



Women. Men. Different. Equal.
Equal Opportunities Commission

The gender equality duty and schools

Guidance for public authorities in England

gender
equality duty

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1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance is for governors, head teachers, teaching and support staff working in schools in England. It provides practical advice on how to implement the gender equality duty (GED) in schools. It also demonstrates how the gender duty can help schools in achieving their overall objectives.

This guidance has been developed to supplement the gender equality duty Code of Practice in England and Wales. In order to ensure you are meeting the legal requirements of the duty, you should use the Code of Practice as your primary source of guidance. There are several other pieces of guidance which you may also find helpful in implementing the duty: developing gender equality objectives and a gender equality scheme, consultation, gender impact assessment, gathering and using information, procurement and employment.

The guidance uses the term “schools” and this refers to primary and secondary schools in England maintained by a local authority (LA). It also includes city academies, city technology colleges, city colleges for technology of the arts, and pupil referral units. The term “local authority” covers the education functions of local authorities in England.

Legal responsibility for the implementation of the gender equality duty rests with the school's governing body (in the case of a school maintained by a local authority), the proprietor (in the case of city academies, city technology colleges, city colleges for technology of the arts) or the local authority (in the case of pupil referral units). The role of school governors is outlined in [Chapter 7](#) of this guidance. However in practice, leadership from the head teacher and senior teaching staff, and support from staff, pupils, parents and carers and members of the wider school community are vital to ensure the duty is met. Staff should be encouraged to read the guidance and be given the opportunity to develop their skills to ensure that schools are at the forefront of promoting gender equality across all aspects of school life. The guidance should also be shared with other key participants in the process such as pupils, parents and carers. Throughout this guidance, the term “parents” has been used as shorthand to include mothers, fathers and other adults with responsibility for caring for a child, including looked after children.

Schools make up the biggest proportion of public bodies covered by the gender duty and have a crucial role to play in ensuring that girls and boys benefit from equality of opportunity in all areas of life. Action to challenge stereotyping needs to be a key component of the whole school curriculum and, in particular, careers, work-related learning, citizenship and personal, social and health education at both primary and secondary school. It is important that schools set a framework which tackles the many factors that affect pupil attainment, including gender, ethnicity and social class. Schools also play a key role in shaping the values and attitudes of children and young people and should take a lead in challenging gender-based harassment, bullying and violence. If schools are to be at the forefront of promoting gender equality in terms of outcomes for pupils, they also need to be at the forefront of promoting gender equality for their workforce.

Whilst many schools have taken positive steps to address gender inequality, many barriers that prevent pupils from achieving and making the most of their opportunities remain. It is vital that the differences between boys' and girls' experiences, attitudes and achievements in school are understood so that policies and practices can begin to break down these barriers. The gender equality duty can help schools work towards this goal.

Some key issues for gender and education include:

- **Challenging gender stereotypes in subject choice and careers advice:** Gender stereotyping not only prevents some boys engaging with schools, it also limits girls' and boys' ability to pursue their interest and talents. Although girls as a group are achieving better results than boys, they are still being steered towards choices that lead to low paid, low status jobs.
- **Pupil attainment:** Boys are generally not achieving the same attainment level as girls, with 52% of boys and 62% of girls in the UK gaining five high grade GCSEs or equivalent by age 16 in 2004/05. The situation is complex however, with certain groups of boys doing as well as girls, whilst other groups of boys doing very badly.
- **Health, sport and obesity:** Girls aged 7-11 are less than half as likely to take part in physical education and sport compared to boys. By the age of 18, 40% of girls have dropped out of sport and physical recreation.
- **Sexual and sexist bullying and violence:** Research by the Universities of Warwick, Bristol, Durham and North London found that over 75% of 11-12 year old boys thought it was acceptable that women get hit if they make men angry, and more boys than girls of all ages believed that some women deserved to be hit.

The gender equality duty presents a fantastic opportunity for schools to make a coordinated effort to tackle inequality and ensure that all pupils are able to fully achieve their potential. The entire school population will benefit by taking well-planned action on gender equality. This should act as a catalyst towards a society where we all can make the best of our life chances.

Chapter 1 What is the gender equality duty?

This chapter provides an introduction to the gender equality duty and outlines the steps you will need to take to meet the duty within your school. It gives some practical examples to illustrate how certain requirements under the duty may be met in schools, and includes links to other pieces of guidance, which you may find useful.

Under the gender equality duty schools will need to take action to:

Eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment

Promote equality of opportunity between men and women

Unlawful sex discrimination and harassment includes discrimination as defined by the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) and the Equal Pay Act 1970 (EqPA). For definitions of unlawful discrimination under the two Acts see the Gender Equality Duty Code of Practice. Visit www.eoc.org.uk/genderduty for a copy of the Code.

These two elements make up what is known as the “general duty”. To support schools in taking action to meet these two aims there is a framework known as the “specific duties”. This framework describes the exact steps schools should take to help them meet the general duty. Gender equality objectives are at the heart of the gender equality duty. The purpose of setting your gender equality objectives is to bring about change. It is therefore important that you focus on outcomes – specific identifiable improvements in policies, in the way services and outcomes are delivered for pupils, and in the outcomes for staff. In other words, what are the biggest gender equality issues in your school and how can you make sure you take the right action to bring about change to benefit those who need it?

The **specific duties** require each school to:

- **Prepare and publish a gender equality scheme**, showing how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives
- **Consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap** in formulating its overall objectives
- **Gather and use information** on how the school's policies and practices affect gender equality in the workforce and in the delivery of services
- **Consult stakeholders and take account of relevant information** in order to determine its gender equality objectives
- **Assess the impact of its current and proposed policies and practices** on gender equality
- **Implement the actions set out in its scheme** within three years
- **Report** against the scheme every year and **review** the scheme at least every three years

What is a gender equality scheme?

All schools will need to produce a gender equality scheme (GES). A GES will give you a clear framework to help you identify objectives, and plan, deliver and evaluate the steps you need to take to ensure you meet the duty.

The scheme must be published by 30 April 2007. It can be embedded within another strategic document, such as the School Development Plan. If you choose to include it in another document, it must be clear that the specific gender duties have been met.

What should a scheme include?

A gender equality scheme needs to show how the school will meet its obligations under both the general and specific duties. It needs to include the school's gender equality objectives, including any pay objective, and show the actions it has taken or intends to take to:

- Gather and use information that is relevant to promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination
- Consult stakeholders in the preparation of its scheme (including setting the objectives)
- Assess the impact or likely impact of existing and proposed policies and practices on gender equality
- Implement the actions set out in the scheme

This set of actions is often referred to as the "Action Plan". See below for further information on carrying out these actions.

The EOC has produced detailed guidance on developing gender equality objectives and a gender equality scheme. To view this guidance visit www.eoc.org.uk/genderduty

Gathering and using information

Schools must gather information on how their policies and practices affect boys and girls and men and women.

You can adapt existing systems for gathering information such as those used for the School Development Plan and during self-evaluation, and where this is not already happening, build in processes for collecting data on gender equality. See [Chapter 3](#) for further information. You should then use the information as the basis for setting gender equality objectives and reviewing the effectiveness of the actions taken to meet the objectives.

The EOC has produced detailed guidance on how to gather and use information. To obtain a copy visit www.eoc.org.uk/genderduty

Example: Gathering and using information

A secondary school collects information on participation of girls and boys in PE lessons and other school sporting activities. The information shows that girls are far less likely to take part in lessons and in physical activity overall. Qualitative evidence highlights that many girls are put off from getting involved with sports mainly because they are not interested in the types of sports and activities on offer and they find the PE kit embarrassing to wear. The competitive environment also puts them off. The evidence indicates that they would be much more likely to take part in physical activity if alternatives such as gym (aerobics, spinning), dance classes and yoga were available and they did not have to wear short PE skirts/knickers. The school decides that addressing girls' participation in sport should be a priority and set an objective to increase the number of girls participating in sport to levels of boys' participation. The sports curriculum is extended to include activities that girls said they would be interested in, and the PE uniform requirements are modified so girls can wear tracksuit bottoms or shorts when undertaking sports. This change to policy whilst promoting gender equality also contributes to the school achieving objectives under the *Every Child Matters* outcome "Being Healthy" and helps the school reach National Healthy Schools Status under the National Healthy School Programme.

