough.*

The idea of 'learnt helplessness' of parents regarding online bullying was something that was hinted at in Diana's colleague's comments too:

*We do talk about this with parents...online safety and things like that. However, they have to take some responsibility too! They often come to us, expecting us to solve everything for them. I'd like to say to them: just take your children's devices away! However, I can't...*

One area that was also of a concern for the interviewed staff was the area of SEND and intersectionality. Helen, from Crocus School, explained this in more detail:

*The training was really useful but there wasn't a lot on intersectionality. You hear about SEND and race and race and religion, things like that...but we have some autistic pupils here and some are non-binary. So, it's the disability and LGBTQIA+ area...intersection...in our school. See what I mean? It should be discussed during the EqualTeach training sessions.*

The Equally Safe training has proved to be beneficial to many staff and pupils. As a result of their training, staff and pupils feel more informed, confident and ready to tackle identity-based incidents in their settings. There seems to be a need for schools and parents to develop a more consistent way of working with each other on suitable approaches to inclusion and equality regarding all school community members' protected characteristics. The areas that need more attention from EqualTeach trainers are as follows: a) extension of existing AFC training opportunities including training wider pupil cohorts to achieve better consistency in approaches to identity-based bullying within schools and networking opportunities involving other schools as well as refresher training events for AFCs; b) parental involvement in relevant training areas, such as online bullying and understanding the concept of bullying itself; c) involving school staff in designing training scripts to manage more complex conversations involving parental views that might be opposed to inclusion of individuals with certain protected characteristics, such as being LGBT+; d) adapting the training materials to simplify information in terms of volume, i.e. gender categories (currently there are almost seventy terms to describe gender identity) and sexual orientation (some terms are identical or almost identical in their meaning which can confuse pupils); enhancing the intersectional aspect of the training materials – reflecting the intersections that are most common in schools to begin with. On the whole the training packages have improved the schools' abilities to create positive change as highlighted in the interviews and focus groups by many participants.

### **Policy**

Teachers and members of the leadership teams were guided to enhance their school policies to better manage identity-based bullying incidents. They made sure to include all of the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010. The policies that were changed or adapted by the six sample schools' staff included those related to uniforms, inclusion, behaviour and discipline and effective management of bullying-related records, i.e., creating more individualised categories for recording identity-based bullying. Home/School agreements were also updated and schools were previously provided with 'Parent Voice' documents to better support their relationships with parents in an effort to achieve a whole school community change. Parents were also given the opportunity to share their views via questionnaires/surveys regarding whole-school improvements. Some schools have also invited parents to be part of some of the Equally Safe initiatives in an effort to

show they respect and value their parental voice. The act of enhancing the existing policies meant that the school leads for the Equally Safe programme presented their updates to the head teachers/governors and embedded a key aspect of sustainability into the project. This all had a positive impact in many ways, especially on: pupils' and staff's abilities to challenge non-inclusive behaviour and language; the quality, success and authenticity of educators' own pedagogical practice.

The evaluator looked for evidence related to the impact of the changes that occurred as a result of conducting policy audits. Besides interviewing the teachers and members of the leadership teams (directly involved with the Equally Safe programme), the evaluator was also given access to a number of staff/pupils/parents questionnaires/surveys and other documentation which pointed out some of the main areas of concern for schools. A considerable number of the interviewed staff stated that they felt their policies were already written to a good standard prior to their collaborating with EqualiTeach. However, they still welcomed the reassurance provided by the ET policy audits. At Magnolia School, the evaluator asked Rose, a staff member with leadership responsibilities, to talk about the gaps regarding the marginalised categories of pupils which were highlighted by the policy audit:

*I think it was gender and sexual orientation mainly that we needed help with. Like not to mix the two together – that sort of thing. Overall, the recommendations were quite minimal. Oh, and making sure we have religious accessories included in the uniform policy. If we have some incidents, we monitor and record them and we identify the victim and the perpetrator. Previously, the children made some jokes regarding race which we immediately dealt with. You know stuff like: You look like chocolate cake! And we try to distinguish a bit more in terms of the very vulnerable children, those who don't fit into any categories really. You know the invisible disability – that kind of category and the ones whose parents struggle in all sorts of ways.*

Rose was implying that some of the policies may unintentionally omit the 'minorities within minorities' category of pupils, such as those from poor socio-economic backgrounds and/or mental health issues, who can often experience stigma.

EqualiTeach have had a very positive impact on schools regarding policy gaps resulting from the merging of the separate categories of sex and gender into one and their tendency to use gendered language. School staff also commented on the effectiveness of ET guidance regarding the adaptation of uniform policies to include pupils and staff from different religious backgrounds expressing their faith via clothing and accessories. For example, Ramita from Rondeletia School, highlighted the aspect of indirect discrimination which can occur if staff are not trained on how to make policies truly inclusive:

*I think there are certain sections within our policies that we might have neglected a bit previously. It's a case of indirect discrimination when there is an unconscious bias and yeah...but we have learnt our lesson and we now ensure no one is prevented from wearing religious headwear, etc.*

With regards to pupils expressing aspects of their identity, this can come in many different forms and can have nothing to do with gender identity. For example, in the case of Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) children, and children/young people

who are autistic, it is a common occurrence to have a 'special interest' (e.g., specific animals, transport, etc.). In one interview, a leadership team member asked the evaluator for advice on how to include a child, who expresses themselves as a cat, in their uniform policy. This child wore whiskers, a tail and cat ears in addition to their school uniform. The uncertainty appeared to be mostly around the correct wording. Therefore, the evaluator is of the opinion that EqualiTeach could expand their policy guidance to include suitable wording for a category of pupils who like to wear 'other additional items' with their uniform.

