DEMOS

A PEER'S PERSPECTIVE

THE IMPACT OF A PEER-TO-PEER APPROACH TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AT SCHOOL AND ONLINE

A case study evaluation of
The Diana Award's Anti-Bullying
Ambassador Programme

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INTRODUCTION

Nearly a third of all teenagers experience some form of regular bullying behaviour, the majority of which takes place face-to-face, at or out of school.[1] When cyberbullying behaviour occurs, it is often alongside face-to-face bullying behaviour. Bullying behaviour of any kind has a detrimental effect on teenagers' mental well-being: more than 60% of young people bullied in the last year report a moderate to extreme impact on their self-esteem, confidence, positivity and social life.[2] These effects are still visible 40 years later, with those who were bullied in poorer physical and mental health, and more likely to use mental health services.[3,4] For the health and future of children, it is crucial that bullying behaviour is prevented, and that online and offline bullying behaviour are tackled together.

This report evaluates the Anti Bullying Ambassador Programme (ABAP), from The Diana Award charity. In partnership with Facebook, the programme trains and supports students to be Anti-Bullying Ambassadors (ABAs), empowering them to become Upstanders rather than Bystanders when they encounter bullying behaviour at their school and online, and to advocate for Online Safety. An Upstander is someone who speaks out against harmful behaviour and offers their support to anyone facing bullying behaviour. The ABAP applies a peer-led and whole-school approach, which gives young people the skills and confidence to take the lead in tackling bullying behaviour in their schools long after the training has finished, and ensures all members of the school community - students, teachers, support staff, and parents - feel empowered to tackle bullying behaviour through sustained anti-bullying campaigns.

These insights are invaluable both for schools around the country, and local and national policy makers in ensuring anti-bullying work is as effective as it can be, empowering students, and creating a safe school and online environment for all children. With the increasing use and influence of the internet in children's lives since the Covid-19 crisis, tackling cyberbullying has become even more pressing.

Through quantitative and qualitative analysis, Demos evaluated the impact of the ABAP, the process of the programme's varied implementation, and took valuable learnings for the future. Quantitative data was obtained from many of The Diana Award's participating schools before training (Baseline: N. Ambassadors = 4872; N. Staff leads = 655), directly after training (Endline: N. Ambassadors = 9053, N. Staff leads = 963), and three months after training (3 month: N. Ambassadors = 284). Qualitative data sources were focus groups and surveys with five case study schools in the North, Midlands, London and East England, with varied Ofsted ratings and ethnic diversity. Schools' names and individuals' names are not used in this report in order to provide anonymity to both students and staff.

1. Oxford Internet Institute, 'Face-to-face bullying more common than cyberbullying among teenagers', 2017, available at https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/news/releases/face-to-face-bullying-more-common-than-cyberbullying-among-teenagers/ [accessed 17/07/2020]
2. Ditch The Label, 'The Annual Bullying Survey 2019', 2019, available at: https://www.ditchthelabel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Annual-Bullying-Survey-2019-1.pdf [accessed 30/07/2020]
3. S. Evans-Lacko, R. Takizawa, N. Brimblecombe, D. King, 'Childhood bullying victimization is associated with use of mental health services over five decades: a longitudinal nationally representative cohort study', 2017, Psychological Medidine, Volume 47, Issue 1January 2017
4. Kings College London, 'Impact of childhood bullying still evident after 40 years', available at https://www.kcl.ac.uk/archive/news/ioppn/records/2014/april/impact-of-childhood-bullying-still-evident-after-40-years

KEY FINDINGS

Overall, the research finds that the ABAP has a significant impact on bullying behaviour in schools. Based on reports from untrained students, staff and Ambassadors we found schools had seen 5 levels of impact, increasing in magnitude, though there were some differences across schools:

1. Knowledge
   Students, Ambassadors and staff gain knowledge of bullying behaviour.

2. Awareness:
   They apply this knowledge, increasing awareness of bullying behaviour at their school and online and are now able to recognise bullying behaviour where they weren't before.

3. Skills
   Students, as well as Ambassadors and staff, now have the skills to tackle bullying behaviour, e.g. reporting offline and online.

