



Celebrating difference Case Study Form

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Age of children/young people: 11-16yrs

Brief Description of Challenging Homophobia work:

School has used training materials and insight gained from attending the Challenging Homophobia Partnership Group meetings to change the practice in school and challenge homophobic language and bullying.

We have successfully achieved this with prominent display boards in corridors, by changing school policies, initiating whole staff training by Rita Adair, highlighting our expectation of pupils in school assemblies, becoming Stonewall Education Champions and by consistently challenging all homophobic language and bullying.

I am looking for case studies which show how training I have organised on Celebrating Difference and Challenging Homophobia has been used to change practice in schools/organisations working with children/young people in Norfolk. Your case study can focus on any area of practice and should give as much information as possible to make it useful for other schools/organisations to learn from. Areas you could consider are:

Changing policy/guidance to staff

Engaging staff

Introducing curricular work

Engaging young people, their families

Specific areas such as challenging homophobic language, addressing sex education, providing young people with relevant information etc

Overcoming barriers

*Please return to Rita Adair
Senior Lead Educational Psychologist
rita.adair@norfolk.gov.uk*

*Children's Services
Carrow House
117 King's Street*

Case Study – Lynn Grove High School (Academy)

At the beginning of 2013 Lynn Grove High School took up the challenge to address homophobic bullying and language in school recognising the huge impact that this can have on the lives of young people, particularly LGBT youth.

We joined the Challenging Homophobia Partnership Group chaired by Rita Adair (rita.adair@norfolk.gov.uk) and gained valuable training and resources to carry this work forward.

We started out by creating a display in the main corridor to coincide with LGBT History Month. We used eye catching posters and leaflets and supportive quotes from famous people who the young people would recognise in order to get the message across. Along the top of the boards we displayed the message statement that the school was adopting:

‘Homophobia is the fear or negative attitude towards gay people and it can be hurtful. Lynn Grove does not tolerate the homophobic bullying or the use of homophobic language’

Pupils immediately started to talk about the wall and read the posters. Two year 11 girls in a relationship remained behind after school and took photographs on their mobile phone. When questioned they exclaimed ‘It’s great, we feel really supported’.

Within the next few weeks two young people ‘came out’, one to a member of staff and the other to the school nurse. Both pupils asked for support in telling their parents and asked for this to take place in school. They explained their fears and these were able to be discussed in an informal between the member of staff, parent and child. Both sets of parents were extremely supportive and both pupils had a positive experience.

We spoke to pupils in single year group assemblies about our expectations that our school would be a place of respect regardless of race, colour, disability, religious beliefs and sexuality.

We then changed our school policies to specifically include our intolerance of homophobic language and bullying and our support of LGBT pupils and families.

In June 2013 the school signed up to become Stonewall Education Champions and we are proud to display our certificate on the wall in the main corridor. Our champion’s resource pack included a hanging display of lesson plans for all subjects and this was hung in the staff room for staff to access for curriculum ideas and support.

We attended the Stonewall Education for All Conference in July in London and gained further training and materials to continue our work.

In the summer term we were informed of a project being organised by Norwich Pride entitled 'Sew Gay'. This involved the community producing a patchwork of squares depicting important LGBT dates and events across the years. Our textile teachers got behind this project and encouraged twelve pupils to create some patches. They happily gave up their lunch breaks to produce some excellent work which was displayed in the Norwich Forum during Norwich Pride Week. The teachers reported back that this had led to some very interesting discussions around gay issues and respecting diversity.

Prior to school recommencing in September 2013 we had two professional development days. We invited Rita Adair into school on the first PD day to deliver whole staff training on challenging homophobia. This was well received and staff immediately took on board the importance of challenging homophobic behaviour in and out of the classroom. Resources were emailed to all staff following the training, together with specific instructions for dealing with incidents of homophobic language and bullying. This ensured a consistent approach across the whole school in line with our behaviour for learning policy and supported any staff who were apprehensive about how they should address this behaviour and what their response should or could be.

We created a form for the recording of homophobic bullying and these are completed and filed for each and every incident, together with a log sheet for monitoring purposes. We were able to evidence our work to address incidents in our recent Ofsted inspection.

Initially highlighting homophobic issues resulted in an increase in the use of homophobic language, both in general and towards other pupils and we found ourselves addressing homophobic behaviour more frequently. However, this was encouraging as it meant that our pupils were more willing to come forward and report homophobic comments that had been made to upset them.

During Anti-Bullying Week we invited Rita Adair back into school to deliver some twilight training to incorporate another longer session on challenging homophobic language and to give staff a chance to ask any questions they may have. Staff present were pleased to report back that they were hearing less homophobic language around school since our work began and that pupils seemed to talk more freely on the subject.

In recent months we have seen a further 5 pupils 'come out'. We believe our work

both to support them and their families and to address homophobic incidents has helped them to find the confidence to do so. We have also had the pleasure of hearing visitors and interview candidates comment positively on our displays. A Governor of the school has reported that their child has commented on the increased level of respect amongst pupils.

We are excited and encouraged by the commitment and success of our staff and young people. Our work to challenge homophobia in school continues as we seek to promote respect and equality for all pupils at Lynn Grove High School.