Compared to the previous year, many Equally Safe lead teachers also had some sort of leadership responsibility or closely worked with members of their leadership teams to "push through" the policy changes needed. This also positively altered the perception that implementing the Equally Safe initiatives could be a distraction from the work that "Ofsted really cares about" as expressed by some staff. One type of barriers to implementing some of the Equally Safe initiatives seems to be persisting: time constraints. Schools do not have all the time required to implement all of their Equally Safe action plans as effectively as they would like. At Crocus School, Helen explained this in the following comment:

*I wasn't expecting it to be so time-consuming. It's so much involvement. I didn't realise how much I would be having to do within the school and with the children. In some respects, I wish I had signed it off to somebody else... but I have enjoyed it!*

Following their policy audits, many staff felt they were guided by the EqualiTeach staff well in terms of making suitable adaptations to their policy documents. The level of collaboration between Equally Safe lead teachers and members of their leadership teams was much more evident in this second year of evaluating the programme. As a result of this schools are able to create much stronger policy systems adopting the whole school approach at the same time.

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

### *Curriculum*

The Equally Safe programme helps schools make their school culture more diverse in order to tackle identity-based bullying successfully. This includes curriculum. School community members with the protected characteristics (as listed in the Equality Act 2010) should feel represented by their curriculum and these protected characteristics should be woven through the curriculum in order to achieve that. The Equally Safe programme has encouraged equality, inclusion and diversity in different ways and has illustrated the importance of focusing on vulnerable categories of people as well. When the evaluator asked Maggie, an Inclusion lead from Sunflower School, about the ways in which the programme had helped her (primary) school enhance the curriculum in terms of gender identity she answered:

*We've had some more open-minded attitudes amongst our staff since we started the work with EqualiTeach. I have introduced LGBT+ family books to my class. They're Early Years...and we talk to them about having two mums and two dads and we also talk about gender identity... but LGBT plus families is mostly what we talk to them about at that early stage. Some of them have LGBT parents too. So why not?*

When asked if there was any fear amongst her colleagues about gender identity being discussed with primary children she said:

*I am very glad I've had the opportunity to learn about gender identity and also how to discuss it with our children and I feel more confident now. My colleagues are the same and sometimes pupils tell me that they are very happy to learn more about gender identity because it genuinely interests them. This is an inclusive Church of England school!*

Maggie's colleague Emma shed even more light on how inclusive this school is including terms of gender identity:

*I have worked with a young girl in this school...previously. She was four or five. She was born a boy but now she is transgender. She wouldn't have been influenced by her family as they were against it. I mean it took them a very long time to accept. She was so into it...like her fascination with Elsa and dressing up - in princess dresses. This is when I knew this is real. Later on, we found out that her teenage half sibling was also transgender. Young children don't follow trends, they don't care. They're either into something or they're not. She was also a bit autistic, had some traits... so it is as authentic as it gets! She was very happy and we were happy too. It was lovely to see her wear her tiara and just be in her own world. She did not harm anyone by doing that! She also happily joined in with all the group learning activities so this shows that she did not feel like an outsider.*

Maggie also added that the school had invested in books about LGBT+ concepts including gender identity.

*One of the books was King and King...by Linda de Haan and Stern...something. Sorry, I can't remember the author's names fully...but it is a fairy tale about a prince who finally meets the man of his dreams and they live happily ever after. When we read this to our Early Years children...most parents were ok with it. However, some complained to the head but the head has dealt with it beautifully. We have an amazing headteacher, very inclusive.*

Given the fact that this is a faith school, the level of inclusion in terms of the curriculum but also staff attitudes could perhaps be an inspiration to schools who have a fear of upsetting parents. Unfortunately, the fear of parental reactions is still a phenomenon in many of the schools. Both Maggie and Emma have helped to dispel certain myths about children from EYFS and primary settings being scared of the concept of gender identity. Equally, there was evidence that staff did not accept misconceptions that children change their gender identity because of following "trans trends". It is quite the opposite when it comes to children, especially young children. As the younger they are the more authentic they are in terms of ways of expressing their identity and their interests. Letting children learn about their identity through play and exploration time whilst in school felt natural to the staff in this school and the child was able to thrive as a result, both emotionally and academically.

### *Environment*

Another area that has started to thrive under the influence of the Equally Safe programme was the visual representation of school community members in terms of

their protected characteristics. The aim behind this was to make all school community members feel safe and thus enable them to thrive in their settings. All the schools (primary and secondary) involved in the interviews and focus groups informed the evaluator that there has been an increase in positive behaviour amongst pupils and also a clearer sense of direction for staff involved in inclusion-related initiatives. Ramita, a teacher from (secondary) Rondeletia School, wanted to share the following:

*So, we now have gender-neutral toilets and LGBTQIA+ information corners around the school to let our young people know about all the support out there. You know – if they need to talk to someone for support - outside of home and school I mean. It's up to them. We have had a lot more assemblies on the topic of race, LGBTQIA+, religion, sexual orientation because our staff feel more confident with using the correct terminology. EqualiTeach has a good website too with many resources that are helpful. I am very glad we have had the chance to work with them. It certainly helped to enhance my role. I am someone who does a lot for this school in terms of inclusion projects and I also supervise the Agents for Change who help me. Although time is an issue sometimes but that's another story.*

Ramita praised the programme in a number of ways as evident in her response. Staff feel more confident in the way they talk about diversity with their young people and are active, alongside their AFCs, in relation to adapting the school environment in more inclusive ways. This also involves gender neutral spaces and useful information regarding support for LGBTQIA+ young people. All of this has positively impacted the young people in this school as explained by Jake (Y8) pupil:

*I am really happy that we joined the Equally Safe programme. It has given me a sense of direction – I know what work needs to be done to make things better in my school, more inclusive. We've done quite a lot but there is still more work to do.*