4. Behaviour change
   Students, as well as Ambassadors and staff, are changing their behaviour, e.g. Bystanders to bullying behaviours becoming Upstanders

5. Cultural change
   Cultural change occurred when it was clear to all that the school community deems bullying behaviour unacceptable. New students joining the school would experience this as an anti-bullying culture, a culture of kindness, and/or a culture of inclusivity.

There were also two additional categories of impact found:

6. Impact on Ambassadors
   Participation in the ABAP had an impact on the Ambassadors themselves, as they became more confident, made new friends, supported each other through hard times and gained leadership skills.

7. Impact on cyberbullying
   Particularly for schools with a targeted cyberbullying campaign, the impact on online bullying behaviour follows the five stages above. This was explored separately to understand potential similarities and differences with in-person bullying behaviour.

Factors such as adherence to the whole-school and peer-led approach, demographics, cooperation between teachers and Ambassadors and who the Ambassadors were all influenced the effectiveness of the programme at different schools. Overall, girls were more likely to be Ambassadors than boys and were more effective as Ambassadors. We also found it is important that Ambassadors are motivated and ready for the responsibility of the role.

Other learnings for schools, policy makers and anti-bullying programmes include:

- Any anti-bullying approach ought to be adapted to the differential needs of a school, and the differential needs and ambitions of the Ambassadors.

- Find a group of Anti-Bullying Ambassadors that is varied in terms of gender, ethnic background, age and skills and interests.

- Engage directly with particular types of bullying behaviour, such as racist, ableist or homophobic bullying behaviour.

- Involve parents in anti-bullying work more frequently.

IMPACT MATRIX [5,6]

The impact matrix provides an overview of the different levels of impact on bullying behaviour, seen at schools participating in the ABAP offline and online. Each level of impact is illustrated by a direct quote from students themselves.

	AT SCHOOL			ONLINE		
	DATA	IMPACT	QUOTES[9]	DATA	IMPACT	QUOTES
Knowledge	95% of Ambassdors can identify & explain 3 types of bullying 3 months later	Students, Ambassadors and teachers know the definition & types of bullying	"I've learned the difference between bullying and banter. Bullying is where one person finds it funny whereas banter is where everyone finds it funny."	41% of Ambassadors saw bullying on social media in the last year	Ambassadors, students, teachers and some parents know the definition &types of cyberbullying	"You are responsible for what you post, and you may be traced, there are others that care enough that may report you."
Awareness	99% of Ambassdors can spot bullying 3 months after training	Students, Ambassadors and teachers now recognise bullying where they didn't before	"I just realised after that [Anti-Bullying] assembly, that that was me, I had done some of those things and I'm so ashamed."	89% of Ambassadors can spot bullying online, 3 months later	Ambassadors, students, teachers and some parents are more aware of online safety and cyberbullying	"I've become more aware of people being bullied and more active in preventing it online."
Skills	Ambassdors' confidence in their anti-bullying skills increased by	Most students can and would: 1. Be an Upstander[10] 2. Support others 3. Report bullying 4. Talk to bullies	"I would then and there put a stop to it. I have been bullied and seen it happen several times and it hurts […] so if I saw someone bullying someone else I would gladly stop it."	Ambassadors' confidence in cyberbullying skills increased by 20%	Some students & parents would: 1. NOT ignore bullying 2. Report & block 3. Take screenshots 4. Share screenshots	"Ambassadors have taught how to deal with it, toblock or report,take evidence, show someone in case it gets deleted; not just pretend it didn't happen"
Behaviour Change	Reports of bullying decreased at 4 out of 5 case study schools	Some students now: 1. Report & are Upstanders 2. Stopped bullying 3. Are open about pain bullying causes 4. Are kinder Ambassadors provide general well-being support to students	"'People would call each other gay, like for no reason and this has stopped" "Ambassadors don't mind spending time with you when you have a problem or if you want to hang out"	Teachers and Ambassadors at at some schools now got more cyberbullying reports	Some students and ambassadors had changed their behaviour online to: 1. Be an Upstander8 2. NOT ignore cyberbullying 3. Think before they post 4. Be kinder 5. Be safer online	"With all assemblies that ABA do, show you online safety videos and […] real-life examples - begin to become more aware of how you sound - type a message and then think no, could word that better."
Cultural Change	Ambassadors felt confidence of 8.9/10 after training that they could make school a kinder place	At all schools, there was some cultural change. At 2 schools there was a shift towards a: 1. Anti-Bullying culture 2. Culture of Kindness 3. Culture of Inclusivity	I feel like the atmosphere has become lighter and happier because if there is someone being bullied you can feel that they are sad and down. But since the ABAP it's completely different and everyone is happy."	Ambassadors felt 9.2/10 confident they could keep themselves safe online	At 2 schools: 1. Online bullying decreased 2. Bullying pages & accounts shut down 3. Group chats are more inclusive	"People comparing each other on their instagram stories etc. was a big problem but now it has almost completely stopped - no more hate, people being kind to each other - my year has really improved"
Impact on Ambassadors	63% of Ambassadors have more confidence	Ambassadors: 1. Stop experiencing bullying 2. Support each other 3. Gain leadership skills and confidence	"I think the ABAP helps us as young people be ambitious and lets us have our own ideas/ initiatives."			

