

---

# PRIMARY BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

How primary schools  
are celebrating  
difference and tackling  
homophobia, biphobia  
and transphobia

---

---

# PRIMARY BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

---

How primary schools  
are celebrating  
difference and tackling  
homophobia, biphobia  
and transphobia

---

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE	5
GETTING STARTED	6
TACKLING HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC LANGUAGE AND BULLYING	8
AN INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM	10
CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE	12
MOVING UP	15
SCHOOL ETHOS	15
MANAGING RESISTANCE	16
WHAT THE LAW SAYS	17
TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS	18
CASE STUDIES	20
RESOURCES	22

## FOREWORD

To train other staff in your school, you need to be confident in your own skills and knowledge. There are plenty of resources that already exist for you to use when training other people. Gather the following resources together and get to know them before planning a training session.

Creating the right environment for this is critical, one that reflects and values the diversity of the world outside the school gates. One that honours that diversity. One that protects it.

This guide will help you do just that. It's an update of the previous one, part of our Different Families materials which have helped over 10,000 primary schools encourage youngsters to think about, respect and value alternative family set ups. The new guide mirrors changes taking place in our society and some of those changes offer new opportunities and challenges, especially to bi and trans youngsters.

As well as giving you practical steps your school can take to celebrate diversity, the guide also features case studies from schools who've already put their commitment into practice. They've found, as you will, that doing this work benefits the wider school community, rather than just those who are, or who come from, LGBT families. It gives children confidence to be their true selves, to value where they come from, to know all that really matters is love - and to believe it with such certainty that they'll stand up and speak out whenever it's being disrespected.

It's a lesson that's every bit as important as their ABC and times tables – and, like those basics, will last them a lifetime too.

We hope you will be encouraged to take on this vital work and help make your school a safe place for LGBT individuals families. If you need any help or advice along the way, please get in touch.

Ruth Hunt  
Chief Executive, Stonewall

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

Lesbian, gay, bi and trans people today enjoy greater equality and freedom to be who they are than ever before – but that's not the case in many of our schools.

The Teachers' Report, research commissioned by Stonewall and YouGov in 2014, showed that 70 per cent of primary school teachers still heard expressions like 'that's so gay'. Almost half of them said that children in their school had experienced homophobic bullying. That's an improvement since the previous research in 2009 but it shows there's still a long way to go.

So too do the findings of the 2010 research report Different Families, carried out by the University of Cambridge and Stonewall. Children with same-sex parents had loving homes but were used to hearing other children use the word gay to mean rubbish – but didn't hear any challenge to it from their teachers. They were sometimes afraid to tell others they had gay parents in case they were bullied. It also made things more difficult for them that lesbian, gay or bisexual people were never mentioned in their schools, making them feel excluded and invisible.

The Teachers' Report 2014 showed that teachers were reluctant to tackle homophobic bullying despite nine out of ten primary school teachers believing that their school had a duty to tackle homophobic bullying. The barrier to them stepping in, was a lack of training on how to do so.

This means many children start secondary school with negative impressions of LGBT people, and a lack of tolerance and understanding of difference and diversity. Not surprisingly, bullying is rife; research from the University of Cambridge in the School Report 2017 found that almost half of LGBT pupils in Britain's secondary schools experienced homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying. The impact on their attainment, health and well-being is profound – but there's one group who perhaps feel its effects even more; more than two in five young trans people have tried to take their own lives.

Stonewall expanded its work on tackling homophobic bullying to primary schools in 2010, developing a suite of age-specific resources and distributing these to over 10,000 of Britain's primary schools. Since then, Stonewall has continued to work with thousands of Britain's primary schools to provide age-appropriate training and resources, and to help schools develop their work on celebrating difference.

This guide shares best practice from great schools from around the country who are leading the way on this work. It gives you tangible examples of policies and practices that worked in schools, shows you how start this work and offers some ideas and inspiration to keep things moving. And, as you might encounter some bumps along the way, it also has some tips to keep you on course.

## GETTING STARTED

All the schools we've worked with stress the importance of getting the basics right. A clear plan of work to tackle homophobia, biphobia and transphobia:

helps stop problems arising down the line

makes the work less daunting

makes it easier to answer questions about this work from parents, colleagues or governors

### Know where you stand

The public sector Equality Duty requires schools to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment. This includes supporting a child to socially transition or to be treated in their self-identified gender, as well as to tackling transphobic bullying. Schools are also required to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This means that schools should go beyond tackling bullying and take proactive steps to celebrate difference and promote respect of others. Schools should set specific and measurable equality objectives e.g. raising awareness of gender identity and trans people, or reducing levels of transphobic bullying and language.

You can't know what you need to improve until you fully understand exactly where you are right now. That means an honest assessment of the problems you have before you explore the best ways to address them.

If work to celebrate difference and diversity is just a box-ticking exercise it can become tokenistic and ultimately counterproductive.