The positive impact of this programme on the emotional wellbeing of pupils is obvious. This was also evident when the evaluator talked to other schools' pupils. Eric (Y5) from Magnolia School commented on this:

*We are more kind to each other now. No one is scared of any bullies anymore. We talk about all kinds of topics with our teachers. I feel we can ask them anything. We also talk to younger children and we made a video for them to watch too. It was about...different types of families. We talked about different kinds of families during the training for Agents for Change Ambassadors. That's what inspired us to make a video about this and talk to younger children Then later the teachers had the video playing in the corridors on our monitors.*

Eric's teacher Mary added:

*I think what Eric means...it is the diversity videos that we play using the monitors that are spread around the school corridors, not just in the reception area. It's like diversity displays but in the video format. The parents are more perceptive to these ideas about diversity if they see their children being involved in this way.*

During this latest evaluation, it was clear that many schools got more creative in an attempt to “win parents over”. This is a sign that schools involved with the Equally Safe programme feel more confident in tackling not just identity-based bullying but also overcoming their own fears regarding parents’ reactions to their implementing action plan’s steps towards better inclusion. It is certainly a worry that certain parents might not be fully on board with ET initiatives but overall, a majority of them do support these efforts and are more likely to do so if their child is directly involved.

There also seemed to be an increased level of acknowledgement that pupil voice matters. Many pupils spoke about being more involved in terms of planning assemblies, having an input into the school newspapers for parents and governors, contributing to child-friendly policies and so on. Secondary teachers admitted to their failing to find suitable ways of empowering the pupil voice in certain areas, such as adapting policies in terms of sanctions related to behaviour. Some expressed they would welcome a bit more guidance from EqualiTeach to make their environments even safer. Rose from Magnolia School said:

*We want to make sure that the consequences are all fair. It would be good to also involve the children in deciding on what the sanctions should be since it affects them – not us. However, I think some staff are a bit nervous about getting the balance right. I think we need to talk to EqualiTeach about this a bit more maybe...I just wish we had more time.*

### *Community*

The Equally Safe project’s broad and inclusive approach has encouraged community cohesion in the schools. It has also inspired many staff and pupils to be creative about the ways they want to work with each other and with the parents and families and the wider community in general. A good number of staff expressed that they felt more confident about their future Ofsted visits because of having more enhanced policies in place and their environments looking more inclusive. The schools have expressed that working with EqualiTeach has enabled them to “educate” the other schools in their Trusts as well and thus develop more staff training opportunities as well. There was also the sense that it was important to a number of schools to have governors, parents, school staff and pupils involved with implementing different steps from their Equally Safe action plan relying on a whole-school approach. Deborah, a teacher from Scilla School, explained this further:

*The head is involved directly – one of our governors is as well – they’ve prepared some staff training information for us. The teachers and pupils are all active in this way too. The teachers who had the Equally Safe training and I’m one of them... they now help the other teachers with diversifying the content of their lessons a bit more. The kids are so good too – like they have so much knowledge about all these LGBT+ terms and they shared that knowledge with us teachers! What amazes me is how educated they are regarding this stuff... We all work so well together actually. It makes me happy.*

When staff were interviewed regarding parental responses and awareness there was a sense of hesitation at times. The impression gained was the one of school staff willing to work with parents on implementing some of these ET initiatives. However, the evaluator received a lot of responses which suggested some staff would



welcome some further collaboration with ET reps regarding this area. Although they felt much more confident talking about diversity via newsletters and general home/school communications, when it came to direct interactions with parents (not in favour of these initiatives) the confidence was lacking in some ways. As mentioned previously, staff would welcome working with ET reps on scripts reflective of their particular settings' issues regarding parental views. Many of them feel strongly about this type of collaboration going forward in terms of implementing their Equally Safe action plans. Diana, a teacher from Begonia School revealed the following:

*The Equally Safe team have been amazing. This project has helped us as a school to recognise the level at which we can support children with fully understanding the concept of prejudice and more complex diversity concepts as well...and it also helped us realise our limitations in terms of winning the parents over if you know what I mean! They need some level of training I feel. They're not on the same page as us. Not really. Especially with online bullying and also the LGBTQ information.*

A certain level of training or an online platform with resource banks specifically designed to support parents might help with improving the consistency of the relationship between schools and parents/families/carers. Some of the staff's responses seem to suggest parents find it difficult to distinguish between bullying and pupils falling out with each other. They often ask school staff to intervene in matters that happen outside of school hours. Aspects, such as the required terminology regarding all protected characteristics, online bullying and the concept of bullying itself are areas that need more attention from EqualiTeach.

The Equally Safe programme strongly supports schools in terms of inclusive practice and policy as is evident in its strong focus on training, policy, curriculum and environment. The adjustments to the policies have had a very positive impact on adapting the sample schools' cultures to make them more inclusive. The reactions of the staff and children and young people have been mainly positive - with policy audits, staff and AFC training being some of the strongest tools this programme offers. One area that continues to benefit from more attention and support consists of parents, carers and families. This is despite the fact that there has been strong evidence schools have made an effort to involve parents/carers in their Equally Safe initiatives. Since time constraints can be an issue for many schools, their call for further involvement from EqualiTeach needs to be more acknowledged. Both the interview and the survey responses suggest parents would benefit from being trained in the area of identity-based bullying, including online bullying, to achieve a stronger cohesion between families and schools. This could have a positive impact on both primary and secondary students. It is clear the programme has established good foundations in this area by equipping schools with the right guidance on how to involve parental views in making their school culture more inclusive. Schools have been forthcoming in sharing key information about the programme with parents/carers via newsletters, assembly presentations and so on.

