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BULLYING IN SCHOOL SPORT

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the Ben Cohen
STANDUP
FOUNDATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project A:
A Literature Review on the Nature and Prevalence of Bullying in School Sport

A literature review was undertaken to explore the nature, prevalence and correlates of bullying in school sport.

The key findings are:

- The literature review identified 14 studies and research reports which explored the nature and/or prevalence of bullying in school sport.
- In these studies between 7.5% and 64% of these samples reported being bullied in school sport.
- Homophobic bullying and name calling due to weight and/or body size were common features of the bullying reported in these papers.
- Definitions of both bullying and school sport in the academic literature are inconsistent and lack clarity, which can affect our understanding of the issues.

Project B:
A Survey of Children and Young People

The results presented in this section of the report draw upon findings from a four-year study involving 15,023 primary and secondary school pupils.

The key findings are:

- 25.8% (n=2,286) of primary pupils reported being a victim of bullying in school sport related facilities.
- 13.9% (n=855) of secondary pupils reported being a victim of bullying in school sport related facilities.

- In the secondary school sample, bullying in changing rooms and bullying due to not being good at sport have both risen gradually over the four-year study period. However, bullying due to being good at sport has reduced.

Project C:
A Literature Review on Anti-Bullying in School Sport Strategies and Guidance

A second literature review was conducted to explore interventions to tackle bullying in school sport.

The key findings of this study were:

- We identified no school sport specific anti-bullying interventions.
- The majority of interventions identified employed a whole school approach.
- Many sports clubs and organizations adapt this whole school approach to intervention for their organization.
- Some anti-bullying interventions used by sports clubs are emerging, which focus on sportspersonship, safety and promoting a positive sport climate.

Conclusions

While the literature review and survey identify that bullying does occur in school sport, there is little information on how, if at all, this may differ both in nature and outcomes to bullying which occurs in other locations.

Recommendations

Interventions to school sport should be developed which:

- Promote inclusion.
- Promote sportpersonship and participation.
- Promote resilience and encourage children and young people to talk about their experiences
- Raise awareness of bullying in sport.

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ABOUT THE REPORT

About this Report

The report has at its core three studies. Each study is presented separately followed by an overarching conclusion. Study A is a review of the published literature on bullying in school sport. This review identified 14 research studies specifically exploring bullying in school sport and in this section we discuss the key findings from these studies. Study B reports on the findings from a sport specific data analysis undertaken on our existing survey data of 15,023 primary and secondary school pupils collected over a four-year period. This analysis explores the children's experiences of bullying in school sport settings. Study C presents findings of a literature search on bullying in school sport interventions. The final conclusion draws together the findings of these three studies and outlines recommendations for tackling bullying in school sport. We have included case studies of examples of bullying in sport and school sport in particular, to illustrate some of the behaviours and issues raised in this report.

INTRODUCTION

General Overview

Investment in Sport is often justified on the basis of improvements in public health and social cohesion. In 2013 the UK government invested over £450 million to develop Physical Education and sport in primary schools[1]. However, some children are reluctant to engage in sport because of bullying. According to the Marlybone Cricket Club's 'Chance to Shine' survey[2], 66% of the 1,010 parents surveyed reported that they had witnessed some form of psychological bullying while watching their child play. A fifth of parents reported their child's reluctance to play sport as a result of the psychological victimisation they experienced and one in ten parents stated that their child gave up a sport entirely due to an incident of psychological intimidation.

Whilst bullying can be experienced anywhere most research with children and young people has focused on bullying within school environments[3]. Most of the research on bullying in schools has also concentrated on the whole school, rather than on specific subjects or locations within the school. Whilst little research exists on bullying in school sport facilities, research has identified that victims frequently report PE changing rooms as a location where bullying occurs[4]. School sport and Physical Education (PE) are unique aspects to school life as PE is the only lesson where pupils are required to undress, take compulsory showers and wear special kit. In addition, school sport includes an element of competition and some sports involve physical contact, collisions and tackling. The uniqueness of PE and the associated challenges for pupils are highlighted in Case Study 1.

Case Study 1

A study[5] conducted by the University of Essex claims that more than half of secondary school boys, and two thirds of girls, never shower after PE. The research states that children may not be exerting themselves in PE as they are anxious at the prospect of showering. Those who did not shower were less active – and among girls – less fit. Although Dr Sandercock did not find a direct link between anxiety about showering and fitness, he acknowledges that this raises concerns over showering as a "potential barrier to intense, fitness – promoting exercise".

Public Health England say that body image is an important factor of undressing and showering for PE lessons. There were also implications made for bullying and humiliation during showering.

The United Nations[6] has recognised that sport has a significant role in 'nurturing the health and harmony of society'. If bullying prevents children and young people from participating in sport, this will result in some children and young people feeling excluded and alienated from such activities[6].

Such an outcome is diametrically opposed to the inclusive, spirit of sport, and therefore the issue of bullying is one that requires attention. There have been a number of high profile cases of bullying in sport reported in the media, some of which we refer to in this report.

However, there is a lack of empirical research on which to base professional practice and develop policy. Whilst journalism serves a useful purpose in raising awareness of the issue good quality research is needed to develop evidence based prevention strategies.

STUDY A

Aims of Study A

In this study we identify and report the existing literature, which explores the nature, prevalence and correlates of bullying in school sport.

Method

We conducted a review of books, journals and policy documents. Through our search for literature, our first 'finding' was that more care needs to be taken in defining both 'bullying' and 'school sport'. These terms are used to mean different things by different researchers. This different use of terminology makes it difficult to identify and compare studies.

In this study, we define bullying as an aggressive behaviour, where there is intent on the part of the perpetrator to harm the victim. This definition differentiates bullying from accidental or 'one-off' acts of aggression. Within a bullying situation there is an imbalance of power whereby the perpetrator is more powerful than the victim. This power imbalance can take many forms, for example, differences in physical power, or age. Power imbalances might also include interpersonal power imbalances, for example popularity or ability[7,-10]. To illustrate this definition, in a school sport context, consider the following hypothetical situations:-

1. At a school there is one girl who is very popular and another who is unpopular. Their relative popularity represents a power imbalance. The unpopular girl plays rugby and the popular girl calls her names because of this. She does this because she wants to embarrass and humiliate the unpopular girl i.e. to cause harm. We would define that as bullying.

