

# Ten Thousand Teens

A series of papers based on 10,000 responses by secondary age students. 2014

- The views of students who have been bullied 'a lot'
- A comparison of effective and ineffective school practice

Bullying Intervention Group



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## About this data.

Bullying Intervention Group (BIG) runs the national award programme for excellence in bullying intervention. As part of our offer to members we provide a free anonymous pupil survey so that schools can measure their effectiveness. While each school receives their own data, we regularly collate data sets for comparison and research purposes. The data looked at here contains responses selected from our data on 10,676 young people collected up to July 2014.

### **What does your school do about dealing with bullying and how well is this working?**

For this paper, students' responses were selected in order to compare those who thought their school was dealing with bullying 'very well' with those who thought their school does 'not deal with bullying well at all.' (A total of 4271 students) The remainder chose other answers ranging from 'OK' to 'Don't know'.

### **Views from those most severely bullied**

The responses were also filtered to examine those students who said they were badly bullied to compare them with those who have never been bullied. Those who were bullied 'sometimes' were not examined in this paper although their views are considered in several other papers in the series. (1057 students were badly bullied, representing 11% of all respondents to our survey, while 5696 were never bullied). This data set has a total of 6747.

The aim is to identify the most vulnerable students and put in place support for them, while at the same time giving messages to schools on what was thought to be effective practice by those on the receiving end, 'the practice consumers'.

*'I thought the school would help me but it just made it all worse.'*

*'Because I have the tiniest bit of Autism, people used to call me Anti-boy, nobody stopped it.'*

*'I was bullied because of my glasses and how I speak, called horrible names.'*

*'My friend thought it would be funny to send me horrible messages about me and my ex, but my dad tracked him down because he was doing it anonymously on ask.fm and it was someone I trusted, I couldn't believe they could do that, it changed my view on how two faced people can be.'*

## 'The profile of the badly bullied group:

### Who is most vulnerable?

Below in Q17 we can see that, of the students who are badly bullied:

- A. 52 are in care: which means 35% of all those in care are badly bullied
- B. 110 have a disability: 45% of those with a disability are badly bullied
- C. 131 have special needs: 54% of those with SEN are badly bullied
- D. 77 have a chronic or long term illness: 52% of those with long term/chronic illness are badly bullied (i.e. asthma, diabetes).
- E. 139 require help with English: 35% of those who require help with English are badly bullied
- F. 80 are young carers: 49% of young carers are badly bullied
- G. 46 are leaving care: 61% of those leaving care say they are badly bullied.

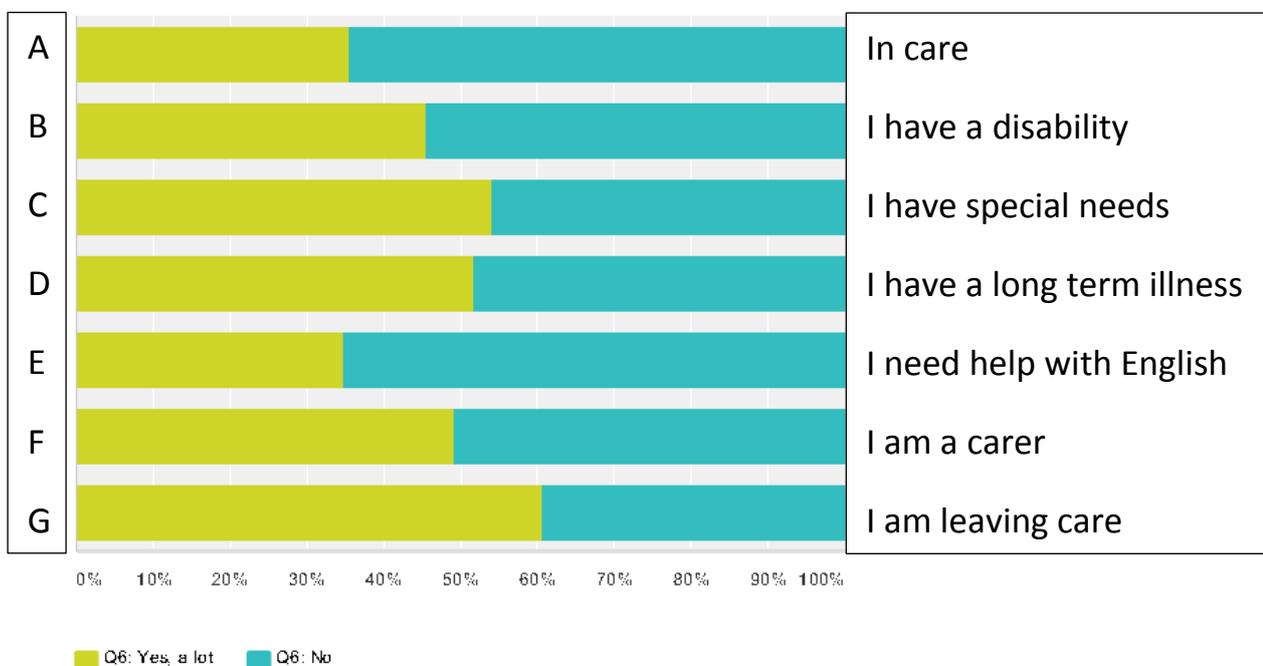
This is a total of 310 people out of the 1057 who are badly bullied.