## **Survey**

The survey was sent to all 72 participating schools regarding Year 2 and we had twenty-five responses altogether. The participants involved school staff within a wide range of roles: teaching assistants (5), teachers (5), teachers with management

responsibilities (5), members of senior leadership teams (14). All were aged between 26 and 56. All participants identified the name of their school and there were two sets of participants from the same school. There were participants from 11 primary schools and 12 secondary schools from all areas of England. 92% of the respondents were female and 8% were male.

100% were aware of the Equally Safe programme: 96% of them being involved with it 'a lot' and 4% being involved 'a little'. The survey found large levels of support for this programme as evident in the responses to the questions stated below:

Have you noticed a positive change in the behaviour in your school since the start of the project?



Do you think the programme improved pupils' confidence in their ability to create positive change in your school?



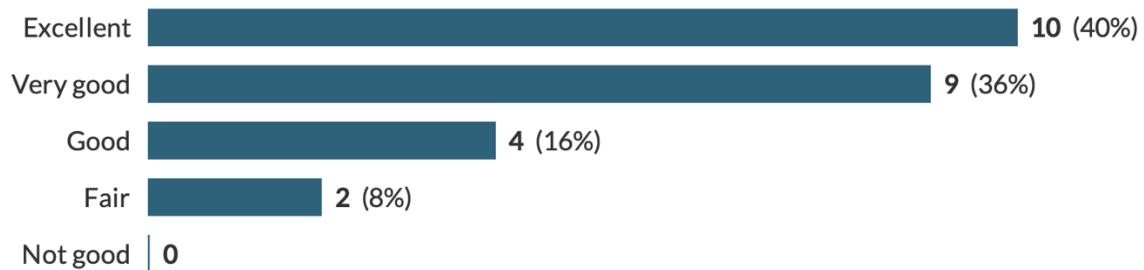
How useful has the Equally Safe programme proved to be in educating children and young people about different types of prejudice-related incidents?



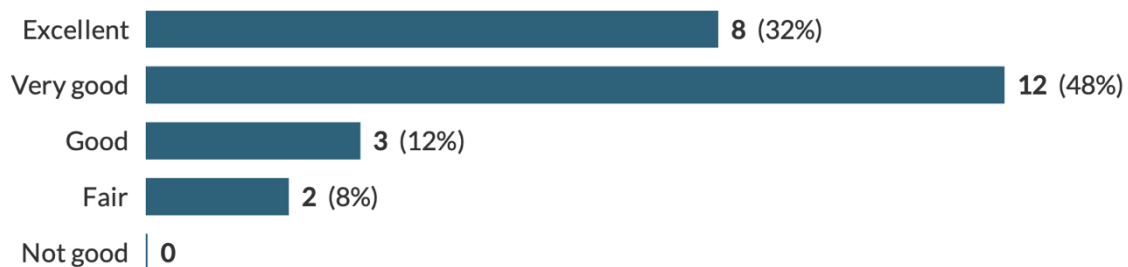
How useful has the Equally Safe programme proved to be in educating children and young people about anti-bullying practices?



How do you think the staff in your school have found the project overall?



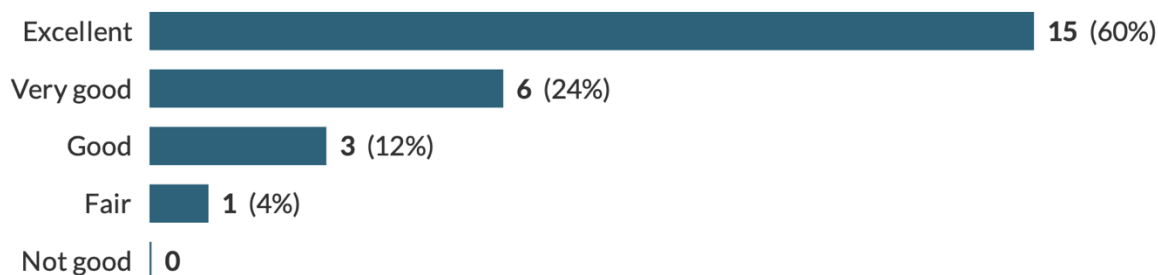
How do you think the children and young people found the project overall?



Staff's responses demonstrate schools appreciate the programme because of its highly positive impact on the behaviour and pupils' confidence and ability to create positive change in their settings. The data shows positive outcomes regarding the programme's usefulness in terms of improving pupils' awareness of prejudice-related behaviour and anti-bullying practices.

Respondents were asked further questions focusing on: the programme's quality of training including 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 as seen in the tables below:

## How did you find the staff training?



Some of the positives highlighted by the respondents in the feedback section included: 'good differentiation' and 'the survey was helpful to create bespoke training'. These responses show that EqualiTeach took care to make the training for schools tailored to their needs. Compared to the previous evaluation, data shows a significant increase in the 'excellent' category by 16.5%. This is an indicator that EqualiTeach have improved the quality of their training paying to attention to the participants' responses and the evaluator's recommendations stated in the Year 1 report. Overall, the respondents have found the training professional and useful with one commenting on it as 'thought provoking, very interesting, and clearly presented'. Another one highlighted the programme's usefulness in terms of enhancing the curriculum: 'using some of the resources to update our RSHE curriculum'

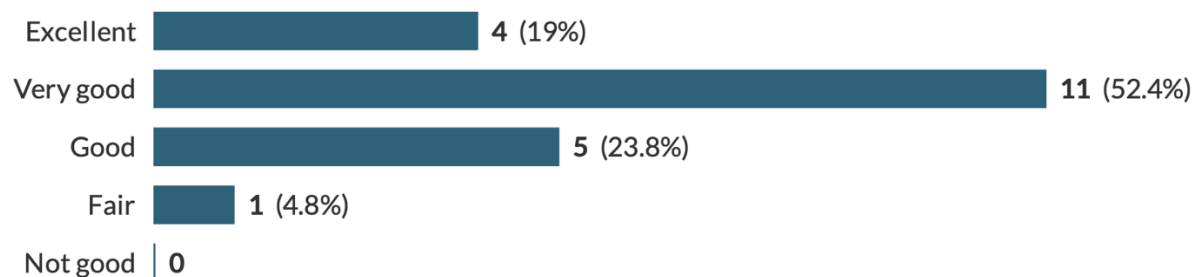
A small number of comments point out the satisfaction with the quality of the training but also show the participants' thoughts on how to improve their training offer even further. One commented:

*It was good as an introductory session. As I have a lot of experience in this area, a lot of the content I was already aware of. The facilitators were excellent, clear and interesting.*

It seems that a certain level of staff are already highly trained and knowledgeable in certain areas regarding inclusion. Therefore, it might be useful to offer an advanced level of training to those who might find this more useful in terms of their role. Others asked for more training in specific areas of the curriculum as seen below:

*...it would be good to have a separate session on religion, otherwise we've found the training excellent.*

Next, the evaluator wanted to know how the school staff found the training materials in terms of differentiation regarding primary and secondary:



There was a positive increase in the ‘Excellent’ and ‘Very good’ categories compared to the responses from the previous year’s evaluation. In addition to this, there were many positive feedback comments, such as: ‘materials always felt applicable’ and ‘materials were appropriate to our setting’. However, a small number of feedback comments also highlighted some need for improvement in specific areas. For example, one respondent commented:

*It would have been helpful in some of the zoom sessions to have primary and secondary options to attend as the needs can be very different and when doing break out rooms, it would be useful to be with people in the same age range. I think this particularly applies to the session on race/religion and LGBT+*

Interestingly, the areas of race and LGBT+ were also highlighted in the interviews when discussing the most common bullying categories.

Next was the area of policy-related support by EqualTeach. The survey respondents were asked a series of questions, including the level of support for schools regarding policy changes:

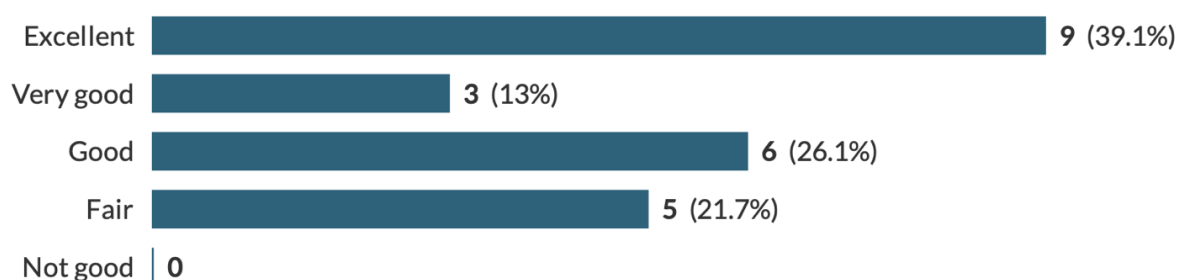


The data shows a clear improvement regarding schools’ views on the quality of support in the area of policy-enhancement, with an increase of 14% in the ‘Excellent’ category compared to the survey data from the previous year. This is also supported by the many positive comments as seen below:

*Very constructive, appropriate and impactful support with our policies.*

*This was of particular use to my school.*

When asked about the level of support regarding engagement with parents/carers the following responses were indicative of some level of improvement in this area:

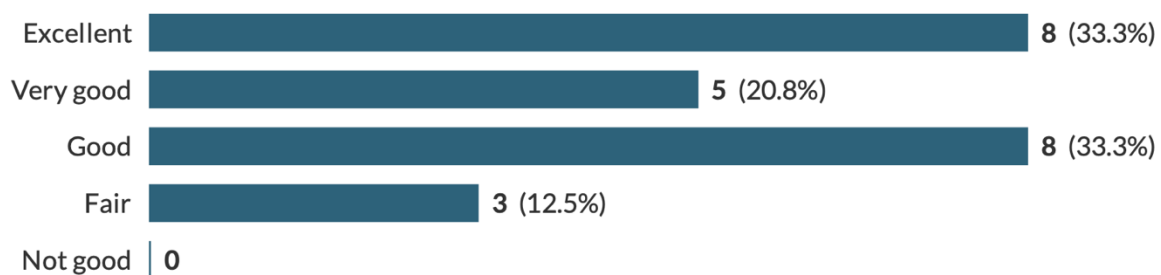


Although the data is overall positive and there is a much bigger increase of responses in the 'Excellent' category compared to the previous year's evaluation some feedback comments suggest school staff feel they need more support as well as more confidence and ideas on how to engage parents with the programme more actively. See below:

*We haven't yet done very much to engage with parents/carers.*

*Some ideas given for how to do this, but possibility for more input on this.*

The survey participants responded in the following ways when asked: How would you rate the support with networking with other schools?



Although there is an improvement in terms of positive responses for the 'Excellent' category by 24.6% compared to the previous year's evaluation report there is also a drop of positive responses regarding the 'Very good' category by 27%. Overall EqualITeach have increased the possibilities of networking for schools participating in the Equally Safe programme. For example, they have created an online platform for school staff to interact with each other as seen in the comments below:

*We've been able to communicate with other schools throughout the process.*

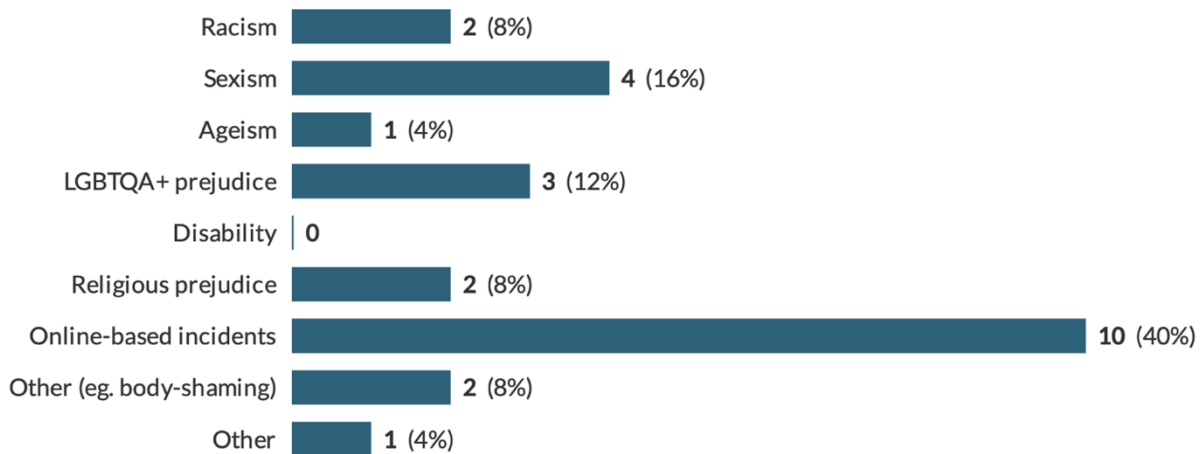
*The online sessions, break out groups were very helpful.*

Some interviewed participants indicated that they made a little use of the online platform and some were not aware of it in any particular way. One survey respondent's comment seems to support this too:

*We could have done more in this regard.*

Next, the attention turned to the type of guidance school staff would want the most. Specifically, they were asked the following:

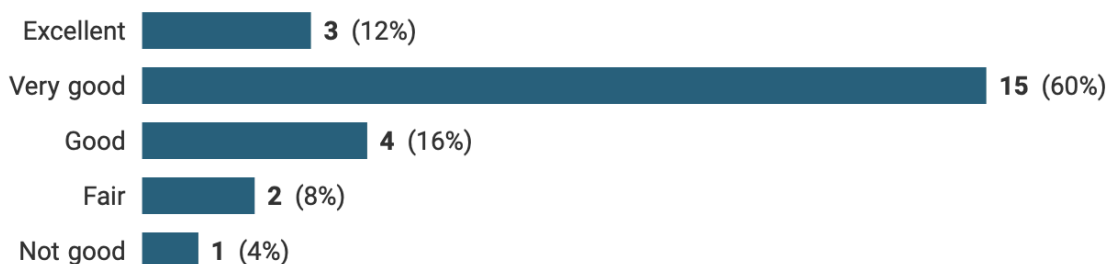
What type of prejudice/incidents would you like more guidance on from EqualITeach?



The graph above shows that the top three categories of prejudice/incidents schools still need support with are online-based bullying, sexism and LGBTQA+ prejudice. Online bullying and LGBTQA+ prejudice were also amongst the top three categories schools wanted more guidance on the previous year. Interestingly, the percentage of need for online bullying increased by almost 9.6% which could be linked to the issues surrounding parental engagement with the schools' Equally Safe initiatives. What is positive is the fact that the level of need for guidance regarding LGBTQA+ prejudice has been reduced by 9.7% compared to the data from the previous year. Sexism remains an area of concern with 16% which is an increase by 7.3% compared to last year's data. There is an increased need for guidance regarding racism, religion and agism. On the other hand, there is a significant level of decreased need for guidance in areas, such as: other (which includes body-shaming) and disability which is the only category of prejudice that staff did not need any further guidance on according to the survey data. In terms of feedback comments, it was apparent that staff are most concerned online bullying, such as 'child on child social media difficulties'.

Next, the survey moves onto the topic of intersectionality which was split into three key sections: LGBT/SEND; LGBT/Race; SEND/Race. This is an area that needed a certain level of improvement as indicated in the report from 2022. 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?

The LGBT/SEND Intersection:



There was a decrease in satisfaction regarding the 'Excellent', 'Good' and 'Fair' sections which was further confirmed by the 4% increase in the 'Not good' category. The feedback comments were a mixture of positive and negative responses. However, the majority of them indicated that the Equally Safe programme focuses on the two characteristics rather individually as seen in the comments below:

*[Focused] Less so on SEND, not really covered as intersection.*

*Whilst I felt these were covered well separately, I am not aware/do not remember much or any comment on intersection in any context.*

*Could be improved with more case studies.*

*It felt more related to each characteristic individually.*

*The information provided was clear and precise in dealing with issues that can sometimes be quite tricky.*

*Not sure training touched on this.*

#### The LGBT/Race Intersection:



There was a decrease in satisfaction regarding the 'Excellent', 'Good' and 'Fair' sections which was further confirmed by the 4% increase in the 'Not good' category. However, there was 45.9% increase in the 'Very good' category which means there was certainly a level of improvement in the EqualiTeach guidance and support regarding this particular intersection. Below is a sample of comments from the survey which hint at the usefulness of the programme in this area:

*Webinars were useful and 1:1 support to discuss [this] was good.*

*Whole school teaching was really helpful to highlight experiences of LGBT/Race issues within education.*

*The course focused on each area excellently and identified that if a young person falls into multiple categories then they are more vulnerable.*



### The SEND/Race Intersection:



There was a decrease in satisfaction regarding the 'Excellent', 'Good' and 'Fair' sections which was further confirmed by the 4% increase in the 'Not good' category. However, the 'Very good' category had an increase in positive responses – by 42.3%. The feedback comments were both positive and negative and indicated that the two characteristics were covered by the Equally Safe programme only individually rather than using the intersectional approach:

*We would like to have a workshop on how disadvantages in this intersection can affect children's inclusivity and ability to flourish within school.*

*[We need] more understanding about the identities and how to tackle any related bullying issues should they arise.*

*Could be improved with more case studies.*

The evaluator would like to emphasise that all three areas of intersectionality had responses that imply some staff do not have a full understanding of the questions asked as stated in some of these comments e.g. 'I am not sure about this specific question.' This in itself suggests that there is a need for raising awareness amongst schools staff (and pupils as indicated in the focus groups' data) about the importance of this concept. Layered stigma is an issue in school settings across the globe, not just the UK, and intersectionality is gaining more attention as a result. There seems to be a gap in this area regarding the Equally Safe programme and this could be addressed by working with schools on designing training materials/guidance that are reflective of the intersectional issues faced by each school individually as some are more diverse than others.

