

Be yourself.

Doesn't MATTER,
it's the INSIDE

Free to Be Themselves

An Evaluation of Beyond Gender Stereotypes in Primary Schools



This was

colour
is for
EVERYONE



**GLOBAL
BOYHOOD
INITIATIVE**

coordinated by

equimundo

Lifting Limits

The Children's Society



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Executive summary

Beyond Gender Stereotypes (BGS) is a free, evidence-based programme designed to support educators and children aged 7 to 11 to challenge restrictive gender stereotypes, build emotional and relational skills, and create respectful, inclusive learning environments. **BGS not only addresses stereotypes facing girls, but also includes an intentional focus on stereotypes affecting boys, to encourage them to be caring, connected, and allies for equality.** When norms on masculinity are left out of gender equality programmes, boys tend to disengage from or reject messages around gender equality and girls' empowerment.¹

BGS provides training, classroom resources and ongoing support aligned with England's Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education.

Developed by Equipundo and Lifting Limits², BGS was iteratively designed and tested between 2021 and 2026. Phase 3, which ran in the 2025-26 school year, is the focus of this evaluation.

A mixed-methods, quasi-experimental, pre-post control-intervention design was used to assess changes in outcomes and impact associated with the programme for pupils, educators, and classroom environments. These included increasing awareness of the negative impact of gender stereotypes and confidence in discussing and challenging them.

BGS helped educators recognise their unconscious biases that stem from gender stereotypes and improve their confidence in talking about and challenging them.

At post-test, more teachers from BGS schools recognised that gender is a social construct and does not inherently determine differences in educational abilities and expression of care between boys and girls (Figure 1).

BGS helped pupils to think critically about gender stereotypes from an early age.

- 80% of pupils in BGS schools felt it was okay for boys to hug their friends and carers, a significantly higher proportion than that seen in control schools.

- Significantly, more pupils in BGS schools accepted that anyone can pursue any career, regardless of their gender. No significant change in acceptance of pursuing an activity regardless of one's gender was found in control schools.

Beyond supporting gender-atypical career pursuits, the programme also helped normalise a gendered perspective in discussions of care and friendship.

- In BGS schools, girls and boys showed increased play and expressed greater interest in cross-gender play.
- Girls in BGS schools showed a significant increase in interest in playing with boys from pre-test (51%) to post-test (58%).
- Boys in BGS schools had an increased interest in playing with girls from pre-test (49%) to post-test (52%).
- Pupils expressed increased confidence in making friends and playing with peers of all genders. No significant change in confidence in cross-gender play was found in control schools.
- BGS also encouraged open discussions about gender stereotypes, with over two thirds of pupils in BGS schools demonstrating interest in continuing conversations with friends, parents and carers, at post-test.

Educators and pupils widely, appreciated BGS, with schools noting alignment with their equity, diversity, and inclusion values and commitment to providing opportunities for all.

- 98% of educators expressed satisfaction with the online training, particularly the self-paced modality, found the content thought-provoking, and valued the supporting resources.
- More than 80% of boys and girls found the lessons interesting and believed other children will also enjoy BGS.

Programme participants

40
Schools

650
Educators

5,400+
Pupils

Evaluation participants

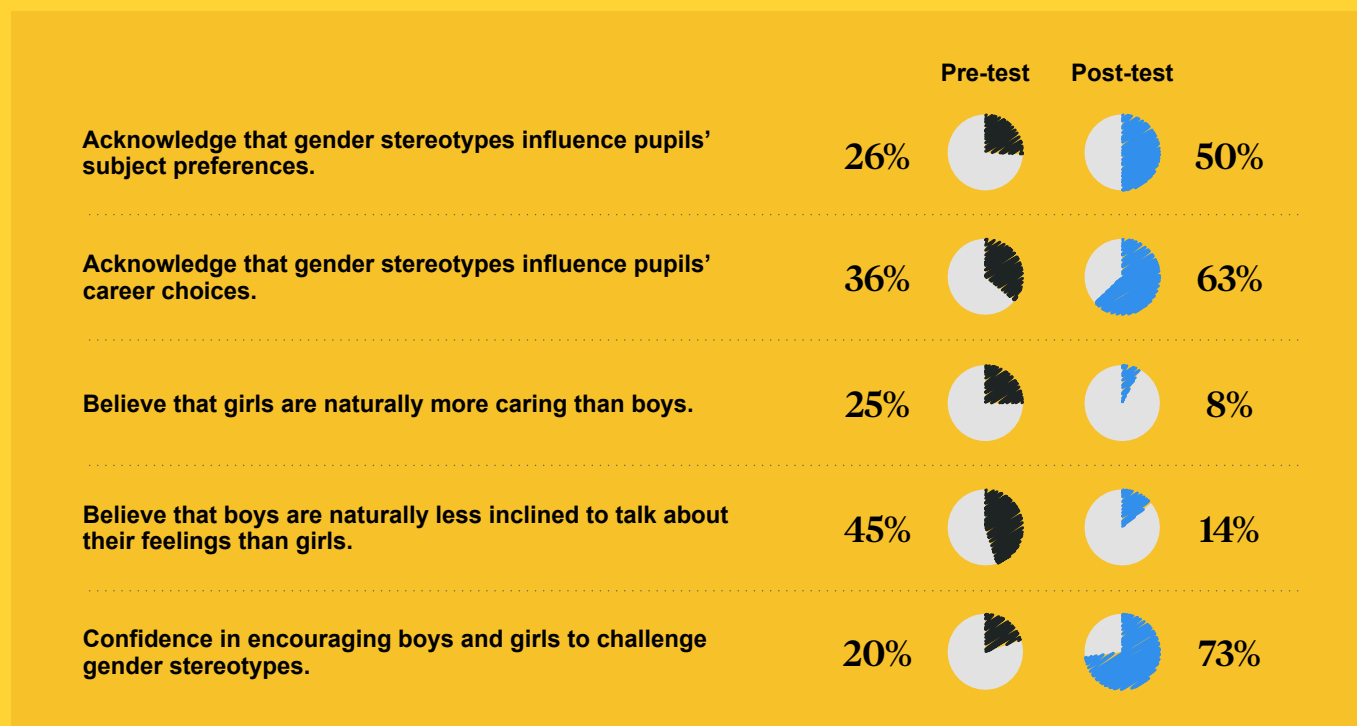
24
Schools

300+
Educators

2,300
Pupils in
BGS schools

1,000+
Pupils in
control schools

Figure 1. Changes in educators' attitudes, beliefs, and confidence before and after BGS curriculum training, BGS schools (percent agree)



The findings also have important implications for policy.

Education systems across England should adopt preventative, evidence-based approaches that recognise healthy boyhoods as an important component of wellbeing. These efforts should complement existing work to address gender-based violence and inequality through RSE guidance and the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy.

Schools should foster opportunities for dialogue and positive cross-gender relationships, while encouraging educators to reflect on their own assumptions and biases. Such approaches align with schools' commitment to promoting respect, inclusion and opportunity for all children, and reflect pupils' positive experiences of cross-gender engagement.

Background

At a very young age, children learn what behaviour, characteristics, and roles are expected from them based on their gender.

The process by which children absorb these expectations through family, peers, media, and communities is known as gender socialisation. These messages and assumptions about a child's interests, likes, dislikes, and characteristics risk becoming self-fulfilling, as the child picks up from those around them what is seen as 'normal' or 'appropriate' according to their gender. These unwritten rules are known as gendered norms, the socially constructed rules and expectations that dictate how individuals should behave, dress, and express themselves based on their gender (UNFPA & UNICEF, 2020).³

Children learn about gender differences at a young age, and these early beliefs are a powerful factor in shaping the subjects they choose in school and their educational outcomes (Bian et al. 2017⁴, King et al. 2021⁵, Kollmayer et al. 2018⁶, Master 2021⁷). Gender stereotypes can also restrict friendships, expression of emotions, and limit children from reaching their full potential (Culhane & Bazeley, 2019⁸). For instance, girls learn to be agreeable, obedient, and care about their appearance, while boys learn to restrict their emotions and express dominance, which can negatively affect their wellbeing (Equimundo 2022⁹, Way 2019¹⁰). Research from Equimundo in the State of UK Boys' Report 2023¹¹ further suggests that school environments can reinforce rigid, binary ideas about gender, and even normalise certain forms of violence. However, with evidence-based lessons, educators and schools can play a positive role in challenging stereotypes and promoting positive and equitable gender norms (Fawcett 2020¹², UNGEI 2025¹³).

The influence of misogynist content online adds a further layer of urgency to this issue. Social media platforms, online communities, and algorithm-driven content target young people, especially boys, with harmful narratives that normalise gender stereotypes and harassment, which are frequently presented as harmless (Koester et al., 2024¹⁴). The Good Childhood Report 2025¹⁵ by The Children's Society found that "[young people] spoke about how the rise of misogyny and specifically incel content for boys, and content about beauty standards for girls, could affect their self-esteem and have an impact on how young people behave towards each other" (page 42).

Studies find that UK teachers often perpetuate gendered stereotypes unintentionally, and even when they believe these should be challenged, they lack the formal training to do so (Gilchrist & Zhang, 2023¹⁶, Jones & Myhill, 2004¹⁷, Sheehy & Solvason, 2023¹⁸).

The UK Government Equalities Office¹⁹ conducted research in 2021 and found "There is a need for greater reflection and learning about gender norms and inequalities throughout the school curriculum; Training should be available for all teachers on the influence of gender stereotypes and the benefits of challenging them".

Recent media coverage in the UK has also drawn significant attention to the influence of harmful gender norms on boys, particularly in online spaces. The Netflix mini-series *Adolescence*²⁰, released in March 2025, explores the impact of manosphere-influenced ideologies, centring on the murder of a teenage girl by a 13-year-old boy. The series sparked national conversation and political response, with then UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer supporting its availability for free viewing in all secondary schools. Similarly, the documentary *Louis Theroux: Inside the Manosphere*²¹, released in March 2026, examines online influencers who promote content around fitness, business, and self-improvement, while also sharing controversial and harmful views, including antisemitism, homophobia, misogyny, and racism. Together, these examples highlight growing public concern about the online environments shaping boys' attitudes and reinforce the importance of early intervention to challenge harmful gender norms.

Education policy in England has begun to emphasise the need for primary school children to learn about gender stereotypes. At the national level, the statutory Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education guidance²² (updated July 2025) explicitly addresses gender stereotypes and normalisation of male violence. The Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education Association's programme of study²³ also prioritises challenging stereotypes that affect career aspirations. The government's cross-government strategy *Freedom from Violence and Abuse*²⁴, further reinforces this, identifying prevention and early intervention through education as a key mechanism for reducing violence and abuse. It also calls for teachers, parents, and caregivers to be equipped with tools to "have conversations with children about healthy relationships, and the confidence to challenge harmful behaviours constructively" (HM Government, 2025).



Programme content

Beyond Gender Stereotypes (BGS) is an age-appropriate curriculum on gender stereotypes for Upper and Lower Key Stage 2 (KS2), Years 3 to 6 (ages 7 to 11). BGS is free, with teacher training and support resources to develop school capacity and enable long-term curricular integration. It aligns with 2025 PSHE guidance on gender stereotypes and serves as either an entry point or a complement to existing programmes on equity, inclusion, critical thinking, misogyny, and discrimination. This strengthens broader school safeguarding and equality efforts.

BGS was based on previous programming through Equipundo's Global Boyhood Initiative (GBI), informed by the State of UK Boys Report, and the Lifting Limits programme. What sets BGS apart is its intentional focus on gender stereotypes affecting boys, which are often overlooked in gender equality programmes. BGS not only gives pupils the skills to critically examine the stereotypes affecting girls, but also challenges the stereotypes that affect boys, to encourage them to be

caring, connected, and allies for equality. **When norms on masculinity are left out, boys tend to disengage from or reject messages around gender equality and girls' empowerment.**²⁵

Guided by the Programme's Theory of Change, the self-directed learning module for educators and the age-appropriate curriculum are designed to promote healthier outcomes for both educators and students (Appendix). Together, they intend to foster a supportive environment where children and educators can act in gender-equitable ways and challenge gender stereotypes.