2. Two girls are playing rugby against each other on opposite sides. They are equal matched physically and interpersonally. There is no power imbalance. In the middle of a hotly contested match one of the girls calls the other a rude name. Whilst we would not condone such bad behaviour we would not define it as bullying

3. Two girls who are friends are playing rugby for the same team. They call each other by the same rude nickname. As there is not intent to harm this is not bullying. It could even be argued that this is a pro-social behaviour i.e. prosocial teasing. However, in this example if the rude nickname was racist, sexist or homophobic it could unintentionally create a bullying environment and therefore would need to be challenged and stopped.

Much has been written on the nature of more general aggression in sport and the role of physical aggression and verbal taunting/abuse to distract opponents (See Tenenbaum et al. 11 for a review). The issue of sledging in cricket and examples of isolated physical and verbal aggression in professional sport receive a wealth of media attention. It is not the aim of this report to discuss this body of literature, but to highlight the challenging nature of defining aggression and bullying in sport. However, it is important to note that observing such aggressive behaviour amongst high profile sports professionals may encourage children and young people to imitate the behaviours of their role models and behave in comparable ways in school sport.

As well as defining bullying it is also important to be able to define school sport. What we mean by School sport may differ between different schools (e.g. state and independent) and in different countries (e.g. the UK and the USA). To ensure readers are clear about what we mean by the term 'school sport' we created the illustration seen in Figure 1, opposite.
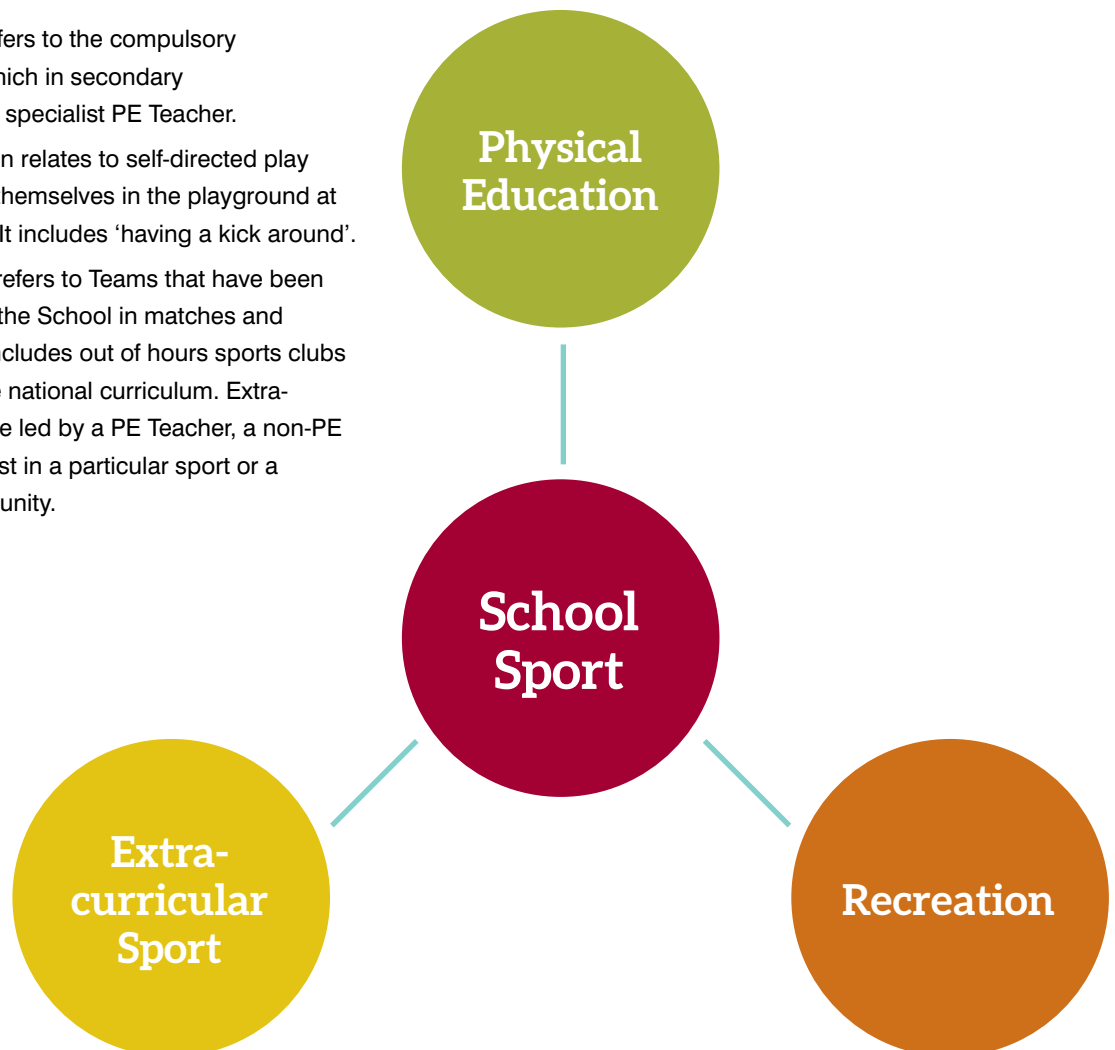
STUDY A

Figure 1: A Simple illustration of School Sport

Our illustration has three components:

i) Physical Education,

ii) Recreation and

iii) Extracurricular Sport

Notes:

1. School sport is not one thing. It is made up of at least 3 subcomponents. To be able to compare research studies on bullying in school sport one needs to know which part of the school sport 'jigsaw' the work was conducted in. It may also be the case that different strategies are needs to tackle bullying in the 3 different subcomponents.