So, like the best schools, you'll need to look at how you can integrate this work throughout your curriculum and school life.

### Lead from the top

To be effective, this work demands a whole school approach with strong leadership from senior management and governors. Only a third of primary school teachers say their headteacher demonstrates clear leadership on tackling homophobic bullying (Teachers' Report 2014), leaving many teachers uncertain about starting this work.

By taking responsibility for communicating the importance of this work senior management:

show pupils these issues are being taken seriously give staff the confidence to address HBT bullying

One problem which some schools highlighted was that occasionally work around tackling homophobia, biphobia and transphobia is delegated to a single member of staff, which makes it both ineffective and unsustainable. Whilst it is perfectly appropriate for someone to lead and co-ordinate the work, it must be seen as the responsibility of all staff across the school.

### PRIMARY SCHOOL, LONDON

*The school encouraged staff to make sure words like 'lesbian' and 'gay' were used in a proper, non-abusive context. A Diversity Week was created where differences in family life are celebrated and the school's work on tolerance and inclusion are showcased. The school works with feeder secondaries to reassure pupils that support is available as they grow up and progress through the education system.*

### Involve pupils

The best schools also involve pupils in their anti-bullying work right from the start because:

- it helps to inform anti-bullying work
- reveals exactly where intervention is needed
- gets their support for the task itself.

School councils are a good way of doing this. Some schools have found it led to the council members becoming ambassadors for the work, and the pupil body becoming more self-policing.

### Train your staff

The biggest barrier to tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in primary schools is that staff feel unprepared for it. Without proper training and know how they won't have the confidence to take the work on or make it effective.

The good news is that this training needn't be difficult; half an hour discussing a school script to tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language can easily be integrated into a staff training day. Many schools also turn to external support and training, to offer new perspectives and give their work added authority. 91 per cent of teachers who have addressed different types of families in the classroom would do so again.

# TACKLING HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC LANGUAGE AND BULLYING

‘Tranny.’

‘You’re such a girl.’

‘That’s so gay.’

Language like this is heard in seven out of ten primary schools. It means that young people are encouraged to see LGBT identities as negative. And use of such language makes the estimated 20,000 young people growing up with same-sex parents in the UK, think their family is being equated with something bad. So, tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language should be a priority for all primary schools.

## Set boundaries

Be clear about what language is and isn’t acceptable and include a zero-tolerance approach to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language. This information should be included in your anti-bullying and behaviour policies. You could also supplement these policies by asking all pupils to sign up to a language charter and making sure they’re aware of what’s expected of them. Some schools have developed home-school agreements to support this. Sample policies can be found in Stonewall’s resources, which can be found at the end of this document.

## Consistency and reporting

Once you put a policy in place it’s important you act upon it from the start and that all staff are consistent in their approach.

As well as being told that pupils shouldn’t tolerate homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language, they should also be encouraged to report it. And your school should record use of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and chart them over time. It helps to both gauge the level of the problem and how effective you’re being in tackling it.

Some teachers don’t intervene when pupils use homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language because they think pupils don’t know the real meanings of the words and aren’t referring to gay, bi or trans people.

But the use of gay in a derogatory manner in particular still equates being gay with something bad. Such negative connotations can have a long-term impact on children’s self-esteem, so a consistent, zero-tolerance approach to the misuse of terminology is vital. This should be highlighted in the school behaviour policy.

## Explaining language

You might be tempted to just ban the use of the word ‘gay’ but doing so could reinforce the idea that ‘gay’ is something taboo.

So instead of banning homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language, you should explain why it’s wrong and hurtful and, in an age appropriate way, explain what the words actually mean. To do this, tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language should be part of a school’s work to build a curriculum which includes LGBT people and different families. This removes the taboo from the word ‘gay’ and also shows young people exactly why the use of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language is hurtful.

### PRIMARY SCHOOL, NORTH WEST

*Staff at this primary school in the north west explore the concept of gender with both their KS1 and KS2 pupils using age-appropriate books in their PSHE lessons. With KS2 pupils, teachers also use the ‘Genderbread Person’ to actively discuss the differences between gender and gender stereotypes and this graphic is displayed as a reminder in all KS2 classrooms. The overall curriculum has been designed to promote diversity, tolerance and equality for all. Staff have had CPD training in trans issues, and a trans toolkit informs the Equality and Diversity Policy. The school has also installed gender neutral toilets.*

### PRIMARY SCHOOL, SOUTH EAST

*An equalities audit at this school needed to do more to promote gender equality and family diversity. The school wanted to have support and policies in place so that it didn’t have to react in an ad hoc way to a situation. Pupils helped put together a language code of conduct which stated that homophobic language was unacceptable and set out procedures for recording incidents of discriminatory language. The move from primary to secondary school was made easier by inviting in a local LGBT youth group who recounted their experiences of homophobic and transphobic language and bullying.*

## Tackling bullying

Tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language goes a long way towards tackling related bullying too as it removes negative connotations from being LGBT.