Consultation

A school needs to consult with stakeholders to prepare their scheme and decide on their gender equality objectives.

Key stakeholders for schools include:

- All members of staff (including teaching staff, support staff, cleaners/caretakers, adult/student volunteers acting as mentors etc)
- School governors
- Parents/carers
- Pupils
- The local authority
- The local community
- Local partners including other local schools, local FE and HE providers, the local Learning and Skills Council.

Schools should look at the existing methods that they use for consulting and involving stakeholders, and consider how these can be developed or adapted to meet the requirements of the gender equality duty. See [Chapter 3](#) for more detail.

Example: Consultation

When setting out arrangements for consultation, a primary school pays particular attention to the need to involve the full spectrum of parents and carers - mothers and fathers, and other adults with caring responsibilities for a child, such as grandparents and foster carers. They also ensure that the process is inclusive for the full range of families in 21st century Britain, including making sure they are welcoming to lesbian and gay parents. In setting up consultative meetings, the school takes into account the impact of parenting and caring responsibilities on the ability of people to take part. Meetings are run at a couple of different times and the school also sets up alternative ways for people to input to the process. This means that the school will ensure that they have captured a range of viewpoints and ideas.

See Chapter 2 on [involving fathers](#)

The EOC has produced guidance on consulting stakeholders on gender equality. Visit www.eoc.org.uk/genderduty

Gender Impact Assessments

A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) is a tool that can help schools take the right action to ensure that neither gender are disadvantaged by school activities and to help identify opportunities to promote gender equality. A school's gender equality scheme needs to include the details of how the impact (or likely impact) of their policies and practices on gender equality will be assessed.

The EOC has produced detailed guidance on conducting gender impact assessments. Visit www.eoc.org.uk/genderduty for a copy of this guidance.

It is difficult in guidance to set out the exact policies or practices that should be subject to impact assessments. A good screening process will help you to identify those policies that are most relevant to gender equality. However, it is important to remember that there will only be a limited number of policies that will not have some relevance to gender. Policies that appear gender neutral at first glance may in fact have significant gender dimensions, for example admission and disciplinary policies.

Examples of policies/practices that schools should impact assess include those relating to:

- Curriculum
- Uniform
- Bullying
- *Every Child Matters* objectives
- National Healthy School Status
- Admissions
- Discipline
- Sports
- Careers/work experience

Schools will be faced with a large number of policies and practices that will potentially require impact assessment. It is not expected that you will impact assess all your policies by April 30th 2007, but they will need to be assessed within the three years of the scheme. You should look to prioritise policies for impact assessment by assessing which have the greatest importance and impact on gender equality.

Example: Gender Impact Assessment

After an initial screening, a policy on bullying shows a high relevance for gender equality and it is prioritised for a gender impact assessment. The policy as it stands does not address the issue of sexist or sexual bullying which has been found to be a serious problem for girls and female teachers. It was also found that homophobic bullying is not covered either which has been found to be a serious issue for many boys. The school takes action, including holding school assemblies on sexist and homophobic bullying, and develops lesson materials on the issue of gender based harassment and violence to address young people's, especially boys', worrying attitudes to this problem. These steps contribute to eliminating discrimination and harassment under the duty and will also help the school address gender issues in the National Healthy Schools Programme around emotional health and well-being.

Wherever possible, the processes required under the GED should be incorporated into existing systems to ensure the most efficient use of school resources. For example, the requirements of gender impact assessment are very similar to self-evaluation. Both require schools to monitor and evaluate data, consult with stakeholders and to act on the outcomes of the processes. Schools may adapt such a procedure to meet the requirements for gender impact assessment. See [Chapter 3](#) for further information.

Where looking to implement new national policies or strategies, or policies/strategies agreed with the local authority, you should expect that the relevant national or local body will have conducted a gender impact assessment on the overall proposals. You should ask to see the conclusions of this impact assessment, including a summary of the evidence relied upon in conducting the impact assessment. This will help you identify possible gender implications in the implementation of the policy/strategy.

How should a school identify its gender equality objectives?

In order to identify your gender equality objectives, and set out the actions you intend to take to achieve them, you will need to develop a good understanding of the major gender equality issues within your school. As outlined in the sections above, this should be based on good evidence and developed through consultation with your staff, pupils, unions, parents and any other stakeholder. In deciding on your gender equality objectives, remember to look at all the information and data you have gathered and identify your biggest gender equality issues, which are most relevant to the needs of pupils, and will best promote equality for staff members. The EOC has produced detailed guidance on developing gender equality objectives. To view this guidance visit www.eoc.org.uk/genderduty

When choosing your objectives, the EOC recommends that you take into account national gender equality objectives that have been set by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), and local gender equality goals that have been set by your local authority. It is also important that in setting gender equality objectives, you look at the gender dimension of your core work - for example raising standards and achieving the *Every Child Matters* outcomes. [Chapter 2](#) gives more information on mainstreaming gender equality across a school's activities.

Pay gap objective

You will have to consider the need to have objectives that address the causes of any gender pay gap in your workforce. Even though the majority of schools do not set their own pay systems, as an employer, they are legally liable under the Equal Pay Act for their implementation. Under the duty, you will have to gather sufficient information to enable you to ensure that any pay decision you make is free from discrimination. If you become aware of elements within pay systems that may cause pay discrimination, you should alert the relevant pay body.

Schools do exercise local discretion over some pay matters and so need to ensure that they have eliminated the risk of discrimination in these pay decisions e.g. placing new teachers or teachers returning from maternity leave on pay scales, pay progression for advanced skills teachers and those in leadership, and payment of Special Educational Needs (SEN) allowances and Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payments.

See paragraphs 3.40-3.45 of the [Gender Equality Duty Code of Practice](#) for England and Wales for further information on objectives to address the gender pay gap. [Chapter 6](#) of this guidance also has a section addressing the issue of equal pay in schools.

You also need to find out whether your policies may be contributing to the gender pay gap in the workforce beyond the school, and whether they could be amended to help close that pay gap. See paragraph 3.56 in the [Gender Equality Duty Code of Practice](#) for England and Wales for further information.

Example: Closing the pay gap

A school decides to take action to address the gender pay gap beyond the school by implementing several initiatives to tackle gender stereotyping in the school curriculum. This action aims to address occupational segregation (the concentration of women in particular lower-paid sectors of the workforce and the economy), one of the major causes of the gender pay gap. By taking action on gender stereotyping, it is hoped that girls and boys will be better equipped to make more informed choices about their future, for example with regards to pay rates in different jobs.

Monitoring and reviewing

Annual reporting

Schools will need to report annually on the actions that they have taken or intend to take to meet the gender equality duty. This doesn't need to be a lengthy document, indeed the legislation requires only a "summary report". It can be incorporated into another strategic document. The first report must be published not later than one year following the publication of the school's first gender equality scheme, so must be completed by 30 April 2008.

Reporting annually on actions will give you an opportunity to monitor progress towards your gender equality objectives and to review the actions set out in your action plan to ensure that they continue to be the best way to meet your gender equality objectives.

Reviewing the gender equality scheme

Schools must review their gender equality scheme at least every three years and publish a revised scheme. The reviewing process is an opportunity for you to evaluate progress made towards the achievement of your gender equality objectives and to decide, in consultation with stakeholders, on your priorities for the next three years.

2. HOW THINKING ABOUT GENDER CAN HELP SCHOOLS MEET THEIR OBJECTIVES

This chapter sets out some of the major gender equality issue in education, and looks closely at the gender dimensions of key policy initiatives such as *Every Child Matters* and the National Healthy Schools Programme, in order to help you best achieve your outcomes and raise standards.

All schools aim to provide their pupils with the best education to enable them to make the most of their life chances. A number of policy initiatives have been designed to support schools to ensure that pupils are enabled to achieve and make the most of opportunities. By taking account of the impact of gender on pupils' attitudes to school, to each other and to the opportunities available to them, schools can work to remove barriers and to promote equality of opportunity.

Gender and *Every Child Matters*

The *Every Child Matters* framework seeks to ensure that every child is supported and enabled to achieve. This means having regard to their physical and mental well being, and providing children and young people with opportunities to make positive contributions to their local communities.

The framework is structured around five outcomes:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

All of these outcomes have significantly different dimensions for girls and for boys. By examining these differences schools can better deliver on the outcomes and their gender equality objectives under the GED.