2. Physical Education refers to the compulsory national curriculum which in secondary schools is taught by a specialist PE Teacher.

3. In our model recreation relates to self-directed play that pupils 'organize' themselves in the playground at break or after school. It includes 'having a kick around'.

4. Extra-curricular sport refers to Teams that have been selected to represent the School in matches and tournaments. It also includes out of hours sports clubs that are not part of the national curriculum. Extra-curricular sport may be led by a PE Teacher, a non-PE Teacher with an interest in a particular sport or a coach from the community.

STUDY A

Results

Using the definitions outlined previously, the literature review identified ten studies and research reports, which have explored the nature and/or prevalence of bullying in school sport. These are summarised in Table 1. This literature reported different rates of bullying in sport. These ranged between 43% and 96% of children and young people being bullied in school sport. The variation reported in the studies concerning the number of pupils bullied may be due to the different definitions of bullying and school sport, and different research methods, which have been used in the literature.

The Nature and Correlates of Bullying in School sport

Although there is a lack of research in this area we have identified some common features of bullying in school sport. In particular bullying related to weight, ability and homophobia were commonly reported[12] -. In Vaillancourt et al's[13] study of 11,152 children and young people, 43% of participants reported being teased in the gym, and 44% in the changing rooms. The majority of negative comments reported were about weight. Morrow and Gill[14] suggest that homophobia is at least as common in Physical Education as in the rest of the school environment.

Concerns have been expressed that experiencing bullying in school sports could result in children dropping out of sport and becoming sedentary adults. Research in America suggests that obese and overweight children who experience criticism during physical activity are more likely to report poorer levels of health and reduced participation in Physical Activity[15].

Some authors recognise the inclusive nature of sport but also acknowledge that the values and attitudes which circulate within sport can encourage negative behaviours. The competitive nature of sport, and the importance of winning, can counter the notions of inclusivity and tolerance[16]. Boys playing school sport may be expected to conform to a masculine role that legitimates certain forms of violence. However, bullying in school sport can have an immediate impact on young people with some reporting how bullying can make them feel unsafe in sport related locations. Case studies reported in Stonewalls School Survey[17] show how some young people report getting changed in school toilets rather than in the changing rooms in order to avoid the bullying, this is also highlighted in case study 2.

Case Study 2

In 2012 The Sunday Herald[18] reported a young gay man's experiences of homophobic bullying in school.

They reported how the pupil was asked to change in private for PE. Whilst the pupil expected protection from his teachers, it was his PE teacher who requested that he change in the disabled toilet as his classmates felt 'uncomfortable' with his sexuality. This led the pupil to swear at his PE teacher, which ultimately led to his suspension. The pupil concerned was disgusted, saying that he was asked to leave because "I was gay and open about it. I was seen as a bad role model".

STUDY A

Table 1: Main Studies Related to Bullying in Sport

STUDY	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	AGE RANGE	METHOD	TYPE OF BULLYING	MAIN FINDING(S)
Li & Rukavina[12]	47	11-19	Descriptive case study approach and in-depth interviews. Conducted in Southern US.	Participants were asked a number of questions in the interviews, including: Their experiences of bullying and teasing in Physical Education How they dealt with the situation	•64% reported being teased in PE. •Victims of teasing felt hurt and experienced uncomfortable feelings due to social comparisons. •Overweight students reported being bullied in the changing rooms •Participants reported that for 45% of incidents of bullying, teachers were not present. •Authors argue that teachers lack awareness of bullying in sport and lack the strategies to tackle this behaviour effectively
Vaillancourt et al[13]	11,152	Grades 4 to 12 (age 8-18)	Online survey exploring pupils perceptions of feeling safe in school Conducted in Canada	Pupils were asked the extent to which they felt safe in school and to what extent they had experienced bullying	**Results of the Elementary School Survey (Grades 4-8, ages 8-11)** •12.7% felt unsafe in changing rooms •20.4% had been bullied in changing rooms •3.8% felt unsafe during intramurals (recreational sport) •7.5% had been bullied during intramural sport **Results of the Secondary School Survey (Grades 9 to 12, ages 11 to 18)** •20.2% felt unsafe in changing rooms •41% had been bullied in changing rooms •10.5% felt unsafe during intramurals (competitive sport) •47% had been bullied during intramural sport
Morrow & Gill[14]	82 teachers and 77 pupils	Physical Education Teachers & Students aged 16 to 46	Teacher & student survey	**Teachers were asked to complete a survey which explored:** Perceptions of homophobia and heterosexism between pupils, between pupils and teachers and between teachers. To what extent teachers create a safe space for lesbian and gay pupils. The student survey also explored experiences or being a victim of or witnessing homophobia or heterosexism in their physical education.	**PE Teacher Survey** •82% of teachers reported witnessing a lot of heterosexist behaviours by students •28% of teachers had witnessed a lot of homophobic behaviours by students **Student Survey** •84% of pupils had witnessed a lot heterosexist behaviours amongst students •67% of pupils had witnessed a lot of homophobic behaviours amongst pupils •64% had used homophobic remarks or name-calling •34% had personally experienced a lot of homophobic behaviours from classmates •7% had personally experienced a lot of homophobic behaviours from teachers
Stonewall[17]	1,614	Lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils aged 11 to 19	Survey	Homophobic bullying in school	•55% of the sample reported experiencing homophobic bullying in school •32% of gay and bisexual boys and 14% of lesbians and bisexual boys reported being a victim of homophobic bullying in sport •30% of the same le reported being bullied in changing rooms •Boys were twice as likely as girls to be bullied in sport
Ronholt[19]	22	15	Semi-structured interviews	Bullying related to forms of masculinity and whether males were perceived as being "masculine enough to play sport".	•Games, sport and physical activity are shaped by masculine identities and are mediated by diverse processes that involve staff competence, pupil friendship networks, class membership and ethnic identity