Most homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in primary schools is directed at children who are different in some way, rather than at children who are actually LGBT.

It should be dealt with in the same way as homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language:

- a clear, zero tolerance policy communicated to all
- creating a school environment which celebrates difference
- ensuring young people are aware of the diversity of family life

It is important that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is highlighted in the school anti-bullying policy and in the school online safety policy.

This anti-bullying work helps dispel misconceptions about being LGBT and better prepares children for life in 21st century Britain.

## Wider inclusion work

This work doesn’t have to be stand alone or ‘crowbarred’ into a school’s agenda. It should form part of your school’s wider work around inclusion and respect and show that you treat the issue just like any other – as part of preparing their pupils to be good citizens.

### PRIMARY SCHOOL, YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

*The governors include a Diversity Link governor who works closely with the Diversity Lead on the teaching staff, to ensure the curriculum and policies are inclusive of trans issues. School assemblies, SMSC related learning, SRE content from a third party, an intolerance of discrimination and bullying and a gender-neutral school uniform keep diversity and understanding at the heart of the school community.*

# AN INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM



## Using storybooks

Once upon a time, traditional storybooks for young people excluded LGBT people and different families, focusing exclusively on opposite sex relationships.

Now though, there are plenty of high quality children's books that feature same-sex parents and challenge stereotypes. Designed specifically for primary school children, they're age-appropriate, subtle and adaptable so can be:

- the basis of PSHE sessions or circle time, integrated into learning exercises
- used as the basis for activities, games, school plays and story time
- left on the shelves among the other books

Key to this work is not making assumptions about your pupils. Children from different families feel uncomfortable telling others about their parents because their teachers assume that they have opposite-sex parents. Although not deliberate, it can make children feel excluded from their learning.

To avoid this, use language which allows children from all families to talk about their home life, such as asking what pupils' parents or carers do, rather than what their mum and dad do.

In school activities based on parents, think of ways to make sure that children from different families don't feel excluded. So, when young people make cards for parents on Mother's or Father's Day, consider that some children have same-sex parents, come from a single parent family or live with grandparents. It's an easy way to ensure all young people feel included in their learning.

## PRIMARY ACADEMY, SOUTH EAST

*This school developed a family diversity lesson with the local authority. Children are encouraged to identify differences in appearance, hobbies and talents with their classmates and to celebrate those differences. Diversity was also explored using *The Family Book* and *The Picnic*, which cover a range of different family types, including same-sex parents.*

## Displaying posters and signs

Stonewall's Different Families posters send out a visible sign that a school is a tolerant and diverse place. They trigger discussion among children and make them aware that different types of families exist, so displaying the posters is a great place for your school to start.

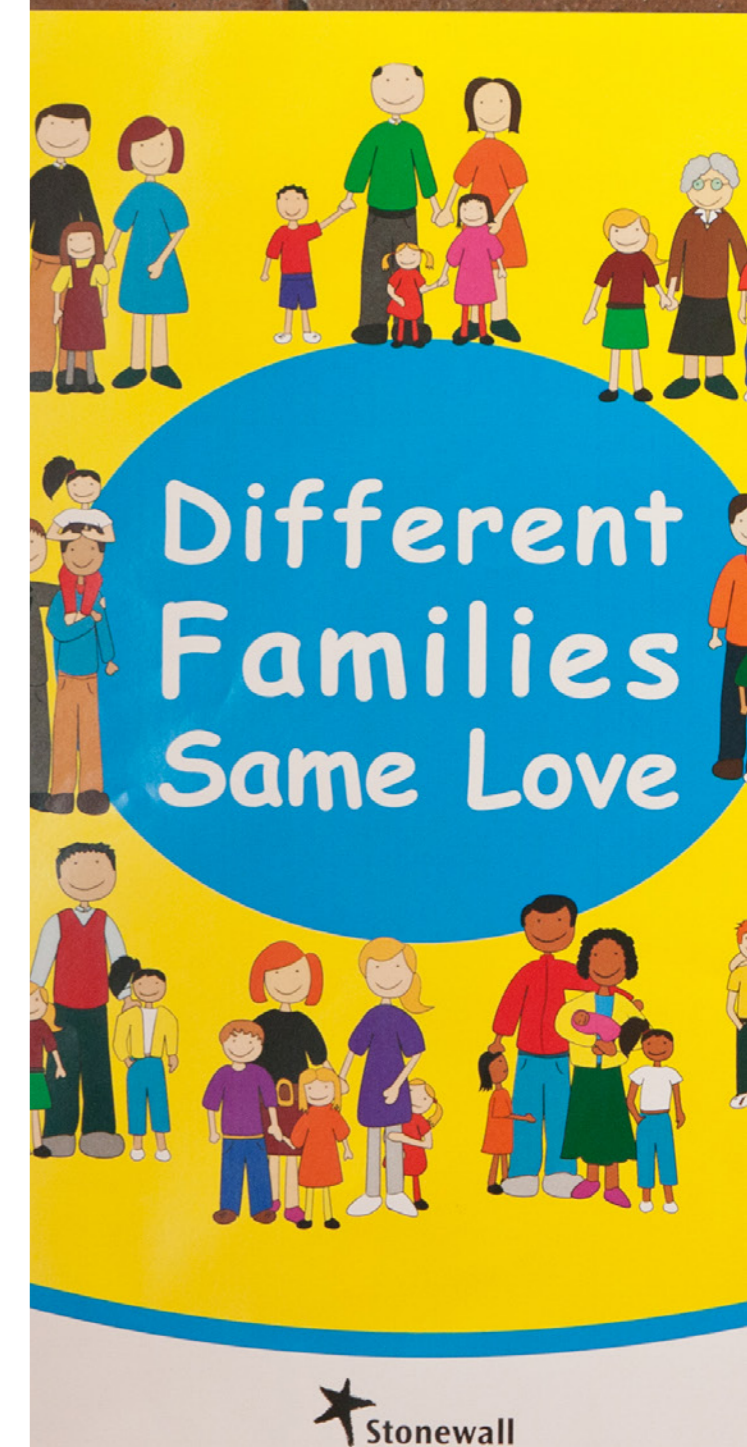
Use the posters during PSHE sessions. Ask children to look at the posters, draw their own family and then compare it with their classmates, to show them how all families are different. Or you can use the posters for a discussion about what makes a family a family. Pupils soon realise that it's things like 'love', 'support' and 'how they treat one another' that matter, not who makes up the family.