A further 91 people mentioned that they had other difficulties in an open question.

In the chart below the light green  represents those who say they have been bullied 'a lot'. The aqua colour represents those who have not been bullied at all.

#### Q17 Please tick a box if any of these are true for you...

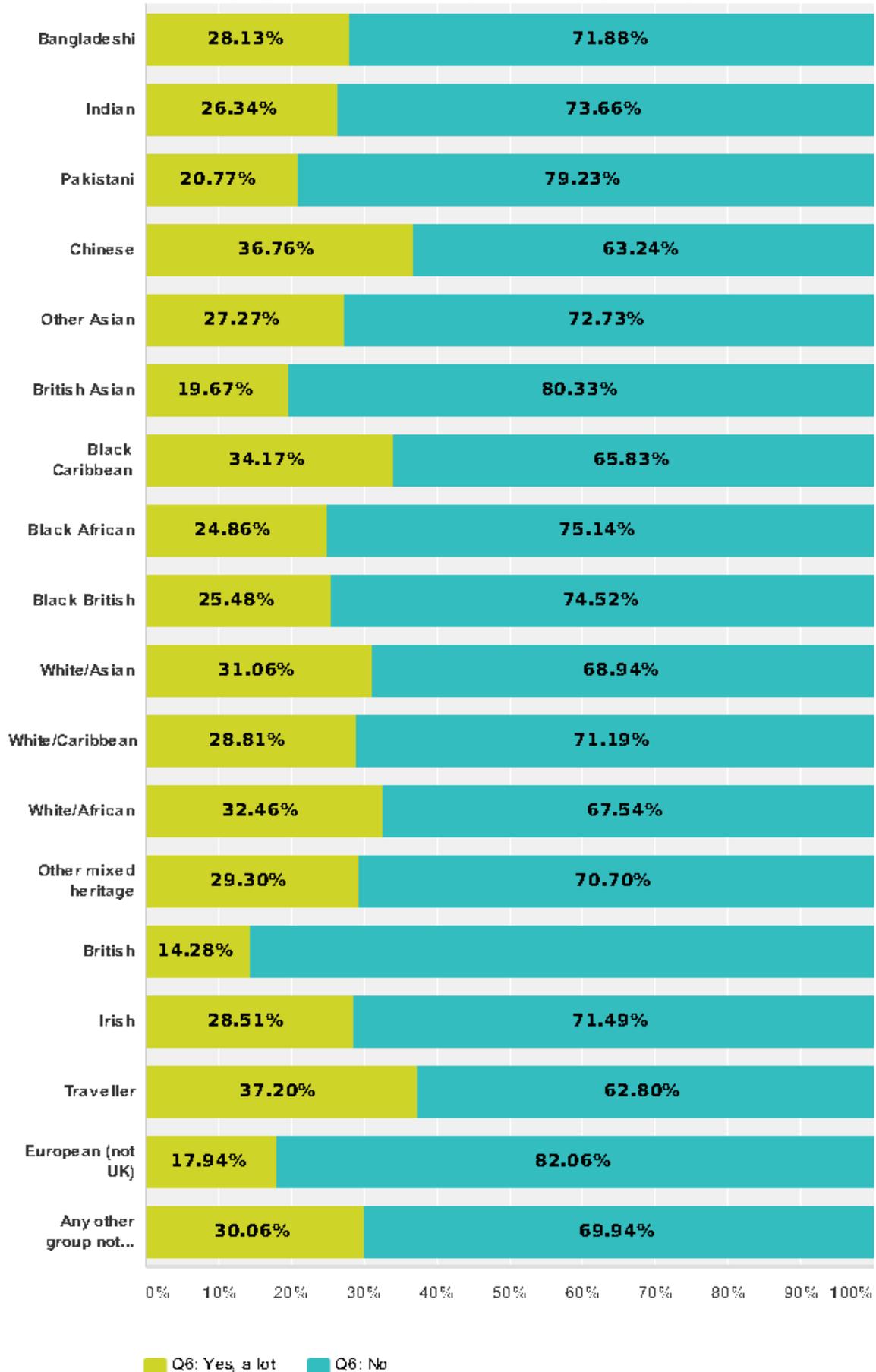
Answered: 871 Skipped: 5,876



### Ethnicity

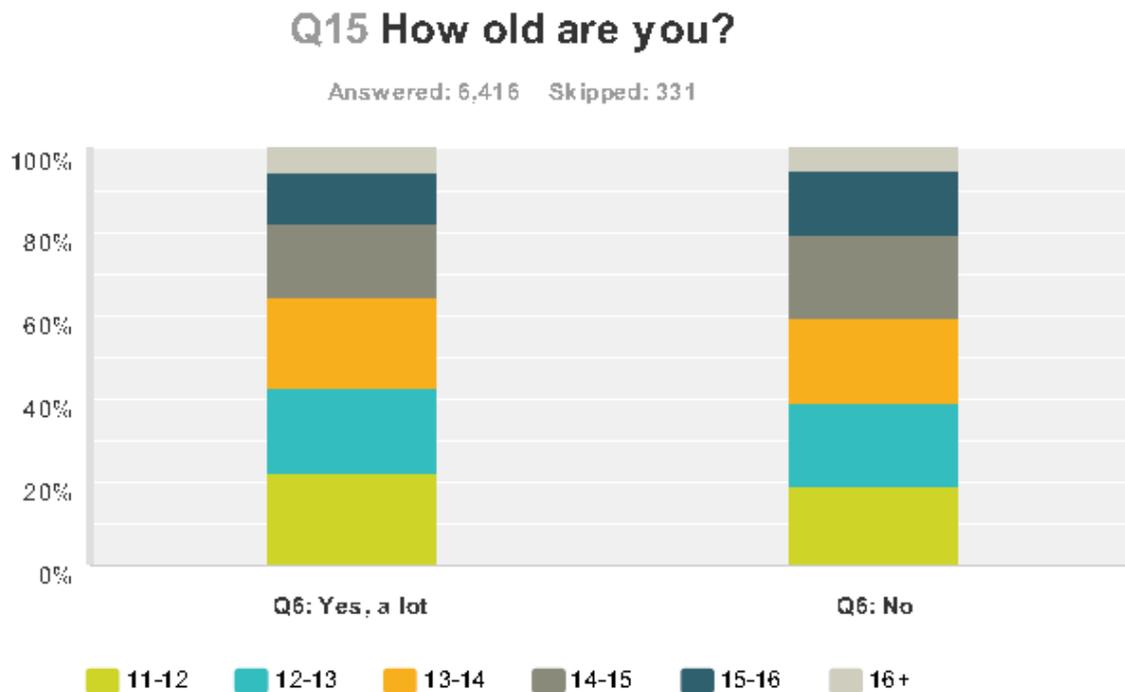
Below we can see the ethnic backgrounds of the badly bullied students as we try to monitor changing patterns of racism.