STUDY A

| STUDY	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	AGE RANGE	METHOD	TYPE OF BULLYING	MAIN FINDING(S)
Branham[20]	22	Adolescents aged 15	Group and Interview Interviews	Understanding issues of Masculinity and Bullying in Physical Education	•The author suggests that Physical Education is a space for boys to express masculinity, through being 'good at sport', being physical and more dominant than other males in this space •Physical Education is a space in which gender relations and identities are negotiated and bullying frequently occurs in the Physical Education classes •PE can be a site for potential for racial abuse and the author also notes the issue of class and how boys create identities through Physical Education
Peterson et al[21]	162 PE teachers and sport coaches	Average age of 43.7	Scenario and follow up questions	Explored teachers and coaches responses to different forms of victimization which varied on the basis of the average weight of the victim	•Reactions to victimisation were found to vary on the basis of the victims weight •Teachers and coaches were more likely to intervene when the victims were overweight females
Roman & Taylor[22]	7,786	Middle school students	Multilevel analysis	Victimization in Physical Education	•Results indicated that bullying victimization was associated with fewer days in PE and lower odds of reporting at least 60 minutes of PA more than once a week.
Shehu[23]	675	11-16	Open ended questionnaire	Six overlapping categories of peer provocation that emerged from the data were: humiliation, injustice, physical assaults, sexual harassment; dangerous play and female physicality frighteners.	•This study encourages educators in general and physical education teachers in particular to take heightened interest in, and reflect more critically about proactive ways to address the multiple domains and consequences of peer provocation in physical education settings.
Healy et al.[24]	12 children with Autism	9-13	Interviews Conducted in Ireland	Children's experiences of PE	•Negative peer interactions were reported by 5 of the children, which included experiences of bullying. •Four of the children reported negative social comparisons on the basis of their sporting abilities.
Rivers[25]	188 self-reported bullies from a sample of 2002 young people	Mean age 13.6, sd = 0.95	Survey Conducted in England	Experiences of bullying in school	•185 pupils reported bullying someone else because they were not so good at sport •There was a relationship between those who bullied someone else because they were not so good at sport and hostility scores.
Brackenridge, et al.[26]	1,860	Young people	Survey Conducted UK Schools	Experiences of bullying in school	•38 (2.1%) pupils reported being a victim of homophobic bullying. 10 (0.5%) reported experiencing homophobic bullying on the playing fields and 9 (0.5%) reported experiencing such bullying in the changing rooms. •266 (14.7%) pupils saw someone bullied homophobically. 90 (4.84%) pupils saw such behavior on the playing fields and 97 (5.2%) saw such behavior in the changing rooms.
Horowitz, et al.[27]	61 pupils	11-14 year olds	Six focus groups of 8-10 pupils	Focus group discussion exploring definitions of bullying and why people are bullied	•Identified that pupils report bullying occurring due to the sport(s) someone does or does not participate in.
Evans, et al.[28]	359 sport team mates	Mean age = 14.47 (sd=1.34)	Survey conducted with sport team members	Survey exploring the frequency and type of bullying experienced, alongside relationship with the team and with the coach.	•14% of adolescents reported experiencing bullying in sport •30% of adolescents reported experiencing bullying in school

STUDY A

Study A: Key Points for Consideration

We do not think that there is enough research on which to draw broad conclusions from the work summarised in Table 1. Whilst it is somewhat of a cliché in this case it is true that more research is needed on the prevalence, nature and eradication of bullying in school sport. If more research is conducted it will be possible to reach a consensus. It is not possible to do this at present. However;

- The published literature we reviewed reports that between 43% and 96% of children and young people in these studies reported being bullied in school sport.

- It is important that research studies on bullying in school sport focus on power imbalances and intent. If the focus is simply on the behaviour, for example name-calling, the subtle differences between pro-social teasing, competitive behaviour and bullying may be missed.

- The small number of studies conducted highlight the issue of homophobic and weight related bullying in school sport.
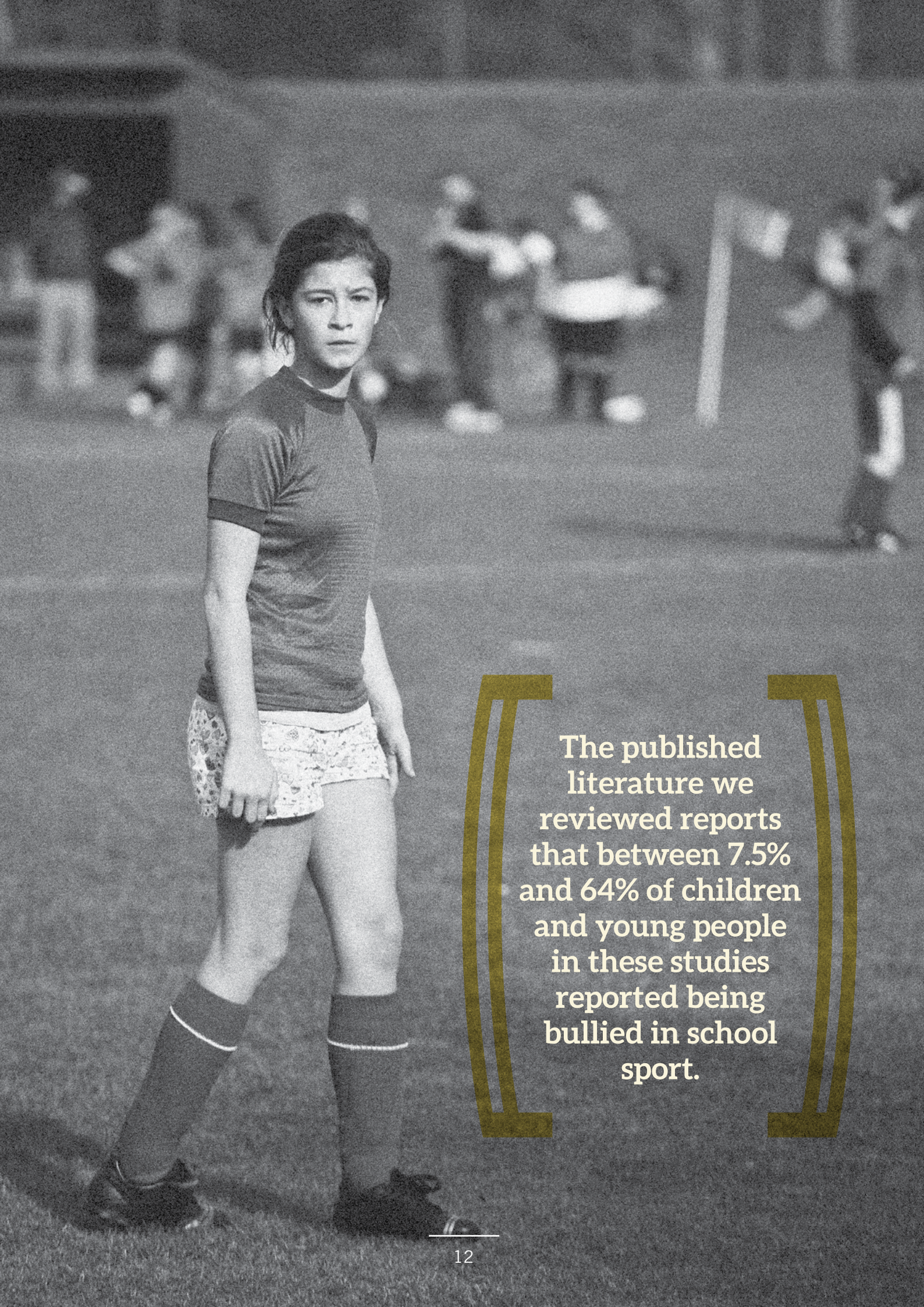
The published literature we reviewed reports that between 7.5% and 64% of children and young people in these studies reported being bullied in school sport.