## Including lesbian, gay, bi and trans people in the curriculum

With older pupils, some schools have begun to integrate lesbian, gay, bi and trans people into the curriculum more broadly, such as exploring LGBT discrimination in the past as well as in the modern day. All of the schools featured in this guide, and many more, found this work rewarding and enjoyable. And 91 per cent of primary school teachers who had tried this type of work say that they'd do it again (Teachers' Report 2014).

## INFANT SCHOOL, EAST MIDLANDS

*The work on gender and diversity at this East Midlands infant school, takes a holistic approach, setting it in the teaching and visual environments. Assumptions aren't made about the family backgrounds of the pupils, various books explore different family set ups and the rainbow flag is displayed in the school, along with the Different Family Same Love poster. Teachers also developed a resource around the book *And Tango Makes Three*. The story sack contained the book and props so that children could re-enact the story once they'd read it and then draw pictures of their own families and share them with their classmates.*



# CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE

One of the easiest ways to create a culture free from homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying is to actively celebrate difference. It sends out a message that it's OK for them not to conform to the norm and that no one should be bullied for being different. You'll create a learning environment where young people feel able to be themselves, which makes them happier and improves their performance at school.

## Challenging gender stereotypes

The Teachers' Report found that the young people most likely to experience homophobic bullying were those who didn't conform to gender stereotypes, such as boys who were perceived as being feminine, girls who were into sports and boys who were academic. This was true for both primary and secondary school pupils, suggesting that intolerance of non-conformity begins in primary school and continues into secondary school.

You can stop this intolerance developing by actively challenging gender stereotypes. Make sure that school activities aren't exclusively for pupils of a particular gender and use inclusive language to show it's fine for people to behave in ways that makes them feel comfortable.

Challenging gender stereotypes will also help make your primary school a more inclusive space for children who are showing gender variant behaviour, or who may feel their gender is different to the sex they were assigned at birth. Many schools are already showing excellent practice in working with these pupils to ensure they feel safe and able to be themselves at school.

Seemingly small changes, like helping a pupil to use their preferred name and pronoun at school, can have a huge impact on the pupil's self-esteem.

Schools often report concerns about beginning this work. How will parents react? What about the use of toilets and changing facilities? Can a pupil take part in sports in inter-school competitions?

But primary schools who take on this work find that challenging gender stereotypes and removing unnecessarily gendered aspects of school life has an empowering effect on all their pupils.

If your school hasn't yet needed to support a pupil who is questioning their gender identity, the work is in allowing schools to feel proactive rather than reactive. Taking the time to consult with pupils and parents will allow you to get the right support in place for your school. To enable a whole school approach, start with a review of your policies and training for staff and governors.

For many primary schools, tackling gender stereotypes and celebrating trans people is an extension of the excellent work they've already been doing on celebrating difference. Threading these themes throughout the curriculum means they are treated in the same way as other differences, through an ethos of respect for everyone.

## PRIMARY SCHOOL, NORTH WEST

*Pupils, staff and visitors at this school are invited to challenge gender stereotypes by a display in the main school hall. The PSHE curriculum and resources have been carefully chosen to continue this theme. Pupils have access to a wide range of books that tackle gender stereotypes – from female rocket mechanics who don't want to marry a prince to a prince who loves to design dresses. A comprehensive guide to trans issues covering legal duties, school policies and plans for trans staff, pupils and family members, has been drawn up, and there are plans for gender neutral toilets and school visits from members of the trans community.*

## CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE

### Celebrate Role Models

Your work around gender and bullying in your school will probably have its biggest impact when it involves real LGBT people who are part of the school community.

