

Report to: Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee

Date: 11 March 2010

Subject: Equality and cohesion, including recorded incidents

Report of: Executive Director of Children & Young People's Services

Contact officers: Trish Anderson 86005
Pete Coulson 3884

Purpose / summary:

To inform Members of:

- i. steps taken to eliminate harassment and discrimination, and promote equality and community cohesion among children and young people; and
- ii. bullying incidents and prejudice-related incidents involving children and young people recorded during the Autumn Term 2009

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended:

Recommendation / decision:

Members are asked to:

- i. note the steps taken to eliminate harassment and discrimination, and promote equality and community cohesion;
- ii. note the steps taken to address bullying;
- iii. reaffirm their commitment to support schools in this work;
- iv. note the bullying incidents and prejudice-related incidents that occurred during the Autumn Term 2009; and
- v. note the views of young people recorded in the Sentinel online survey during Anti-Bullying Week 2009

The decision will be made as a result of this report and will be published within 48 hours

Risks / Implications:

Financial:

Staffing:

Policy:

Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?

Wards affected:

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution?

Yes / No *

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget?

Yes / No *

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council?

Yes / No *

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:	x
Discussion leading to a decision	
Monitoring	
Sharing for corporate understanding	

	x
Discussion	
Decision	
Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Committee	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council

There are no Background Papers to this Report within the meaning of Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Proper Officer



Date

24th February 2010

1.0 Steps taken to promote equality

- 1.1 As expected, Ofsted school inspections are now placing much greater emphasis on how effectively schools promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination. This means that a school judged to be ineffective in equality is likely to be judged inadequate in overall effectiveness.
- 1.2 To prepare head-teachers and senior managers, five half-day training sessions were held in October 2009, one in each locality. Attendance was over 70 and resulted in over 50 follow-up training requests for school staff and governors. Feedback so far has been extremely positive.
- 1.3 An extensive curriculum support package has now been established on the Virtual Learning Network (VLN). This replaces, and extends, the previous Education Dept Race Equality Resource File distributed in hard copy in 2004.
- 1.4 In the area of human rights, the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was celebrated on 20th November with a successful pupil-voice competition. The finalists (four secondary schools and five primary schools) presented their ideas to each other and a judging panel by video-conference.
- 1.5 Children and young people across the borough have also been making their voices heard in the preparation of Wigan Council's next Equality Scheme. The consultation has involved youth groups, focus groups, school councils and Comunik8.

2.0 Steps taken to promote community cohesion

- 2.1 Guidance from the Dept of Communities and Local Government states that “*Local authorities should work to join up their education and cohesion strategies, along with supporting schools in meeting the duty in a number of ways, including: by assisting them to obtain a clearer picture of their local community; by helping schools to develop links with the community; and by facilitating links between schools within the authority*”. [Guidance on Meaningful Interaction, DCLG, Jan 2009].
- 2.2 First, a comparative set of locality data on ethnicity, religion or belief and socio-economic background has been made available to schools. This is to support them in meeting their duty to promote community cohesion, part of which requires schools to compare their own community with the local and national context.
- 2.3 Broadly speaking, most local schools find themselves to be significantly less diverse than the national average in terms of ethnicity and religion or belief. This clearly points to a need to provide our students with opportunities to encounter people from different backgrounds that they would not otherwise come across. Actions can then be planned to address the individual needs of each school.
- 2.4 Following the success of the 2009 Schools Linking Network pilot, one such action is to establish a school-linking arrangement with another school that allows some engagement with “difference”. Officers of the national Schools Linking Network are particularly keen to continue to support the Wigan model because of the collaborative approach shown within our Borough.
- 2.5 Another method of support offered to schools is an online community cohesion survey for pupils. This enables Wigan borough schools to evaluate the impact of the actions they take to promote community cohesion, both in the classroom and in engagement with people from different backgrounds. It is intended that, by comparing the results of this survey over time, changes in pupils’ awareness and understanding can be analysed and further interventions planned.

3.0 Steps taken to address bullying

- 3.1 An important development this year has been the Sentinel online pupil survey during Anti-Bullying Week, November 2009. This provided a young people's perspective on bullying to complement the existing reports of incidents recorded by adult staff, and can be repeated in future years. For the first time, the Scrutiny Committee now has the benefit of seeing these key findings side by side.
- 3.2 The Wigan Bullying Survey 2009 was offered to schools for Wigan pupils in Years 5 to 11. 1422 surveys were returned electronically from a total of 29 settings including primary, secondary and special schools and Pupil Support Centres. Participants were asked questions about their attitudes and experiences of bullying in and out of school, the psychological effects of being bullied and how well they feel their school deals with bullying issues. In line with current national and local priorities, there were also specific sections on cyberbullying and homophobic bullying.
- 3.3 Among other things, the results clearly show a significant disparity between the number of incidents perceived by pupils and the number reported by adult staff on Sentinel. These results are presented below in both table (3.4) and graph (3.5) format.