STUDY B

Study B:
The Nature and Prevalence of School Sport: Survey Results

Aims of Study B

Study B addresses 3 key questions –

1. To what extent are children and young people bullied because they are good or not so good at sport?
2. To what extent are children and young people bullied in school sport facilities, including on the playing fields and in changing rooms?
3. Are there any gender differences?

Method B: Survey

The results presented in this section of the report draw upon findings from a four-year study involving 15,023 primary and secondary school pupils from one Local Authority region in the North of the UK.

The survey was conducted annually between 2011 and 2014 and was approved by the York St John University Research Ethics Committee and supported by the Local Authority. Full details on the sample are presented in Table 2.

The survey explored different aspects of pupils' life in schools, including their enjoyment and engagement in school, experiences of bullying and aspects relating to their friendships and wellbeing. Of particular relevance to this study are pupil's responses to the following questions:

- **Where were you bullied in school?** Pupils could respond by identifying sports facilities including changing rooms, playing fields and the playground.
- **Why were you bullied in school?** Pupils could respond by indicating they had been bullied because they were not good at sport, because of their appearance, friendships and race/ethnicity.

Pupils were also provided with the opportunity to provide more detail on their experiences of bullying in sport. Some of these stories are included in this section of the report. The surveys were conducted online, during school time and in exam conditions. Following completion of the survey pupils were provided with sources of information and support if they had any concerns or worries about bullying.

Table 2: Details of the Sample used for this study

		2011 (n=1,425)	2012 (n=2,566)	2013 (n=2,540)	2014 (n=2,337)
Primary School Sample (n=8,868)	**Gender**				
	Male	667 (468)	1,294 (50.43%)	1,275 (50.2%)	1,137 (48.7%)
	Female	76 (2.4%)	1,257 (48.99%)	1,226 (48.3%)	1,160 (49.6%)
	Did not State	12 (0.8%)	15 (0.58%)	39 (1.5%)	40 (1.7%)
		2011 (n=2,425)	**2012 (n=1,190)**	**2013 (n=1,559)**	**2014 (n=981)**
Secondary School Sample (n=6,155)	**Gender**				
	Male	1,202 (49.57%)	597 (50.17%)	775 (49.71%)	468 (50.2%)
	Female	1,219 (50.27%)	583 (48.99%)	760 (48.75%)	447 (47.9%)
	Did not State	4 (0.16%)	10 (0.84%)	24 (1.54%)	18 (1.9%)

STUDY B

Results of Study B

We asked pupils about their experience of bullying in a number of school sport related facilities. We also asked why pupils felt they were bullied in school, which included items on being good and being not so good at sport. The results are presented separately for primary and secondary schools in Table 3. Children and young people were provided with the opportunity to describe their experiences of bullying in school and provide extra detail if they chose, to. Examples of these responses are included in this section to highlight the variety of ways in which bullying in school sport can occur.

How many children and young people reported being bullied in sport related facilities?

The sport related facility in which most bullying took place was the school yard or playground. The least frequently reported location was the changing rooms. This was the same for primary and secondary school pupils.

Primary School

- 17.5% (n=1,553) of primary pupils reported being a victim of bullying in school sport related facilities
- 8.9% (n=548) of primary pupils bullied in the school yard
- 7.5% (n=464) of primary pupils bullied on the playing field
- 4.1% (n=254) of primary pupils bullied in the changing rooms

Secondary School

- 10.7% (n=656) of secondary pupils reported being a victim of bullying in school sport related facilities.
- 52% (n=341) were boys and 47.4% (n=311) were girls
- 6.8% (n=417) of secondary pupils bullied in the school yard
- 5.4% (n=332) of secondary pupils bullied on the playing field
- 3.8% (n=235) of secondary pupils bullied in the changing rooms

Year differences in the prevalence of bullying in sports facilities

Changes over the 4 year study period in the prevalence of bullying in school sport facilities were explored. As Figures 2 and 3 show, bullying in sport facilities fluctuated for primary school pupils. However, in secondary school pupils bullying on the playing field reduced over the 4 years period whilst bullying in school changing rooms has increased.