Below are examples and evidence that illustrate some of the gender dimensions of the framework.

- **Be healthy:** Biological and social factors of sex and gender are important determinants of health outcomes. There are particular issues for girls and boys in, for example, mental health, attitudes to sport and exercise, sexual health, sexual abuse and smoking. The 'identification and assessment of young people's health needs' has to recognise these and other factors. In the 'promotion of healthy lifestyles', an effective school will recognise that sports provision has to address the needs and preferences of girls and boys, and indeed will be more likely to succeed if it does so. Also see the section on the [National Healthy Schools Programme](#).
- **Stay safe:** The targets listed under "stay safe" will clearly not be met unless the different needs of boys and girls are taken into account. The key aims "safe from bullying and discrimination" and "safe from violence and sexual exploitation" have high relevance to gender equality. Differences in the way boys and girls are bullied need to be examined - the National Union of Teachers (NUT) has highlighted the problem of sexual bullying for girls, and the link has been made between homophobic bullying and suicide for boys. The problem of gender-based violence and sexual

exploitation needs to be addressed by schools, especially in light of research findings reporting worrying attitudes of boys to violence against women. See sections on [sexual bullying](#) and [teenage attitudes to violence](#).

- **Enjoy and achieve:** Boys are still behind girls in overall school performance. The gender gap in attainment is significant in literacy and language. The underachievement of boys is clearly important but this overall gap masks the fact that particular groups of boys are doing well, whilst some groups of girls are underperforming. Schools should avoid generalisations and over-simplification, and examine how factors such as ethnicity and social class also impact upon the achievement of boys and girls. Girls' educational achievements, however, are not necessarily helping them to take up well-paid jobs. Eliminating gender stereotyping in school education, in vocational training, and in careers choices is a vital step towards tackling the gender pay gap in employment. Following this, it is clear that the link between the 'enjoy and achieve' and the 'achieve economic well-being' outcomes is vital in ensuring achievements lead to economic gains. Also see sections on [pupil attainment](#) and [14-19 education](#).
- **Make a positive contribution:** 'Develop positive relationships and choose not to bully and discriminate' are among the aims under this part of the framework. As well as having robust and well-implemented policies to tackle sexist stereotyping, bullying, and sexist and sexual forms of harassment, schools can use their citizenship and social studies classes and school assemblies to challenge the assumptions which underlie this behaviour. Another crucial issue that needs to be addressed is the attitude towards gender-based violence amongst children and young people. Schools should also understand the link between gender stereotyping and homophobic bullying. Attitudes such as "real boys don't try in class" often lead to homophobic bullying of children who are seen by their peers to break gender norms.
- **Achieve economic well-being:** Occupational segregation is a major contributor to the gender pay gap and to lower pensions and poverty in old age for women. The EOC's investigation into gender segregation showed that it is girls from lower socio-economic groups particularly who suffer as a result of stereotyping and from a school system without an agenda to widen choices. With little access to information from other sources about wider work opportunities and associated pay rates, many girls are trapped in low-paid, low-status jobs that give little opportunity to improve the quality of their lives. Also see sections on [pupil attainment](#) and [14-19 education](#).

Gender and the National Healthy School Programme

The outcomes "be healthy" and "enjoy and achieve" in the *Every Child Matters* framework are supported by the National Healthy Schools Programme (NHSP). By 2009 the Government wants every school to be working towards achieving [National Healthy Schools Status](#). In order to achieve National Healthy Schools Status, schools are asked to demonstrate evidence in the core themes of the NHSP, using a whole-school approach involving the whole school community:

- Personal, social and health education, including sex and relationship education and drug education (including alcohol, tobacco and volatile substance abuse)
- Healthy eating
- Physical activity
- Emotional health and well-being (including bullying)

Clear gender differences exist within the core themes of the NHSP, and addressing these differences will help schools demonstrate action towards the themes. Different patterns of exercise, food and alcohol consumption and different attitudes to risk affect boys and girls, and will determine their response to health initiatives.

- Boys are more at risk of suicide than girls, with some evidence that homophobic bullying plays a large part in this. Girls are, however, more prone to depression and self-harm. Effective school policies that aim to address issues of emotional and mental health in the classroom and through pastoral care will recognise and respond to these gender differences.
- The sexual health of adolescents in the UK is poor. It is likely that an increase in risky sexual behaviour has contributed to sexual health outcomes such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and unwanted pregnancy among young people. Young women, in particular females under the age of 20, bear the burden of STIs. Boys tend to be less well informed than girls about sex and relationships, and about contraception. Only 48% of boys report having been told “a lot” or “quite a lot” about sex and relationships by their parents; boys are less likely than girls to obtain information from their friends (43% boys versus 56% girls) and magazines and newspapers (26% boys versus 52% girls). Yet boys are often influential in deciding which form of contraception, if any, is used.
- Girls aged 7–11 are less than half as likely to take part in physical education and sport compared to boys. By the age of 18, 40% of girls have dropped out of sport and physical recreation. Schools must recognise that sports provision has to address the needs and preferences of girls and boys, and indeed will be more likely to succeed if it does so.
- Schools must address sexist bullying, sexual harassment and violence against women in their formal school policies, in personal and health education classes, citizenship classes and throughout the school curriculum where relevant. See sections on sexual bullying and teenage violence.

Schools should also work together with Children’s Trusts, Learning and Skills Councils and other local agencies to ensure that appropriate support services exist for teenage mothers and teenage fathers. In particular, teenage mothers need to be supported to continue with their education both during pregnancy and after the birth of their child. See section on teenage parents.

Pupil Attainment

Gender and pupil attainment

One of the key outcomes under the *Every Child Matters* Framework is “Enjoy and Achieve”. Generally, boys are not achieving the same attainment levels as girls. In 2004-05, 52% of boys and 62% of girls in the UK gained five high grade GCSEs or equivalent by age 16. The problem of boys’ underachievement is of particular concern in literacy and language, as gender gaps in these subjects are significant and affect all socio-economic and ethnic groups.

The situation is complex, however, as the overall attainment gender gap masks the fact that particular groups of boys are performing well at school, whilst there are some groups of girls who are underperforming. Schools must avoid generalisations and over-simplification, and examine how factors such as ethnicity and social class also impact upon the achievement of boys and girls.

In 2006, Key Stage 1 results in reading, writing and mathematics show that the highest overall performers in each of the tests were Chinese girls followed by Indian girls. However, whilst girls are generally doing better, there are groups of boys, for example Chinese, mixed race, Indian and white middle-class boys, who continue to significantly out-perform groups of girls, for example white working-class girls, African Caribbean girls and Gypsy/Roma girls. The particular groups of boys that are largely underperforming include, African Caribbean boys, Gypsy/Roma boys, and to a lesser extent Pakistani boys, African boys and white working class boys.

Nearly five times more boys than girls were permanently excluded from UK schools in 2000/01. There are certain groups of boys who are far more likely to be excluded, for example Black Caribbean boys. This has serious ramifications for these boys in accessing future opportunities.

Certain girls are also becoming disengaged and failing to reach their full potential. Girls are more likely to self-exclude through truancy or fail to continue with their education because of pregnancy. See section on [teenage parents and education](#).

A framework for achievement

No one method will work in every setting, and raising attainment should be approached in a whole school way, using a variety of methods. Schools need to set a framework that tackles the many factors affecting pupils’ engagement with learning. Research shows that short-term or isolated strategies to raise achievement are unlikely to be effective without a whole-school, holistic commitment to breaking down stereotypical gender cultures, which:

- Recognises that social and cultural factors will impact on how pupils view gender, and this will affect how they engage with learning, for example boys viewing learning as ‘uncool’
- Encourages classroom and staffroom discussion of gender issues which reflect on gender stereotypes, expectations and the impact on learning
- Includes teaching and classroom-based approaches appropriate for the whole school population. Research does not support the notion of “boy-friendly” and “girl-friendly” teaching. One learning style is not applicable to all boys or all girls, and approaches that appeal to boys are equally likely to appeal to girls. Good quality teaching will be suitable and desirable for both sexes.

Single sex-classes in mixed schools

The majority of interventions to address under-achievement have centred on classroom-based approaches such as single-sex classes. Research indicates that such interventions will not succeed in isolation, and a holistic whole-school approach is needed to address the many factors that affect pupil attainment. Schools must also be aware of the provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA). The SDA allows schools to provide separate lessons in single-sex groups for boys and girls in a mixed school provided that there is no question of one sex receiving 'less favourable treatment'. Girls must not receive a lesser education than boys and vice versa if they are taught in single-sex classes.

