

Appendix 1: Methodology

We visited a broad range of schools with secondary-aged pupils across Wales. We ensured that we included a broad and comprehensive sample of schools in terms of size, geographical context, socio-economic context and language medium. We visited a proportionate amount of faith schools to the percentage of secondary schools in Wales that are classed as a faith school.

Inspectors did not share with schools why they had been selected but gave clear assurance that our role was not an investigatory one. We also gave assurance to headteachers that we would not be naming schools in the report and that all findings from interviews, document scrutiny, focus groups and questionnaires would be anonymised. This is because of the sensitive nature of the topic and in order to protect schools, staff and pupils.

School visits included the following activities:

- Initial and final meetings with the headteacher
- Meetings with the senior leader responsible for wellbeing and with the designated safeguarding lead
- Meeting with the school leader responsible for Personal and Social Education, Relationships and Sexuality Education and/or Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning Experience
- Meeting with a group of teachers
- Meeting with a group of teaching support staff
- Mostly single sex pupil focus groups for two separate year groups in every school (years 8-13)
- Pupil questionnaire completed by approximately 1,250 pupils
- Scrutiny of relevant school documents including bullying reports, a sample of PSE schemes of work and a sample of whole school/year assembly presentations

We also offered the possibility of holding specific focus group sessions or meetings with active and well-established school LGBTQ+ groups if schools so wished.

During our visits, we conducted focus group activities and worked with pupils from Year 8 to Year 13 across 35 schools. We nominated two different year

groups in each school and randomly selected six girls and six boys in each year group. We shared these names with school leaders around a week before the school visits and asked them to check for suitability in terms of emotional resilience and vulnerability. We selected extra pupils to replace any child that the school considered too vulnerable to take part. We asked schools to meet with the selected pupils and ask each one to invite a friend. The friend could be of any gender. Many pupils chose to bring a friend of the same gender, which meant that we had groups of mainly boys and mainly girls. The few mixed groups worked just as well as single sex groups. In total, we also saw six LGBTQ+ groups.

Each selected pupil and their friend was given a pre-visit information sheet and schools corresponded with parents on our behalf. Parents were given the opportunity to opt their child out of the focus group activity. Only a very few parents chose to opt out.

Inspectors and pupils worked from paper booklets. The focus group activities were a blend of oral discussions and writing activities. This decision was to enable pupils who wanted to talk to do so at the same time as allowing quieter, less confident or more introvert pupils to write down their thoughts. All the contributions by pupils were anonymous. Visiting inspectors did not ask them for their names nor the name of their school on the booklet. At the end of the sessions, pupils were asked to complete an anonymous online questionnaire.

In all activities, inspectors ensured they did not ask leading questions, nor did they offer model answers in activities/tasks. They encouraged pupils to think for themselves and there was no pressure on pupils to complete all or even any of the activities if they didn't wish to do so. At the start of the sessions, inspectors made clear to pupils that they had a right to leave at any point and they then modelled consent throughout the sessions.

In addition, we had discussions with a range of other organisations who have an interest in this field, including seeking initial feedback on emerging findings from most of them. We engaged with:

Professor EJ Renold, Cardiff University

The Children's Commissioner's office

Welsh Women's Aid

The NSPCC

Wales Schools Police Programme Manager,

Welsh Government Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual
Violence Team

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