Figure 2: The percentage of Primary School Pupils who reported being bullied in specific sport facilities, split by year
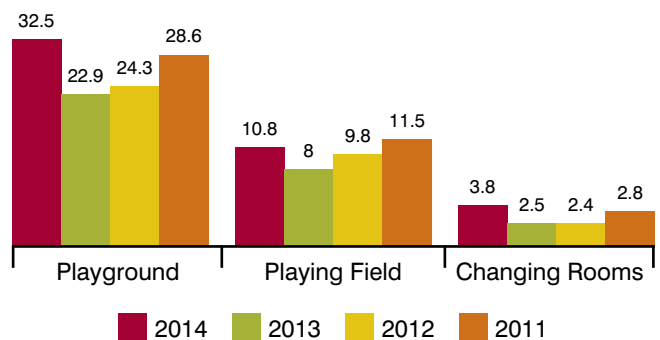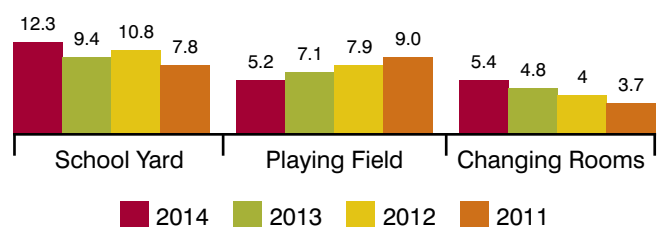

Figure 3: The percentage of Secondary School Pupils who reported being bullied in specific sport facilities, split by year

STUDY B

The Survey data highlights that pupils can be bullied in sport facilities for a number of reasons and not just because of their sporting ability. The following analysis presents reasons why pupils felt they were bullied, and is based on all the secondary school data and the data collected in 2012 to 2013 in primary schools, as the question was not included in the 2011 primary survey.

Primary Schools

Of the 1,830 primary school pupils who reported being bullied in school sport facilities between 2012 and 2014

- 16.8% (n=307) reported being bullied because of their weight, size or body shape
- 18.0% (n=329) because of who they are friends with
- 9.7% (n=178) because not so good at sports
- 7.0% (n=128) because good at sports

Secondary Schools

Of the 656 secondary school pupils who reported being bullied in school sport facilities

- 34.8% (n=228) reported being bullied because of their weight, size or body shape
- 27.7% (n=182) because of who they are friends with
- 25% (n=164) reported being bullied because of their appearance
- 16.3% (n=103) because of they are called 'gay' or 'lesbian'
- 14.9% (n=98) because not so good at sports
- 12% (n=77) because good at sports

Being bullied because of sporting ability

The survey asked pupils specifically about their experiences of being bullied because of their sporting ability. This is bullying that is reported anywhere in school but is due to pupils being either good or not so good at sport.

Primary School

- 1.3% (n=94) of primary pupils reported being a victim of bullying because they are good at sport
- 1.7% (n=126) of primary pupils reported being a victim of bullying because they are not so good

Secondary School

- 2.4% (n=150) of secondary pupils reported being a victim of bullying because they are good at sport
- 2.4% (n=145) of secondary pupils reported being a victim of bullying because they are not so good at sport
- An equal proportion of secondary school boys and girls reported being bullied because they are good at sport
- More secondary boys reported being bullied because they are not so good at sport

The prevalence of being bullied due to being good or being not so good at sport is shown in figures 5 and 6. As figure 5 shows, in primary school children, the prevalence rates of being bullied because of being good at sport has increased gradually over the three year period. However, being bullied due to being no good at sport has fluctuated over the same time period. In the secondary school sample however, being bullied because of being good at sport has decreased gradually over the four year period, being bullied because of being no good at sport has increased over the same time period.

Figure 4: The proportion of Primary School Pupils who reported being bullied because of their sporting ability, split by year
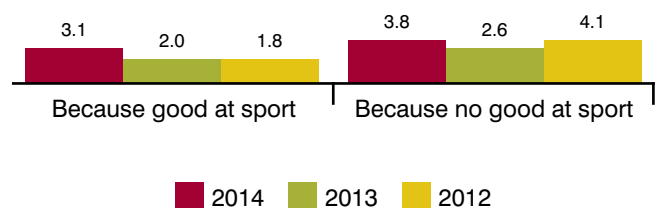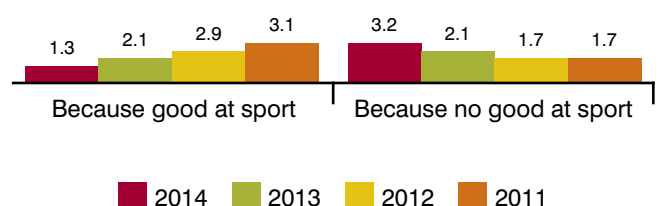

Figure 5: The proportion of Secondary School Pupils who reported being bullied because of their sporting ability, split by year

STUDY B

Study B:
Key Points for Consideration

The findings of our survey highlight differences and changes over time, in experiences of bullying in school sport. In particular:

- A higher proportion of primary school pupils reported being bullied in school sport compared to secondary school pupils.
- A higher proportion of male pupils compared to females, reported being bullied in school sport.
- In both primary and second schools, the most frequently reported location of bullying in school sport was the school yard.
- In secondary school pupils, the proportion of pupils who reported being bullied on the playing field reduced over the four year period, however bullying in changing rooms increased over the same time period.
- The most commonly reported reason for being bullied reported by those bullied in school sport was because of weight, size or body shape.
- Reports of being bullied because of being good at sport.

Because I'm not very good at football

Because I am too good at football

Because people think I'm clever and am bad at football

I think is because before I am at school, she's the second best at gym, but when I came, she got in 3rd

Comments in speech bubbles are example comments from pupils on why they felt they were bullied'
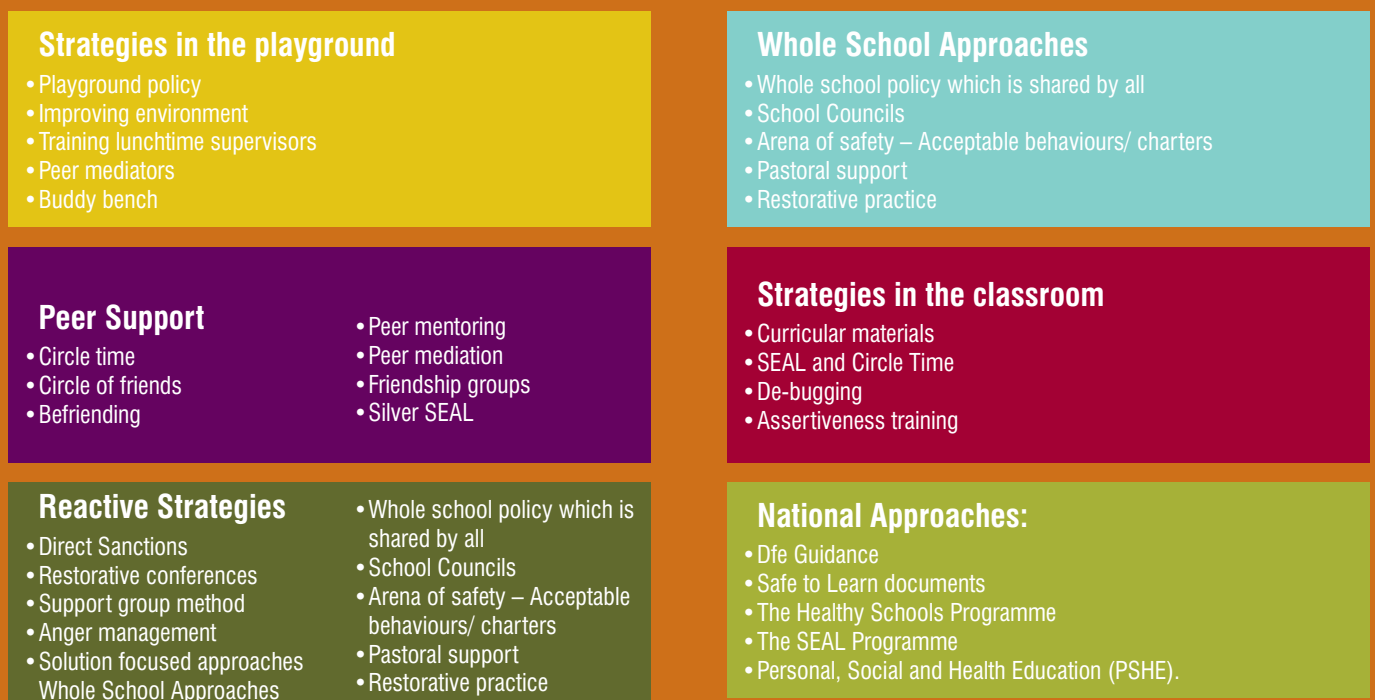
STUDY C

Aims of Study C

As part of this literature review, we aimed to identify any anti-bullying strategies and interventions specifically focused on tackling bullying in school sport.

Method

In order to identify possible anti-bullying strategies and interventions a literature search was conducted specifically focused on anti-bullying interventions in sport and anti-bullying interventions in school sport. Interventions were identified and are summarised in Table 4.

Results: Tackling Bullying in School Sport

Through our literature, we found a lack of School sport specific Anti-Bullying interventions. The majority of interventions, employ a whole school approach and do not focus specifically on School sport. The Department of Education's Report[28] on bullying interventions (2011) provides a useful and thorough overview of examples of Anti-Bullying Interventions that can be used. This report highlights how interventions typically include whole school approaches, such as policies and school councils, strategies for the playground, strategies for the classroom and Peer Support.

Although the majority of Anti-Bullying interventions take a whole school approach and do not target bullying in school sport specifically, some tailored guidance is emerging. We found four such examples of interventions through our literature search. These interventions highlight how sport clubs utilise and adapt these commonly used anti-bullying interventions, examples of this can be seen at the websites for Cornwall Sports Partnership, Children in Golf, and Baseball-Softball UK (Weblinks are available in the references).

Figure 10: School Anti-Bullying Interventions (Based on DoE, 2011)

Strategies in the playground

- Playground policy
- Improving environment
- Training lunchtime supervisors
- Peer mediators
- Buddy bench

Whole School Approaches

- Whole school policy which is shared by all
- School Councils
- Arena of safety – Acceptable behaviours/ charters
- Pastoral support
- Restorative practice

Peer Support

- Circle time
- Circle of friends
- Befriending
- Peer mentoring
- Peer mediation
- Friendship groups
- Silver SEAL

Strategies in the classroom

- Curricular materials
- SEAL and Circle Time
- De-bugging
- Assertiveness training

Reactive Strategies

- Direct Sanctions
- Restorative conferences
- Support group method
- Anger management
- Solution focused approaches
  Whole School Approaches
- Whole school policy which is shared by all
- School Councils
- Arena of safety – Acceptable behaviours/ charters
- Pastoral support
- Restorative practice

National Approaches:

- Dfe Guidance
- Safe to Learn documents
- The Healthy Schools Programme
- The SEAL Programme
- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).

STUDY C

Table 4: Summary of intervention Strategies

GUIDANCE/INTERVENTION	ACTIVITY/POPULATION TARGETED	KEY MESSAGES
NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit free webinar[29]	Discusses sport generally and the role of the coach in tackling bullying in sport. Focus in particular on sports clubs.	• The importance of developing resilience in children and young people to help increase confidence and self-esteem • Importance of stressing the role of coaches as positive role models and the role they can play in modelling positive behaviours • Asks coaches to think about how they make sure that a child/ young person is not being bullied or repeatedly targeted. In addition, coaches should know how to support a child/ young person if they are being bullied or know where to get help.
NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit Anti-Bullying Activities[30]	These activities can be used with children and young people in sports clubs however could be adapted.	• The activities are focused around what is bullying, the effect of bullying on the victim and the role of the environment.
National School Climate Center[31] guidance document on extending a positive school climate into athletic activities	The guide aims to support the development of a positive climate in sport which extends beyond the teacher/ coach and the children and young people, to also include opposing teams, sport officials and parents and other spectators.	• The importance of a positive climate in sport and rewarding sportsmanship or sports integrity, recognition of personal best efforts not just celebrating winning • Recommends displaying posters in sports locations, such as changing rooms and sports halls, highlighting acceptable and unacceptable behaviours • Ban mobile phones from changing rooms • Develop expected standards of sportsmanship • Avoid and challenge the "win at all costs" approach to sport
The FAs Respect Toolkit[32]	Not specifically an anti-bullying policy, but aims to promote a safe and positive environment to play football.	• The website provides a number of resources, including guides for coaches and posters.

STUDY C

Key Points for Consideration

Overall, while there are no school sport specific anti-bullying interventions, that we could identify, there are a number of whole school interventions and interventions for community sports clubs which could be adapted and tailored to make them more appropriate for a school sport message.

The key messages from the interventions we identified, included:

- The importance of developing resilience in children and young people, to develop self-esteem and confidence.
- The importance of teachers/ coaches to identify and tackle bullying behaviour.
- How posters could be displayed in prominent school sport locations, outlining the acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and good sportsmanship rules for playing sport in school.
- Avoid and challenge the "win at all costs" approach to sport.

Concerns have been expressed that experiencing bullying in school sports could result in children dropping out of sport and becoming sedentary adults.

CONCLUSION

While relatively small in number, those studies that have explored bullying in school sport highlight between 43% and 96% of children and young people reported being bullied in school sport. The fact that bullying takes place in school sport challenges the notion that sport is inclusive, builds teams and promotes a healthy body and mind. However, currently there is a lack of empirical research which has focused specifically on bullying in school sport. In addition, the challenging nature of defining bullying and aggressive behaviour in sport makes it more complex than in other school environments. Many studies use different measures of bullying and school sport, which makes drawing comparisons and conclusions from this literature difficult. Future work should explore how bullying in school sport is defined by children and young people. The findings of the literature review highlight the issue of bullying due to weight, size or body shape and homophobic bullying in school sport, this finding is supported by our own survey which found that bullying due to weight, size or body shape was one of the most common reasons victims report for being bullied in school sport.

The findings from our survey also highlight that the prevalence of bullying due to being good at sport has reduced in secondary schools over the four year period, whereas bullying due to being not so good at sport has increased. This may be due, in part, to the positive messages in the media following the London Olympics (and other mega events) and the reasons why pupils are bullied in school sport warrant further attention to consider how ensure engagement in school sport can be more inclusive for pupils regardless of whether they are good or bad at sport.

In our review we could find no school sport specific anti-bullying interventions. There are a number of whole school interventions and interventions for community sports clubs which could be adapted and tailored to for an anti-bullying in school sport message, however these may fail to recognize some of the nuances of bullying in school sport that have been highlighted in the literature review.

Recommendations

Bullying in School Sport should be tackled as a unique form of bullying experience, due to the unique nature of sport in school, compared to other subjects in the curriculum. Therefore, we recommend that anti-bullying interventions specifically tailored for school sport be developed which:

- Raise awareness of bullying in sport
- Promote inclusion
- Promote resilience and encourage children and young people to talk about their experiences
- Promote sportspersonship and participation.

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APPENDIX

About the Authors

Nataly Birbeck

Research Assistant joined the Unit for Child and Youth Studies in 2014. Nataly completed her undergraduate degree in Sociology at Newcastle University. It is here that Nataly developed an interest in the interpersonal relationships of everyday life, and the ways in which they affect the individual.

Role in this study:

Nataly was the research assistant on the project and was responsible for collating the literature and analysing the data.

Nathalie Noret Principal Investigator

Nathalie Noret has for a number of years been researching and teaching on issues relating to peer relationships. Nathalie's research interests focus primarily on children and young peoples' experiences of bullying in school. Following her work on cyberbullying, in 2006 Nathalie is involved in a number of large-scale survey projects, exploring the nature, prevalence and correlates of bullying.

Role in this study:

Nathalie was involved in the original drafting of the research bid, assisted in the management of the project and was involved in the final editing of the report. Nathalie also collected the data for project B.

Professor Andy Smith MBE, PhD, CSci, FBASES

Co-Investigator and co-authour – Andy is a Professor in Exercise and Sports Science. He was awarded an MBE for his service to community sport and higher education. His PhD investigated why some people exercise whilst others are sedentary. He is a Chartered Scientist and was awarded a Fellowship by the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences.

Role in this study:

Andy made an original contribution to the ideas contained in the report, helped write the original proposal & funding bid, helped manage the project and redrafted a number of versions of the report.

Dr Philippa Velija

Co-author has 10 years' experience of researching and teaching equality issues. Her PhD focused on gender relations in cricket, presenting a case study of gender relations in county cricket and exploring issues such as homophobia in women's sport. This research has extended to understand equity and diversity in the organisation of women's sport in the UK and globally.

Role in this study:

Philippa supported the original development of the project idea and writing of the bid and supported the editing of the final report.

Mark Mierzwinski

Co-author is a lecturer in sport. As a former elite footballer, Mark has first-hand insights into a spectrum of sporting sub-cultures. These experiences have informed Mark's research interests into sport and inclusivity, with a particular focus on bullying in sport.

Role in this study:

Mark supported the original development of the project idea and writing of the bid.

About the Ben Cohen Stand up

The Ben Cohen StandUp Foundation is the world's first foundation dedicated to raising awareness of the long-term, damaging effects of bullying and funding those doing real-world work to stop it. We stand up against bullying regardless of to whom it happens. We support organisations and projects that help stop bullying, help those hurt by bullying and/or help increase equality and diversity. **www.standupfoundation.com**