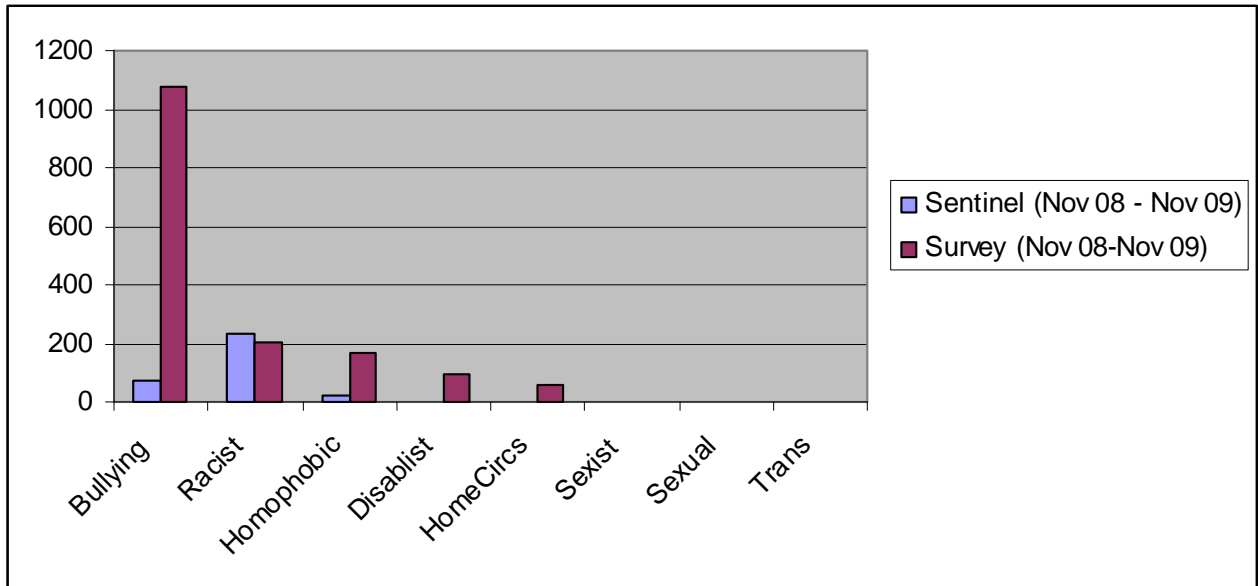
3.4

**Incidents recorded on Sentinel
compared with young people's perceptions (table)**

	Sentinel incidents recorded (all 136 schools) Nov 08 - Nov 09	pupil survey incidents perceived (29 schools only) Nov 08-Nov 09
Bullying	75	1076
Racist	231	203
Homophobic	20	167
Disablist	3	98
Home Circs	1	56
Sexist	1	1
Sexual	1	4
Trans	1	4

3.5

Incidents recorded on Sentinel compared with young people's perceptions (graph)