9. All quotes are from students, except under "Impact on Ambassadors", which is from an Ambassador
10. An Upstander is somebody who speaks out against harmful behaviour and offers their support to anyone going through bullying behaviour.

CHAPTER 1
IMPACT

Overall, students and teachers at participating schools report that the ABAP has had a significant impact on bullying behaviour at their school, as Graph 1 shows.

Ambassadors' view on whether the training has helped them address bullying behaviour
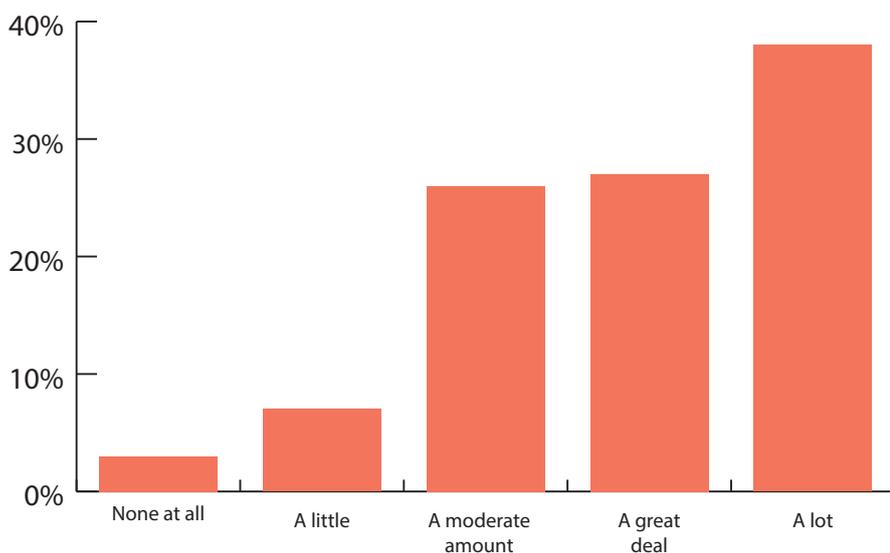
GRAPH 1.