Some schools may also wish to introduce "catch-up" or extra classes designed to target underachievement by boys or girls in particular areas of the curriculum - for example, a school may want to introduce remedial classes in English for underperforming boys. This approach is likely to be unlawful, unless similar assistance is provided for underperforming girls. This is because it can amount to less favourable treatment, even if the motive behind the idea is well intentioned, because it denies opportunities to the opposite sex. However, single sex classes can be offered if the criteria for entry to the class is performance rather than gender.

Example: Single sex class on the basis of performance

A school decides to take action to raise the attainment levels of the lowest performing pupils in English. Remedial English classes are offered to the bottom 10% of pupils in terms of performance in the subject. In assessing who are the lowest performers in English, the school finds that all of the pupils in the bottom 10% are boys. Offering a catch up class solely to these boys would be lawful because it is based on a criteria other than gender i.e. performance. The school continues to monitor results to ensure that if any girls drop to the bottom 10% they are also given a place in a catch-up class, or offered comparable assistance to raise their achievement.

This is a potentially complicated area of law, and we would recommend that where a school is considering introducing single-sex teaching or "catch-up" classes to address underperformance, they should discuss this with their local authority and consult the Gender Equality Duty Code of Practice. See Chapter 6 in the England and Wales Gender Equality Duty Code of Practice on the EOC website for more information. www.eoc.org.uk/genderduty

Achievement and life outcomes

Girls' educational achievements are not necessarily helping them to take up well-paid jobs. Women earn on average 17% per hour less than men for full-time work. Girls are still being steered by careers advice and work experience placements towards choices that lead them into low-paid, low-status jobs. This is especially true for working class girls who are less likely to have family and friends in professional jobs, and therefore rely on schools and careers advisors for access to information and to provide them with work experience placements.

Engaging boys in education

A number of research projects have been carried out to look at methods of engaging boys more in education. The overwhelming message of this research is that no one method will work in every setting, and that it should be approached in a whole school way, using a variety of strategies. See [resources](#) section for information on DfES research on raising boys' achievement.

Some schools have sought to tackle boys' negative attitudes to school by engaging with fathers and drawing them into school life. These approaches have achieved positive outcomes for boys, girls and their fathers. The DfES website gives fathers advice, tips and hints on how to get more involved in their sons' education. www.dfes.gov.uk/dadsandsons/

Young parents and education

The Government's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy has two targets:

- To halve the under-18 conception rate by 2010, and establish a firm downward trend in the under-16 rate
- To increase to 60% the participation of mothers aged 16-19 in education, training or employment by 2010, to reduce their risk of long-term social exclusion

The strategy examines the factors associated with high teenage pregnancy rates - one of which is education. There is a strong link between low educational attainment and teenage pregnancy. Disengagement from education and low attendance is also linked to teen pregnancy. A survey of teenage mothers showed that disengagement from education often occurred prior to pregnancy, with less than half attending school regularly at the time of conception. Nearly 40% of teenage mothers leave school with no qualifications.

Addressing young mothers' disengagement from education is a key issue for local authorities and schools to take action on. The DfES provides guidance on implementing the strategy which can be accessed at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/teenagepregnancy/

Young women from lower socio-economic groups are twice as likely to be teenage mothers and the majority of teenage parents live in poverty. Ensuring all young mothers and fathers have access to high quality education and training is central to ensuring they have the opportunity to create the best life outcomes for themselves and their children. The [YWCA](#) reports that half of education professionals think that young mothers are not interested in education. In fact, research shows that becoming pregnant and having a child increases young women's interest in education and determination to get a job. 78% of young mothers felt that motherhood had increased their determination to get a good job. The role of the local authority in providing particular services to young mothers is covered in more detail in [Chapter 5](#).

The DfES has produced guidance on the education of school age parents for head teachers and local authorities www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolageparents/

Young fathers also need support to engage them in learning and to help them be fully involved in the upbringing of their child. Fathers Direct provide guidance on working with young fathers. www.fathersdirect.com

Example: Help for Young Dads project

Connexions South London, in partnership with Richmond on Thames council, are holding a series of workshops for young dads (up to age 22) to support them through ante-natal and post-natal stages of childbirth, sexual health awareness and getting back to work and learning.

The young people will receive advice on how to deal with the routine problems of baby care as well as unexpected challenges. Support networks for young fathers are hard to find, and this programme aims to fill a gap, providing young men with an opportunity to access support and information as well as sharing their own experiences and learning from one another.

Connexions in Action: Challenging Gender Barriers, 2006

Challenging gender stereotypes across the curriculum

Gender stereotyping not only limits individual opportunity to progress and access the best life chances, it also limits employers' recruitment pools and contributes to ongoing skills gaps in sectors such as engineering, ICT, and caring.

Challenges in the 14-19 curriculum and qualification reforms

Schools have a key role to play in promoting non-stereotypical choices in the 14-19 curriculum. With the introduction of Young Apprenticeships and the forthcoming Specialised Diplomas, it is vital that a robust gender equality strategy is in place.

While increased flexibility at 14 may provide learning opportunities which re-engage those at risk and underachieving, greater and earlier vocational specialisation might lead to more gender-stereotyped curriculum choices. For many girls, particularly those from working class backgrounds, making early choices will move them onto stereotyped vocational paths which diminish their chances for progression and offer low level jobs in sectors traditionally dominated by women, characterised by poor pay and career prospects.

Ensuring that young people have access to information about sector workplaces and occupations is important in helping to shift out of date images and concepts. Taster sessions to give young people an opportunity to try out an area of learning before making their option choices are also key. The DfES has published a good practice guide for schools on promoting equal opportunities in Young Apprenticeships. See [resources](#) section for further information.

Example: Taster sessions to widen career choices

Tees Valley Connexions led the Redcar Against Gender Stereotyping (RAGS) project, which provided hands-on activities for young people to encourage them to think about a wider range of career options. For example, girls participated in traditionally male-dominated activities, including bricklaying, construction and fire fighting. Whilst boys participated in activities such as childcare, hairdressing and floristry. Over 20% of participants indicated that they were interested in pursuing non-traditional careers.

The EOC's general formal investigation into gender segregation in training and work highlighted the importance of challenging stereotyping in vocational education. Information on the investigation can be found at www.eoc.org.uk/segregation

The DfES has recognised the importance of putting in place an agenda to challenge stereotypes in vocational education and has initiated several projects including non-traditional tasters for young people and equality guidance for delivery of Young Apprenticeships.

Challenges in work experience placements

Currently work experience placements for boys and girls reflect the traditional gender segregation of the labour market, with very few young people having any exposure to experiences which might widen their career mind-set. Decisions on placements are often made by teachers on the basis that the type of work is less important than the experience of being in a work situation. EOC research has found that many young people are greatly influenced in their subsequent career choice by the type of employment in which they have been placed for work experience. This signals the importance of providing a wider range of experiences to girls and boys.

EOC research into gender segregation in training and work, found that a high proportion of girls and boys are interested in non-traditional work experience and job choices:

- 80% of girls and 55% of boys said they would or might be interested in a non-traditional job
- 76% of girls and 59% of boys wanted to try non-traditional work before making their job choices

Example: Widening opportunities through non-traditional work experience placements

JIVE Yorkshire & Humber have piloted two versions of a SET/Built Environment work experience programme called *Wider Horizons* for girls in Years 10 and 11. The programme is run in conjunction with the local Business Education Partnerships and employers in the area.

In West Yorkshire the aim is to encourage girls who have previously participated in taster activities in SET in Year 9 and others who are interested in finding out more about careers in the sector. In South Yorkshire, the programme is offered to girls who have selected gender stereotypical placements in business administration to encourage widening of future career choices. 25-30 girls in 6/7 schools are participating in the pilot.

www.jivepartners.org.uk

Challenges in Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)

EOC research found that the majority of people believe that their careers advice was based on their gender and highlighted the extent to which careers advice and guidance often continues to perpetuate stereotyped and traditional choices.