### Bullying Intervention Group Secondary Survey

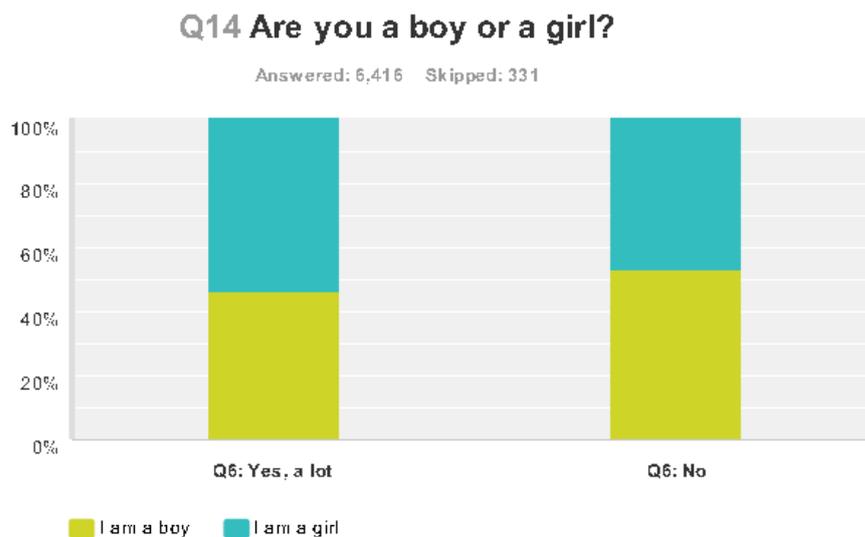


## Age groups:

There is little difference in the age groups when bullied and non-bullied students are compared.



**Gender:** More girls than boys report being bullied 'a lot': 54% compared to 46% of boys.



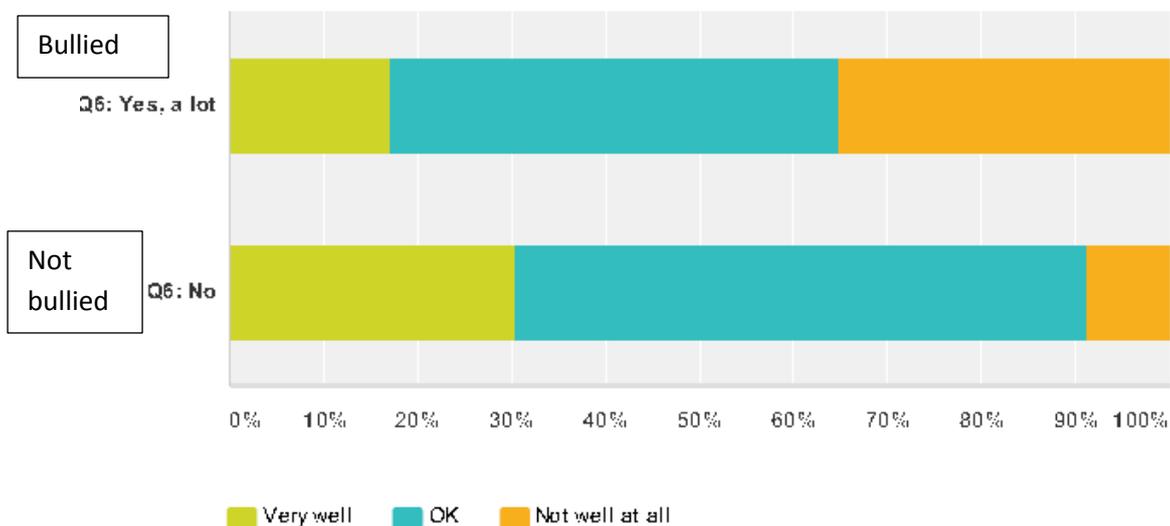
## What do they think of the way their school tries to counter bullying?

The badly bullied students were as expected, less inclined to say that their school deals with bullying very well, but 17% did think so, compared to 30% of those who were not being bullied. (Q2).

47% of badly bullied students said what their school was doing was working 'OK', but 35% said it was 'not working well at all' compared to their non-bullied peers, of whom 61% said it was 'OK' and 9% said it was 'not working well at all'.

### Q2 How well do you think your school deals with bullying?

Answered: 6,708 Skipped: 39



## Awareness of school Anti-Bullying Policies

Where policies are in place, well understood and known to all, they can have the effect of making everyone feel that there is a system in place and the student body can feel reassured by this, even if they are not bullied and have not needed it personally.

Among students who were not bullied at all, only 2% said their school lacked an AB policy, whereas 14% of the badly bullied students said they thought their school did not have one, and 32% were not sure whether or not their school had such a policy.

Having a policy in a file that is not a living document regularly reviewed with all pupils, parents and staff is unhelpful. But if there is an active policy it has to be seen to be working.

### **Do they think the Anti-Bullying Policy is working?**

18% of pupils who are badly bullied say that their school's policy is actually working, but 56% of them think it is only working 'in some ways' and 17% say it is not working. (9% say I don't know).