THE EXTENT TO WHICH AMBASSADORS FEEL THE ABA TRAINING HAS HELPED THEM ADDRESS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AT THEIR SCHOOL, AT 3 MONTHS
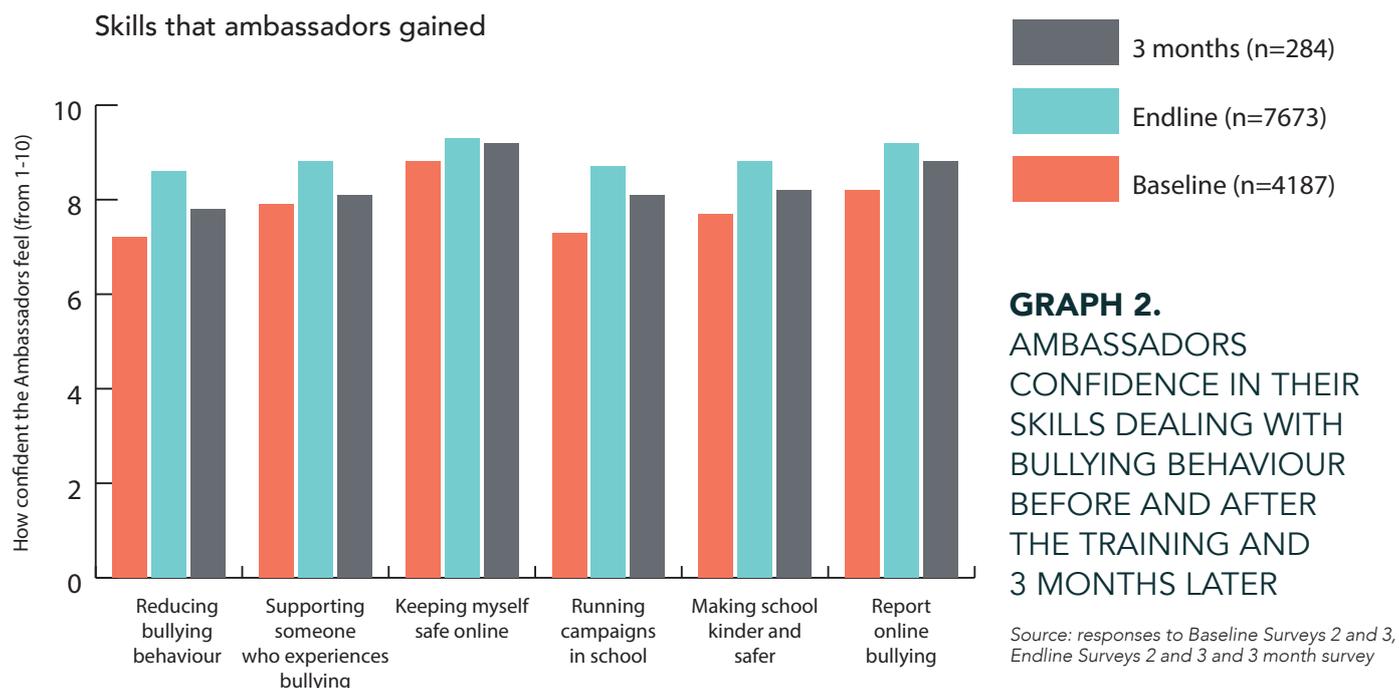
Source: 284 responses to 3 month student survey

KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

Nearly 100% of students who took the ABAP training now know how to spot the signs that someone may be experiencing bullying behaviour and how to identify the three different types of bullying behaviour. There is clear evidence that the Ambassadors have passed this knowledge on to the other students at their school, as students at each of the five case study schools report increased understanding of bullying behaviour and the ability to recognise instances of bullying behaviour that they wouldn't have before. A year 9 student says "I've learned the difference between bullying and banter. Bullying is where one person finds it funny whereas banter is where everyone finds it funny."

SKILLS

Ambassadors and staff across schools have increased confidence in their skills dealing with bullying behaviour, as Graph 2 shows. Overall, the case study schools have been successful at teaching anti-bullying skills to the students. Many students have learned to be an Upstander against bullying behaviour, rather than a bystander. They learnt how to support someone who is experiencing bullying behaviour, how to report bullying behaviour and how to talk to someone exhibiting bullying behaviour. Many students would talk to an Ambassador if they were being bullied, but many would also talk to their parents, friends, or teachers.

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Skills that ambassadors gained

Legend:
- 3 months (n=284)
- Endline (n=7673)
- Baseline (n=4187)

Y-axis: How confident the Ambassadors feel (from 1-10)

X-axis categories: Reducing bullying behaviour | Supporting someone who experiences bullying | Keeping myself safe online | Running campaigns in school | Making school kinder and safer | Report online bullying

GRAPH 2.
AMBASSADORS CONFIDENCE IN THEIR SKILLS DEALING WITH BULLYING BEHAVIOUR BEFORE AND AFTER THE TRAINING AND 3 MONTHS LATER

Source: responses to Baseline Surveys 2 and 3, Endline Surveys 2 and 3 and 3 month survey

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

At 4 out of 5 case study schools, bullying reports decreased since the ABAP. Ambassadors at every school say they have changed their behaviour to stand up against bullying behaviour and report it. There were big differences in the instances of behaviour change between the schools: some schools report that almost everyone exhibiting bullying behaviour had stopped, while at other schools, the main behaviour change was students who started to be Upstanders. One Ambassador recalls: "There was this girl who didn't like me and was having a go at me; people saw that and actually stood up for me. That is when I saw that what we're doing, is really having an effect." Ambassadors at another school report how after their anti-homophobic bullying campaign, assembly and LGBTQ celebratory events, use of the word 'gay' as an insult stopped entirely.