The survey also asked about staff's needs regarding continued guidance from EqualTeach following the end of the collaboration period. The responses are indicated that most schools would like to have a continued support. See below:



The following comments show the wide-ranging area of guidance required by the survey participants:

*Staff access to webinars through their own log ins.*

*Email updates with top tips.*

*Support to help train more pupils and ongoing updates to language of equality...more second year training for key pupils on intersectionalities.*

*We currently have a very solid set of policies in place but going forward we understand these will need tweaking in response to the issues we face at school.*

*Access to ask questions about specific issues would be helpful, especially any backlash from the local community as we prepare to celebrate our first Pride month.*

*Support with our recruitment as we would like to hire a more diverse range of staff.*

*We would like to begin the Equally Safe Silver award programme.*

*We would like more training on acceptable language use.*

*Updating and refreshing staff knowledge.*

*A shared forum for resources or advice, e.g., Facebook page or termly remote meeting.*

The last response suggests that some staff are not aware of the existing online platform that was created by EqualiTeach in response to schools' need for a networking platform.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The Equally Safe programme is able to address a gap in teachers' knowledge and confidence in relation to preventing and tackling identity-based bullying. The beneficial impact of the programme is evident in all main areas, including policy, training and creating positive change in schools with the help of pupils who feel empowered and more confident as a result of being part of this Equally Safe project.

Participating schools have developed more inclusive environments due to having an effective guidance from EqualiTeach regarding uniforms, gender-neutral spaces and language, policy and curriculum adaptations – all in accordance with the government's guidelines and relevant legislation, such as the Equality Act 2010. **Some of the strongest areas** which were positively enhanced due to the quality of the programme include: policy, behaviour management and knowledge regarding the areas of diversity and inclusion of both staff and pupils. **Areas that still need more attention** to improve the consistency of approaches towards identity-based bullying include parental engagement with the programme, online bullying, sexism, homophobia and racism. Focusing on these using the intersectional lens might be an effective way to prevent less obvious types of bullying. The survey found a good level of support for the programme with staff and pupils feeling more confident and knowledgeable when it comes to dealing with identity-based bullying and prejudice. This was also expressed in the responses gained via interviews and focus groups.

The whole-school approach adopted by EqualiTeach regarding the reinforcement of the importance of diversity, equality and inclusion has had a very helpful impact on the management of identity-based bullying incidents. This helped to minimise the stigma surrounding those with one or more of the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. As well as this, the programme inspired schools to enable pupils to have more of an input into the structure and content of assemblies with the aim of making them more representative of the school community members' characteristics. Staff and pupils feel they have more access to diversity-based information, including aspects, such as gender identity categories, the concept of diverse families, neurodiversity-affirming language, etc. Pupils who participated in the AFC training took their responsibilities seriously as was evident in the many creative ways of implementing their action plans.

The skills developed as part of their AFC role (i.e., leadership skills) have strengthened their 'pupil voice'. Their level of thinking in an open-minded way is more enhanced compared to staff/parents and this is due to their consumption of social media and reality TV. This can be beneficial to teachers at times, for example when relying on their knowledge regarding the LGBT+ inclusive vocabulary.

Finally, the Equally Safe project can be regarded as a great tool in order to achieve schools' full capacity as centres of excellence in relation to equality and inclusion work. This has made many of the schools feel more confident with regards to meeting the Ofsted requirements regarding effective school practice. It has also showed to be local experts, prepared to guide other schools within their Trusts, local areas and general networks.

### ***Recommendations***

#### **Ideas for continued guidance from EqualiTeach**

A majority of respondents felt they could benefit from having continued guidance from EqualiTeach once their collaboration stops – with 64% selecting the 'yes' option in their responses. 36% of respondents felt confident enough to continue their Equally Safe work without having continued guidance from ET. Many contributed feedback comments in this section focusing mostly on the following areas:

- continued and increased access to information regarding intersectionality and protected characteristics
- more differentiated training materials/workshops regarding primary and secondary phases
- training offers for staff who are already trained in certain areas of inclusion due to the nature of their roles, i.e., pastoral leads
- producing training materials that are more reflective and bespoke regarding ongoing issues for schools, such as negative parental influence on children's views concerning inclusion and diversity, i.e., designing scripts directly with staff
- continued guidance regarding policy adaptations and the correct terminology, especially LGBTQIA+ terminology
- providing some guidance regarding more inclusive recruitment processes involving future staff
- designing an award scheme for participating schools

Comparing the set of the latest recommendations with those identified back in 2022, it is clear that EqualiTeach have been offering schools the option of having a point of contact once the collaboration period comes to an end. The EqualiTeach team have been highly professional and understanding of the needs of the collaborating schools. This was stated in a number of the interviews conducted by the evaluator as for Year 2 evaluation. The reps were also highly praised by the staff during the interviews and they warmly and professionally interacted with everyone during the in-person staff/AFC training events and staff online workshops the evaluator had the opportunity to observe.