This doesn't mean singling LGBT people out or treating them any differently. All it takes is for your school to celebrate the engagements, marriages or births of LGBT people in the school's community, just as you would its straight members.

When pupils move to secondary school, any negative attitudes they developed in primary school can follow them into more serious bullying. Stonewall's School Report 2017 found nearly half of LGBT secondary school pupils – including 64 per cent of trans pupils – were bullied for being LGBT at school, while 7 per cent experienced physical abuse. 4 per cent of LGBT pupils – including 9 per cent of trans pupils – also received death threats at school.

Work with your Year Six pupils to help reduce their likelihood of either leading homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or being on the receiving end of it when they reach secondary school. You could consider bringing lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans young people of secondary school age into your school to talk to pupils directly about their experiences.

By adopting these measures, you'll be ensuring young people enter secondary school knowing they don't have to put up with homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language, and are willing and to challenge others who do.

### Holding events

Your school could go even further and start actively celebrating difference through assemblies, plays and events. As before, you don't need to focus purely on sexuality, but can embrace all the aspects of diversity that make your school unique.

#### JUNIOR ACADEMY, SOUTH EAST

*Staff at one junior school have been challenging gender stereotypes and bullying in the classroom, playground and assemblies. Diversity Days are timetabled to address issues of identity and stereotyping, parents are engaged with the work through the school newsletters and staff given regular reminders around gendered activities, such as art classes for Mother's and Father's Day. A successful move for a trans pupil from primary to secondary school, and another younger child openly exploring their gender identity, show the work has paid off as the pupils felt comfortable in a safe and supportive space. An 'Aspirations & Careers' day saw a shift away from children coming dressed as stereotypically gendered careers; not all the girls were hairdressers and dancers, and not all the boys were footballers.*

## MOVING UP

Your school could choose to work directly with feeder secondaries. If you do, you'll be ensuring a consistency of approach to dealing with these issues and sending a clear message to your pupils that their new secondary school will also be an environment where they can be themselves.

## SCHOOL ETHOS

Your school ethos sets the tone and parameters for the environment in which your pupils learn. It supplements and supports the curriculum and, just like the curriculum, it must embrace everyone. Only then can your ethos be truly valuable and meaningful to everyone who learns, works or visits your school.

So LGBT inclusion and tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying must be central to your school ethos – not just because it's the right thing to do, but because it matters to your pupils and parents. In YouGov polling of 2,000 adults for Stonewall in Living Together, 93 per cent of parents of under-18s, and 92 per cent of people of faith said that homophobic bullying in schools should be tackled. As you work to make your school more LGBT inclusive, you'll find it helpful to emphasise that celebrating difference promotes the values of love and respect for all which lie at the heart of most faiths and creeds.

If yours is a church school or a school with a faith character, national guidance may be provided by the relevant religious body. For example, 'Valuing All God's Children: Guidance for Church of England schools on challenging homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying' or 'Made in God's Image: Challenging homophobic and biphobic bullying in Catholic schools.'

#### CATHOLIC PRIMARY ACADEMY, LONDON

*When a pupil at this London school began a social transition, the school made sure that the pupil was at the centre of all decisions. A step-by-step process was agreed with the pupil and their parent, and the pupil was offered choices at every stage. The school was clear with both the parent and the pupil about what was possible. They respected the pupil's confidentiality regarding which information would be shared with the wider school community. The school also offered the pupil and their parent information on external support agencies. Policies and procedures were audited and reviewed with guidance from Stonewall. Respect for everyone is a key thread throughout the curriculum with trans issues and gender stereotyping featuring prominently. Staff have received training on trans issues in relation to cultural and religious backgrounds.*





# MANAGING RESISTANCE

Despite the best of intentions, you'll almost certainly worry about the reactions of parents and the local community when starting out with this work. But don't let this put you off. The Teachers' Report 2014 showed that 91 per cent of teachers who have addressed lesbian, gay or bi issues, or different families, received no complaints from parents for doing so. Even in the small number of cases where the work met with resistance, the majority resulted in parents being more than happy for their children to take part once they'd been given more information about what the work involved.

Best practice is to actively involve parents in your school's work. Your school could inform parents through newsletters and parents' evenings about the work that you'll be doing and exactly why you're doing it. Ask parents and carers to sign up to policies and to state their role in the school community explicitly. You could try getting parents involved in events such as diversity week or school plays.

Having an open door policies enables you to address parents' concerns when they arise, have copies of the teaching materials you'll be using available for parents and carers to see. This should reassure them that the work is sensitive and age appropriate. Explain to parents that creating a culture of respect is something you take seriously and that all members of the school community are expected to embrace this ethos, in line with school policy and the Equality Act.