The overall aims of the BGS programme are:

1. Children of all genders behave in gender-inclusive and equitable ways
2. Teachers confidently and effectively challenge gender stereotypes and inequality

The BGS programme includes:

One hour lesson plans

Three lessons²⁶ for Years 3-4 and four lessons for Years 5-6:

Lesson 1: Exploring gender stereotypes

Lesson 2: Learning not to feel limited by gender stereotypes (friendship and feelings)

Lesson 3: Understanding how gender stereotypes can influence aspirations and careers (Years 5-6 only)

Lesson 4: Challenging gender stereotypes and supporting gender equality

eLearning teacher training course

A self-paced, 2.5-hour training for KS2 teachers,²⁷ with a condensed version available for all school staff. The training is Continuing Professional Development (CPD) accredited and includes eight modules:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Differences between gender and sex | 5. The gender boxes |
| 2. Gender expectations in childhood | 6. Teaching the BGS curriculum |
| 3. Gender stereotypes in society | 7. Supporting families |
| 4. Gender stereotypes in schools | 8. Leading BGS for school leads |

Support resources

1. Comprehensive teaching guidance
2. Resource guide to engage parents and carers

By the end of the 2025-26 academic year, BGS will have reached over 40 schools, including those involved in the evaluation and those participating only in the programme. Additional schools are scheduled to implement BGS in the following school year.

BGS was developed, tested, and refined in an iterative process of three phases:” since it is linked to the timeline below



Phase 1: Proof of Concept (2022)

The initial curriculum was developed and taught in 2022 in two schools. Evaluation results and feedback from this phase emphasised a need to develop teacher training and support resources for parents, and to restructure the lesson plans to align with PSHE curriculum and reduce the number of lessons from 10 to three, so that teachers could realistically fit them into their PSHE class time.



Phase 2: Pilot (2024)

In 2024-25, the BGS programme was piloted in five schools with approximately 150 teachers and 980 pupils. The evaluation results from the five pilot schools and five control schools helped assess initial impact, improve the teacher training and refine the curriculum.

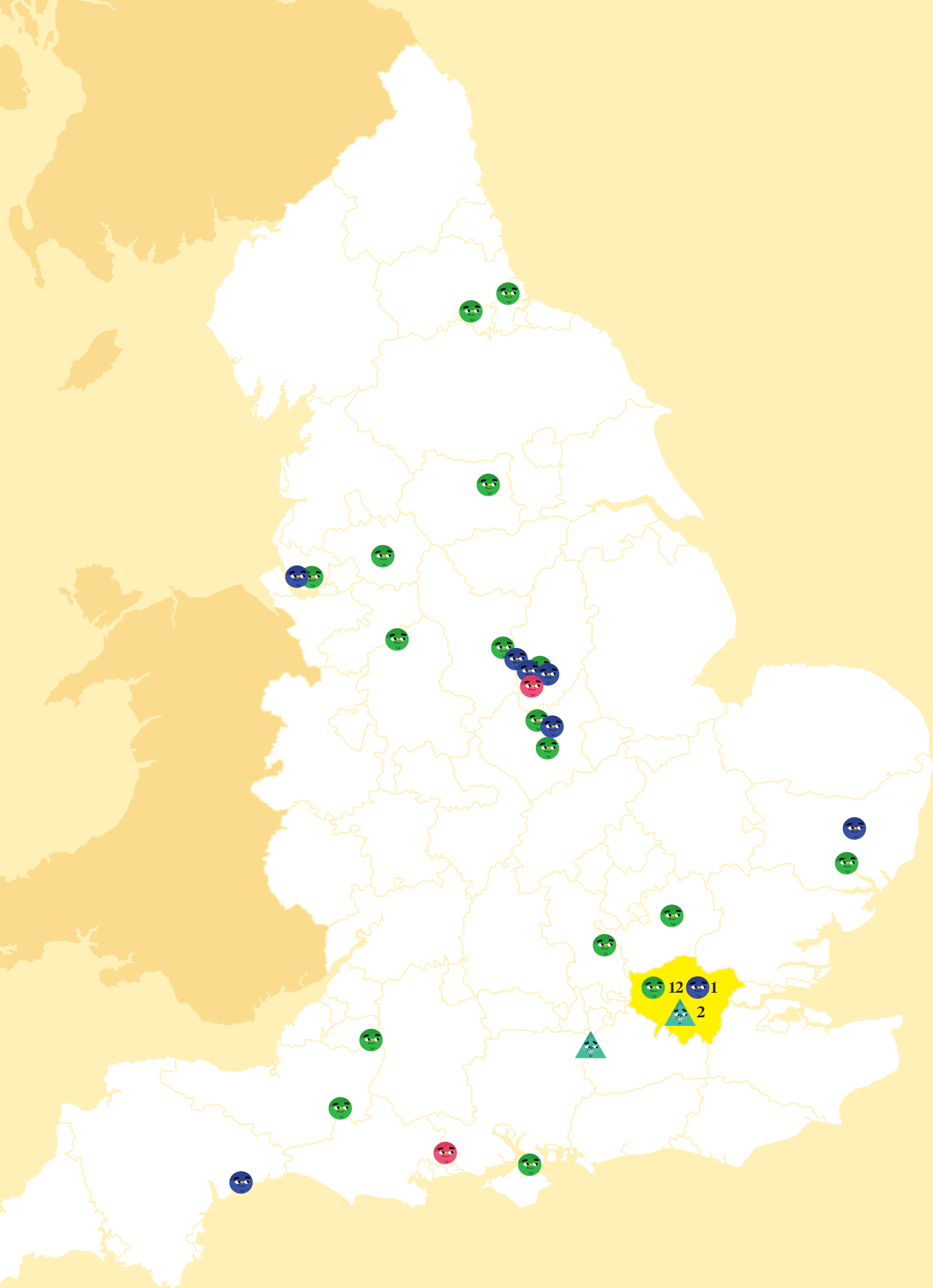


Phase 3: Building Evidence (2025-26)

In the 2025-26 school year, BGS reached 38 schools, impacting over 550 teachers and 5,400 pupils. Of these, 29 schools trained teachers and taught BGS to pupils (three of which stayed on from Phase 2), and nine more trained teachers but have not yet taught the lessons. In the evaluation, 24 schools participated. This report presents findings from Phase 3, which offers the evaluation results from the final version of BGS.

In Phase 3, the focus of this evaluation, BGS was implemented across a diverse range of schools, including many serving disadvantaged and “high-need populations,” and was broadly nationally representative across key measures of diversity and need.

- **Pupil premium rate:** 26.4% (national average: 25.9%, range: 0% to 63%)
- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND):** 25.3% (national average: 20%)
- **English as an Additional Language (EAL) rate:** 22.6% (national average: 21.4%, range: 0% to 76%)



Participating BGS schools



Schools where teachers completed the training and taught the lessons to pupils



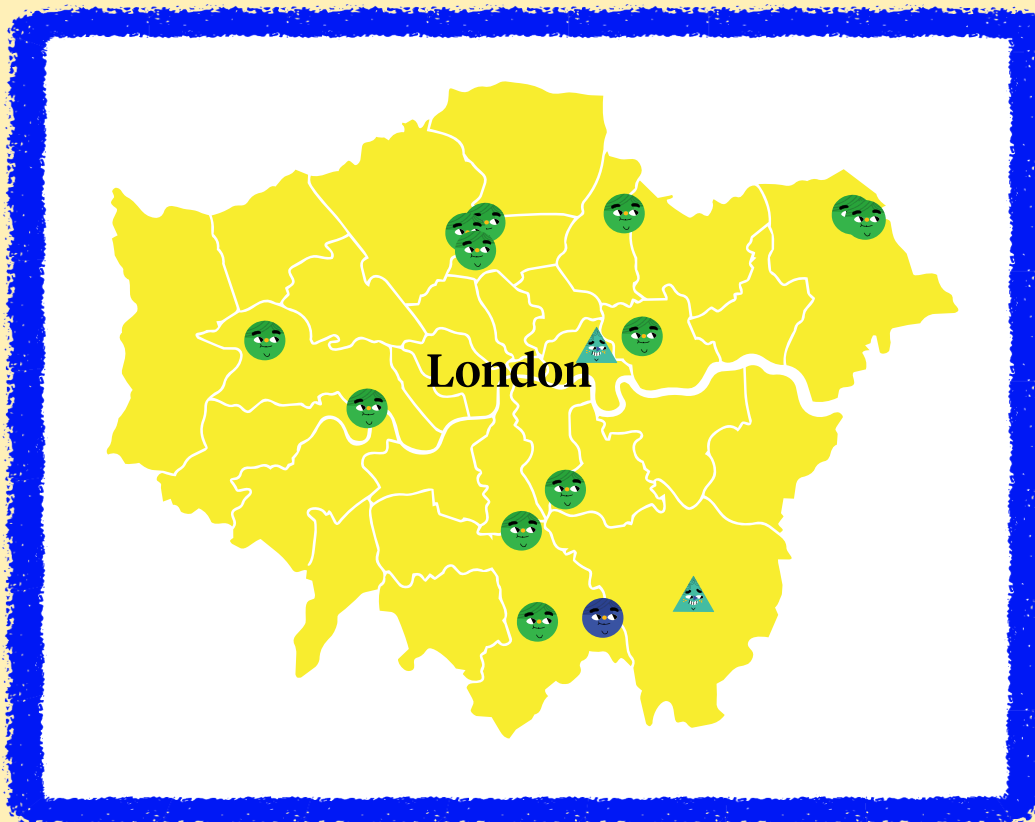
Schools where teachers completed the training but have not yet taught the lessons



Control schools that eventually implemented the BGS curriculum



Control schools





Evaluation

Aims and indicators

Equimundo, in partnership with The Children's Society, led the evaluation of BGS. This report focuses on the evaluation results from Phase 3, which aimed to test the outcome of the curriculum among pupils, the outcome of the online training among educators, and its effectiveness in creating a supportive classroom environment where educators and pupils could discuss how gender stereotypes affect boys and girls differently. Impact of the BGS programme was also measured by comparing changes in outcomes among pupils and educators in BGS schools, with those in control schools. In addition, the evaluation sought to generate learnings to guide the process of scaling BGS beyond 2026, including exploring educators' perceptions of the programme and ways to strengthen parental engagement. **The key outcomes measured in Phase 3 are shown in Box 1.**

Design and sample

A quasi-experimental, pre-post control-intervention design was used to assess changes in outcomes over time and the programme's impact. Phase 3 control schools were recruited in autumn 2025. Control schools were selected by matching characteristics such as pupil premium percentage, percentage of students with English as a second language, geographical location and ethnic diversity, with BGS schools. Control schools had the option to sign up for BGS in the next term. A total of 24 schools participated in the evaluation. However, some schools participated in different aspects of the evaluation as shown in the box below.