The *14-19 Education and Skills Implementation Plan* included two proposals to reduce gender stereotyping in choice of career paths. It emphasised the importance of high quality IAG in ensuring that “all options are seen as real choices for young people”. It announced plans to introduce IAG in schools from Year 7 by Spring 2008 on the grounds that by the age of 14, “many young people already display entrenched attitudes about gender roles and occupations, so early intervention is needed”.

Youth Matters: Next Steps sets out plans for improving IAG for young people and their parents. Challenging gender stereotyping will be a key component of the new quality standards for IAG, which are due to be published in April 2007.

Role of schools in IAG delivery

Schools will play a key role alongside local authorities and other learning providers in ensuring that their pupils have access to high quality advice that challenges stereotypes. Some examples of IAG delivery that can assist schools in breaking down gender stereotypes include:

- Advice that actively challenges stereotypes and provides information about the longer term consequences of career choice (pay differentials etc)
- Using positive action such as single sex events
- Holding equal opportunities events which focus on breaking down gender barriers and raising aspirations

- Work with local employers to deliver projects such as mentoring, practical assignments and role models in a wide range of careers
- Use of good careers materials which seek to widen choice and opportunity
- Involving groups who can support work in schools such as JIVE, GERI and WISE. www.jivepartners.org.uk www.geriproject.org www.wisecampaign.org.uk

Example: Challenging gender stereotyping in primary school

Connexions Tyne and Wear, and several local partners, ran a project in four primary schools to explore the connection between school subjects and work, challenge children's gender stereotyped beliefs, and increase awareness of available job opportunities. The project had three strands:

Curriculum support- the 'Make it Real Game' was used which helps students understand jobs and services whilst increasing their vocabulary and exploring learning pathways and qualifications

Careers software featuring over 600 photographs, 1000 different job types and 40 lesson plans supporting PSE, citizenship, literacy, numeracy and ICT

Careers events, each with five workshops featuring cross-curricular themes such as gender stereotyping, healthy living, key skills, and employability. The workshops were on engineering, beauty therapy and early years education, and were designed to address gender-stereotyped views of the world of work

Connexions in Action: Challenging Gender Barriers, 2006

Role of parents in IAG delivery

Schools should pay particular attention to the role of parents as key influencers on choices. EOC generational research on attitudes to stereotyping has shown that parents are more traditional in their attitudes and expectations than their children. The story is complex however, as evidence also suggests that parents are far more likely than any other source of guidance to encourage young people to consider non-traditional options. It is therefore vital that parents are involved in the careers advice process, to both challenge any stereotypical views which may stifle children's interest, and also to capture their potential to widen choice and opportunity. The importance of this is magnified for ethnic minority and working class young people. EOC research has found that there is a tendency for working class pupils to choose their parents' occupation as their own, as stereotypes can convey expectations about what job is appropriate for 'someone like me'. Young people from South Asian backgrounds are far more likely to say that their parents have a big say regarding their future career compared with white boys and girls.

Sexist and sexual bullying

Sexist and sexual bullying is increasingly common in many schools.

Research by the National Union of Teachers (NUT) revealed that:

- Nearly one in five primary teachers and two-thirds of secondary teachers have been subjected to sexually abusive language by pupils
- Nearly 75% of secondary teachers and 30% of primary teachers have encountered such language being used by pupils against each other

This study also showed that only about half of serious incidents were reported. This is often because teachers dealt with the situation immediately but largely because institutional support was seen as unsatisfactory. Senior management often do not take the issue seriously and sexist and homophobic language is institutionally tolerated. Young people are not provided with the language and labels to define sexual bullying or the processes to report it in schools.

Sexual bullying impacts on both genders. Boys are also victims of girls and other boys. Sexual bullying can be broadly defined as any bullying behaviour, physical or non-physical, that is based on a person's sexuality or gender. This also includes transphobic bullying on the basis of a person's perceived gender, or alternative gender expression. It is not just inappropriate language but also gossiping about someone's rumoured or actual sex life, comments about someone's appearance or attractiveness, inappropriate touching, sexual innuendos and propositions, graffiti with sexual content, the creation of internet porn sites, spreading films of sexual abuse on mobiles, and its most extreme form sexual assault and rape.

Measures schools can take

- Recognise the sexual and sexist content in verbal abuse
- Adapt anti-bullying policies to refer explicitly to sexism and to define sexual bullying
- Work with pupils to develop school policies to promote an atmosphere free of intimidation
- Explore gender stereotyping in the curriculum
- Ensure strategic leadership from senior management including training for governors and senior staff
- Use disciplinary processes consistently
- Record all incidents of sexist language and bullying

WOMANKIND work with schools to identify sexual bullying in the school environment, define it in school practices, raise awareness across the school and work on strategies to stop it. Schools can access support and useful resources at www.womankind.org.uk.

Example: Addressing sexual harassment in schools

Working with WOMANKIND, a school in Cardiff found that 55% of young women and 30% of young men surveyed had experienced inappropriate touching. They developed role-plays, posters and leaflets to raise awareness of the issue across the school to deliver to Year 7 students. It is hoped that this will help to create a school culture where sexual harassment and bullying is unacceptable and pupils treat each other with respect.

Teenage attitudes to violence

Recent research by the Universities of Warwick, Bristol, Durham and North London, highlighted worrying attitudes to domestic violence amongst young boys. Over 75% of 11-12 year old boys thought that it was acceptable that men hit women if they make them angry and more boys than girls, of all ages, believed that some women deserve to be hit. These attitudes and beliefs need to be challenged at a very early age and be continually challenged throughout a child's time at school. If these attitudes are not tackled within the school environment, they are likely to have a real impact on society.

Violence against women does not happen only to older people. Young women are experiencing high levels of violence, including being hit by their boyfriends. The End Violence Against Women Coalition has reported that 42% of young people know a young woman who has been hit by her boyfriend, yet 59% felt that they lacked the information and support to deal with this. One in five young men and one in ten young women think that abuse or violence against women is acceptable. 33% of teenagers experience some form of domestic violence or abuse at home.

Schools have a responsibility to tackle these attitudes and beliefs. To help children understand the links between sexual bullying and violence against women, schools should:

- Explore sexism and sexist bullying in the curriculum
- Create an environment where violence against women is unacceptable
- Promote anti-sexist school cultures
- Involve and educate parents

Example: Challenging attitudes to violence in schools

Cheshire County Council has developed a range of resources for schools in Cheshire to challenge young people's attitudes to violence, including drama projects and a 12-week group work programme for young males who are developing abusive patterns of behaviour.
www.cheshire.gov.uk

Working in partnership

Youth Matters and the *14-19 Implementation Plan*, place an expectation on schools to work in partnership with other organisations, including the Learning and Skills Council, local authorities, and work based learning providers. Further and higher education institutions are also being encouraged to work more closely with schools in tackling low student numbers in key subjects, including science, engineering, mathematics and modern languages which are often heavily segregated along gender lines. Working together, these organisations can develop innovative and inventive ways of tackling gender segregation in subject and career choice.

Example: Partnership working to breakdown gender stereotyping

Doncaster Pathfinder, a partnership between organisations including the LA, 11 schools, 2 colleges, the local Business Education Partnership, training providers, and Connexions, set up three projects aimed at challenging gender stereotyping in careers choices:

A Skills Roadshow bringing training providers into schools to give students the opportunity to undertake taster sessions in vocational courses including engineering, mechanics and hair and beauty

The Developing Dads programme supporting young fathers to find employment provides sessions addressing gender stereotyping in careers. A male play-worker was invited to one session to present the students with a positive role model of a man in a non-traditional occupation

Women into the Built Environment (WITBE) is specifically targeted at encouraging female students to consider careers in the construction industry, and involves collaboration with Sheffield Hallam University. The girls get a chance to try out practical activities such as surveying and to visit a construction site

Engaging and involving parents and carers

Schools are working all the time to ensure greater engagement with parents and to involve parents more in their children's education and the strategic direction of the school. The DfES produces the *Guide for Parents and Carers of Year 9 Students* annually to help them understand the education system better and support their children in their decision-making at key stages 3 and 4. www.connexions.gov.uk/parentcarer/

Research shows that positive father involvement in their children's learning is associated with better educational, social and emotional outcomes for children, including better examination results, better school attendance, and better educational expectations. More and more schools are also recognising the importance of engaging with fathers as well as mothers, and the benefits that this can bring. The DfES has developed guidance on how schools can engage with fathers. See [resources](#) section for further information. Information on working with fathers is also available from organisations such as Fathers Direct and Working With Men. www.fathersdirect.com www.workingwithmen.org

In developing new ways of engaging with and involving fathers, schools need to be aware of the evolving nature of families in the 21st Century, and in particular they should be welcoming to gay and lesbian parents. Schools also need to have policies and procedures in place to deal with occasions in which violence in the family may make it inappropriate to engage with both parents in the same way.