It is recommended that EqualiTeach extend the training to include more school community members and parents/carers. There is still a need to educate wider pupil cohorts about inclusion and identity-based bullying as the schools' capacity to do so is often restricted by time constraints and other activities which fall outside the Equally Safe remit. The future Equally Safe training offer might include even more in-depth information on how to tackle and prevent: online bullying, sexism (**secondary schools**), gender identity and sexual orientation (**parents and primary schools**) - which are topics that can be "uncomfortable" to engage with (**staff and parents**). Certain topics need more bespoke tools from EqualiTeach to directly reflect the ongoing issues in each participating school. On the whole, the evaluator is of the opinion that staff's levels of knowledge and preparedness have been more extended compared to the previous year. This shows that the quality of the programme has also increased following the first report back in 2022. The data suggests there is a mixture of apprehension and genuine unease regarding staff's dealings with parents from both religious and non-religious backgrounds – regarding LGBT+ concepts. Hence why this is another reason why the Equally Safe programme should have more intersectionality-based training information in the future. There was less fear amongst staff about discussing gender identity with primary children and it was nice to see that some teachers also introduced this topic to children from the Early Years sector. It is important to highlight the need of helping parents understand the importance of this inclusion work as there is a certain level of incoherence regarding approaches to inclusion and diversity. Perhaps having an award scheme for the Equally Safe project would inspire parents to engage more actively with the programme in order to help their children's schools to get an award. There were responses from some of the interviewed staff that indicated that a level of competition added on by a possible award scheme could be a big enough motivator for parents to help their children's schools expand their inclusion work and also bring members of individual school communities closer together.

The level of discussion concerning more "sensitive" topics, such as sexual orientation and gender identity, has expanded amongst staff since the evaluation back in 2022. This is certainly positive but as indicated in some of the interviewees' responses, there is a thin line of making some of these concepts trivial in the eyes of less informed pupils. Hence why the need for wider pupil-focused training is rather a necessity. In order to address barriers to the safety for all the LGBT+ pupils, EqualiTeach could consider a refresher programme for existing AFCs and involving wider pupil cohorts in the AFC training events.

There was a positive change in terms of the staff being nominated as Equally Safe leads in their schools. This is because many of them already held leadership

responsibilities or/and worked closely with senior leadership team members in order to implement the Equally Safe action plans faster and more effectively. This was not the case so much last year and as a result many of the initiatives were not fully implemented or weren't implemented at all. Leadership staff certainly make a difference to the levels of efficiency with which the programme gets fully "activated" in schools.

It was encouraging to see that many schools involved with the programme this year have had much more enhanced levels of knowledge of SEND. In fact, none of the survey respondents asked for more guidance on this area of inclusion. However, it is important to stress that the area of SEND needs more attention in terms of its interlinking with race and LGBT+. In addition to this, the policy language (i.e., uniform policy) must be reflective of any additional needs of pupils with SEND which can come in a form of 'additional needs' that may simply serve as a way of expressing one's identity or one's 'special interests' (i.e., PDA and autistic children and young people).

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. Although there was a slight improvement regarding the selection of Year 2 focus group participants, the evaluator felt students with recorded SEND could have been present in bigger numbers still – especially considering the increasing cohorts of pupils with recorded SEND in mainstream settings. Generally speaking, most staff were respectful of pupil participants' space to express their views in focus groups. However, on a number of occasions staff not only took over parts of the discussion but they also re-stated some of the evaluator's questions without her permission. Although the evaluator addressed such situations (by re-stating her questions as needed) it would be helpful if EqualiTeach reps could guide the school staff in a way that would prevent such situations from happening in the future. This will also ensure the data by the pupils will be more "organic". The programme has provided staff and students with a good range of knowledge regarding identity-based bullying. Many of them are enthusiastic about sharing their ideas with other schools engaging in this project. However, a lot of them don't feel they have had an opportunity to fully network with other schools involved with the same project. One way forward could be creating an online platform for all AFCs to exchange and compare ideas regarding implementing the individual steps from their action plans. Together with other schools they could perhaps create resources (based on their previous experience in the AFC role) that could potentially help future AFCs. As last year, this year the AFCs have also expressed a keen interest in meeting with AFCs from other schools which could also lead to staff having further opportunities to network with Equally Safe leads from other schools (and not just online). This would enable whole school communities to extend their existing networks and develop bespoke approaches reflective of their local circumstances.

## **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.**

## Appendix 2

### Consent Form – Staff

<b>Please tick the appropriate boxes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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.		
<b>Use of the information in the study</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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.		

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



## 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

<b>Please tick the appropriate boxes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
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.		

<b>Signatures</b>		
<b>Your Name [IN CAPITALS]</b>	<b>Your Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Researcher name [IN CAPITALS]</b>	<b>Researcher signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
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](mailto: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		
<a href="mailto:kmata005@gold.ac.uk">Klaudia Matasovska, PhD student (Department of Educational Studies), email: kmata005@gold.ac.uk</a> Dr Anna Carlile (supervisor), Department of Educational Studies, tel: 0207 7172296 email: <a href="mailto:a.carlile@gold.ac.uk">a.carlile@gold.ac.uk</a>		

## 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<sup>2</sup>:

- **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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<sup>2</sup> <https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/>

processing your data<sup>3</sup> 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".<sup>4</sup>

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](mailto: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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<sup>3</sup> 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/>

<sup>4</sup> 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 definition  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  
Bangladeshi  
Any other Asian background

White and Black African  
White and Asian  
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  
Divorced  
  
Widowed  
Living with Partner

In a civil partnership  
Civil partnership has been legally ended  
Single  
Separated

**Please describe your sexual orientation**

Heterosexual  
Would rather not say

Gay or lesbian  
Bisexual

Please describe your **gender**

Man  
Non-binary

Woman  
Genderless

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

Yes  
Would rather not say.

No

**Please describe your religion of belief**

Buddhist  
Hindu

Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and other Christian denominations)

Muslim  
Sikh  
Jewish

Would rather not say  
No religion  
Other religion or belief

**Thank you for completing this form**