Box 1. Key indicators used to test the change in outcome and impact of BGS, Phase 3

Audience	Key outcomes
Pupils (Curriculum)	■ Awareness of gender stereotypes and attitudes towards these ■ Acceptance of pursuing interests beyond gendered constraints ■ Willingness and interest to develop friendships with children of all genders ■ Confidence to challenge gender stereotypes
Educators (Online training)	■ Awareness of the negative impact of gender stereotypes on children ■ Attitudes towards gender stereotypes ■ Confidence to discuss gender stereotypes and challenge them
Classroom environment (Curriculum & online training)	■ Discussions in the classroom and beyond ■ Interest in listening to diverse perspectives ■ Pupils' perception of support from teachers

Tools

Data were collected using quantitative and qualitative tools. Quantitative data were collected using pre- and post surveys with pupils and with educators, while qualitative data were collected using focus groups and interviews. The pupil surveys measured knowledge and attitudes toward gender-equitable behaviours, acceptance of interests and careers beyond gender stereotypes, and engagement in play across genders. The pupil survey was administered by teachers and completed online during class time set aside for BGS. The teacher surveys assessed awareness of gender stereotypes in education and their negative impact on pupils, confidence in challenging these stereotypes, and sought to collect feedback on the training and lessons. The teacher pre and post-test surveys were self-administered and completed online by BGS leads, headteachers, KS2 teachers and staff before and after

they took the online training. A post-lesson survey was also completed by teachers who taught BGS at the end of the term. **Details of the quantitative and qualitative data collection are provided in Tables 1 and 2.**

The evaluation research protocol was assessed through an expedited research ethics review by the Health Media Lab Institutional Review Board. This global body provides ethical assurance in international social and behavioural science research. The changes in outcomes among pupils, educators and in the classroom, and the programme’s impact. Extra care was taken because children participated in the study. The process for obtaining parental consent, simplifying language for child assent, ensuring pupils were recruited in a fair manner, and establishing protocols for reporting adverse events were thoroughly evaluated.

Table 1. Sample of quantitative surveys, Phase 3

Pupil surveys	BGS schools		Control schools	
	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Number of responses	2,967	2,326	1,144	966
Teacher surveys	Pre-training	Post-training	Post-lesson	
	306	113	48	

► Data from control schools was collected in autumn 2025 only.

Table 2. Sample of qualitative inquiry, BGS schools*

Participant	Tool	Autumn 2024*	Autumn 2025
School headteachers	Interviews	0	2
BGS leads	FGDs/interviews	3 (5 BGS leads)	2 (6 BGS leads)
Teachers who taught BGS	FGDs	4 (14 teachers)	2 (4 teachers)
Pupils	FGDs	6 (36 pupils)	5 (25 pupils)

► ‘FGD’ stands for ‘Focus Group Discussion’.

► *Qualitative data collected in Phase 2 (autumn 2024) is used in the report to support the findings.

► Qualitative data was not collected in Phase 3, spring 2026.

Phase 3: Building Evidence*

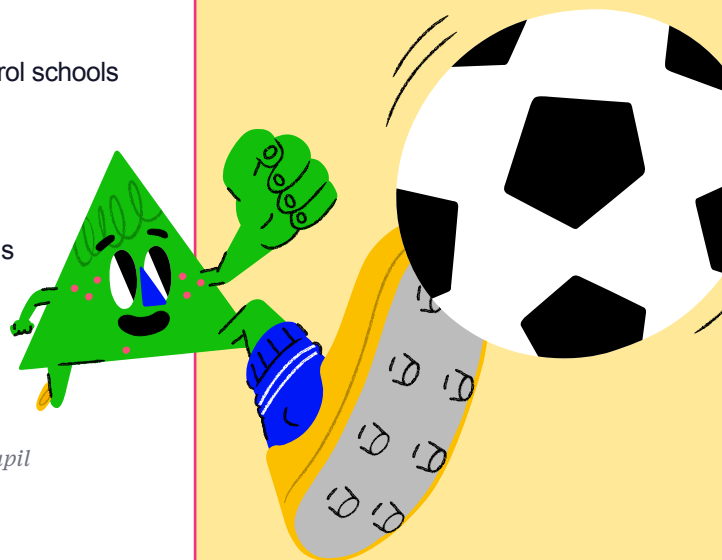
Autumn 2025

- Pupil pre- and post-test surveys in 12 BGS and five control schools
- Educator pre- and post-training surveys in 11 schools

Spring 2026

- Pupil pre- and post-test surveys in six BGS schools
- Educator pre- and post-training surveys in nine schools
- Teacher post-lesson surveys in six schools

- **In Phase 3, there is an overlap of schools that participated in the pupil surveys, educator surveys and teacher surveys. The total number of schools that participated in any one of the surveys is 24 schools.*



At the classroom level, BGS broadened critical discussions to cover emotional expression, friendships, and healthy boyhood, topics often overlooked in primary education.

Analysis

Univariate and bivariate analysis (by gender, type of school: BGS and control, and time: pre and post) was carried out from the quantitative survey data. Most analyses of BGS school outcomes consist of combined data from BGS schools that participated either in autumn 2025 or spring 2026. Where comparisons between control and BGS schools are made, the sample consists of those BGS and control schools that participated in the same term. That is, Phase 3 control schools were recruited in autumn 2025, and pupil and educator outcomes were compared at pre-test and post-test between BGS and control schools participating

that term, as shown in Box 1. Control and BGS schools outcomes were compared for schools that participated in the pupil survey in August 2025. Statistical tests²⁸ were used to assess if outcomes varied significantly between groups, such as between pre- and post-test outcomes or between control and BGS schools. Where the differences are meaningful or statistically significant²⁹, they are mentioned as 'significant' in this report.

The interview and focus groups audio files were transcribed and coded by theme based on the Theory of Change. Anonymity of the participants was maintained.



Key findings

This section describes the outcomes of BGS for pupils, educators, and the classroom environment and where the programme has demonstrated impact.

Positive changes in pupil outcomes and impact

Decline in acceptance of restrictive gender stereotypes

In BGS schools, pre-post results showed a decline in agreement with restrictive gender stereotypes, indicating increased support for gender equality. For example, the proportion of girls and boys who agreed that 'boys must be good at sport to be popular' declined

from 8% to 3%, and 19% to 14%, respectively (Table 3). Similarly, the proportion of girls and boys who agreed that 'pink cards are not suitable for boys' declined from 8% to 6%, and 15% to 12%, respectively.

Table 3. Percent pupils' agreement on the following attitudes related to gender stereotypes, by gender of pupil and time of survey, BGS schools

	Girls		Boys	
	Pre-test (1,475)	Post-test (1,087)	Pre-test (1,383)	Post-test (1,136)
"Boys must be good at sport to be popular."	8%	3%*	19%	14%*
"Pink cards are not suitable for a boy."	8%	6%*	15%	12%*
"Boys like winning more than girls do."	19%	16%	36%	31%*
"It is okay for boys to physically fight."	9%	7%	15%	15%
"Boys who cry look weak."	6%	5%	8%	8%
"Boys should not become nurses because these are women's jobs."	6%	5%	12%	11%
"Girls must look nice to be popular."	12%	9%*	10%	9%
"Girls are kinder than boys."	19%	13%*	13%	13%

► T-test used to compare the proportions between pre and post-test among pupils of the same gender to assess if this change is statistically significant.

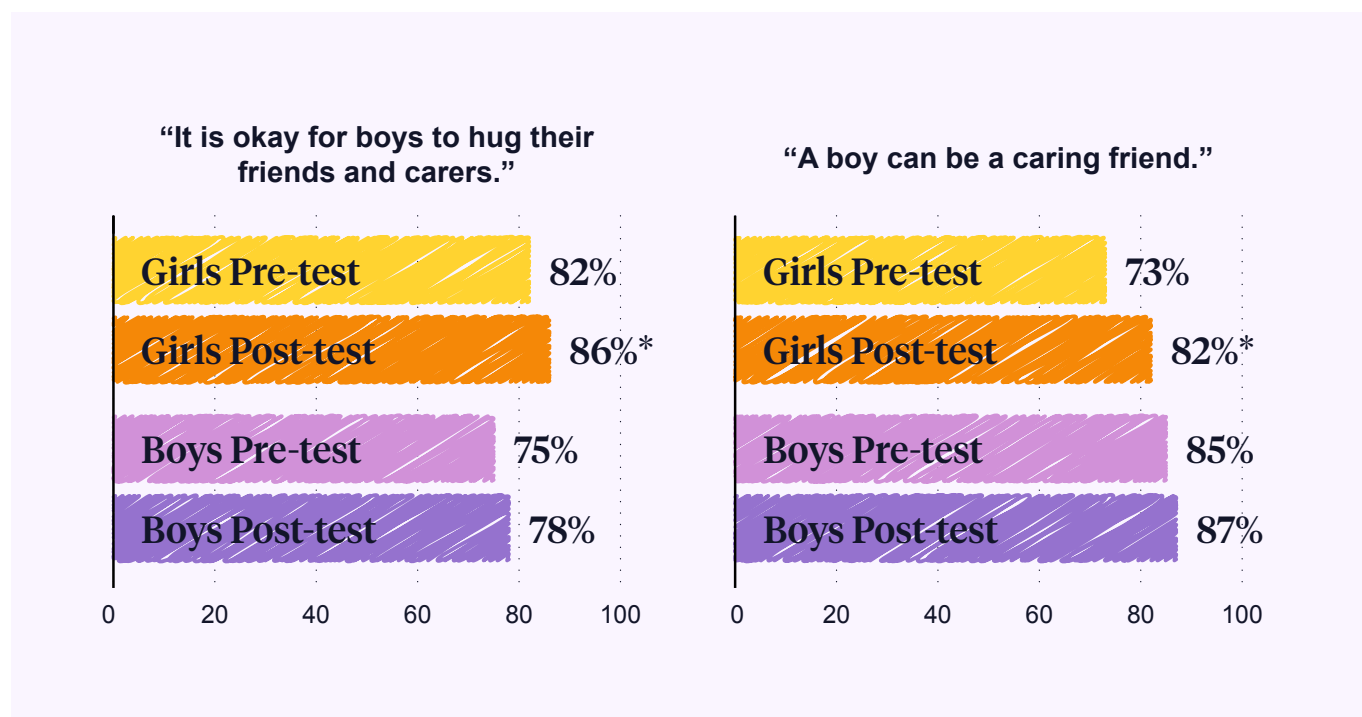
► * T-test value is significant at $p < 0.05$.

Increase in support for caring behaviours among boys

BGS had an impact on increasing reflection on healthy boyhood. The percentage of girls agreeing that ‘it is okay for boys to hug their friends and carers’ rose significantly, from 82% to 86%, while agreement among boys increased from 75% to 78%. Similarly, more pupils agreed that boys can be caring friends (Figure 2 below and Figure 3 on the following page).

Acceptance of boys hugging their friends and carers showed a significant positive change from pre- to post-test in BGS schools, but not in control schools. In BGS schools, the percentage of pupils who agreed that this behaviour is acceptable increased significantly from 78% to 82%. In control schools, the increase from 72% to 76% was not significant.

Figure 2. Increase in percentage of girls and boys from BGS schools who strongly agree/ agree with caring behaviours among boys



► T-test used to compare the proportions between pre- and post-test among pupils of the same gender to assess if they are statistically different.

► *T-test value is significant at $p < 0.05$ among girls for both statements

Increased acceptance of pursuing interests and careers regardless of gender stereotypes

In BGS schools, the percentage of girls who found it easy to pursue activities without gender constraints increased significantly, from 49% to 56% between the pre-test and post-test. For boys, this proportion rose from 41% to 45%. When comparing all pupils from control and BGS schools from the autumn 2025 cohort, at post-test, the increase in BGS schools to 51% (from 44%) was significant, while the increase to 45% in control schools (from 42%) was not. This also suggests that BGS had an impact on giving pupils the confidence to feel that they can pursue any activity without gender constraints.