3. THE GENDER EQUALITY DUTY AND A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOLS

This chapter sets out how the gender equality duty can be built into the School Development Plan (SDP) process and self-evaluation, in order to help schools raise overall standards and meet outcomes under *Every Child Matters*.

Implementing the gender equality duty in the context of *A New Relationship with Schools*

The principles outlined in *A New Relationship with Schools* are designed to enable schools to achieve the outcomes of the *Every Child Matters* framework, whilst lessening the bureaucratic burden on schools and providing more information for parents.

Schools may find it helpful to look at ways the gender equality duty can be implemented within the approach set out in *A New Relationship with Schools* in order to streamline their processes making most effective use of their time and resources.

How might the Gender Equality Scheme (GES) and the School Development Plan fit together?

The SDP identifies the actions a school intends to take in order to meet its priorities for raising standards. The gender equality scheme outlines the actions they intend to take to promote gender equality. The two documents should inform each other and you might choose to combine them. This may make it easier for you to identify the actions you intend to take to raise standards across the school and to allocate resources to those actions.

Integrating the GES into the SDP has several benefits. It enables schools to:

- Demonstrate how promoting gender equality can help raise standards
- Ensure their gender equality priorities are part of the school's core business
- Ensure their priorities for raising standards and the actions they outline to meet these priorities will not undermine the promotion of gender equality

The process of setting priorities for improvement in the SDP will often be very similar to those required to set gender equality objectives. For example, both require schools to collect and analyse data and consult with stakeholders and it might be useful for schools to combine the processes for both documents.

Gender Equality Scheme and self-evaluation

School self-evaluation is a key component of the new light-touch inspection regime introduced as part of *A New Relationship with Schools*. Schools should use their self-evaluation form (SEF) to outline their successes and improvements, along with the actions they intend to take to make further improvements.

The SEF is a summative evaluation of the school's performance. Progress towards meeting the gender equality duty is a key part of a school's performance. Evaluation of the school's GES should therefore inform their SEF and contribute to the overall evaluation. This will enable schools to highlight how taking action to promote gender equality has helped raise standards and meet the outcomes of *Every Child Matters* and other key policy documents.

Gender Impact Assessments and self-evaluation

In undertaking gender impact assessments, schools can build on the processes they have developed for undertaking self-evaluation. Like self-evaluation, gender impact assessments require schools to gather and analyse data, to consult on proposals, and to use the outcomes of the analysis and consultation to deliver improved outcomes for girls and boys.

Visit www.eoc.org.uk/genderduty to access the general guidance on processes such as gender impact assessment, collecting and using information, consultation, and developing objectives/producing a scheme.

Role of Ofsted

Ofsted are covered by the general duty to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination and harassment and will therefore need to build this activity into all aspects of their work, particularly in their inspection function. This means building promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination and harassment into their inspection regimes.

4. PROCUREMENT

This chapter outlines how the gender duty applies to procurement and how schools can ensure they meet the duty when contracting out services.

Schools are directly responsible for purchasing some goods and services, such as maintenance, cleaning and security. The extent to which schools purchase goods and services will depend on their status.

Schools should bear in mind that when they procure goods and services from external suppliers they will need to ensure that they have taken the gender duty into account.

Asking the following questions will help:

- Could this procurement affect our duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity between girls and boys and men and women?
- If so, do we need to include any gender equality requirements within the contract and if yes, what requirements are necessary?

As a minimum, schools will also need to ensure that they include contract conditions requiring their contractors to comply with the SDA and EqPA and to secure similar compliance by any sub-contractors.

Many schools will work closely with local authorities on procurement, and so will need to work together to ensure that gender equality is given due regard.

The Code of Practice sets out in more detail the steps that schools need to take to ensure they have met the duty in the way in which they procure goods and services and EOC will be producing in depth guidance on procurement. Visit www.eoc.org.uk/genderduty

5. THE ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

This chapter sets out the roles and responsibilities of the local authority (LA) under the gender equality duty, when exercising its education functions, including its support and advice role to schools to help them meet the duty.

The local authority's functions

In exercising its functions in relation to education, a local authority will need to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and promote gender equality. This means that the LA will need to consider any impact, or potential impact, of its policies and practices on gender equality.

LAs have responsibility for the strategic planning of the delivery of education services across their area, which includes:

- Planning the supply of school places for a given area, taking account of population trends and transport patterns across authority boundaries
- Arranging suitable transport for children who need it, especially in rural areas, to support parental choice
- Securing fair school admissions policies and making sure that every child has access to a suitable school place, or has suitable provision made for him or her outside mainstream school
- Taking decisions, in consultation with schools, about the distribution of the schools budget to take account of schools' differing needs
- Drawing up the over-arching strategy for all services affecting children and young people in the local area in their Children and Young People's Plan

Advice and training for schools

LAs also have responsibility for providing advice and training to schools, and this will form a key part of the role of local authorities in relation to the gender equality duty.

Alongside school improvement partners, LAs can provide advice and guidance to schools on setting their gender equality objectives and developing their gender equality schemes. They also have an important role to play in promoting good practice to schools. Because LAs have a strategic overview of the education provision in their area, they can bring schools together and enable them to share information and experiences throughout this process. LAs can also play a key role by helping schools to access the relevant information and evidence that they will need when developing their gender equality scheme and conducting impact assessments.

LAs can also provide support and training to schools in carrying out gender impact assessments. It will not be appropriate to apply an impact assessment tool developed by the LA for its own internal use to schools. LAs should work with schools to help them develop a method of conducting impact assessments that are proportionate and fit in with the way schools work. Again, by bringing schools together, LAs can assist them to share information and learning.

Advice and training for School Governors

LAs also provide advice, support and training for school governors. School governors will need training on how to carry out their responsibilities in relation to the gender equality duty. See [Chapter 7](#) for further information.

Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)

The CYPP sets out improvements to the outcomes for all children and young people and will identify outcome measures for specific groups. This will include outcomes related to gender equality where they have been identified through the detailed needs analysis that underpins the plan.

Management of schools

Schools can include their gender equality scheme within their School Development Plan, and monitoring and reviewing the scheme should be done as part of schools' self-evaluation. This means that schools should not need to duplicate the information they provide to LAs and others for the purposes of implementing the gender duty.

Employment

Where the LA is the direct employers of staff in schools, they will need to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity in their employment practices.

Partnership working

LAs are the key partner in a number of local partnerships that have a direct bearing on schools and the education system. These include Children's Trusts, local 14-19 partnerships and others. LAs should consult with other stakeholders, including schools, on how they will ensure that they pay due regard to the need to promote gender equality in the work of these partnerships.

Teenage parents

The LA has a key role to play in implementing the government's teenage pregnancy strategy and working towards the target of

“Increasing the participation of teenage mothers aged 16-19 in education, training or employment to 60% by 2010, to reduce their risk of long-term social exclusion”

It is important that the LA provides options to young mothers that will allow them to continue with their education. All LAs receive funding under the Children Services Grant to support children whose circumstances may make it difficult to attend school regularly. Some LAs have used this funding to appoint specialist re-integration officers and this has proved to be very effective in ensuring that pregnant pupils re-engage with education and complete their GCSEs. It also means they are more likely to continue in education post-16.

Research commissioned by the Teenage Pregnancy Unit on the education of pregnant young women and young mothers in England recommends that:

- Young women should be offered a choice between a return to mainstream schooling and alternative forms of education outside school
- LAs should offer specialist units wherever possible. For areas where specialist units are not practical, it is essential to incorporate the positive features of these units into other alternative forms of provision
- Mainstream schools should listen to the views of young women and provide a supportive and non-judgmental environment, ideally combined with a flexible approach to timetabling and the availability of acceptable childcare

Support for young fathers is also needed to ensure they remain engaged in education. See section on young parents and education in [Chapter 2](#).

6. EMPLOYMENT

This chapter sets out some of the major gender issues in employment in schools to assist schools in taking action to promote equality and to eliminate discrimination and harassment in their workforce.