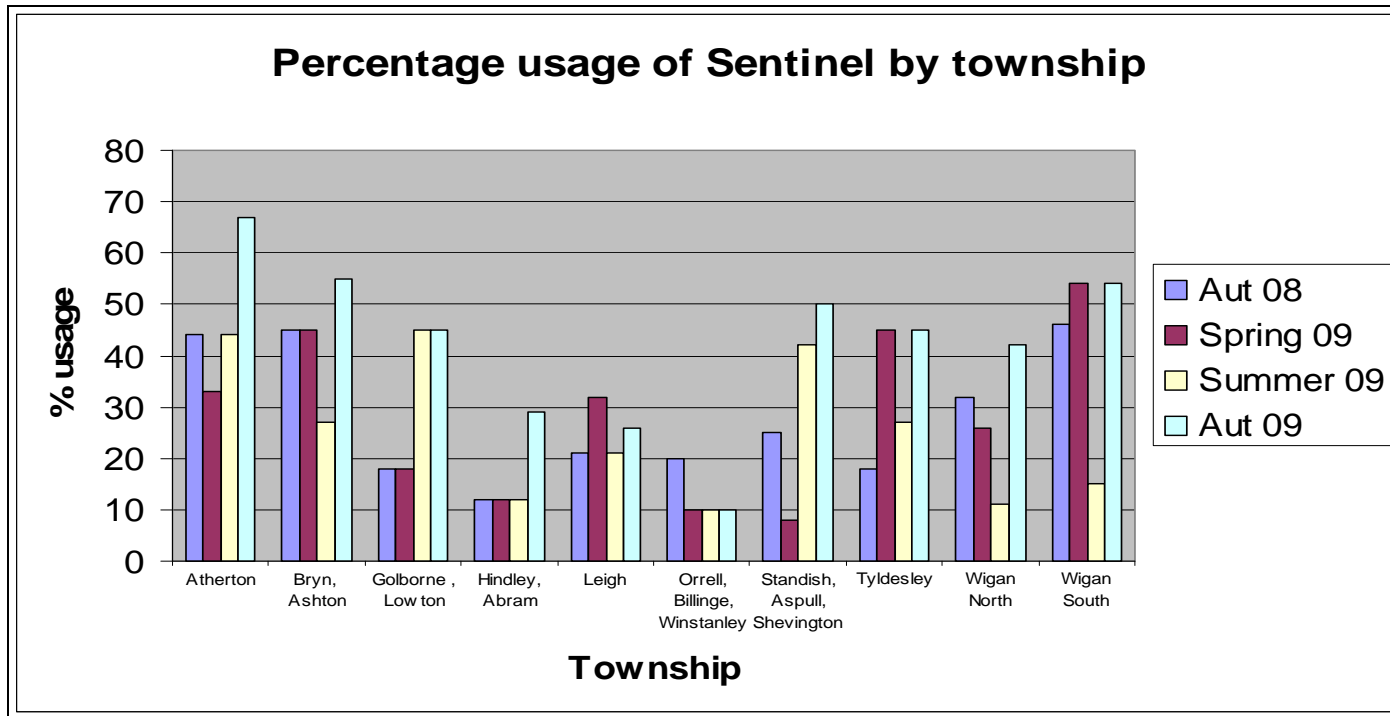
3.6 The government is currently consulting on the proposed new duty on schools to record incidents of bullying between pupils, verbal and physical abuse against school staff and prejudice-related incidents such as racist incidents. The consultation also covers whether to require schools to report statistics to the local authority. All this is already covered by current practice in Wigan, where we have taken a national lead.

4.0 Bullying and prejudice-related incidents recorded for the Autumn Term 2009

4.1 In late 2008 the Children & Young People's Champion wrote to encourage all schools to use the Sentinel system to its full potential, as part of the joint commitment to keep children and young people safe from bullying and harassment. Following a recent training campaign by the CYPS Anti-Bullying Officer, there has been a further surge in usage which can be seen from the graph in 4.3 below. There are now only 30 schools left that have never used the system. Results from the Autumn Term 2009 can be found in 4.2 below

4.2 Autumn term 2009	Bullying	Homophobic	Racist	Disablist	Home Circs	Sexist	Sexual	Trans	v Staff
Atherton	10	3	5						
Bryn Ashton	4	2	26						
Golborne Lowton	2	5	6						1
Hindley Abram	13	1	9						
Leigh	2		5						
Orrell Billinge Winstanley			1						1
Standish Aspull Shevington	3		9	1					1
Tyldesley		3	6	1					
Wigan North	4	2	13						
Wigan South	6	1	16			2			
Total	44	17	96	2	0	2	0	0	3

4.3



5.0 Proposals

Members are asked to:

- 5.1 note the steps taken to eliminate harassment and discrimination, and promote equality and community cohesion;
- 5.2 note the steps taken to address bullying;
- 5.3 reaffirm their commitment to support schools in this work;
- 5.4 note the bullying incidents and prejudice-related incidents that occurred during the Autumn Term 2009;
- 5.5 note the views of young people recorded in the Sentinel online survey during Anti-Bullying Week 2009.

6.0 Appendix: Comparative figures for the Summer Term 2009

6.1 Summer term 2009	Bullying	Homophobic	Racist	Disablist	Home Circs	Sexist	Sexual	Trans	v Staff
Atherton	1		9						
Bryn Ashton			5						
Golborne Lowton	1		6						
Hindley Abram			5						
Leigh	1	1	6						
Orrell Billinge Winstanley	1								
Standish Aspull Shevington	7	1	5						
Tyldesley			6						2
Wigan North	1		5						
Wigan South			5						
Total	12	2	52	0	0	0	0	0	2