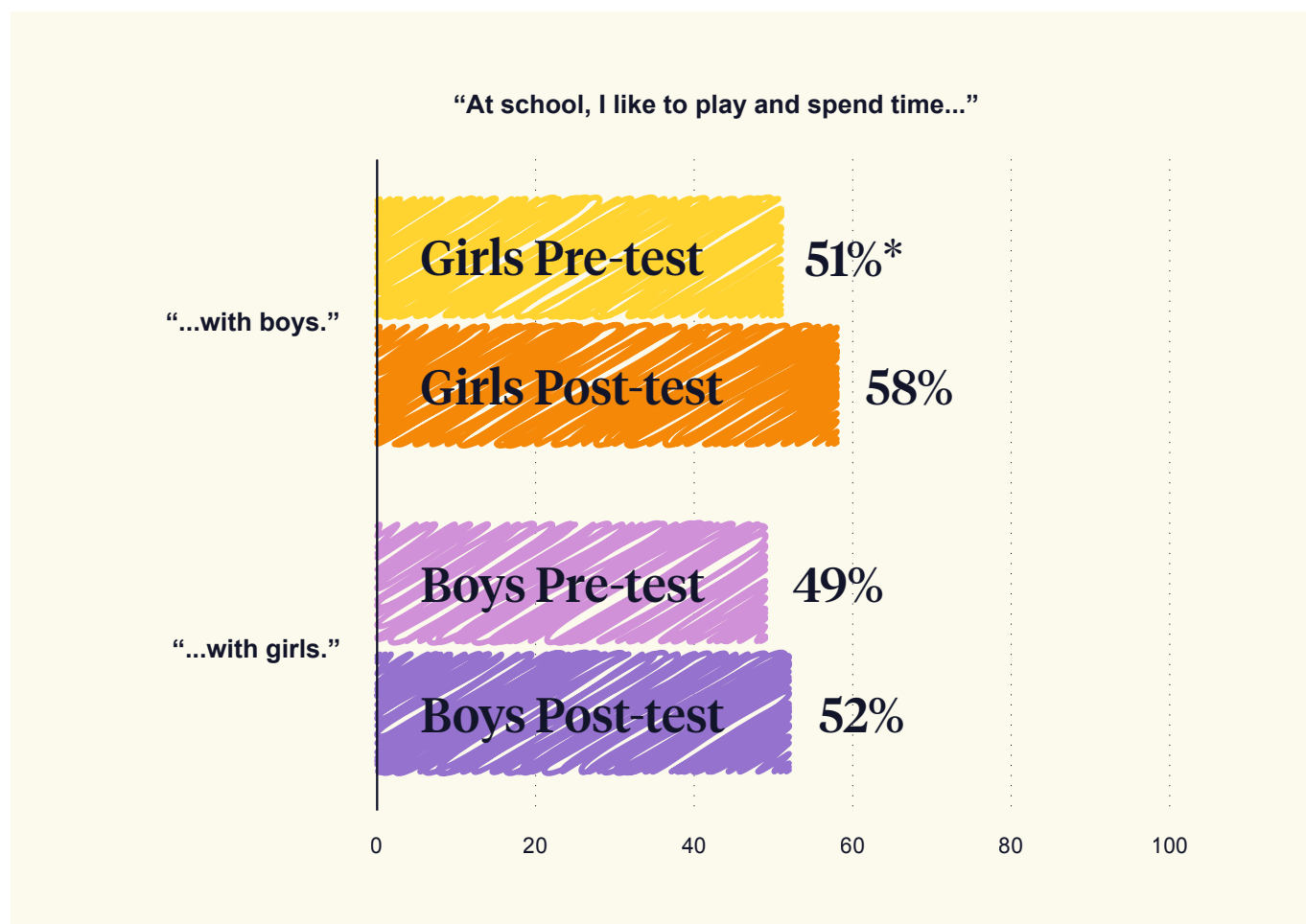
Engaging in the BGS lessons was closely linked to a strong belief and acceptance that one can remain true to oneself and not limited by gender norms. As expressed by pupils:

“The lessons inspired me to know that boys can do whatever they want, and same with girls.”
– Pupil, Year 5-6

“I really liked that in the lessons we got more courage to do what we wanted.”
– Pupil, Year 3-4

“I’d tell other pupils that our PSHE lessons are about not being afraid of what other people think. Only trust your heart.”
– Pupil, Year 4-6³⁰

Figure 3. Increase in percentage of girls and boys from BGS schools who enjoy play across genders



- T-test used to compare the proportions between pre- and post-test among pupils of the same gender to determine if they are statistically different.
- *T-test value is significant at $p < 0.05$ among girls.

When it came to views on different professions, footballers and firefighters were the two professions with a clear increase in the belief that anyone, regardless of gender, could pursue them. Both boys and girls showed this change. For girls, the share who agreed that anyone can be a footballer went up significantly, from 71% to 77%. For boys, it rose significantly, from 53% to 61%.

While the evaluation participants did believe that they can follow any career or engage in any activity, focus group discussions revealed that pupils (and parents and carers) continue to be wary of the potential of being bullied. This concern was especially felt for boys.

"I think parents want you to be whoever you want to be, but they can [steer] you... so you are not bullied at school. If a boy wants to dance, their mum will be like, you can do that, but I wouldn't do it, because you might get bullied at school."

– Pupil, Year 5-6

"Girls can be a footballer or rapper, but if a boy wants to be a dancer or a singer, they may get bullied."

– Pupil, Year 5-6

"I learned that it's okay for boys and girls to play together, because I used to just only play with boys until we did the gender stereotypes lesson."

– Pupil, Year 3-4



Increase in willingness to develop friendships with peers of all genders

After the BGS lessons, significantly more girls said they enjoy playing with boys, and more boys said they enjoy playing with girls, as illustrated in Figure 3. The slight increase in these proportions among control school pupils was not significant.

Although pupils found it easier to make friends with those of the same gender, conversations in the focus groups indicated that BGS encouraged thinking towards respect for peers of all genders and appreciating each other's company.

Compared to control school pupils, BGS school pupils demonstrated a positive impact towards caring friendships with boys. For instance, a greater proportion of pupils felt that it is easier for them to make friends with boys and invite boys to their birthday parties in BGS schools, compared to control schools. **This increase from pre- to post-test in BGS schools was significant, but the change in control schools was not (Figure 4).**

BGS opened a space for discussing and challenging gender stereotypes

After having the BGS lessons, pupils demonstrated strong interest in having conversations about gender stereotypes. For instance, more than 80% of pupils (86% of girls and 80% of boys) reported that BGS had helped them talk about gender stereotypes. Additionally, 69% of girls and 60% of boys expressed interest in discussing gender stereotypes with friends; and 73% of girls and 62% of boys felt so, with parents/carers. BGS also increased pupils' confidence to challenge gender stereotypes as illustrated in these words:

"If my friend was being bullied, maybe, we were riding our bikes together and someone said she has a blue bike and should get a pink one... I could say that she's allowed a blue bike if she wants."

– Pupil, Year 5-6

"I think it's quite unfair that girls only have football on Friday. It's wrong. I think half the week it could be boys, and half the week it could be for girls."

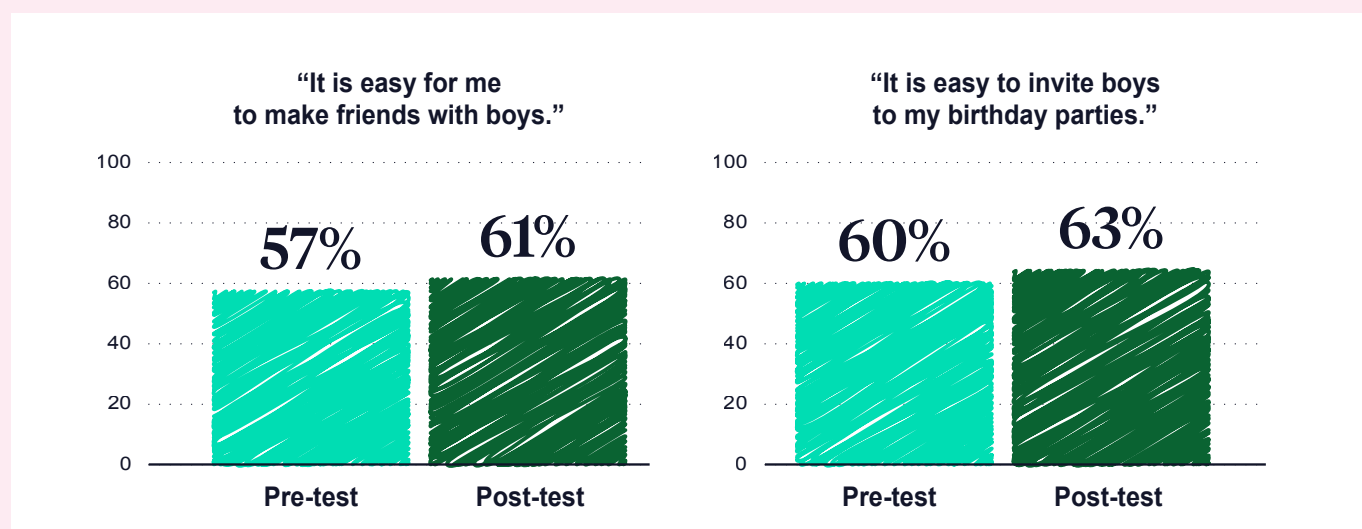
– Pupil, Year 5-6

If you have a friend, the most important thing is that you respect each other; enjoy each other's company (when asked what pupils learned from BGS)

– Pupil, Year 3-4



Figure 4. Increase in percentage of girls and boys who enjoy play across genders, among BGS school pupils



► T-test used to compare the proportions between pre- and post-test among pupils from the same type of school (BGS or control) to determine if they are statistically different.

► * T-test value is significant at $p < 0.05$ between pre- and post-test among BGS school pupils, for both statements.



Positive changes in educator outcomes

Recognition of unconscious gender bias in one's own practice

The online training for educators (headteachers, KS2 teachers, and non-teaching staff) and delivery of the curriculum was associated with a significant shift towards awareness of biases in one's teaching and at school. Teachers who taught BGS shared their experiences in the post-lesson survey. Results indicated that 98% became more aware of the language they use in the classroom. Additionally, 94% reported increased awareness of potential biases toward boys and their educational abilities, while 96% felt that teaching BGS helped them recognise unintended gender stereotypes in other educational materials.

In the focus group discussions, many educators mentioned that:

“*Teachers and staff have spoken about things that they didn't know and the unconscious bias [they had] and with the training, we needed a deeper look at ourselves and the things that we said and we did.*

– BGS Lead

“*BGS made me think about the language I use in my class.*

– Teacher

“*BGS made me aware of some of the gender split in our extracurricular activities and what we could do to address this.*

– Teacher

“*I realised that I say sweetie a lot to girls. So, I've stopped saying that since everyone is a superstar.*

– BGS Lead

Increased recognition of gender as a social construct

Educators increasingly recognised that gender stereotypes are socially constructed rather than innate. Following the training, the proportion of teachers who believed children learn about gender through innate biology fell from 52% to 9%, suggesting increased recognition of social and environmental influences. In addition, a greater proportion of educators reported that children learn about gender from external sources, such as from school, television and social media, toys and books and from peers and friends.