Generally, you'll find parents more than willing to support the work. Parents and carers don't want their children to be bullied or discriminated against, nor do they want their child to be a bully.

## CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY ACADEMY, WEST MIDLANDS

*This Church of England School had provided training for staff, and shared their plans with their governing body, they ran a parents' meeting to introduce their updated policies. The Headteacher shared the new Anti-Bullying Policy, which now contains explicit reference to transphobic bullying, and highlighted the school's plans to increase awareness of gender stereotypes and LGBT people with pupils. Parents responded positively to the information, and the way it was shared. Using Jigsaw to teach PSHE has proved very effective at celebrating diversity and drawing discussion on gender stereotyping and gender identity, and a specific transgender lesson was delivered to Years 3-6 to great effect. The school's inclusion day saw each year group wear a different colour to form a rainbow.*

# WHAT THE LAW SAYS

## Equality Act 2010

The public-sector Equality Duty requires all schools in England, Scotland and Wales, including academies and free schools, to eliminate discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender reassignment, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Primary schools are expected to set age appropriate equality objectives, although these don't have to be in relation to the national curriculum. Equality objectives could include committing to reducing incidences of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language in school, or looking to more accurately reflect pupils' different families. These objectives should have tangible actions that allow your school to measure their progress.

For more information about the Equality Act 2010, see guidance from the Department for Education [www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools)

## Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education and Inspections Act places a duty on schools to promote the safety and wellbeing of the children and young people in their care. This includes the children of same-sex parents in primary schools and those who experience homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

In the 2016 Schools White Paper, Educational Excellence Everywhere, the Government pledged to work to produce an action plan for improving PSHE provision. This included confirming they have invested in eight projects, including training around 20,000 teachers, to prevent and tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools. The government's continued emphasis on this area of bullying highlights that it should continue to be a priority for your school.

## Ofsted

Since 2012, the Ofsted framework explicitly directs inspectors to look at a school's efforts to tackle bullying based on sexual orientation and how the school supports the needs of distinct groups of pupils, such as pupils with same-sex parents.

Ofsted's guidance to inspectors from 2014 suggests that primary school inspectors should ask whether:

- pupils ever hear anyone use the word 'gay' when describing a thing, or whether they have been told by teachers that using the word 'gay' to mean something is rubbish, is wrong, and why it's wrong
- pupils ever get picked on by other children for not behaving like a 'typical girl' or a 'typical boy'
- pupils have had any lessons about different types of families (single parent, living with grandparents, having two mummies or two daddies)

In addition, it's also suggested that they ask staff how the school seeks to support LGBT pupils and those from LGBT families and whether policies include reference to carers as well as parents.

The current Ofsted guidance, The Common Inspection Framework, published in 2015, states that inspectors will evaluate the extent to which leaders, managers and governors 'promote British Values' when making judgements on the effectiveness of leadership and management. The Prevent Strategy (2011) lists 'equality of opportunity' as one of the British Values. Emphasis is also placed on mutual respect and tolerance. In the School Inspection Handbook (2018), which is a guide for inspectors, inspectors are informed that 'Before making the final judgement on the overall effectiveness, inspectors must evaluate: the effectiveness and impact of the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development'. Definitions of these areas are given, which include reference to respecting British Values.

# TOP 10 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

## 1. ACKNOWLEDGE AND IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

Your school policies should make clear that there is zero tolerance for homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying and language in the school community. Reference to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and language should be included in the anti-bullying policy, the online safety policy and the behaviour policy. As with any school policy, these should be developed in partnership with pupils, staff and governors. Incidents of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying should be recorded and tracked over time.

## 2. EXPLAIN LANGUAGE

Your staff should be willing to explain to children in an age appropriate way, why it's important to use language in its proper context and what terms such as 'gay' and 'trans' actually mean.

### RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOL, SOUTH WEST

*A log book at this rural primary school helped bring about a shift in culture as it captured complaints made by children when they were called gay. They no longer tolerated insults and expected their complaints to be heard and acted upon. But when it became apparent that pupils thought that it meant the word 'gay' was banned completely, school leaders realised that work needed to be done to explain the diversity of family relationships to pupils.*

## 3. INCLUDE DIFFERENT FAMILIES

Your school should recognise the difference and diversity of family life by displaying Stonewall's Different Families posters around the school, including different families in the school curriculum and stocking storybooks which feature different families and can be read aloud during circle time.

## 4. ENCOURAGE PUPILS TO BE THEMSELVES

By actively celebrating difference and diversity, you can challenge stereotypes and make clear to pupils that it's important that they're able to be themselves.

## 5. LEAD FROM THE TOP

This work doesn't succeed if it's just the responsibility of one individual. Staff doing this work need to know this is a priority of the school leadership. School leaders should also make sure their staff have the training and support they need to feel confident doing this work.