CULTURAL CHANGE

Some of the case study schools report a large shift in their culture since starting the ABAP towards a culture of anti-bullying, kindness and inclusivity. At these schools, students and staff reported not only that bullying behaviour was no longer acceptable, but that other students would go out of their way to help each other, and make sure everyone was included. An Ambassador at an all boys' school said: "the lunch [football] game is more integrated now and inclusive and they are accepting each other and getting closer. There are rarely cases where a group wouldn't accept someone." At other schools, some students and Ambassadors observe a positive cultural shift but this isn't perceived by everyone.

CASE STUDY 1:
THE CULTURE OF KINDNESS

A school in a deprived area was rated "requires improvement" by Ofsted and put in special measures. Student behaviour was the biggest issue: classes were disrupted constantly and little learning could happen. Bullying behaviour and use of racist and homophobic language were common. To address these issues, the new principal conducted a student panel to understand changes the students wanted to make, launched a Kindness and Respect campaign and joined the ABAP. The Ambassadors' campaign activities included a kindness challenge and producing videos about cyberbullying for social media. The Culture of Kindness was also built into the strategic leadership plan. In many focus groups we see students, staff and Ambassadors all report that there has been a real transformation at the school in less than a year and cite the same changes. Use of prejudiced language is reported to have stopped, bullying reports decreased and Ambassadors and students see many others act like Upstanders. The Ambassadors have become more general advocates of being kind and supportive of students and the outside community. The last Ofsted report reads that "the school is transformed" and unrecognisable from a year ago.

IMPACT ON AMBASSADORS

Graph 2 shows that Ambassadors develop many anti-bullying skills during the ABAP training. They also report other positive effects, as the programme often requires and develops qualities and skills that are applicable beyond the ABAP. 63% of Ambassadors increased their self-confidence and 75% gained leadership skills. In many focus groups, we see that the Ambassadors are very good at supporting one another when they are being bullied themselves or face other issues.

CYBERBULLYING

At some schools, the ABAP achieved the same five stages of impact on cyberbullying as with face-to-face bullying. In the training, Ambassadors learned ways to tackle cyberbullying behaviour and develop online safety skills. At all case study schools, Ambassadors passed these skills on to some other students. The students learned how to report cyberbullying, and how to keep themselves safe online. Most importantly, many learned not to simply ignore cyberbullying, especially if it happened in private messages.

One student at a school says: "Ambassadors have taught how to deal with it - what to do; told to block or report, take evidence, show someone in case it gets deleted; not just keep it and pretend it didn't happen because it might get worse if you ignore it." At two schools where the Ambassadors chose to do a targeted campaign around cyberbullying behaviour and online safety, significant impact is reported: students have more knowledge and awareness of online safety, more skills and they often change their behaviour to be an Upstander, report it, and keep themselves safe. At these schools, parents were taught about cyberbullying, in line with the whole-school approach. At one school, a page about all students in year 8 appeared on Instagram, with nasty comments about certain students and certain groups. A group of students (not Ambassadors) found out who the account holder was and told him to stop and that his comments were more harmful than funny. The account was blocked by Instagram.

These findings imply that if a school and its Ambassadors focus on Online Safety and tackling cyberbullying behaviour in their campaign, the ABAP has a significant impact on the students' online experience and behaviour.

CASE STUDY 2:
INSTADOs AND INSTADON'Ts

At an independent all-girls school, the Ambassadors decided they wanted to focus their anti-bullying campaign on cyberbullying behaviour and online safety. There were a lot of instances of students comparing each other's photos and looks on Instagram stories and numerous instances of cyberbullying behaviour.