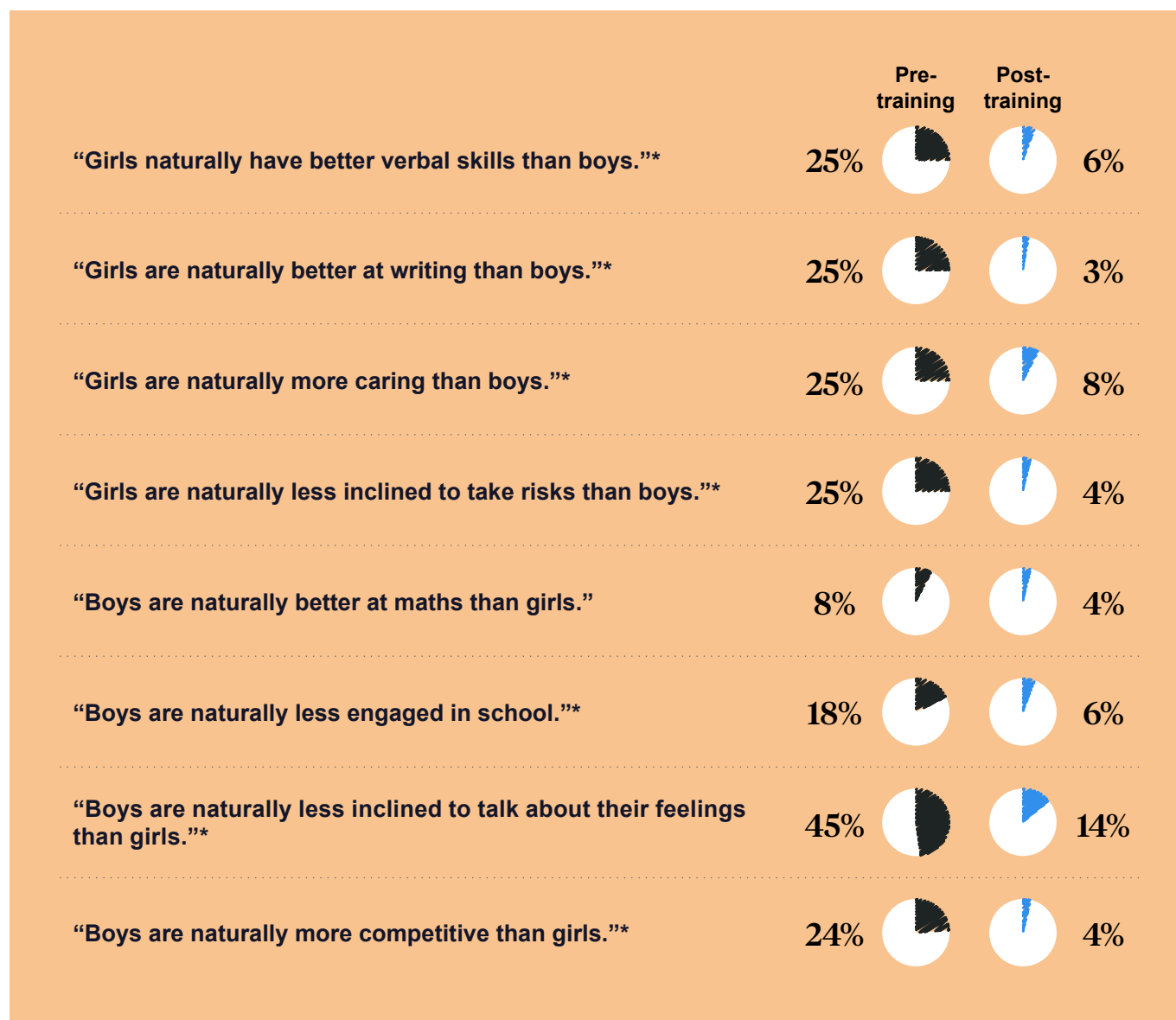
Educators were also asked whether girls and boys differ naturally in their abilities. At pre-test, a quarter of educators felt that there were natural differences between girls and boys in their educational abilities. Almost half felt that boys and girls naturally differ in expressing themselves, that boys are less inclined to talk about their feelings. However, after the training, very few educators endorsed these beliefs as shown in Figure 5 on the following page. The post-training results suggest increasing recognition of gender as a social construct and not something that determines children's educational abilities. However, a notable 14% continued to agree that boys are naturally less inclined to talk about their feelings, suggesting that this belief is held more strongly than those associated with educational abilities.

Increased recognition that gender stereotypes affect pupils' interests and careers

The online training was associated with a significant increase in educators' recognition that gender stereotypes influence pupils' subject preferences (significantly rising from 26% in the pre-training to 50% in the post-training). The recognition that stereotypes shape career aspirations also increased significantly, from 36% to 63%. Post-lesson results corroborate this, and show that a large proportion of educators (94%) felt that BGS made them more interested in learning about how teachers can challenge gender stereotypes.



Figure 5. Decline in percentage of educators who strongly agree/agree with gender stereotypes, after the training



► Z-test used to compare the proportions between pre and post-training to assess if they are statistically different.

► * Z-test value is significant at $p < 0.05$.



The online training opened doors that teachers may have otherwise not realised, views that they may have had embedded, like unconscious views that they needed challenging with.

– BGS Lead



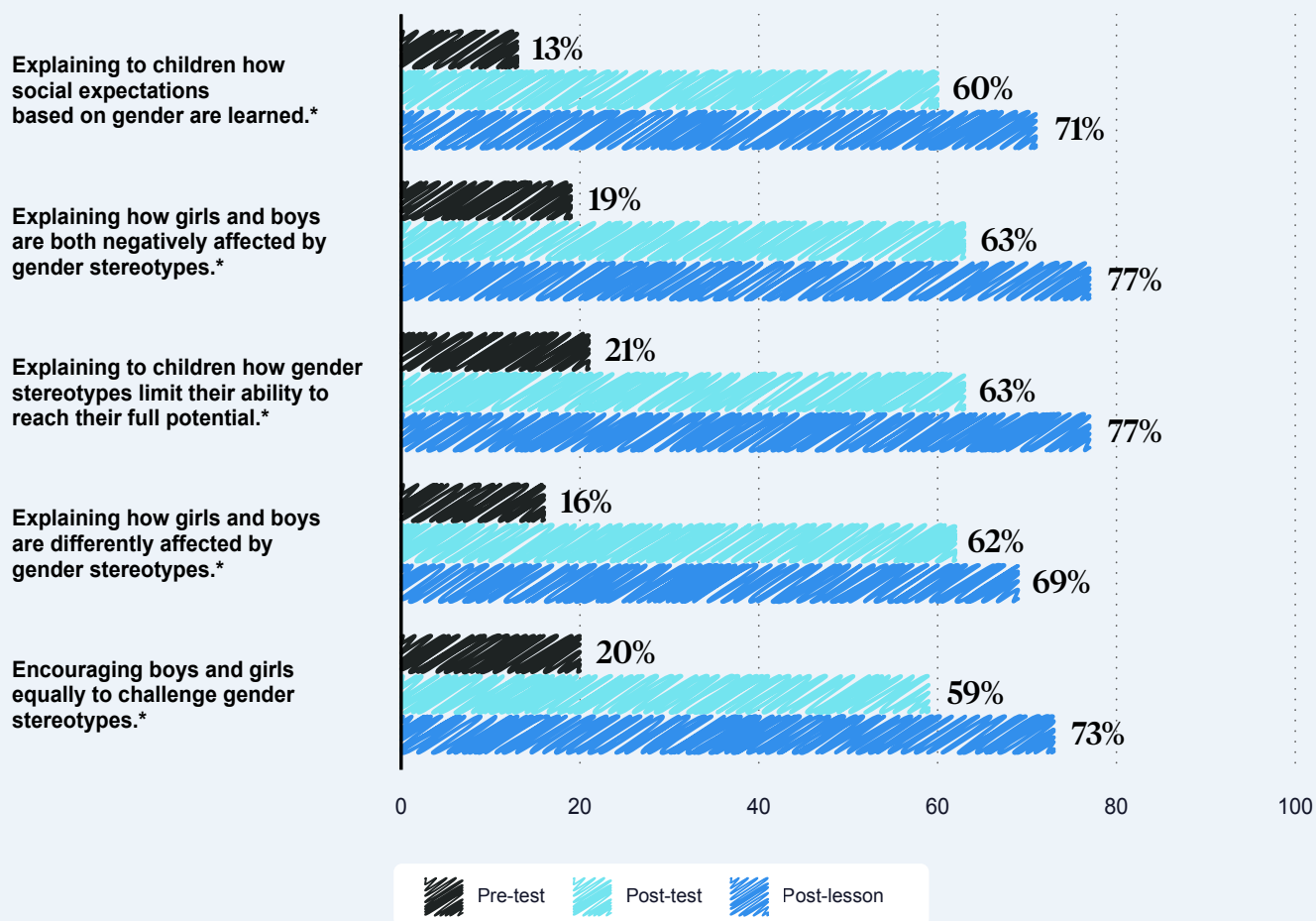
Increased confidence to have conversations on gender stereotypes and challenge them

Educators were asked to rate their confidence in explaining gender stereotypes on a scale of 1 to 5, ranging from 'not confident at all' to 'completely confident'. After the training, more than three times as many educators reported feeling 'very confident' or 'completely confident' (rated their confidence as either 4 or 5) when explaining gender stereotypes to pupils, a significant rise (Figure 6). Teaching the lessons was also associated with further increases in confidence in teachers to explain gender stereotypes to pupils, although the increase was higher from pre-training to post-training. The mean score of confidence (calculated from the six items shown in Figures 6 and 7) rose from 10.7 before training to 16.2 after training and 17.8 after teaching the lessons.

Educators reported greater confidence in addressing questions from parents and carers about gender stereotypes, rising from 11% to 43% after training. This figure increased to 59% among teachers following lesson delivery (Figure 7). However, further support is needed to help educators engage with parents and carers, as outlined in the next section.

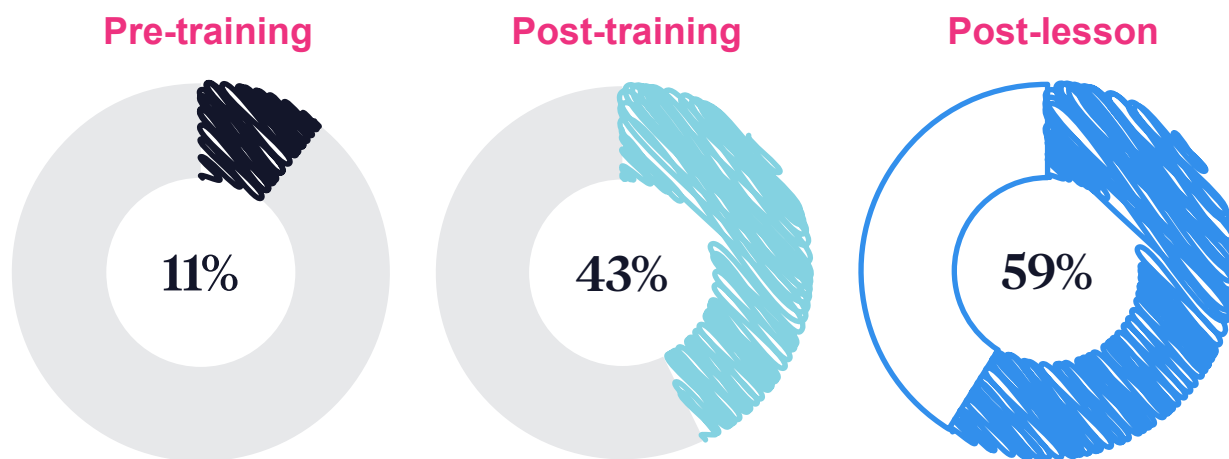
Educators reported increased confidence in challenging gender stereotypes. For instance, agreement with the statement "When I hear people use gender stereotypes in front of children, I challenge them" significantly rose from 62% before training to 80% after training.

Figure 6. Increase in percentage of educators who feel very confident/confident to talk about gender stereotypes with pupils



- Z-test used to compare the proportions between pre and post-training to assess if they are statistically different.
- *Z-test value is significant at $p < 0.05$.

Figure 7. Increase in percentage of educators who feel very confident/confident in responding to questions from parents/carers about gender stereotypes



- Z-test used to compare the proportions between pre and post-training to assess if they are statistically different.
- *Z-test value is significant at $p < 0.05$.

Positive change in the classroom environment

BGS expanded conversations on gender stereotypes beyond careers, to include emotions, friendships and healthy boyhood

Focus group discussions with teachers, BGS leads, and pupils suggested that typical discussions on gender stereotypes at school often focus on career choices. However, they found that BGS broadened their understanding of how gender stereotypes manifest and of the ways in which healthy emotions and friendships can counter them.