The teaching profession is female-dominated but women are under-represented in senior posts. Primary teaching exhibits the highest levels of gender segregation with under 20% of teachers being male.

Although many members of staff in schools are employed by local authorities, in most instances, appointments, promotion and pay decisions are taken by the Governing Body, and an increasing number of schools do directly employ members of staff.

Schools will need to bear in mind that in exercising their employment functions they must pay due regard to the need to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination and harassment. It is also important to remember that the gender duty extends to the elimination of discrimination and harassment towards transsexual staff. When considering their overall gender equality objectives, schools will also need to consider having an objective that specifically addresses the causes of the gender pay gap.

The EOC has produced guidance on how public authorities can implement the gender duty in their employment functions and guidance on implementing the duty in employment for transsexual staff. Visit www.eoc.org.uk/genderduty

Lack of women in senior roles

Teaching is a female-dominated profession – women make up over 80% of full-time regular teachers, 90% of primary teachers and 66% of secondary teachers in England. In addition to teaching staff, schools employ nearly half a million support staff, a majority of which are also female.

However, women are severely under-represented in senior posts in schools making up only 30% of secondary head teachers and 64.6% of primary head teachers. An NUT survey found that black and ethnic minority women in particular tend to be under-represented in senior management positions.

General Teaching Council (GTC) research suggests that family responsibilities are turning many female teachers off applying for promotion. Women teachers are much more likely than men to say that factors in their private lives, such as childcare or caring for adult relatives, have limited their career development - 26% of women compared with 6% of men.

Action is needed to encourage more women to seek promotion and enable them to do so by widening the opportunities for flexible and part-time working. Schools and local authorities should also consider developing mentoring schemes and training for women looking to move into senior management posts.

Equal pay

On average, women working full-time in primary and nursery schools earn 12.2% less than their male colleagues and women working in secondary schools earn 10.6% less. Women working part-time in secondary education earn 3.4% less per hour than their full-time male counterparts and women working in primary and nursery education earn 3.9% less.

Even though the majority of schools do not set their own pay systems, as employers, they are legally liable under the Equal Pay Act for their implementation. Under the duty, schools will have to gather sufficient information to enable them to ensure that any pay decisions they make are free from discrimination - without taking action, schools may find themselves at risk of equal pay claims. If a school becomes aware of elements within pay systems that may cause pay discrimination, they should alert the relevant pay body.

Whilst the School Teachers Pay Review Body prescribes pay and conditions for teachers, schools do exercise local discretion over pay matters and so need to ensure that they have eliminated the risk of discrimination in these pay decisions e.g. placing new teachers or teachers returning from maternity leave on pay scales, pay progression for advanced skills teachers and those in leadership, and payment of SEN allowances and TLR payments.

An increasing number of support staff are also now employed, often directly, by schools. Between 1997 and 2005 there has been a 97% increase in the number of the support staff, many of whom are in part-time or part-year roles. The EOC is currently conducting an investigation into the role and status of classroom assistants in Scottish primary schools. Preliminary findings indicate that classroom assistant jobs in Scotland are popular with many women who are looking for family friendly hours and holidays that fit with their childcare needs. However, many will be shocked by the low levels of pay, some just reaching the minimum wage at £5.05, considering the wide range of tasks involved. Visit www.eoc.org.uk/Scotland for further information.

Flexible working

Flexible and part-time working is not common in UK schools – only around 10% of teachers work part-time. Whilst there tend to be more opportunities to work part-time in primary than secondary schools, in general flexible working for teachers is still unusual. The myth persists that senior posts cannot be job-shared and that part-time teachers are not ‘career’ teachers. These attitudes to flexible working are limiting the career development of many teachers, especially women. However, there are examples of how flexible working can really work in schools and can boost staff recruitment and retention.

Example: Job-sharing

A school in Bury St Edmunds operates a husband and wife head teacher job-share. The school benefits from the different skills that the job-sharers bring whilst the couple benefit from a better work-life balance.

Example: Using flexibility to boost staff recruitment and retention

Harrow LEA works with its 70 schools actively to promote part-time working and job-sharing and they believe it has significantly helped their recruitment and retention. They offer advice, guidance and encouragement to head teachers and governors to consider requests creatively. They used a contract with Flexexecutive to promote part-time working and job-sharing and enable schools to find 'the other half' of anyone reducing their hours from full-time. 23% of teachers in Harrow work on a part-time basis, a figure which is far higher than the national average.

Retention and recruitment of male teachers in primary schools

Currently just 15.7% of primary school teachers in England are men and almost half of primary age children do not have any contact with male teachers. By only recruiting from half of the population schools are missing out on valuable talent and skills in their workforce. The Training

and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) found that 83% of parents wanted to see more men in primary teaching. The TDA have been working to attract more men, and other under-represented groups in the teaching profession. Three-day taster courses, including a one-day school placement, are designed to help people decide whether to apply for initial teacher training. Primary schools also need to ensure that they are supportive of male teachers, especially those who want to work in early years education.

Pregnancy discrimination

Discrimination against pregnant workers and women returning to work after maternity leave is widespread in Britain: around 45% of pregnant women experience disadvantageous treatment at work (such as being threatened with dismissal or actually dismissed, denied pay rises or opportunities for promotion or training).

Schools should aim to create a positive working culture for pregnant staff and those with family responsibilities and back this up with written guidance on managing pregnancy and maternity. Return-to-work rates can provide a good indicator of how well your school is managing pregnancy, with some of the best employers achieving rates of over 90%. Look at your return rate from maternity leave and consider what can be done to improve it.

Sexual harassment of teachers

Schools will need to tackle sexual harassment of staff, both women and men. Sexual harassment of staff may be perpetrated by other employees or by pupils. It is important to ensure you have a clear policy for preventing and tackling sexual harassment. You should also actively promote the policy to ensure that everyone is aware of and understands it.

Sexual harassment can have a serious impact on the physical and mental well-being of victims, and schools should treat the prevention of sexual harassment as part of their health and safety duties. Some groups may be particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment, for example young teachers both female and male, gay men and transsexual people.

It is recommended that procedures for investigating sexual harassment complaints are linked to grievance and disciplinary procedures. Serious sexual harassment should normally be treated as gross misconduct.

Also see section on sexist and sexual bullying in Chapter 2.

Training and Development

Gender equality should form a key component of continuing professional development. Critical to the successful implementation of the GED is the need for effective professional development for teachers and other staff. Research has shown that effective professional development requires sustained interactions, which give more breadth and depth than short or one-off courses such as INSET. Crucially, effective continuing professional development (CPD) maintains a clear focus on pupils' learning.

7. THE ROLE OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS

This chapter sets out the role of schools governors in implementing the gender duty and gives advice on how they can fulfil their responsibilities to ensure the school delivers on its gender equality objectives.

The legal responsibility of the governing body

The legal responsibility for implementing the gender equality duty rests with a school's governing body. The specific requirements to implement the duty are outlined in [Chapter 1](#). In particular, the governing body needs to ensure that the requirement to promote gender equality is clearly reflected in the school's appointment and employment processes, and in those aspects of staff pay that are determined by schools.

Note: With regard to Academies, City Technology Colleges, City Colleges for Technology or the Arts, the proprietor has legal responsibility for implementing the gender equality duty, and for pupil referral units, the local authority has the legal responsibility.

How does the gender equality duty fit with the governing body's broader responsibilities?

The governing body has a general responsibility for the conduct of the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement including:

- Setting targets for pupil achievement
- Making sure the curriculum is balanced and broadly based
- Appointing staff and reviewing staff performance and pay

Understanding the impact of gender and implementing the gender equality duty will help governing bodies ensure that the needs of girls and boys and women and men are met, and will support their overall goal of promoting high standards of educational achievement.

The school will need to set gender equality objectives and outline the actions it intends to take to meet those objectives, and take that action. Those objectives should support the governing body's overall objectives for the school.

Training and support

Local authorities are responsible for providing training and support for school governors. The training and support provided should enable school governors to effectively carry out their roles in relation to the gender equality duty.

Gender equality schemes

School governors have a key role to play in developing the school's gender equality scheme and setting the school's overall gender equality objectives. [Chapter 1](#) outlines the steps that need to be taken to prepare a GES and what needs to be included in a scheme under the duty and how to develop gender equality objectives.