The Ambassadors held assemblies on online safety and created videos for social media to educate students about online safety. They realised parents often want to help but do not know how to: they might decide to just delete their daughter's social media or restrict their use, which often isn't a productive solution. The Ambassadors held workshops for parents and provided resources and videos to explain how different platforms work and how their daughters can stay safe on them. Many students notice a difference and are happy their parents are able to help them now.

The Ambassadors also arrange for older girls to talk to the lower years and find this to be very effective; the Ambassadors understand what the girls are experiencing, and students are more likely to listen, as they look up to older girls. Year 10 Ambassadors offered an example of how effective this was when one group of year 9 girls started using a website called "Tellonym" where you can put anonymous messages about others. It was popular in the year 9 group and caused many problems. The teacher talked to the students about it but to no avail. The year 10 Ambassadors asked students in the year 9 group why they were doing this. They explained the impact of their actions, that they shouldn't be hiding behind a screen and said that if they don't have a reason for putting up these messages, then they shouldn't be doing it at all. The messages stopped.

All students at this school express that the ABAP is very valuable: they are really happy to have someone to talk to, group chats and online spaces are a lot friendlier and people really think about what they post. One student said that on Instagram there was "no more hate and people being kind to each other - my year has really improved".

CHAPTER 2
CONTRIBUTORS AND BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

The reported impact varied widely between schools, which can be explained to a large extent by the difference in schools' implementation. The factors identified in this chapter provide a powerful guide for schools and local and national policy makers to tackle online and offline bullying behaviour.

PROGRAMME DESIGN

Adaptability

Most members of staff and Ambassadors identified the ABAP's adaptability as key to its success: to the school's circumstances, the issues the school deals with and the goals of the Ambassadors themselves. The sense of ownership this gives to Ambassadors is key to their motivation and the programme's success. Some members of staff at different schools noted that the programme could be further adapted to certain groups: schools with a low Ofsted rating might have different needs to one with a high rating, and boys can have a different approach to the role of Ambassador than girls.

Peer-led approach

Staff and Ambassadors felt that the ABAP's peer-led approach is essential to its success. Many students find it easier to speak to the Ambassadors, as they can relate more easily and are less of an authority figure. One student said: "You feel more comfortable around them and would be able to tell them more." All members of staff observed that students are more open with Ambassadors and are likely to listen to what they say. One principal said: "Children holding their peers to account is essential. Wouldn't have had the same impact if it was done by the teachers, it would have felt as a 'done to them.'" Not all Ambassadors ran activities with their own year groups: at an all-girls school, older Ambassadors hold assemblies for and support and tutor their younger peers.

Demographic factors

Girls show a steeper increase in confidence in all ABA skills, affirmed by staff both at single gender schools and co-ed schools. Possible reasons for this are: 1) boys' reticence to share their feelings and the higher risk they take in terms of their reputation among peers if they do so; 2) a particular 'banter' culture among many boys, which they find difficult to distinguish from bullying behaviour; 3) teenage boys have more difficulty following through on their commitments as Ambassadors; and 4) boys have gained the same skills but feel less confident about them. A few members of staff recommend that the programme more specifically engage with these differences and the unique pressures of masculinity.

Staff at many case study schools also shared that the ABAP is more effective for younger students. This shows both in the number of students of a certain age willing to be Ambassadors and whether students are willing to listen to Ambassadors of that age. Reasons include: 1) concern about reputation which increases with age; and 2) lack

of time among older students to be Ambassadors or engage with these issues due to exams. One member of staff says: "Especially the older kids or those who wanted to seem cool, the Anti-Bullying Ambassador label wasn't a label that they wanted. When I suggested we should wear a badge so we can parade around the school, they didn't want to stake their reputation on the playground. The younger ones were very keen to do it."

The total number of trained Ambassadors from different ethnicities is relatively representative of the wider population. However, the evaluation found that Ambassadors from a White British background are less able to recognise racist bullying behaviour: 40% of Black British Ambassadors see or experience racist bullying behaviour at least once a month compared to only 19% of White British Ambassadors. Moreover, non-White British students report a smaller increase in skills after the ABAP training than White British students. This suggests the ABAP needs to engage with racist bullying behaviour directly. The ABAP has previously helped schools engage with anti-homophobic, biphobic and transphobic training with significant impact; discussion of particularly pervasive types of bullying behaviour of marginalised groups can be very effective.