Educators reported they were already aware that gender stereotypes often discourage girls from pursuing certain careers and interests, such as engineering and football, before BGS. They were also familiar with programmes and assemblies addressing gender-stereotyped professions and interests among girls. However, BGS has helped educators recognise that gender stereotypes also affect boys in different ways and can negatively impact them as well. Teachers noted that BGS increased acceptance of boys as caring and expressive. For instance:

“ I think that the pupils were very open on what girls can do. Girls can do anything. The only thing from before was that boys are more likely to fight and boys are more likely to play rough. And I think [one pupil] had a bit of a struggle with understanding why his brother was telling him to play fight, but he didn't want to. But by the end of the lesson, when we were rehearsing what he could say to his brother, he was saying that it is his right to decide not to play fight.

– Teacher

“ Some boys stepped forward and said, well, I cried yesterday, or I cried last week, and then some of the boys that put themselves up for being that vulnerable were respected boys in the class.

– Teacher

“ I was quite impressed. The pupils were saying, but we can't put that into a girl box. We can't put that into a boy box. We put [qualities of a friend] all into the human box. I thought that was lovely.

– Teacher

BGS facilitated interest and practice in listening to different perspectives

Pupils repeatedly mentioned that they enjoyed listening to their peers and that BGS offered such a space.

The boys were fully on board [with] the birthday cards, the careers, the skills of the jobs. But the emotional stuff really touched a nerve with the boys. Discussions on hugging and crying. And I think by the end of the lesson, they were like, Oh, fair enough. Yeah, boys can hug. And yeah, it's okay if boys have a cry.

– Teacher

“ I liked the lessons because I enjoyed hearing other people's opinions about what a girl can do and what a boy can do, and I really think other pupils will enjoy it.

– Pupil, Year 3-4

“ I enjoyed the lessons and tests, because it's something that you can have a free opinion and there's no right or wrong answer.

– Pupil, Year 3-4

Pupils felt supported by teachers and classmates in challenging gender stereotypes

Teachers also noted that classroom discussions helped pupils develop critical awareness and feel supported in challenging gender stereotypes.

“ We normally have a boys' football day and a girls' football day, but my pupils have actually said, why can't we have a mixed football day.

– Teacher

“ There was a lot of interesting discussion around the phrase 'man up' - where this comes from and why it's challenging.

– Teacher



I had an occurrence in my class where someone found a packed lunch and there was a superhero on it. This was after the lessons and then a girl in my class said, that's got superheroes, it's for boys. Then almost the whole class said that you cannot say that. So it's [the BGS lessons] given my class the confidence to say that's not okay. And they were able to challenge a child who held that stereotype.

– Teacher



Enablers of BGS

Focus group discussions from Phase 2 and Phase 3 showed that schools signed up for BGS when it was aligned with their broader mission and because it gave pupils the tools to understand gender equality and embrace diversity. The programme was well-received by teachers and pupils, supporting the implementation of BGS. Educators recommended strengthening parental engagement to further improve the acceptance of BGS.

BGS's alignment with schools' mission on opportunities for all

It emphasises the message that opportunities are available to everyone.

“ BGS tied in so well with our work on careers-based learning. The idea that the world of opportunity is open to all pupils.

– KS2 Teacher

“ We're raising children's aspirations, their play choices, what they might go on to next in their life. That's what we're doing when we're thinking about gender stereotypes.

– BGS Lead

BGS also supports the commitment of schools to develop respect among pupils

“ Our school vision is that we want children to know who they are, respect others for who they are, and to never stop learning. [It] isn't just about English and maths...And I think BGS aligns with that vision.

– KS2 Teacher

BGS's alignment with schools' efforts to foster gender equality and embrace diversity

Schools joined BGS to provide students with a more comprehensive understanding of diversity and protected characteristics. Schools that had previous positive experiences teaching programmes on racial diversity, child safeguarding or diversity also signed up for BGS.

“ We have 64 ethnicities in our school, quite a multicultural school. We have done work on looking at the protected characteristics and focused a lot on race, but as an equality leader we are now also thinking about gender equality. We want our pupils to understand that nothing is limited for them. Just raising aspirations and empowering our pupils to feel as though they can aspire outside of the parameters set by family and by the unconscious biases of those around them. We want our pupils to have that confidence, to be able to say no, and then be able to support their family and friends to think similarly.

– BGS Lead

“ We do a lot of work around protected characteristics and diversity. BGS is just another part of that toolkit.

– BGS Lead

“ We're quite small, rural school and we don't have a lot of diversity. We are keen to do everything to enable our children for when they leave this bubble.

– BGS Lead

Several schools reported that BGS complemented current and previous programmes by providing a shared language and historical context to better understand the origins of inequality and gender stereotyping. BGS helps pupils develop critical thinking around gender norms and stereotypes from an early age. This is especially important as schools face increasing concerns about online polarisation and misogyny.

“ We need to be proactive, there's lots of need to address gender and misogyny. And we want to be one step ahead. We want to be preventative rather than reactive, which is why we got involved with BGS.

– BGS Lead



I marketed the curriculum in the context of national data discrepancy: that we are addressing that data discrepancy. The fact that boys do better in maths generally, and girls do better with reading and writing... But [children] are not limited and can achieve anything they want.

– BGS Lead

High satisfaction with the online training

At post-test, almost all educators were satisfied with the training (98%). Of these, 45% reported being 'very satisfied', while 53% reported being 'satisfied' with the online training. Educators appreciated that the online training is self-paced and allows them to revisit materials. Many teachers found the videos thought-provoking and insightful, particularly regarding the impact of gender stereotypes on children. Teachers also valued the use of well-researched, evidence-based and current resources. They considered the training a useful refresher on unconscious gender biases. As shared:

"You hear the words online training and your heart kind of sinks thinking it will be tedious. But this training was not. It was very interactive, with research behind it. You could take it at your own pace and it was more manageable. It was easier to digest."

– KS2 Teacher

"The teacher training makes us reflect on our own practice. You can really easily slip back into that pattern of buying different toy treats for boys and girls. BGS just reminds you to stop and ask, 'what am I doing?'"

– BGS Lead

Pupils found the lessons interesting

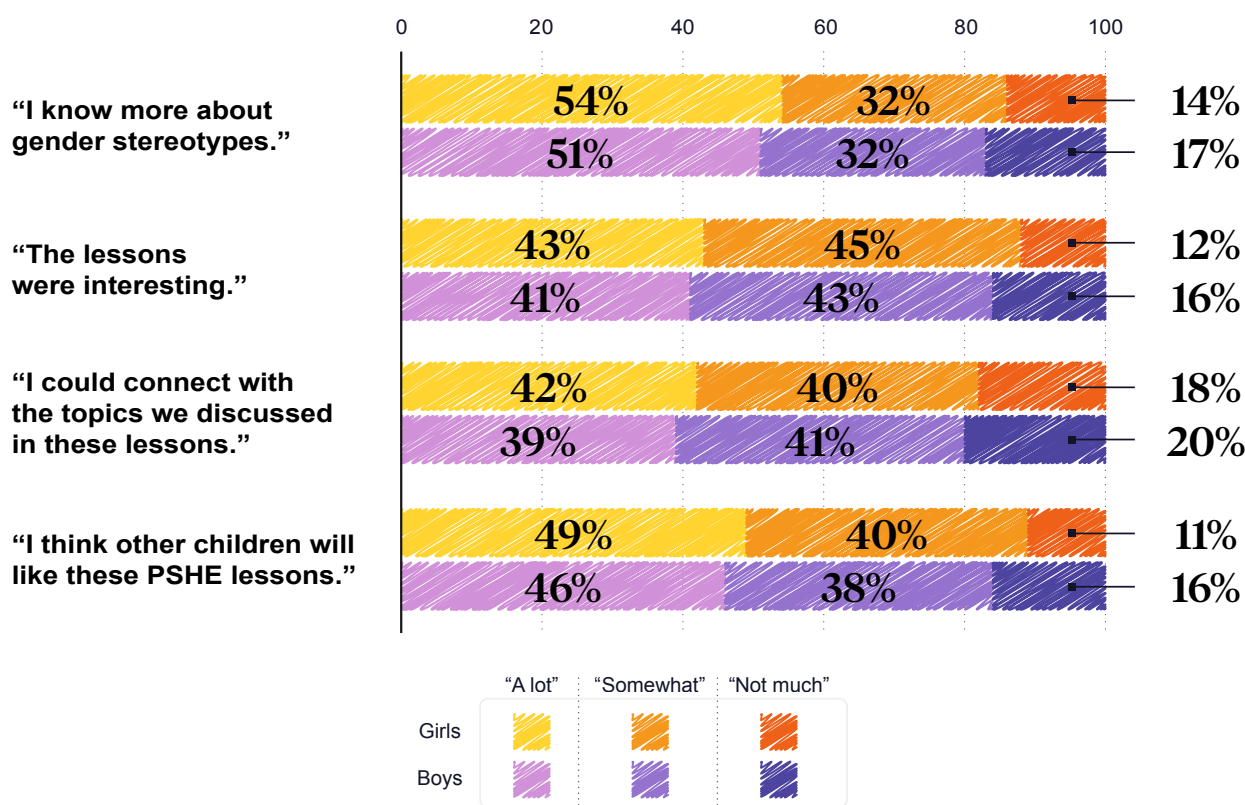
Survey results showed that most pupils found the lessons interesting and think other children will enjoy BGS as well, as shown in the figure (Figure 8). The results were similar for girls and boys. In focus groups, pupils said they enjoyed activities such as analysing greeting cards, moving around the classroom, and discussing what makes a good friend.

We have tried to be very sensitive in engaging our parents. With race it has been fine, but when it comes to gender, we're treading carefully and not trying to scare our parents off. We have weekly assemblies where our parents have been invited to come and learn.

– BGS Lead



Figure 8. Percentage of BGS school girls and boys reporting their feedback on BGS





Schools' engagement with parent and carer community

Some schools anticipated that parents and carers might mistakenly believe the curriculum focuses on gender identity. As a result, schools were proactive in contacting them early on to communicate what the programme includes and excludes.

“ We preempted that [BGS could lead to backlash in the community] because when families hear the word gender, they assume it is about identity and sexuality but BGS is about gender stereotypes. So I sent a letter to the parents on what was going to be covered, year by year, and made sure that they understood it was about stereotypes, not sexuality.

– BGS Lead

“ Our Head Teacher sent out emails to parents to say that BGS would be happening, and she very clearly outlined that it would not be about gender identity, which is something that our parent community struggles with because it is a hot topic. So we had to be very clear that it wasn't about gender identity.

– Teacher

One school reported backlash from parents and carers, based on the fear that BGS would open up discussions on gender identity.

“ I think it was a small number of parents who probably through WhatsApp, riled up a lot of parents. It was largely about misunderstanding what the lessons were about. The parents presumed we were talking about gender identity.