Students who are not bullied are more approving as expected, and 30% of them say their school's policy is working, with a further 49% saying it works in some ways. Only 5% say they do not think it is working while 16% do not know, perhaps as they have never concerned themselves with this issue.

### **What steps did the students take?**

22% of bullied students told nobody they were being badly bullied, 38% told a teacher, 49% told a parent or carer, 21% told a sibling and 23% told another person they trust. 5% rang a helpline and 4% used some type of online service while 27% said they dealt with it themselves. The bullying stopped for 32%, but for 40% it stayed the same and indeed for a further 29% it got worse.

### **Where does it happen and who knows about this?**

*There were a large range of locations offered in the question and students could tick any that apply. They were asked whether it happened to them personally, as well as whether they had seen it happen to others. This revealed how many people know what is going on. An example of their answers are given below.*

#### **On the bus**

Badly bullied: it happened to me 41% and seen happening to others 60%

Non-bullied peers: it happened to me 4% and seen happening to others 96%

#### **Walking to school**

Badly bullied: it happened to me 45% seen happening to others 55%

Non-bullied peers: to me, 4%, seen happening to others 96%

#### **On the field or play ground**

BB: 56%, seen 44%

Non Bullied: 4%, seen 96%

#### **In the classroom without the teacher**

BB: 54%, seen 46%

Non Bullied, 4% seen 96%

### **In the toilets**

BB, 44%, seen 56%

Non bullied, 5%, seen 95%

### **At the leisure centre**

BB, 38% seen 62%

Non Bullied, 5%, seen 95%

### **In the corridors**

BB, 57%, seen 43%

Non bullied, 4%, seen, 96%

### **On a mobile phone, online, social networks etc**

BB: 50% experienced it personally and 50% saw it happen to others

Non bullied: 7% experienced it personally and 93% saw it happen to others

Living in an atmosphere of bullying, threats and fear is damaging even if you are not currently a target. Research has shown the damage this can cause as pupils fear they could be singled out next, or feel guilty seeing what is happening to a fellow pupil, but they feel helpless to stop it. So while personal experiences were bad enough, this was compounded by being aware of bullying happening to others too.

### **The types of bullying experienced or seen most often by the badly bullied group are:**

	<b>Experienced</b>	<b>Seen happening to others</b>
Pushing shoving on purpose	54%	46%
Kicking/beating up	46%	54%
Rumour spreading	59%	41%
By mobile or hand held device	49%	51%
Always leaving someone out	57%	43%
Bullying due to disability or health	38%	62%
Sexism	41%	59%

Bullying is conducted in front of an audience, and it is remarkable how many pupils know of bullying happening to others. Rumours and threats fly around the school community and this creates an environment of fear and suspicion, rather than a positive ethos where everyone is valued and respected. The more vulnerable students are having to be constantly alert, or are worrying about what might happen next. This can be very exhausting and draining, not leaving them free to learn. Victims report being poly-victimised in a relentless campaign.

### **Compare their experience with the total sample of all their peers in BIG Award schools:**

To see quite how bad the experience is for badly bullied pupils, it is helpful to remember that the vast majority of pupils are not bullied so severely, or at all. Some were bullied sometimes or a long time ago. Despite headlines in the media our sample does not show an enormous rise in cyberbullying among member schools. This is the picture from our entire sample:

- 11% of all secondary pupils surveyed said they had been bullied 'a lot' and 33% 'sometimes'.
- Of those who had been bullied, 15% said it happened in the last week and 12% in the last four weeks.
- 16% said it happened in cyberspace, chatrooms, social networks, online and using photos
- 13% said it happened on their mobile phone.
- 15.63% of those who are bullied say they have been cyberbullied in one way or another, (they represent 6% of our total sample.)

This illustration of life for the majority, underlines the difference in the school experience of those who are badly bullied when compared to their peers.

*We surveyed **10,676** in all, ages 11-16 in 45 secondary schools in England*

## What does an effective school look like?

2816 students said that what their school was doing to counter bullying was working 'very well'.

1377 students said that what their school was doing was 'not working at all well'.

Others said it worked 'OK' or they did not know.

