

That's so gay: Information for Educators

- UK government assumes for policy that 6% of people will grow up to be gay
- 84% of gay young people say they are distressed when they hear the word 'gay' used as an insult, 45% say it distresses them a lot.
- Almost half of secondary school teachers and a quarter of primary school teachers think that the homophobic language they hear is 'just harmless banter'
- More than half of gay young people feel that they 'don't belong' at school
- 23% of LGB young people have tried to take their own life at some point, 56% have self-harmed.
- In the UK there are now around 20,000 young people growing up with same-sex parents.
- 55% of LGB young people at secondary school say that they experience bullying
- 17% of gay young people say that teachers within a school make homophobic comments.

Education and Inspections Act

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on school governing bodies in England and Wales to promote the safety and wellbeing of the children and young people in their care. This includes lesbian, gay and bisexual young people. Homophobic language has a proven negative impact on the wellbeing of these young people and as such, schools have a responsibility to tackle it. The Act also gives head teachers the ability to respond to incidents that take place outside school hours, for example on public transport or use of homophobic language on the internet. The UK Government has also made tackling homophobic bullying and language a key priority. Former Education Secretary Michael Gove described the use of homophobic language as 'outrageous and medieval'.

Ofsted

The Ofsted framework now explicitly directs inspectors to look at a school's efforts to tackle bullying and prejudicial language based on sexual orientation and how the school supports the needs of distinct groups of pupils such as lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils. Ofsted's guidance to inspectors suggests that they should look at the following:

In primary schools whether

- pupils ever hear anyone use the word 'gay' when describing something, or whether they have been told by teachers that using the word 'gay', to mean something is rubbish, is wrong, scary or unpleasant and why it is wrong

In secondary schools, the above and whether

- there is any homophobic bullying, anti-gay derogatory language or name calling in school or on social media sites

With senior leaders whether

- they are aware of any instances of homophobic or transphobic language in school, whether this is recorded and how it is acted upon
- there is any homophobic language used against staff
- the school's bullying and safeguarding policies and equality objectives address gender identity and sexuality
- training has been provided for staff in how to tackle homophobic/transphobic bullying, including language
- policies promote safety for all groups of pupils regardless of sexuality or gender identity, including the use of language

Schools' efforts to tackle homophobic language are increasingly cited in Ofsted reports. Since the new framework was introduced, around 25 per cent of secondary school inspections mention the school's efforts to tackle homophobia.

Source: Stonewall

[http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/school_report_2012\(2\).pdf](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/documents/school_report_2012(2).pdf)

<http://www.stonewall.org.uk/other/startdownload.asp?openType=forced&documentID=3926>