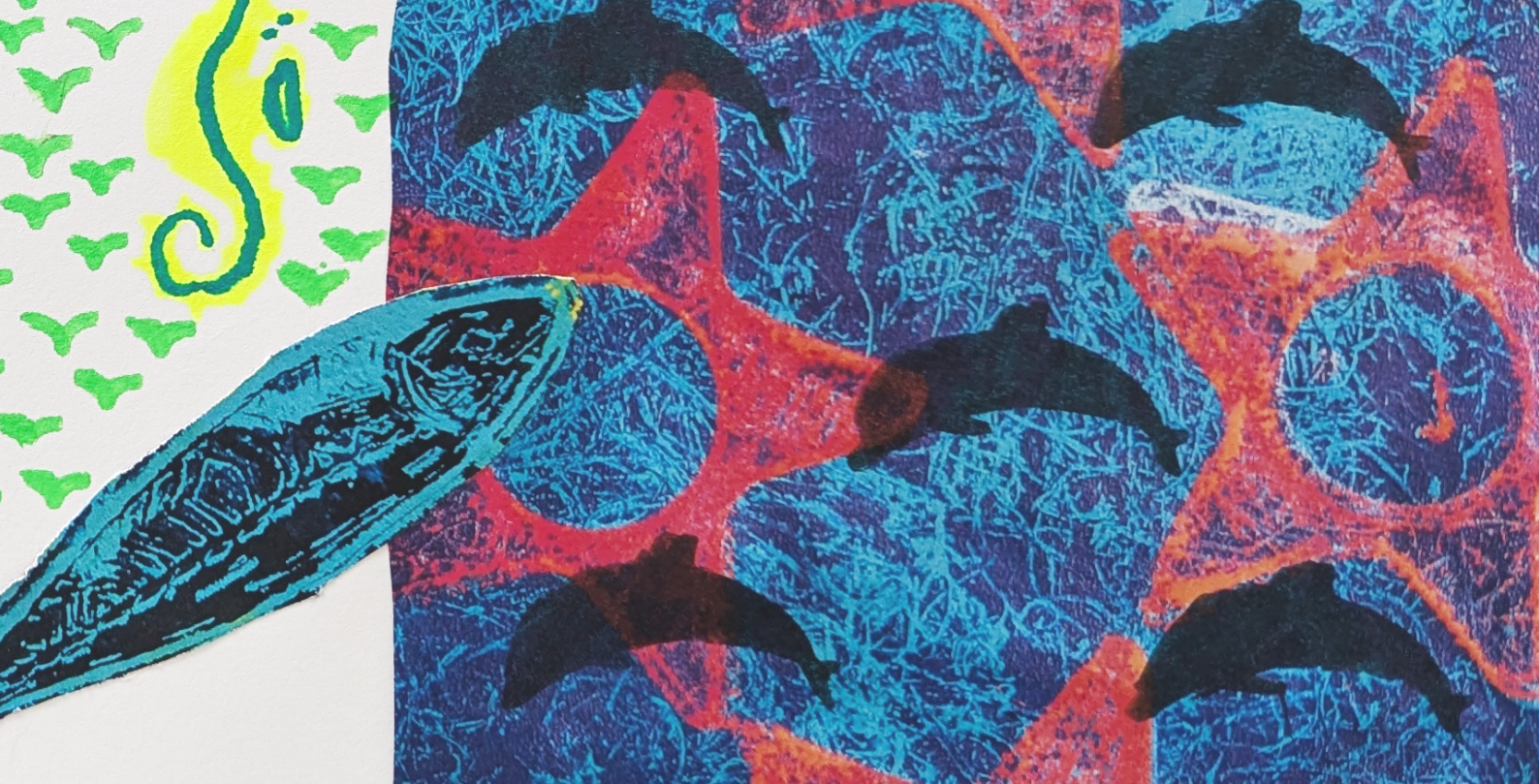
– BGS Lead

A few schools reported using pupil voice and involving both pupils and the board of governors to communicate the programme to parents and carers.

“ I think we pitched it right. I didn't make a fanfare, but just shared within each class in the newsletter and on Facebook. We had materials out at parents' evening, where they could see what the children had been doing. The children also presented their learnings from the autumn term at the board of governors meeting, which was lovely.

– BGS Lead

Following the pilot, teachers recommended providing parents and carers with more information on gender stereotypes to address misconceptions. This feedback led to the development of a parent and carer resource. However, post-lesson survey results suggested that 75% of teachers did not use this resource. While many indicated they plan to use it in the future, some were interested in more guidance in increasing parental engagement on BGS. A few suggestions from the qualitative inquiry that emerged were using school assemblies and developing take-home assignments for children to actively talk with their parents and carers on gender stereotypes.



“ *I'd like our classes to include gender stereotypes in the annual assembly, where parents hear what pupils have learned.*

– BGS Lead

“ *You could give a home learning task. Maybe interview a relative about what gender stereotypes they've experienced.*

– Teacher

Limitations of the evaluation

A few limitations should be noted.

First, participation was voluntary, with schools self-selecting into the programme. This introduces a risk of selection bias, as participating schools may differ from non-participants in motivation, resources, or prior experience with similar projects. As a result, the findings may not generalise to schools less likely to participate.

Second, the quasi-experimental, pre-post control-intervention design is suitable for evaluating programme outcomes in real-world settings, but does not allow for causal inference concerning the impact of the programme. Although pre-test data were collected to establish baseline comparability, unmeasured confounding variables may still have influenced the results.

Third, these findings reflect short-term change rather than sustained behaviour change. Longitudinal follow-up, through repeated surveys with the same schools or cohorts, would help establish firmer conclusions about longer-term impact.

Fourth, only five control schools participated, and comparative data were available only for the autumn 2025 cohort. This restricts cross-group comparisons and limits tracking trends over time. Caution is warranted

regarding the extent to which the results apply to other schools. School characteristics, such as location, student demographics, or school or community norms, may limit how well findings apply to other places or groups. Findings from the qualitative inquiry should be interpreted as illustrative, not definitive.

Conclusion

The BGS programme produced significant positive shifts among pupils in intervention schools, including reduced acceptance of restrictive gender stereotypes, increased willingness for cross-gender play and friendships, and greater support for caring behaviours in boys and towards boys. Pupils also showed increased belief that career paths are open regardless of gender, and over two thirds expressed interest in continuing these conversations. Educators showed even sharper shifts: unconscious bias dropped substantially, recognition that stereotypes limit pupils' potential roughly doubled across measures, and confidence in discussing gender stereotypes with pupils and parents/carers more than tripled after training. Notably, most of these changes were not observed in control schools, strengthening the case that the BGS programme drove the shifts. Combined with high satisfaction rates among pupils and educators, these results position BGS as a promising, scalable programme aligned with schools' broader goals around respect and inclusion.

Recommendations for scale

Use open-source models aligned with schools' missions to increase adoption

The BGS programme has been designed from the outset for broad, sustainable adoption. **An open-source model removes the financial barriers that commonly limit uptake of new educational initiatives, ensuring the programme is as accessible to under-resourced schools as to those with greater capacity.** Engaging all-school staff creates a supportive environment to discuss and challenge stereotypes. It helps extend these conversations beyond the classroom and into the playground and extra curricular activities. This model has potential to reach a significant number of children and teachers through a low-cost, teacher-led approach.

The evaluation findings also indicated that BGS closely aligns with schools' missions on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). BGS can act as an effective entry point to build staff capacity and confidence to teach on equity, discrimination, and gender equality, and establish strong classroom foundations that other programmes can build upon. For schools already delivering content on healthy relationships, girls' empowerment, or broader EDI themes, BGS addressed a common gap of explicit engagement with how gender norms and stereotypes uniquely shape boys' experiences.

Leverage accreditation and peer endorsement to build credibility

Accreditation is a key lever for adoption. The BGS teacher training course is CPD-accredited and the curriculum is under review by the PSHE Association for accreditation. **These endorsements align the programme with existing professional standards, making it easier for school leaders, local authorities, and multi-academy trusts to adopt the programme with confidence and incorporate it into existing education frameworks.**

Alongside formal accreditation, outreach has centred teacher voices by highlighting the experiences of educators who have taught BGS. This peer-to-peer approach reflects evidence that adoption in education is significantly influenced by practitioner recommendation. The BGS programme has been featured in leading primary education publications, such as Education Today, Teach Primary, and QA Education. Sustaining and expanding this communications strategy through partnerships with education media will be important for reaching schools at scale.

Strengthen partnerships to increase sustainability

The long-term aim is systemic integration, to embed BGS materials within broader teacher development frameworks, safeguarding initiatives, and curricula. **Partnerships across education, child safeguarding, and gender equality extend the programme's reach and build credibility through association with trusted organisations, integrating BGS into existing ecosystems of education training and programmes.** Partners such as Cummins Education Champions played a key role in school outreach, especially in geographies such as Darlington, while networks including the PSHE leads, Healthy Schools leads, the Chartered College of Teaching, and Boys' Impact have helped connect BGS with established education actors. As BGS continues to scale, strategic alignment with organisations that have established routes into schools, local authorities, and multi-academy trusts will be essential for reaching new settings.

In addition to institutional partnerships, greater investment in parent and carer engagement is needed, both to deepen impact and to build demand for the programme's rollout. Impact is strengthened when conversations at home reinforce equitable norms. Schools can use existing channels, such as assemblies, newsletters, and school events to communicate BGS clearly enough for parents and carers to echo its messages themselves. Engaged carers can also drive demand by encouraging schools to introduce or expand the programme. Proactively addressing misconceptions about the programme is key to building family-level trust that sustains programme engagement.



Implications for policy

The BGS programme is part of a dynamic education ecosystem shaped by national policy, cultural shifts, and evolving social expectations around gender, health, and wellbeing. Recent government direction has signalled a clear shift towards upstream, preventative, evidence-based approaches that recognise equitable norms and healthy masculinities as central to gender equality, public health, and democratic stability. BGS is well-placed to both implement and inform the direction of policy.

Embed healthy masculinities within education

The revised RSE guidance going into effect in September 2026 and the National Curriculum Review of 2027 both reflect a growing emphasis on the role of schools in shaping personal development, healthy relationships, and inclusion and belonging. There is notable attention to early intervention at primary level, rather than delaying these topics until secondary school. The explicit mentions of educating on 'stereotypes about boys' and 'positive male role models' acknowledge the need to intentionally include boys in topics of gender stereotypes, equality, and belonging. Importantly, this should not be framed as an issue only for boys, since gender norms are collectively maintained and must be collectively challenged. It is equally important to include girls, who play an important role in reinforcing or disrupting harmful stereotypes of boys.

This aligns with the Good Childhood Report 2025³¹ that calls for funding targeted programmes that actively challenge harmful gender stereotypes, delivered both in school and in youth services, with content shaped by young people's experiences. Programmes like BGS, that focus on emotional literacy, healthy masculinities, and challenging discrimination in primary schools, directly embody this kind of upstream, evidence-based work these frameworks are calling for.

Reach boys before crisis

The BGS evaluation findings highlight the importance of reaching boys during childhood and early adolescence, when attitudes, behaviours, and social norms are still developing. By late adolescence or early adulthood, restrictive gender norms can manifest as poor mental health, misogyny, or violence, and the window for low-cost, high-impact intervention has passed. Both the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy and the Men's Health Strategy represent important commitments to addressing gendered harms early. This is especially urgent given the digital environments many boys now navigate, where harmful content can exploit loneliness and anxiety while promoting narrow models of masculinity. The evaluation suggests that addressing emotional wellbeing, relationships, identity, and gender norms could help build resilience to these influences.

Align with community services

Shifting gender norms requires consistency across the environments in which children grow up, which extends beyond schools. Stronger alignment between schools, NHS services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), local authorities, and national policy frameworks can help embed this preventative approach and ensure the work in the classroom is reinforced in wider communities. Community spaces, such as sports and youth clubs, libraries and childcare centres, offer places where children can play, make friends across genders, and learn and internalise gender norms. As such, they represent both a risk and opportunity, as they can reinforce the same harmful stereotypes that school-based programmes work to challenge. With appropriate support and investment, broader youth-centred services and community organisations are well-placed to extend and embed this work beyond the classroom.

Equally important is the role of the adults who lead and staff these community spaces, such as coaches, youth workers, librarians, and childcare workers. These adults can model healthy relationships and challenge harmful stereotypes, and would benefit from the same structured support and training that school-based programmes like BGS provide to teachers.



"The Outside
Doesn't Matter,
it's the Inside
That Counts!"

ALWAYS GO
FOR GENDER EQUALITY!
GAY GAY & GAY!

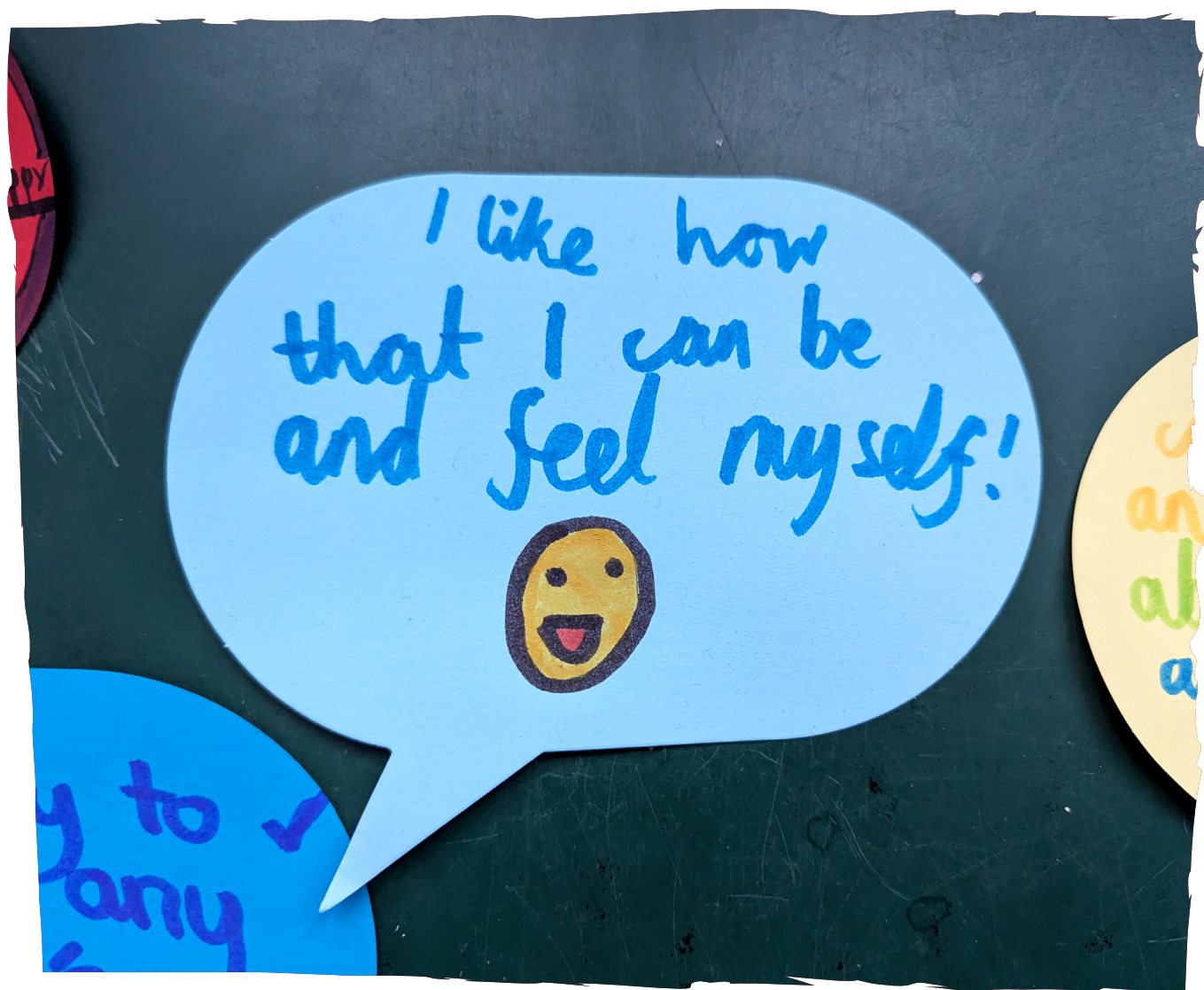
Conclusion

The findings of this evaluation demonstrate that gender stereotypes are neither inevitable nor fixed. When given the opportunity to reflect critically on gender norms, primary-aged children can develop more equitable attitudes, build stronger cross-gender relationships, and become more open to a wider range of opportunities and ways of expressing themselves. The evaluation also shows that educators are willing and able to facilitate these conversations when equipped with evidence-based tools and training.

At a time when concerns about children's wellbeing, online misogyny, gender-based violence, and boys' mental health are rising across the UK, prevention cannot begin in adolescence or adulthood. The attitudes, behaviours, and expectations that shape later outcomes are formed much earlier. The evidence from BGS suggests that primary schools are a critical and underutilised setting for this work.

The challenge now is not whether schools should address gender stereotypes, but whether they are sufficiently supported to do so. National policy increasingly recognises the importance of prevention, healthy relationships, and challenging harmful gender norms. Realising these ambitions will require sustained investment in teacher training, evidence-based curriculum resources, and cross-sector collaboration between education, public health, safeguarding, and gender equality organisations.

BGS offers one practical model for how this can be achieved at scale. Expanding access to preventative programmes of this kind would help ensure that all children have the opportunity to develop the skills, relationships, and critical understanding needed to thrive in an increasingly complex and divisive world.



Glossary

Beyond Gender Stereotypes lead (BGS lead)

A designated member of staff who leads work to challenge gender stereotypes and promote equality, inclusion and positive representation across the school. The BGS lead supports staff development, curriculum review and initiatives that help ensure all pupils can explore opportunities free from gender-based assumptions or limitations.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Certification Service

A recognised quality standard showing that training has been independently assessed and approved as contributing to professional learning and development. CPD-accredited courses support participants to develop their knowledge, skills and professional practice.

Headteacher

The senior leader responsible for the overall management, strategic direction and educational performance of a school. The headteacher oversees staff, curriculum delivery, pupil outcomes, safeguarding, and the day-to-day operation of the school.

Key Stage 2 (KS2)

The phase of education for pupils aged 7 to 11 in England, typically covering Years 3 to 6. During Key Stage 2, children build on core skills in subjects such as English, mathematics and science, and are assessed through national curriculum expectations.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE)

A curriculum subject that supports pupils' personal development by helping them build knowledge, skills and confidence in areas such as health, wellbeing, relationships, citizenship and financial education. PSHE enables young people to make informed choices and participate positively in society.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Statutory curriculum subjects that teach children about healthy relationships, physical and mental wellbeing, personal safety, puberty, and age-appropriate aspects of sex education. In primary schools, this includes learning about friendships, families, respect, emotions, online safety, and developing the skills needed to build positive relationships and treat others with respect.

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About Equipundo: Center for Masculinities and Social Justice

Equipundo: Center for Masculinities and Social Justice³² is a global organisation focused on engaging men and boys as allies in gender equality and the prevention of violence. Beyond Gender Stereotypes is a programme of Equipundo's Global Boyhood Initiative (GBI)³³ which aims to support children of all genders aged 4 to 13 and the adults in their lives to embrace healthy masculinity and gender equality. Through research, educational tools, and community engagement, GBI works to challenge harmful gender stereotypes and help children build emotional connection, empathy, respect, and healthy relationships from an early age.

About The Children's Society

The Children's Society³⁴ is a national children's charity working across England and Wales and has been helping children and young people for over 140 years. The charity supports children and young people, especially in their formative teenage years, when, and where, they need help most. The charity specialises in helping young people who are struggling with their emotional wellbeing, and those facing risk in their lives. The Children's Society's services support thousands of children every year, and their campaigning impacts many young people's lives across the country.

About Cummins Inc. and Cummins Powers Women

Cummins Inc.³⁵ is a global power technology leader. In 2018, they launched Cummins Powers Women,³⁶ a corporate social responsibility initiative focused on gender equity through education, mentoring, and financial investment. Cummins supported this programme financially and also by contributing meaningfully to broader outreach and community support of the programme.

About Spring Impact and the Oak Foundation

Beyond Gender Stereotypes was part of the Preventing Childhood Sexual Violence Scale Accelerator Programme with Spring Impact,³⁷ a non-profit consultancy that supports organisations to drive social and environmental impact at scale. The support was funded by Oak Foundation,³⁸ whose grant-making contributes to a safer, fairer, and more sustainable world.

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- 22 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>
- 23 <https://pshe-association.org.uk/guidance/ks1-5/programme-of-study>
- 24 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/freedom-from-violence-and-abuse-a-cross-government-strategy>
- 25 <https://www.boyhoodinitiative.org/blog/why-some-french-boys-rejected-gender-equality-workshops/>
- 26 <https://www.childrengssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/lifting-limits/beyond-gender-stereotypes>
- 27 <https://www.equimundo.org/learn/?project=beyond-gender-stereotypes-in-the-uk>
- 28 Two sample t-tests and z-tests.
- 29 The significance levels of the p-values associated with these statistical tests help determine if the difference in the measured outcomes is statistically meaningful. If the differences are meaningful and can be attributed to occur not by chance, or if the p-value is less than 0.05, it is considered as statistically significant.
- 30 This school could only host one pupil FGD, which comprised of a mix of Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils.
- 31 <https://www.childrengssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/good-childhood-report-2025>
- 32 <https://www.equimundo.org/>
- 33 <https://www.boyhoodinitiative.org/>
- 34 <https://www.childrengssociety.org.uk/>
- 35 <https://www.cummins.com/en-na>
- 36 <https://www.cummins.com/en-na/company/esg/social/corporate-responsibility/cummins-powers-women>
- 37 <https://www.springimpact.org/>
- 38 <https://oakfnd.org/>

Theory of Change GBI Phase 2

Problem

Gender socialisation communicates what is expected from children on the basis of their gender.

Gender stereotyping has negative effects on children of all genders. It perpetuates gender inequality, undermines healthy ways of expressing emotions and establishing relationships, and limits children's ability to achieve their full potential.

Gender stereotypes are internalised early in childhood but childhood is also an opportunity when young people of all genders can effectively challenge these.

Parents/carers/educators and the school system play a strong role in gender socialisation and the validation of gender stereotypes.

Children spend a substantive proportion of their time in schools. With evidence-based curricula and appropriate tools, teachers can play a positive role in promoting positive and equitable gender norms.



Inputs/Activities

- Two scalable, safe and age-appropriate PSHE curriculum resources for Years 3 to 4 and 5 to 6 that address gender stereotypes.
- Pursue the PSHE Association Quality Mark for the curriculum resources.
- Self-guided online learning modules and guidance materials for teachers to deliver the curricula to students, and to support and strengthen their own professional development.
- Guidance for schools/teachers to use with parents/carers, to build support for the curricula and engage them to promote its Objective.



Outcomes

Children of all ages

- Increased critical awareness of gender stereotypes.
- Increased skills and confidence to express emotions in healthy rather than unhealthy ways.
- Increased skills and confidence to develop healthy/empathetic/supportive relationships with pupils of all genders.
- Increased skills and confidence to engage in activities not aligned with gender stereotypes.
- Increased skills and confidence to challenge gender stereotypes in safe and appropriate ways.
- Increased support for gender equality.

Teachers and facilitators

- Increased awareness of the negative impact of gender stereotypes on children of all genders.
- Increased awareness of the importance of discussing/challenging gender stereotypes at school.
- Increased confidence to discuss and/or challenge gender stereotypes with colleagues and parents/carers.
- Increased recognition of the extent to which gender stereotypical attitudes and behaviour may exist within the school.
- Increased confidence to discuss and/or challenge gender stereotypes with children at school.

Classrooms

- Children feel less expected to conform to gender stereotypes in class/school.
- Children feel more supported in class/school to develop friendships with pupils of all genders.
- Children feel more confident that teachers will effectively challenge gender stereotypes in class/school.

Parents and carers

- Increased understanding of gender inequality and gender stereotypes, and the impact on children.
- More discussions between children and their parents/carers about gender stereotypes.

Overall aim

- Children of all genders behave in gender inclusive and equitable ways.
- Teachers challenge gender stereotyping and inequality at school confidently and effectively.
- Parents and carers are more aware of the impact of gender stereotyping on their children.





Pink does not equal Equality

All should be respected
football

ALWAYS STAND
UP FOR GENDER EQUALITY!
EVERY GENDER IS IMPORTANT!

Gender does not LIMIT YOU!

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I love to
be an Artist
when I grow
up.

You can
wear
what
you
want.