CASE STUDY 3:
BANTER OR BULLYING

Members of staff at an all-boys school found the ABAP difficult for boys because they are less likely to express their emotions and more occupied with looking 'cool' and 'tough', especially as they age. This school had a particular issue where anyone who reported bullying behaviour would be called "a snake", which made students afraid to do so. The ABAP focus at this school was to teach the students when something is and isn't a joke. A member of staff says: "Often the victim is laughing along, so that public face for teenage boys is vital. They often laugh along, they're not going to cry. Even if they're laughing, it doesn't mean it's OK. That's what my older boys find very difficult." Even though the ABAP made a big difference among younger boys, the older students frequently complain that "it's gone too far" and insist that their bullying behaviour is 'just bants [banter]'.

The member of staff saw big changes at their school: students now come forward, no one is called a 'snake' anymore and the word 'gay' is no longer used as an insult. The students from this school from year 8 and 9 are incredibly positive about the ABAP. Many express that having understood the difference between banter and bullying behaviour, they changed their behaviour and see others do so too.

These changes were achieved with the help of another programme, specifically fostering a more positive version of masculinity. The Good Lad Initiative did workshops with all students and the staff found the conjunction with the ABAP very effective. This effect was clear among the students, many of whom talked about the importance of empathy, support and kindness.

IMPLEMENTATION

Cooperation between Ambassadors and staff

At the schools with the biggest measurable impact, staff leads let the Ambassadors shape the implementation of the programme in terms of its goals and activities while staff provide logistical support to put their ideas into practice and ensure commitment from the whole school (see 3.2.3) and make sure the Ambassadors stay on track.

Ambassadors' effectiveness

Many staff leads observe that both the students who become Ambassadors and the Ambassador label itself, aren't always viewed as 'cool' among the other students. This means Ambassadors were unwilling to take on a public role, which is important to raise the profile of anti-bullying, or sometimes weren't listened to by other students. Some staff suggested harmonising the role of student leaders, class leaders or school councillors with Ambassadors. And many staff reiterated the importance of having a varied group of Ambassadors with different skills and ambitions.

Whole-school approach

All members of staff consider the buy-in from the entire school to be essential to the success of the programme. To create cultural change at a school, parents, school leadership, teachers and pastoral staff all need to embody this new culture: parents need to be involved more frequently so they can teach their children about anti-bullying and kindness and help them when they're experiencing bullying behaviour; teachers and pastoral staff need to take bullying reports seriously and deal with them; and school leadership needs to change policies and give the anti-bullying efforts validity with their active support. Designating a staff lead or team of staff who have capacity to devote time to the ABAP is vital.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation finds clear evidence that the peer-led and whole-school approach of The Diana Award's Anti-Bullying Ambassador Programme is an effective approach to tackling bullying behaviour in schools and online. Students who weren't Ambassadors, at all schools, reported increasing their knowledge and awareness of bullying behaviour. At a significant number of schools, students and staff report that this has led to changes in behaviour: fewer students bully, more students have become Upstanders, and those subject to bullying behaviour more frequently stand up for themselves. At some schools, students and staff report a shift towards an anti-bullying culture, where bullying behaviour is not accepted by the community as a whole; a culture of kindness, where students are consistently kind and friendly to others and increase their charity work in their community; and an inclusive culture, where those who are different feel accepted and comfortable to be themselves, students socialise with everyone, and homophobic and racist bullying behaviour and words are reported as being all but eradicated.

Similarly, at those schools where the campaign is targeted towards tackling cyberbullying, students and staff report increased knowledge and awareness, skills, as well as behaviour change and change in the online culture. Targeted engagement with particular types of bullying behaviour, such as racist, ableist or homophobic bullying, are essential in order to help the most marginalised students.

The Anti-Bullying Ambassador Programme provides a good guide for schools and local and national policy makers for tackling bullying behaviour across the UK. The contributors and barriers to the success of the programme and varying impact at different schools can help schools more effectively shape their anti-bullying approach. Similarly, for national policy makers, civil society and The Diana Award, these findings can help shape future versions of the programme, and new areas for research.

DEMOS