## 6. SUPPORT TRANSITION TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

You can prepare your pupils for entering secondary school by making clear they don't have to put up with homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying. By engaging with their feeder secondary schools, you can also ensure their policies protect difference and diversity too.

## 7. INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE

Seek children's involvement in work around homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and celebrating difference. It gets your pupils' input and, just as importantly, their buy-in for the work.

## 8. ENGAGE PARENTS AND CARERS

Keep parents and carers informed about this work and encourage them to get involved. Being open about efforts to celebrate difference and diversity means it's much less likely you'll experience resistance from parents.

## 9. USE THE LAW

It's your school's responsibility to make sure pupils from all backgrounds feel included in their learning. Ofsted in particular now expects to see evidence of schools tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying as part of its inspections. This alone is strong justification for doing this work, let alone your pupils' well-being and sense of self or the benefits to society in general.

## 10. LEARN FROM OTHERS

This guide highlights the excellent work many schools are already doing in this area. So, instead of reinventing the wheel, why not learn from the best practice of others? Stonewall's School Champions programme is designed to help you do just that, creating a network of schools to share best practice with one another.

## CASE STUDIES

### METHODIST PRIMARY SCHOOL, NORTH WEST

*A Methodist primary school in the North West bolstered its commitment to LGBT inclusion by removing gendered behaviours, like asking children to line up in 'boys' and 'girls' queues or stipulating gender specific school uniform items, and building new, unisex toilets. New books, Stonewall lesson plans, assemblies and a 'Diversity Week' which looked at challenging stereotypes, were supplemented by 'Be You' discussion groups and a visit from a local LGBT support group.*

### PRIMARY SCHOOL, EAST OF ENGLAND

*At one primary school with over 700 pupils, staff and PSHE lessons are focused on challenging pupils on the hurtful and negative use of the word 'gay', and on any instances of homophobia. Using Stonewall's Different Families, Same Love posters led to breakthroughs in understanding of the diversity of family life as the resource material wasn't only concerned with sexuality. Stonewall's resources have been incorporated into the PSHE&C curriculum. The work has been led by SLT during assemblies, making it both high status and highly effective. Pupils were prepared for leaving for secondary school by looking at stereotyping and being shown how they could challenge homophobic bullying if they saw or experienced it.*

### JUNIOR SCHOOL, EAST OF ENGLAND

*Pupils at this junior school, discussed why people's differences should be accepted after their teacher had read them You Are Special and And Tango Makes Three. Each year, they have a lesson on what makes the perfect family, the out take from which is always 'no family is perfect, but mine is perfect for me.' Stereotypes were broken down in various ways, such as encouraging boys to knit and girls to do judo. And when one staff member had civil partnership with their partner, the school children made a celebratory card, signed by all the pupils.*

### PRIMARY SCHOOL, EAST OF ENGLAND

*Books played a big part in diversity work at this school. Books reflecting same-sex relationships were brought into the classroom and, alongside Different Families Same Love material, were used to start discussions about their own families. Year Fives then looked at books from the 1960s and 1970s and were encouraged to discuss how families were portrayed then compared to those from the 1990s. A local LGBT charity ran workshops with Year 6 pupils on same-sex relationships and shifted perceptions quite dramatically. The school has been commended by inspectors for 'gaining recognition for its pioneering work in tackling homophobia.'*

### PRIMARY SCHOOL, EAST OF ENGLAND

*This primary school has written and developed a practical guide for other primary schools who are supporting pupils who transition to their preferred gender in school. The practical guide, made available on the school's website, recommends that schools work closely with parents and offer choices throughout the individual's social transition and that pupils lead the way (including deciding when to use a new name and using the toilets they felt most comfortable with). The guide advises that schools should identify adults that the pupil feels most comfortable speaking to and ensure that parents can contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team whenever they need to. Feedback on the guidance has highlighted that successful transition happen when Headteachers lead from the front and the child is at the centre of the process feeling that school is on their side and is a safe space to be.*

Schools wishing to be in contact with any best practice schools should contact [education@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:education@stonewall.org.uk)

## STONEWALL SCHOOL CHAMPIONS PROGRAMME

Stonewall delivers training to teachers through Train the Trainer courses. These courses are currently available on two themes, Tackling Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying and Language and Creating a Trans Inclusive School, with a future module on tackling gender stereotypes planned for 2019.

Each member of school staff who attends one of these courses will gain the knowledge, tools and confidence to return to school and train their colleagues. The courses include guidance on celebrating difference and including different families, as well as meeting Ofsted and statutory requirements, and practical techniques to train other staff.