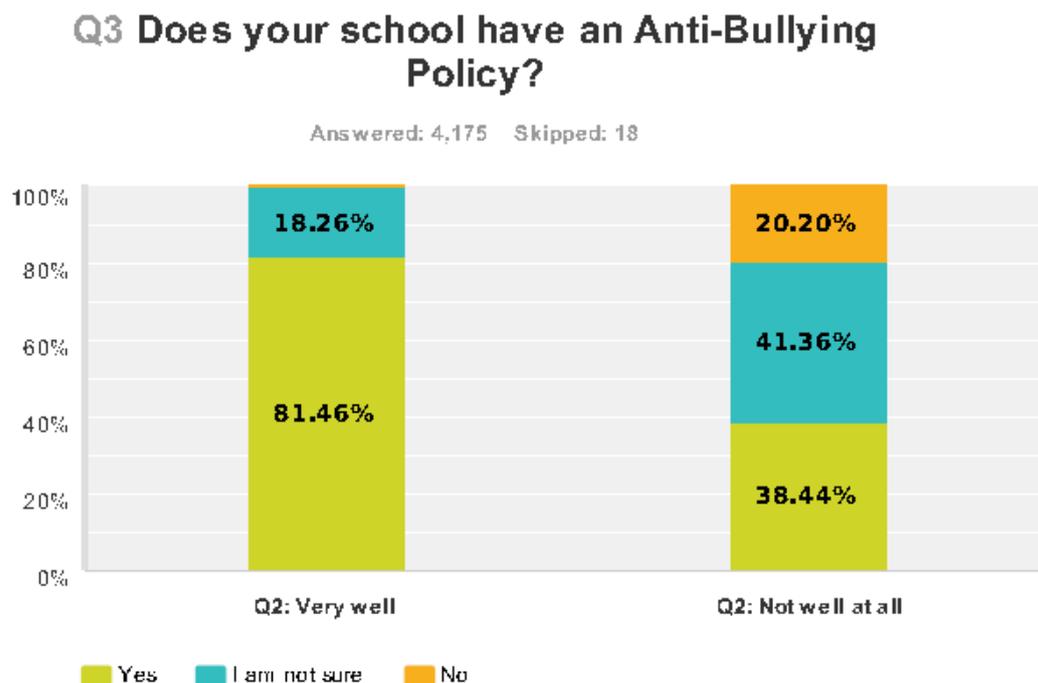
### Policy

**Does knowing about the policy contribute to the view that the school is effective?**

- Schools rated as effective are twice as likely to ensure everyone knows about the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- BIG Award advocates consultation and review with students, parents and staff.

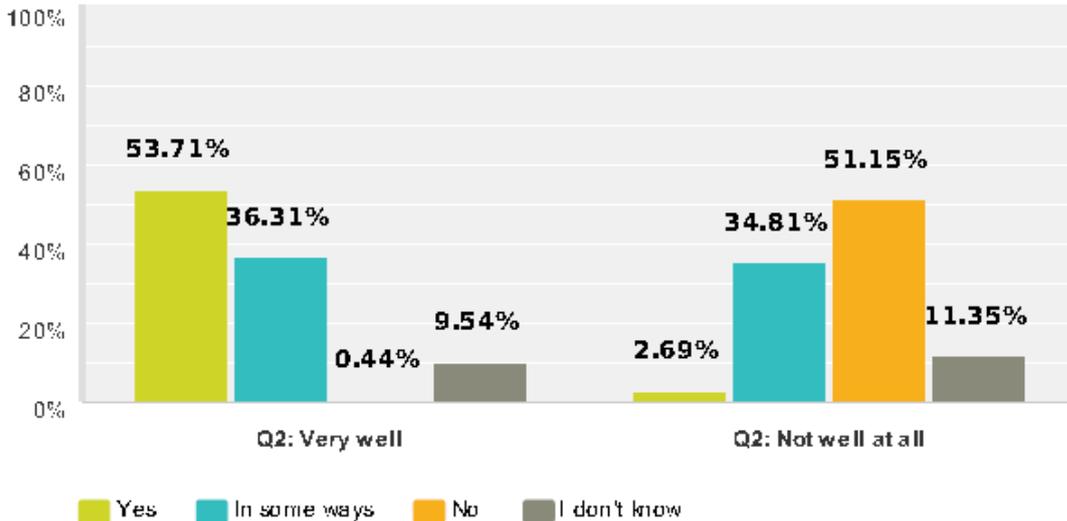
In the chart below (Q3) we can see that in schools thought to be dealing with bullying 'very well' as many as 81% of pupils are aware of their school's AB policy in contrast to schools that do not deal with bullying well at all, in which only 38% of students say their school has an AB policy.