The EOC believes that the gender equality scheme can form part of the School Development Plan. The plan outlines the improvement or development opportunities that the stakeholders in the school have identified as being the main priorities to be addressed, in order to raise standards, and determine the timelines, milestones and resources required to achieve them.

Setting the school's gender equality objectives

School governors should ask staff to explain the basis on which they are making proposals for gender equality objectives - what evidence do they have to support their proposals. They should also be clear how the gender equality objectives relate to the core work of the school and what specific outcomes the proposed objectives and the actions to meet them are designed to achieve. Governors should find out whether stakeholder consultation has been carried out to develop the gender objectives and they should also establish how the school intends to monitor progress towards their objectives.

School governors should ensure that the annual report contains an analysis of progress on implementing the gender equality duty. This is an opportunity for school governors to ensure that the gender equality objectives chosen are the right ones, and that action is being taken to meet these objectives.

The school profile

In order to demonstrate the steps that the school is taking to implement the gender equality duty, we would also recommend that reference to the school's gender equality objectives should be included in the school profile.

This would not require the governing body to reproduce the whole of the school's gender equality scheme in the school profile. The school profile could simply set out the school's gender equality objectives and some of the key actions it is taking to achieve these objectives. This will enable the school to demonstrate its commitment to gender equality and the implementation of the gender equality duty to a wider audience.

School governors: gender impact assessments

What is a gender impact assessment?

A gender impact assessment is a tool that enables policy makers to identify any differential effect on women and men, girls and boys of existing policies and practices, and any possible differential effect of proposed policies and practices. It provides policy makers with a means of ensuring that policies and practices do not have unintended discriminatory impacts, and also enables policy makers to identify policies and practices that support the promotion of gender equality.

More information about gender impact assessments can be found in Chapter 1. Full guidance on how to conduct gender impact assessments can be found at www.eoc.org.uk/genderduty

How do gender impact assessments fit into a school's policy development process?

The governing body has statutory responsibility for writing policies and reviewing existing policies. The process of conducting gender impact assessments should form part of this programme of work.

The gender duty requires schools to conduct gender impact assessments of current and proposed policies and practices. Schools will need to look at their current policies and practices and prioritise those that have the greatest relevance to gender equality to go through the impact assessment procedures. School governors should be satisfied that this process of prioritisation has been based on evidence of relevance to gender equality.

Whenever a policy or practice development is presented to the governing body for approval, school governors should ask whether a gender impact assessment has been carried out and ask to see the conclusions of the impact assessment, including a summary of the evidence relied upon in conducting the impact assessment.

School governors: employment

The school's governing body is responsible for appointing staff and reviewing staff performance and pay.

It is crucial that school governors understand the impact of gender in relation to employment policies and procedure, and that they ensure that their employment policies and procedures do not discriminate against women or men.

In particular, when reviewing the school's existing policies on pay, school governors need to take account of the requirement to eliminate unlawful pay discrimination and consider the need for objectives to tackle all causes of the gender pay gap.

The EOC's general guidance on employment and the GED can be viewed at www.eoc.org.uk/genderduty

8. FURTHER RESOURCES

This chapter provides a list of resources and organisations that can provide schools with help and information on gender and education.

Action for Change

www.eoc.org.uk/actionforchange

The EOC has published a series of good practice guides giving teachers and other education professionals practical, straightforward advice on breaking down gender barriers in vocational education, training and work.

Connexions in Action: Challenging gender barriers

www.cegnet.co.uk

This is a good practice booklet produced by the National Association of Connexions Partnerships in conjunction with the DfES and the EOC. It describes some of the work done by Connexions Partnerships to support young people in challenging stereotypes.

DfES standards site

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/genderandachievement

The site is designed for teachers, LAs and parents who want support and information on gender and achievement. It aims to help those who are raising the performance and aspirations of underachieving boys and girls by providing an on-line resource pool of best practice, analysis and practical guidance.

Engaging fathers — involving parents, raising achievement

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/familyandcommunity/workingwithparents/engagingfathers

This publication shows how engaging fathers in their children's education can make a significant difference to the lives of both child and father well beyond the years of school based-learning.

Every Child Matters

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/

Every Child Matters: Change for Children is a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19.

General Teaching Council for England www.gtce.org.uk/

The professional body for teaching in England. Help improve standards of teaching and the quality of learning in the public interest.

Genderwatch: Still Watching

Edited by Kate Myers and Hazel Taylor with Sue Adler and Diana Leonard www.trentham-books.co.uk

The first *Genderwatch* was published twenty years ago for teachers and school leaders who wanted to take action on gender equality in education. This entirely new edition is designed to coincide with the Gender Equality Duty coming into force.

The GERI project

www.geriproject.org

The GERI (Gender Equality and Race Inclusion) consortium was formed to help the Connexions and careers guidance sector, schools, colleges, training providers, and employers to tackle gender and ethnic stereotyping.

JIVE

www.jivepartners.org.uk

JIVE (Joint Interventions) Partners is a national European Social Fund project led by Bradford College, which aims to create cultural change in engineering, construction and technology by addressing the barriers that prevent women from pursuing careers in these sectors. Working with careers professionals, LSCs, training providers and employers, JIVE offers a range of strategies, resources and training courses designed to help girls succeed in male-dominated sectors.

National Healthy Schools Programme

www.healthyschools.gov.uk/

This is a long term initiative that helps young people and their schools to be healthy. Healthy Schools help children and young people to reach their potential by building on a solid foundation of health to do better in learning and in life. www.healthyschools.gov.uk/

National College for School Leadership

www.ncsl.org.uk/

Works to make a difference to children's lives through excellent school leadership – growing and supporting current and future school leaders so that they can have a positive impact within and beyond their schools.

No Outsiders: Researching approaches to sexualities equality in primary schools

www.nooutsiders.sunderland.ac.uk/

A project focussing on challenging homophobia and developing approaches to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender equality in primary schools.

Planet Science

<http://www.scienceyear.com/home.html>

Provides online resources to support creative and fun approaches to science teaching and learning that help teachers to inspire their students and families to inspire themselves. It aims to engage more young people in science, encouraging more to consider studying science post-16.

Raising Boys' Achievement project

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/genderandachievement/goodpractice/>

Funded by the DfES, the project looked at exciting and innovative ways of raising achievement across a range of primary, secondary and special schools. Working with over 60 schools across England, the aim was to identify and evaluate strategies which are particularly helping in motivating boys.

Teenage Pregnancy Unit

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/teenagepregnancy

This area of the *Every Child Matters* website provides resources for local areas and all agencies working on tackling both the causes and the consequences of teenage pregnancy.

Training and Development Agency for Schools

www.tda.gov.uk

Work with schools to develop the workforce and ensure that schools can recruit good quality, well trained people, and support schools to provide extended services for parents, children and young people.

UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology

www.setwomenresource.org.uk

Provides accessible, high-quality information and advisory services to industry, academic institutions, professional institutes, and education and research councils within SET and the built-environment professions.

Women and Equality Unit

www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk

Produces an equality teaching resource pack entitled Does Sex Make a Difference?, which has been designed for teachers, personal advisers, Connexions staff and other professionals who work with young people to help stimulate discussion about gender related issues. The pack contains background information and lesson plans focusing on occupational segregation, the career choices boys and girls make, the pay gap and other areas, including public life and domestic violence.

Women and Manual Trades

www.wamt.org

Produces videos and teaching packs for schools.

Women into Science and Engineering

www.wisecampaign.org.uk

WISE promotes these sectors as career options to girls and women across the UK, through brochures, posters, websites, a video, hands-on courses and presentations. The campaign works with teachers, careers advisers, parents, employers, politicians and the media.

Works4me

www.works4me.org.uk

This EOC site provides a virtual careers centre with interactive features, games, quizzes, animation and music. Users can browse information about case studies, pay scales, qualifications, work experience, myths and reality, what employers say etc. The website will be useful to anyone working with this age group as a means to widening choice. The site also offers work placements in non-traditional areas for students.

Young Apprenticeships equal opportunities good practice guide

www.employment-studies.co.uk/summary/summary.php?id=428

This good practice guide gives details of ways schools can break down gender stereotyping in the Young Apprenticeships programme and vocational education more widely.

YWCA

www.ywca-gb.org.uk/

YWCA England & Wales is the leading charity working with young women facing poverty, discrimination or abuse.