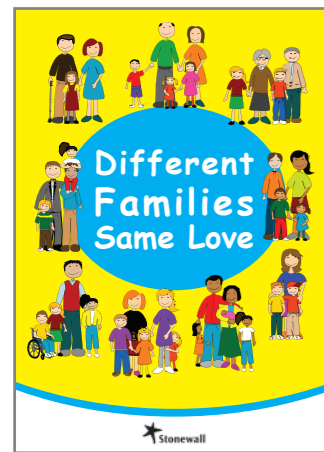
Schools that take part in Stonewall's Train the Trainer courses automatically receive Stonewall School Champion status. In addition to the training day, this gives schools an extensive pack of Stonewall's age-appropriate primary school resources, including posters, DVDs and teaching guides, ongoing support, guidance and best practice from Stonewall's education team, exclusive use of the School Champions logo, and regular newsletters, briefings and opportunities exclusively for School Champions.

In addition, all School Champions are encouraged to apply for Stonewall School Champion Awards. Begin with Bronze, then work your way through Silver and up to Gold in subsequent years. The process is straightforward; create a submission using the online portal to answer the questions and upload your evidence. Once you achieve your award, you'll be given an updated logo to reflect your achievement.

For more information, please get in touch with Stonewall's education team at [education@stonewall.org.uk](mailto:education@stonewall.org.uk)



## RESOURCES



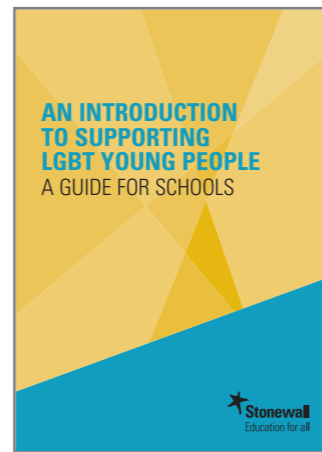
### DIFFERENT FAMILIES, SAME LOVE - POSTERS, STICKERS AND POSTCARDS

Families come in all different shapes and sizes, from the conventional nuclear family to single parents, adoptive parents and children being raised by grandparents. Around 20,000 young people in Britain are growing up with same-sex parents and many children have lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans parents or family. Our Different Families, Same Love materials are an excellent starting point to celebrate different families, and to talk with pupils about how every family is special and unique.



### LOVEHEART POSTER

This poster continues the theme of Different Families, Same Love and showcases the different forms that family relationships can take.



### AN INTRODUCTION TO SUPPORTING LGBT YOUNG PEOPLE

This guide provides an overview of some of the key ways school staff can support their LGBT pupils, and is one of our most popular downloads.



### GETTING STARTED EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

An age-appropriate toolkit especially designed to give a range of ideas for celebrating difference and challenging gender stereotypes in the Early Years Foundation Stage.



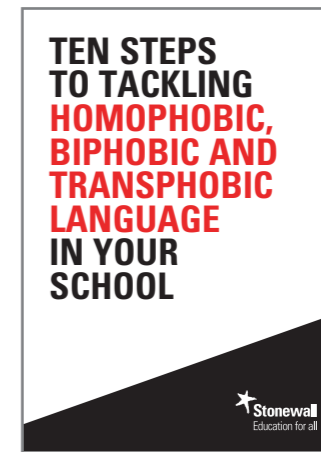
### GETTING STARTED TOOLKIT PRIMARY

This toolkit sets out five key steps for preventing and tackling homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and language in primary schools. It includes many of the practical resources that schools need to begin their work on LGBT inclusion, including school surveys, scripts and a pupil-friendly anti-bullying policy template.



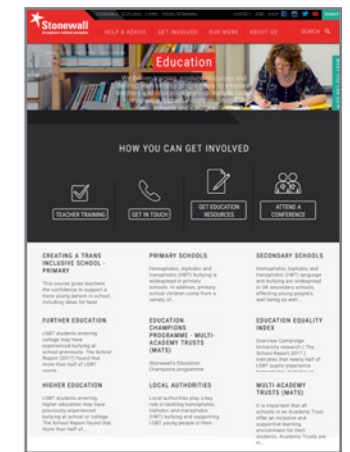
### FREE FILM AND WORKSHOP PACK

FREE, by Rikki Beadle-Blair, is a powerful, thought-provoking and entertaining film about friendship, families and the importance of being yourself. It explores gender stereotypes, homophobia and what it's like to be part of a family which is perceived as 'different'. A variety of resources are available that can be used alongside the DVD to enable teachers to talk about difference and diversity in an engaging and age-appropriate way. These include an activity pack, lesson plans and posters.



### TEN STEPS TO TACKLING HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC LANGUAGE IN YOUR SCHOOL

This guide outlines 10 clear steps that will help staff to address homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and includes definitions and examples of hurtful language.



### FIND MORE RESOURCES ON THE WEBSITE

All of our education resources can be found on the Stonewall website: [www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/education-resources](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/education-resources)

---

# PRIMARY BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

How primary schools  
are celebrating  
difference and tackling  
homophobia, biphobia  
and transphobia

---

Stonewall, 192 St John Street, London EC1V 4JY  
info@stonewall.org.uk  
www.stonewall.org.uk  
Registered Charity number 1101255  
PUBLISHED BY STONEWALL, 2018

 **Stonewall**  
Acceptance without exception