*(The two groups compared here are those who think their school deals with bullying very well and those who think their school does not deal with bullying well at all.)*



## Q4 If your school has an Anti Bullying Policy, is this policy working?

Answered: 2,773 Skipped: 1,420



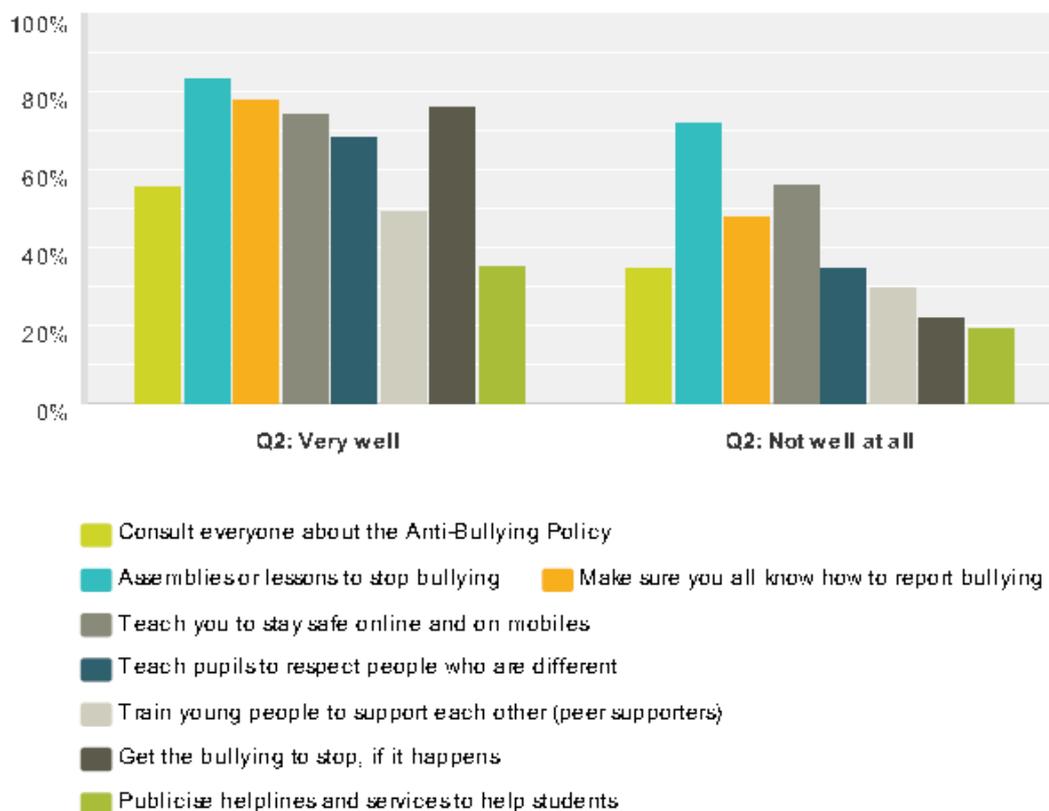
- **Effective schools are more likely to have Anti-Bullying policies that pupils believe are working well.**

Over half the pupils in effective schools say their school's AB policy is working, whereas in ineffective schools only 3% believe this.

Schools are actively trying to counter bullying and members of BIG Award are a particularly active set of schools who by definition are working to address this behaviour. Yet they do not all take the same steps and it is useful to compare what the effective schools actually do, compared to those who are thought by bullied students to be ineffective.

## Q5 Does your school do any of these things about bullying? (You may tick more than one box)

Answered: 3,791 Skipped: 402



### Effective schools are more active over a wider range of proactive steps.

	Effective	Ineffective
Consult everyone about the AB Policy	56%	35%
Assemblies or lessons re bullying	84%	72%
Make sure you all know how to report bullying	78%	48%
Teach you to stay safe online/mobiles	74%	57%
Teach pupils to respect people who are different	69%	35%
Train pupils to support each other	49%	30%
Get the bullying to stop if it happens	77%	22%
Publicise helplines/sources of help	36%	20%

