

Essential features of good practice in countering gender stereotyping in schools

Based on the discussions and observations that took place within the site visits and subsequent recommendations given to schools, the following are the essential features of a school that is actively addressing gender equity. The next section explores these, and other, aspects of good practice in more detail.

1 Senior gender champion

Senior Leadership Teams identify one of their number as a gender champion whose role includes bringing together the whole school in a coherent campaign to challenge gender stereotypes. Governors are involved in the campaign in order to reinforce the message that this activity is a priority.

2 Training

Staff attend gender awareness and unconscious bias training, whether as part of their induction to the school or their ongoing professional development.

3 Sexist language

Sexist language is treated as being just as unacceptable as racist and homophobic language. Teachers receive training on unconscious bias and equality and diversity awareness.

4 Use of progression data

Gender-disaggregated data on both achievement and progression are collected for all subjects and discussed formally at whole-school level, using benchmark data for comparison. Where there are issues to be addressed, actions are generated, including targets where appropriate.

5 Initiatives

Initiatives are introduced and developed on the basis of what works and in a way that shows how they address a problem identified in the school data. Carefully planned external visits encourage students to challenge stereotypical views as do role models who commit to developing sustainable relationships.

6 Subject equity

There is a strict policy that all subjects are presented equally to students in terms of their relative difficulty and teachers refrain from making any remarks about how difficult they find particular subjects. The emphasis is on working to the best of one's ability rather than seeking to find subjects where one has innate talents.

7 Careers guidance

Careers guidance starts an early stage. It focuses on the next educational phase, emphasises keeping options open and actively challenges gender stereotypes.

8 Student ownership

Students are at the heart of any campaign to counter gender stereotyping. They are made aware of the issues and be encouraged to think of ways of combatting them.

9 Personal, social, health and economic education

Regularly timetabled PSHE sessions are regarded as a high-value activity that can have a positive impact on students' lives, teachers delivering content are provided with resources and activities. Sessions on equality and diversity form the basis of a wider school campaign and discussions on these themes continue through other topics.