## Summary

### Effective schools are more likely to

- Consult everyone on the school's Anti-Bullying Policy (21% more)
- Do assemblies on bullying and back these up with a wider range of other activities
- Make sure everyone knows how to report bullying (30% more)
- Teach pupils how to stay safe online and on mobiles (17% more)
- Teach pupils to respect people who are different (34% more)
- Train young people to support each other (peer mentors, buddies, supporters) (19%)
- Get the bullying to stop if it happens (more than 3 x as likely)
- Publicise helplines and services to students (16% more)
- **The single most striking finding is the fact that effective schools are more skilled at getting the bullying to stop if it occurs.**

### In schools deemed effective, bullying was less recent

Bullying was 3 x less likely to have happened to the pupil in the last week - 10% vs 30%

Bullying was more likely to have happened to the pupil a long time ago -30% vs 23%

Cyberbullying was reduced markedly from 62% in ineffective schools to 38% in schools rated as effective by students despite the fact that these students are badly bullied. (NB in some of our samples it is reduced by half).

Bullying on the journey to or from school was 20% lower in effective schools.

## What impact does effective practice have?

### Do you think the bullying was linked to any of these?

	Effective schools	Ineffective Schools
Race religion or culture	20%	30%
Homophobia	12%	28%
Sexism	10%	21%
Disability or Special Needs	15%	21%
Long term illness	6%	14%
How I look	78%	81%

### Summary:

Sexism and homophobia are responding well to the actions of the effective schools, with bullying due to SEN/D also reduced.

In the ineffective schools, bullying due to long term illness is more than twice as high as in the schools doing well, and racism continues to affect as many as 30% of pupils in these ineffective settings.

Although racism is 10% lower in effective schools it is not showing the same reductions as homophobia for example. This resistance could be due to the current discourse and media discussion about immigration and identity in the country as a whole.

Appearance continues to be the single most overwhelming reason children attribute to bullying behaviour. It appears to be resistant in both types of school.

### Did they tell anyone and did it help?

In effective schools pupils are more likely to come forward and tell someone, whether at school or at home.

	<i>Effective</i>	<i>Ineffective</i>
No I told nobody:	14%	24%
They are more likely to tell a teacher:	46%	38%

I told a parent or carer 46% vs 38%

I dealt with it myself: 18% vs 31%

- **The bullying worsened markedly in the ineffective schools: 27% of the students said that even after they reported it the bullying worsened and 38% said it stayed the same.**
- **By contrast in the effective schools it only worsened for 4%.**

**\*Staff training in successful interventions is recommended**

## Key messages

### *Messages from badly bullied pupils*

The badly bullied pupils could contribute to reviews of school policy and strategy as they are understandably critical of what their schools are doing. It is vital that schools know who is particularly at risk so that interventions can be targeted correctly.

Badly bullied pupils reveal being poly-victimised and are also acutely aware of bullying happening to others. They live in an atmosphere of aggression, on high alert.

Pupils reveal the extent that they know about bullying happening to others. If this audience can be addressed and bystanders given ways to step away and report the behaviour, this can be a successful route to intervention.

### *Messages from schools thought to be effective by students*

In effective schools a wide range of anti-bullying activities are in place, with schools not relying solely on assemblies and lessons. These activities engage pupils in a range of ways.

Pupils are consulted on the Anti-Bullying Policy

The whole pupil body knows there is an Anti-Bullying Policy and most consider that it is working.

Pupils are taught to respect people who are different

Pupils are taught to stay safe online

Pupils are trained to help one another (Peer support)

These schools ensure pupils know how to report bullying and what is more, if bullying is reported they are 3 x more successful at getting it to stop.

Pupils do not pick on people with long term illnesses

Homophobia is successfully reduced (by more than half)

Sexism is halved

Cyberbullying is markedly reduced by 24%

Racism as a cause of bullying has shown some resistance to change.

'How I look' remains the most frequently given reason for bullying.

## **About Bullying Intervention Group**

We are a not-for-profit social enterprise set up to support schools to reduce bullying. The co-directors have 17 years of experience in this field. Two were formerly Regional Advisers for the Anti-Bullying Alliance and one has extensive first-hand experience in schools as an Anti-Bullying co-ordinator. We have consultants working in different parts of the country and a base in Co. Durham and one in Surrey.

BIG produces reports, newsletters and accredited training programmes.

Members are given support on all aspects of addressing bullying and cyberbullying. When excellent practice can be demonstrated an award is achieved.

All current award winners are listed on our website.

[www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk](http://www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk)