

# Evaluation of anti-bullying methods





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## Foreword

No pupil should be afraid of going to school according to the Minister for Schools, Jan Björklund, in a press release, when the government instructed the National Agency for Education to carry out this evaluation. The goal was for the methods used in schools to be based on evidence and to be quality assured. The methods used to combat bullying in schools should therefore be evaluated.

The assignment states that all forms of discrimination and other degrading treatment should be vigorously combated, as referred to in the new Child and Pupil Protection Act. The terms of reference state that “In their work to combat degrading treatment, school staff need personal knowledge based on science and well-proven experience of preventing, detecting and confronting bullying.”

This evaluation reports on measures aimed at effectively preventing and remedying bullying. The evaluation is unique in that it is based on large quantities of qualitative and quantitative data from 39 schools, it follows up the vulnerability of individuals on three occasions and incorporates several programmes at once.

Eight specific anti-bullying programmes are covered in the evaluation: the Farsta Method, Friends, Lions Quest, the Olweus Programme, SET (Social and Emotional Training), School Comet, School Mediation, and Second Step.

The question of which programmes are effective has proved complicated however. It became clear early on that it was not possible to measure the effects of specific programmes in schools, as no school used a single programme exclusively. The evaluation thus assesses the effects of specific measures. The results show that different measures have different effects on boys and girls, and different effects depending on whether the bullying is social or physical. The results also show that no single individual measure has dramatically positive effects. To succeed in preventing and remedying bullying, a school must carry out systematic work in conjunction with a combination of measures. This report presents the experiences gained by schools from working with the different programmes and analyses the extent to which the programmes contribute to reducing bullying.

Researchers from the universities in Gävle, Gothenburg, Karlstad, Umeå and Örebro collaborated in the evaluation from autumn 2007 to autumn 2010. Marie Wrethander, Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Gothenburg, took part in the work up to autumn 2008 and was a co-author of the sub-report *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)*.

The following people are responsible for this report: Erik Flygare, PhD in Sociology and Senior Lecturer in Social Work at Örebro University; Gun-Marie Frånberg, Professor of Education at the Institute of Applied Education Sciences at Umeå University; Peter Gill, Professor of Education at the Academy for Education and Economics at the University of Gävle; Björn Johansson, PhD in Sociology and Senior Lecturer in Social Work at Örebro University; Odd Lindberg, Professor in Social Work at the Academy of Law, Psychology and Social Work at Örebro University; Christina Osbeck, PhD and Senior Lecturer in Religion, Faculty of Ethics and Philosophy at Karlstad University; and Åsa Söderström, PhD and Senior Lecturer in Pedagogy, Department of Education

Sciences, Faculty of Ethics and Philosophy at Karlstad University. The last two have primarily worked with the chapters describing the schools' experiences of working with the evaluated programmes. The work has been carried out under the leadership of Annika Hjelm and Peter Östlund at the National Agency for Education.

Within the framework of the evaluation, journalist Mats Wingborg, under the scientific leadership of economist Stefan de Vylder, has identified the resources that the different programmes use in terms of time and money.

The report has been edited and proofed by Jonas Fredén.

*The Summary by the National Agency for Education* gives a brief review of the work and conclusions of the evaluation. Chapter 8, *Overview of results*, and Chapter 9, *More effective work to combat bullying and degrading treatment*, report on the conclusions of the evaluation. For a discussion on concepts, earlier initiatives and theoretical perspectives on bullying, see Chapter 3, Background. A presentation of the assignment and a description of how the evaluation was carried out can be found in Chapter 2, Assignment, and Chapter 4, Methodology overview.

A complete report on the results can be found in the three chapters: Chapter 5, *Experiences of programme implementation*; Chapter 6, *Costs of working with programmes – an analysis*; and Chapter 7, *Effects of different measures – an analysis*.

In a separate report, *Evaluation of anti-bullying methods. Methodology appendix and attachments to report 353* (published in pdf format), the researchers report in detail on the design of the evaluation and the approach taken to collecting and analysing data.

A complete survey of resources used by schools when working with the different programmes, Schools' costs of working with anti-bullying programmes, is available in pdf format on the National Agency for Education's web site.

The results of the evaluation are also presented in a book, *Vad fungerar? Resultat från utvärdering av metoder mot mobbning (What works? Findings from an evaluation of anti-bullying measures)*, which is primarily intended for staff at schools and the general public.

The knowledge and conclusions contributed by this evaluation will hopefully lead to fewer children and pupils being subjected to degrading treatment in school and to bullying being detected and remedied. The National Agency for Education wishes to extend its appreciation to all the pupils and employees who responded to the questionnaires and took part in the interviews. Your efforts will contribute to more effective combating of degrading treatment and bullying in the future.

*Helén Ängmo*  
Acting Director-General

*Annika Hjelm*  
Director of Education

## Preface

In 2011 the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Skolverket*) presented a report on an evaluation of methods against bullying. On its publication, the findings, methodology and conclusions generated considerable discussion among academics, professional evaluators, education practitioners and policy makers in Sweden. This translation of the report is aimed at broadening this discussion.

While Swedish schools, in an international perspective, have consistently shown relatively low levels of bullying, a continuing number of initiatives have been introduced to prevent bullying.

This report presents the results of the evaluation. It gives an account of how schools use the programs investigated, an assessment of effectiveness of various elements of the programs as well as a detailed explanation of the evaluation strategy.

It is important to note the use of concepts and terms. The word *bullying* (Swedish: *mobbning*) is not used in Swedish legislation. In the last decade, a wider term, generally translated as *degrading treatment* (Swedish: *kränkande behandling*), has come into use in various school ordinances. In addition to the use of a wider, more inclusive term, duties of schools have also been extended by the revised Anti-Discrimination Act, introduced in 2009, with the specific goal of combating all forms of discrimination. Readers of this report should note these aspects when reading the text.

The Swedish National Agency for Education hopes that agencies, policy makers, educational planners and evaluators, in their efforts to prevent bullying, will find the report useful in the continuing battle to reduce and eliminate bullying and degrading treatment in schools.

*Tommy Lagergren*  
Head of Department.

## Background of authors

**Erik Flygare** has a PhD in Sociology and is a Senior Lecturer in Social Work at the Academy of Law, Psychology and Social Work at Örebro University. Flygare received his PhD in 1999 for his thesis *Den psykiatriska problematiken och den problematiska psykiatrin (Psychiatric problems and problematic psychiatry)*. Flygare's main interests in research are in areas such as mental ill-health, rehabilitation of persons diagnosed with difficult mental illnesses/disturbances and bullying.

**Gun-Marie Frånberg** is a Professor in Pedagogy at the Institute of Applied Education Sciences at Umeå University. Frånberg received her PhD in 1996 for her thesis *East of Arcadia*, and she has carried out research into questions on fundamental values with the focus on democracy, bullying and gender equality. Frånberg is also the author of *Mobbning i nordiska skolor (Bullying in Nordic Schools)* and co-author of the National Agency for Education's publication *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)*. Frånberg is currently researching girls' identity work and learning in relation to the Internet.

**Peter Gill** is a Professor of Education at the Academy for Education and Economics at the University of Gävle. Gill received his PhD in 1979 with his thesis *Moral Judgements of Violence among Irish and Swedish Adolescents*. Gill is currently researching bullying, violence in schools, and pupils' experiences of violence with special focus on the pedagogy of violence and value didactics. He is also co-author of the National Agency for Education's publication *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)*.

**Björn Johansson** has a PhD in Sociology and is a Senior Lecturer in Social Work at Örebro University. Johansson received his PhD in 2001 for his thesis *Att slåss för erkännande – En studie i gatuväldets dynamik (Fighting for recognition – a study on the dynamics of street violence)*. In his research, Johansson focuses on phenomena such as criminality, abuse, bullying and mental ill health, as well as the ritual and emotional dimensions of these phenomena.

**Odd Lindberg** is a Professor in Social Work at the Academy of Law, Psychology and Social Work at Örebro University. Lindberg received his PhD at the University of Gothenburg in 1998 for his thesis *Emotioner, sociala band och ritualer. En kvalitativ analys av narkotikakarriärer (Emotions, social links and rituals. A qualitative analysis of careers in narcotics)*. Lindberg has published articles and reports on drug abuse, drug policy, bullying in schools, women in prison and the vocational culture and identity of prison officers. Odd Lindberg is also a member of the Scientific Council of the Swedish Prison and Probation Service.

**Christina Osbeck** has a PhD and is a Senior Lecturer in Religion at the Faculty of Ethics and Philosophy at Karlstad University. Osbeck received her PhD in 2006 for her thesis *Kränkningens livsförståelse – En religionsdidaktisk studie av livsförståelselärande i skolan (Life understanding of degrading treatment – A didactic religious study of learning from life in school)*. Osbeck has continued her research into questions concerning fundamental values and the didactics of religious issues.

**Åsa Söderström** has a PhD and is a Senior Lecturer in Education at the Faculty of Ethics and Philosophy, Department of Education Science, at Karlstad University. Söderström received her PhD in 2006 for her thesis *Att göra sina uppgifter, vara tyst och lämna in i tid – om elevansvar i det högmoderna samhället* (*Doing one's tasks, being quiet and handing work in on time – about pupils' responsibility in the ultramodern society*) about pupils' and teachers' views on pupil responsibility in school. Söderström has subsequently carried out research into school development and issues concerning foundation values at schools.

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1.

Summary by  
The National  
Agency for  
Education

# 1. Summary by the National Agency for Education

Combating bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination is a key task for schools. A positive social environment is not just a goal in itself but a prerequisite for learning. Although much has been tried by schools to help pupils subjected to bullying, there has been little research into which methods are effective. This evaluation will help to address this issue.

The evaluation provides information on measures that effectively prevent and remedy bullying. The question of which programmes are effective, however, has proved more complicated.

This evaluation is unique in that it includes large amounts of qualitative and quantitative data from 39 schools, charts vulnerability at individual level on three occasions and covers several programmes at the same time.

## Bullying and degrading treatment

The evaluation defines bullying as a repeated negative act involving an individual or individuals deliberately and intentionally trying to cause somebody harm or distress. Bullying is repeated and continues over a long period of time. Degrading treatment is when a child's or pupil's dignity is violated on single occasions. Such acts can be performed by and directed at one or more individuals. Degrading treatment can be visible and physical, or hidden and subtle. It can be expressed through derogatory forms of address, spreading of rumours, ridicule or physical violence. Excluding or threatening somebody can also be regarded as degrading treatment. Harassment is degrading treatment that is linked to one of the forms of discrimination (gender, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation and age).

## Organisation and focus of the evaluation

The evaluation was conducted by researchers with extensive knowledge of bullying and experience of different disciplines and methodological approaches, first on behalf of the National Agency for School Improvement and subsequently on behalf of the National Agency for Education. Researchers from the universities in Gävle, Gothenburg, Karlstad, Umeå and Örebro collaborated on the evaluation from autumn 2007 to autumn 2010. The evaluation posed the following fundamental questions:

- What experience do teachers, pupils and other school staff have of working with the eight anti-bullying programmes studied here?
- How and in what way are the measures used by schools effective in reducing bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination?

## Programmes covered in the evaluation

The selection criteria for the evaluated programmes were that they were widely used in Swedish schools or that there was evidence of their effectiveness. The aim was also to cover different kinds of programmes. The evaluation covers the

Farsta Method, Friends, Lions Quest, the Olweus Programme, SET, School Comet, School Mediation and Second Step.

### Evidence and selection of methodology

The government mandate to the National Agency for Education emphasised the requirement for an approach based on evidence and science. A thorough account of the factors considered and the methodology used can be found in a comprehensive appendix on methodology.<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to measure the effects of anti-bullying methods because there are always other factors to assess than just the effects of the methods. After a review of previous research, the researchers concluded that the measured effects were consistently small. In Sweden, legislation requires schools to implement comprehensive measures to combat degrading treatment and discrimination, which further reduces the scope for differentiating between the effects of specific anti-bullying programmes.

In this evaluation, a longitudinal, quasi-experimental design using individual level data was selected, with four compulsory schools per programme included in the evaluation, together with eight schools that were not working with any programme, which would function as control schools. All pupils in years 4–9 at these 40 schools completed a questionnaire on three occasions, at intervals of just over six months, about their experiences of degrading treatment. Interviews were conducted at the schools in order to obtain detailed information about the schools' measures. Information was also collected on teacher-pupil ratios, socio-economic conditions and other relevant data.

An overall assessment based on a number of comparison categories for the 39 schools that were finally included in the evaluation shows that the schools were representative of the approximately 4 700 compulsory schools in Sweden.

### Questionnaires and interviews

For this evaluation, the research team developed a web-based questionnaire in which pupils' perceptions of what constitutes bullying had no impact on the results. Instead of asking pupils if they had been bullied, they were asked about what they had been subjected to, e.g. physical blows or exclusion, how often this had occurred and how the intentions had been perceived. A template developed by the researchers was used to determine which pupils were to be classified as bullied and which as having been subjected to degrading treatment. The questionnaire, which was developed within the framework of the project, constituted an important step of the mapping process.

As the main focus was on the schools' measures to combat bullying and degrading treatment, group interviews were conducted with school management, pupil welfare staff, teachers and pupils at all the schools. Further in-depth interviews with these groups, as well as with non-teaching staff and parents, were conducted a year later at a third of the schools. The aim was to deepen understanding of measures to combat bullying and degrading treatment and to understand changes in the frequency of bullying observed between the first and second questionnaires.

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<sup>1</sup> *Evaluation of anti-bullying methods. Methodology appendix and attachments to report 353* (National Agency for Education, 2011), pdf.

### No school works with a single programme – a new strategy for the evaluation

After the first few school visits, it became apparent that not a single school used just one programme. All the schools had been in contact with or used components from several programmes. This also applied to the control schools, which were designated as such as they did not use any programme. This meant that it was impossible to proceed with the initial planned strategy of comparing the extent of bullying in schools using different programmes and thus obtaining knowledge on the effects of different programmes.

Schools that used a specific programme also worked with components from several other programmes. This meant that the focus of the evaluation had to change.

### Evaluation of the effects of individual measures and experiences of working with programmes

The strategy was modified to evaluate the effects of individual measures rather than the effects of whole programmes. The results describe the effects on bullying of individual measures, combinations of measures, and groups of schools using similar approaches.

The evaluation also describes schools' experiences of working with the evaluated programmes. Information about the experiences of working with the programmes, the relationship between effective measures and what the programmes prescribe, and programme costs provide a basis for discussing the potential of each programme to support schools.

The resources used by the different programmes, in terms of time and money, were identified within the framework of the evaluation.

### Facts about bullying

The evaluation shows that within a period of a few months between 16 and 19 per cent of pupils have been subjected to degrading treatment. Approximately 7–8 per cent of boys and girls are bullied. In other countries the figures are often higher. It is interesting to note that girls and boys are bullied to broadly the same extent. Previous studies have shown that boys are more often victims of bullying than girls. Girls are subjected to degrading social treatment to a slightly higher degree than boys, whilst boys are more often subjected to degrading physical treatment. Of the pupils, 1.3 per cent have been bullied by teachers who have said nasty or unpleasant things to them. The proportion of pupils who have been victims of cyber bullying is 1 per cent, which is a significantly lower proportion than reported in the media and other studies.

As the evaluation followed up bullying of individual pupils, it can show that bullying is usually variable, that for some children it is a growing problem and for others it is transitory. However, 1.5 per cent of the pupils in the study were bullied during the entire period of the study, i.e. for more than a year. Shame-related emotions are common among pupils who are bullied. They also have fewer friends and feel little trust in teachers. This indicates that self-esteem is eroded by bullying, especially over long periods.

Bullies are usually several members in the same class as the victim, and bullying occurs most often in the playground, in and around the toilets, in corridors and classrooms, and even relatively often when teachers are present. It was

slightly more common for the perpetrators to be boys than girls. Of the boys, 5–6 per cent subjected others to degrading treatment or bullying and, of the girls, 3–4 per cent followed the same pattern. The pupils said that bullying is primarily due to their appearance, envy or because others are stronger. Reasons that can be linked to the different forms of discrimination are less common, but they include gender (particularly among girls), disability and ethnicity.

### Successful approaches

Some schools managed to keep bullying at a low level or reduce it, whilst others were less successful. The frequency of bullying increased in some schools during the period of the evaluation. The evaluation report contains a discussion on successful approaches to combating bullying and degrading treatment based on the way schools with low or reduced levels of bullying work. The requirements for anti-bullying measures to be successful include actively committed individuals and various kinds of resources, such as competent staff, organisational stability and staff who work together.

### Systematic implementation

Successful schools are distinguished by their systematic and well-thought-through implementation of different anti-bullying measures used in combination and a clear allocation of roles and division of responsibilities. The combinations of measures used by successful schools have often been developed in relation to the school's own local conditions and experiences of different approaches.

### The whole school approach

Several of the schools in the study have a well-developed *whole school approach* to combat bullying and degrading treatment. This means that all the staff and pupils know how to act when bullying and degrading treatment occurs: everyone is involved and the approach adopted is supported by pupils and staff. Although, according to the staff, some schools face a tough climate, they have nevertheless managed to reduce the proportion of pupils who are bullied. This can be partly explained by the fact that all the staff take an active role in the work. Another important feature is that there is consensus among the staff on how the process should be implemented. The work is well supported by all the staff, not just the teachers and people in the school's safety team but also the cleaning staff and caretakers. This shared and deliberate strategy to combat bullying and degrading treatment is also well supported by all the pupils in the school. A shared approach seems to be a prerequisite of success.

### School climate

A positive school climate is another important prerequisite of successful prevention. Successful prevention can also contribute to a positive school climate. The school climate is influenced by several factors related to the situation inside and outside the school. For example, it may be a question of organisational conditions, social relationships, involvement, attitudes, norms and values.

Staff at one school in the evaluation said that the school was characterised by a culture of equality. They emphasised that there was a culture with a sense of community and respect for the equal value of every person. During the interviews, the pupils also showed that they had been socialised into this culture of

equality. If a positive school climate and spirit are to be maintained, however, it must work organisationally. A possible explanation for a positive perception of the climate at the most successful schools may be that activities promoting social relationships are always taking place there. A positive school climate is characterised by creativity, stimulation, learning, competence, security, helpfulness, participation, influence and responsibility.

### **Pupil participation**

The majority of successful schools have well-developed relationship-enhancing measures in which the pupils participate. Other studies also show that when pupils are allowed to participate in school activities and can determine their own scope for action, it has a positive impact on their views of the school, thereby improving the school climate.

### **Effective measures – different for girls and boys**

The evaluation shows that there is a difference between anti-bullying measures that help girls and those that help boys. The gender aspect of anti-bullying measures has not been demonstrated as clearly before. This brings in a new dimension to the entire problem area and broadens understanding of the use of different anti-bullying measures. It is also interesting to note that there are clear traces of traditional gender roles as regards the factors affecting bullying of girls in relation to boys.

The evaluation also shows that there is a difference between measures that are effective against physical bullying expressed in blows and pushing and those that are effective against social bullying, such as spreading rumours and excluding others. It also shows that there is a difference between factors that remedy individual cases of bullying and those that reduce the overall level of bullying in the school, i.e. factors that prevent bullying. This also deepens understanding of the complexity of the issue in terms of what should be done to reduce bullying in schools.

Differences between the effects of the measures show that they do not work as well in all cases. This further underlines the importance of schools identifying and analysing their own conditions when planning measures. The differences in the effects of bullying by boys and girls apply at a general level but, naturally, do not apply to all groups of children or pupils. All people and groups are not gender typical. Deeper knowledge is required of how gender-differentiated effects are linked to other factors.

As stated earlier, it was not possible to measure the effects of specific single programmes with regard to bullying frequency in schools, as no school adheres to just one single programme. This evaluation reports on the effects on bullying of a series of individual programme measures that can form part of an anti-bullying programme or be implemented by a school without being linked to a specific programme. The results contain a comprehensive review of the effects of each individual measure and the overall effects of recurring combinations of individual measures.

When the researchers concluded that individual measures were being used in the schools, they also examined how they were being used. Put very simply, as a rule it is only when measures are implemented deliberately, systematically and with a high degree of participation that they have demonstrable effects. This

also applies to the measures that the evaluation shows are actually connected to increases in bullying. Descriptions of measures identified as effective are given below.

As mentioned earlier, individual measures have gender-differentiated effects. There are two measures, however, that can remedy bullying for both girls and boys. A successful strategy for reducing the bullying of girls and boys is to encourage *pupils to actively participate in the work of preventing bullying*, not just on isolated occasions but also in activities aimed at creating a good atmosphere, with support and cooperation of adults at the school. Examples of this include pupils working in the school cafeteria and relationship-enhancing measures within the framework of the class (however, this measure does not cover pupils providing peer support). Regular *follow-up and evaluation* of the frequency of bullying and the use of these results as a basis for the way the school's anti-bullying measures are designed also has an effect on the bullying of both sexes.

Bullying of both girls and boys will generally decrease if there are cooperative teams in the form of anti-bullying teams, safety groups or similar with a broad mix of teachers and staff with specialist skills, such as school nurses, counsellors or teachers for children with special needs.

### Focus on girls

The most important individual measure for girls, especially in terms of remedying individual cases and for prevention, is the *follow-up and evaluation* of the pupils' situation as regards bullying and degrading treatment. To be relevant, follow-ups and evaluation must be carried out regularly and used as a basis for designing anti-bullying measures.

A well-developed system for *monitoring school breaks* that is timetabled and based on identifying areas perceived as dangerous, with specific staff responsible for supervising pupils and organising special activities, will also work as a preventive measure for girls.

To prevent bullying of girls, especially of a social nature, *measures for dealing with the perpetrators and victims of bullying* are also effective.<sup>2</sup> This means that there must be procedures in place for addressing and following up occurrences of bullying for the victims as well as the perpetrators. For this to be effective in reducing bullying of girls, there must also be procedures for dealing with experiences of bullying and providing support for those involved.

Physical bullying of girls can also be prevented by *active participation of pupils in prevention*, which means that pupils are given responsibility for running regular activities aimed at creating a good atmosphere with support and cooperation of adults at the school. *Staff training*, with the majority of the staff receiving training to enhance their understanding of bullying and degrading treatment, can also prevent physical bullying of girls.

Social bullying of girls is prevented by informing pupils about bullying and degrading treatment at regular *school assemblies*. This measure is almost counter-productive for boys however.

Two individual measures have been shown to increase bullying of girls. These are special lessons timetabled for all classes and aimed at developing pupils' so-

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2 Later in the report, these measures are referred to as *dealing with bullies and dealing with victims*.

cial skills, and mediation if this is used as a procedure when conflicts between pupils occur.

Special lessons aimed at developing pupils' social skills and empathy, and reinforcing the school's work on foundation values in the form of, for example, life skills, foundation values, and Olweus or 'Togetherness' lessons timetabled for all classes are perceived as tedious and dull by teachers and pupils. The pupils may see the manual-based exercises as silly and contrived, and when they recur frequently they can have the opposite effect to that intended. Some exercises can make pupils feel vulnerable, and lessons then run the risk of becoming unruly. Some teachers feel they have insufficient competence to carry out the difficult talks prescribed.

When it comes to mediation, this can place too much responsibility on pupils who are to function as mediators.

### Focus on boys

The pattern of individual measures that is effective when addressing bullying of boys differs somewhat from the pattern of such measures for girls. The evaluation found that more measures are effective against bullying of boys than bullying of girls.

An effective measure for tackling bullying of which boys are victims involves the use of *cooperative teams*, in other words, anti-bullying teams, safety groups or similar, with a broad cross-section of teachers and staff with special skills, such as school nurses, counsellors or teachers for children with special needs. *Measures for dealing with bullies and victims* that involve procedures for addressing and following up occurrences of bullying for both victims and bullies can also be effective in individual cases.

*Case documentation* is an effective measure against physical bullying of which boys are the victims, i.e. documentation of the investigation, planning of remedial measures and follow-up carried out in accordance with established procedures for dealing with degrading treatment of pupils.

Relationship-enhancing measures between pupils, a deliberate strategy implemented in activities aimed at creating a sense of closeness and community, are effective in reducing physical bullying in general of boys and in improving the situation of individual boys who are bullied.

Boys subjected to social bullying will also be helped if the school organises staff training in which the majority of the staff receive training to enhance their understanding of bullying and degrading treatment. If the school has *disciplinary strategies* that teachers find supportive and act in accordance with, such as sanctions or consequences applied to unacceptable behaviour, this will also have a preventive effect on social bullying of boys.

*Rules on behaviour* to prevent physical bullying of boys<sup>3</sup> developed in cooperation between teachers and pupils also work.

Bullying of boys increases with the measure *pupils as players*, i.e. specially designated pupils who have received training and who function as observers or rapporteurs, such as peer supports. These pupils have a role to play in preventive work as the staff's eyes and ears. The process of appointing peer supports is complicated. Sometimes pupils are chosen who are not up to the task or who

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3 Later in the report, they are referred to as the measure school rules

themselves have subjected others to degrading treatment. Pupils may also be subjected to degrading treatment when peer supports are chosen. Just like pupils who act as mediators, peer supports say they feel that the task is difficult, that they have a burden of responsibility, and that sometimes they are victimised by other pupils because of their role.

For young boys, *special lessons* that are timetabled for all classes can lead to increased bullying (see previous page about girls).

### *Comments*

The evaluation shows that there is a difference between measures that reduce bullying of girls and those that reduce bullying of boys. There is also a difference between measures that reduce social and physical bullying, and between general prevention and measures for remedying individual cases. These findings show that the measures do not work as well for everyone. They show that the problem of bullying is complex and that there are no methods that function in all situations. The findings cannot be used as a manual for what works for the different sexes and kinds of bullying. Girls and boys do not all conform to gender stereotypes and not all groups work in the same way.

It may appear contradictory that the measure *pupils' active participation in prevention* reduces bullying whilst the measure *pupils as players* (peer supports or mediators) can have the opposite effect and increase bullying. The difference is that in the first case, pupils are allowed to participate and influence planning, and they have responsibility, under supervision, for preventive measures. In the second case, as peer supports and mediators, pupils have responsibility for remedial measures that may prove too difficult for them and they run the risk of being victimised themselves.

### The most effective anti-bullying measures

The following measures can generally be regarded as most effective:

- *Pupils participate actively in preventing bullying* – not just occasionally but are entrusted, to a great extent, with responsibility for running activities aimed at creating a good atmosphere (peer supports are not included in this measure), with the support and cooperation of adults at the school.
- *Follow-up/evaluation* – carried out regularly of the pupils' situation with regard to bullying, and the outcomes are used to develop and modify anti-bullying measures.
- *Cooperative teams* – i.e. anti-bullying teams, safety groups or similar with a broad mix of teachers and staff with special skills, such as school nurses, counsellors or teachers for children with special needs.
- *Measures for dealing with bullies and victims* – procedures for addressing and following up bullying of the victim and the bully. If the measure is also to be effective for girls, there must be procedures for processing bullying experiences and providing support for those involved.
- *Staff training* – the majority of the staff receive training to enhance their understanding of bullying and degrading treatment.

Measures that are also effective for girls:

- *A system for monitoring school breaks* – well-developed, timetabled and based on identifying areas that are perceived as dangerous in which there are special

staff responsible for being with the pupils and organising special activities for them.

Measures that are also effective for boys:

- *Relationship-enhancing measures between pupils* – a deliberate strategy implemented through activities to create a sense of closeness and community.
- *Case documentation* – based on established procedures.
- *Rules on behaviour* – developed in cooperation between staff and pupils.
- *Disciplinary strategies* – strategies that teachers find supportive and follow, e.g. sanctions or consequences applied to unacceptable behaviour.

It is important to bear in mind that different measures may have different effects under different conditions. According to the evaluation, the most basic prerequisites for successfully combating bullying are that measures are implemented systematically and enjoy the support of the whole school, and that cooperation and a sense of commitment permeate the school climate and culture.

### Measures that reduce degrading treatment

The majority of measures that proved effective against bullying also proved effective against degrading treatment. It should be noted, however, that the effects are slightly less in the case of degrading treatment than for other forms of bullying. Measures that reduce degrading treatment:

- *Relationship-enhancing measures between pupils* – a deliberate strategy implemented through activities to create a sense of closeness and community.
- *Pupils participating actively in preventing bullying* – not just occasionally but are entrusted, to a great extent, with running activities aimed at creating a good atmosphere with the support and cooperation of adults at the school. (This measure does not include pupils functioning as peer supports.)
- *Disciplinary strategies* – strategies that teachers find supportive and act upon, e.g. sanctions or consequences applied to unacceptable behaviour.
- A system for monitoring school breaks – well-developed, timetabled and based on identifying areas that are perceived as dangerous where special staff are responsible for being with the pupils and organising special activities for them.
- *Cooperative teams* – i.e. anti-bullying teams, safety groups or similar with a broad mix of teachers and staff with special skills, such as school nurses, counsellors or teachers for children with special needs.
- *Measures for bullies and measures for victims* – procedures for addressing and following up incidents of bullying for the victim and the bully, and procedures for processing bullying experiences and providing support for those involved.
- *School rules* – developed in cooperation between staff and pupils.

### Measures that reduce the proportion of bullies

A few measures have been shown to have an effect on the proportion of perpetrators. The proportion of bullies has fallen when the following measures have been implemented:

- *Follow-up/evaluation* – carried out regularly of the pupils' situation with regard to bullying, and the results are used to develop and modify anti-bullying measures.

- *Pupils participate actively in preventing bullying* – not just occasionally but are entrusted, to a great extent, with the responsibility of running activities aimed at creating a good atmosphere, with the support and cooperation of adults at the school. (This measure does not include pupils functioning as peer supports.)
- *Staff training* – the majority of staff receive training to enhance their understanding of bullying and degrading treatment.

### Combinations of measures

The researchers have also examined how individual measures function in combination. The positive effects of an individual measure are also achieved when combined with other measures. Schools often combine similar measures. No ideal combination can be inferred, however, on the basis of the current empirical data.

### Measures that cannot be recommended for combating bullying

Some measures in the evaluation proved ineffective or even increased the frequency of bullying. No effect was demonstrated for the following measures:

- *Relationship-enhancing measures between teachers and pupils*
- *Training material* about bullying and degrading treatment
- *Parent training* about bullying and degrading treatment

The following measures have shown that they may increase bullying and cannot be recommended. Note, however, that it is when they are implemented fully as described below that the negative effect becomes evident.

- *Special lessons* – timetabled and for all classes
- *Pupils as players* – pupils trained to function as observers or rapporteurs, e.g. as peer supports
- *Mediation* – used as a procedure when conflicts between pupils occur

The last two measures are also counter-productive with regard to degrading treatment and reducing the proportion of perpetrators.

Regular *school assemblies* to inform pupils about bullying and degrading treatment can increase bullying of boys and, although, they may be effective for girls, they cannot be recommended as a general method. They may be effective in isolated cases for dealing with specific, identified needs.

The negative effects that were observed are correlated with the measures being used systematically as described above. However, it is possible that special lessons and training material may have positive effects if used occasionally and on the basis of specific needs.

It is also important to bear in mind that measures categorised as ineffective or that increase bullying may have other positive effects. For example, mediating measures may have the conflict-resolving effects originally intended. However, the focus of this evaluation is on bullying and the findings therefore concentrate on the effects on bullying.

It is also possible that measures categorised as ineffective or as linked to increased bullying may have positive effects in some contexts and under certain circumstances.

## Schools' experiences of working with programmes

Working on the basis of programme concepts with manuals in the complex everyday life of the school proved particularly complicated. The decision to introduce a programme is often poorly supported among school staff, and support among pupils is virtually non-existent. Decisions are sometimes made by head teachers or even local municipal management without communication with those who will implement the programme in their work with pupils. Inadequate support for the decision to introduce a programme or in its implementation can easily lead to resistance to the programme among staff. Resistance from staff is negative, since all programmes, with the possible exception of the Farsta Method, assume that most of the school's staff actively contribute to the implementation of the programme.

Not one of the programmes covered in the study has an implementation strategy that takes adequate account of the difficulties associated with school improvements. There are shortcomings in the schools' preparedness to implement programmes and in the flexibility of the programmes to meet the varying circumstances and needs of the schools. Of the programmes studied, only the Olweus Programme includes a long-term strategy for the implementation process as part of the programme. It is difficult to create the conditions necessary for a positive result, and schools are offered little or no help within the framework of the majority of the programmes studied. Programme training seldom takes account of the knowledge and experience of combating bullying and degrading treatment that already exists in the school. When a programme is introduced and the staff are trained, the school often lacks a plan to maintain and deepen the programme work.

Most programmes are unclear about the basic assumptions on which their form and content are based. Staff assigned to work with the programmes are unaware of the underlying programme assumptions about the causes of bullying. Poor knowledge of the programmes' intentions and the measures required of the school staff may lead to a programme being perceived as doing more harm than good. All programmes have features that can lead to pupils feeling that they are the victims of bullying or degrading treatment.

The programmes' role in the school's work on combating bullying, discrimination and degrading treatment is often not made clear. Few teachers in the study can describe with any certainty the overall strategy outlined in the school's action plan. If a programme concept does not match or coincide with a teacher's needs and ideas of what is meaningful, he or she may not work with the programme. The different circumstances and needs of schools largely determine a programme's impact and effectiveness.

The majority of pupils are unaware of the school's measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment. They have insufficient formal influence on the measures the school applies to promote equal treatment. Pupils' viewpoints are rarely considered when programmes are purchased or when a school wishes to evaluate the effects of a programme measure. The programmes studied do not require pupils to exercise formal influence within the framework of the process. Pupils who act as mediators or peer supports say that they find themselves acting as the extended arm of adults, which can lead to harassment from other pupils.

When school staff were interviewed about their experiences of working with the various programmes, they were often positive to the programmes they used, especially when they had adapted the way they used the programmed to local conditions. Working with programmes can provide a sense of security and contribute to a shared perspective and approach to combating bullying. The introduction of a programme means that people come from the outside with time, resources and authority to focus on the work area, and this is a stimulus for the school.

### Costs of anti-bullying programmes

The schools have direct costs for course fees and purchasing material as well as indirect costs for working hours. The indirect costs mean that the school staff have to devote time to the programmes, and this requires resources in the form of working hours.

Many schools are offered financial support if they introduce the programmes. Five out of eight programme representatives said that such financial support exists or is common.

It is common for municipalities to provide special financial resources to schools that introduce a programme. Other players that give support to the programmes are the county administrative boards, county councils, SKL (Sweden's Municipalities and County Councils), the Swedish National Institute of Public Health, the private sector and foundations. Two of the programmes have their own sponsors. Schools using Lions Quest have good chances of receiving financial support from local Lions Clubs, and Friends has received support from Gålöstiftelsen (the Gålö Foundation) to allocate funds to some schools.

There are of course many people in society who consider it urgent that schools initiate anti-bullying programmes. Schools that do not use programmes but actively work with plans to combat discrimination and degrading treatment do not receive any financial support for this purpose however. The possibility of receiving financial support to initiate programmes is one of the reasons schools use multiple parallel programmes, according to representatives of two of the eight schools that were interviewed about the costs of working with the programmes.

Financial support for anti-bullying programmes can be used by financially pressured schools as a means of funding in-service training for school staff. Anti-bullying programmes can involve costs for the schools – but they can also open up new financial opportunities.

### About the programmes

The evaluation does not provide a basis for drawing direct conclusions about the effectiveness of the programmes nor for ranking them. It is not possible to determine programme efficacy by enumerating the effective measures they prescribe. This is because programme instructions prescribe that schools should work with the measures in a specific way, and often this does not match the way schools subsequently work with the measures once they have proved effective according to the evaluation. The effectiveness of a measure also depends on local conditions: where it is implemented and how it is combined with other measures. It is difficult to evaluate the programmes because success depends on local conditions as well as how systematically the school manages to work and

the participation by the staff and pupils. An analysis is provided below of the programmes' key measures in relation to the effects found by the evaluation and the staff and pupils' experiences of the programmes, subject to the reservations mentioned above. All the programmes have positive components, but they all also prescribe measures that have been shown to increase bullying or that are problematic in other ways.

**The Farsta Method** is a remedial programme that focuses on how bullying should be dealt with after it has occurred. The method involves 'surprise' talks with bullies who are then expected to stop bullying. Talks should also be had with the victims. One of the advantages of the Farsta Method is that it is supported by the effective measure *cooperative teams* and by *measures for dealing with bullies and victims* that have an effect on bullying of boys. A negative factor is that doubt has emerged in interviews with staff about whether it is morally right to 'surprise' children and confront them in a way that does not allow them to defend themselves. It has also been pointed out that the method does not work in cases of repeated bullying. The Farsta Programme has also been criticised by school authorities as it advocates not contacting parents of bullies immediately, as is required by law. The programme costs relatively little to purchase.

**Friends** is a preventive pupil-support programme. The programme is based on pupils appointed as peer supports to help adults detect bullying, serve as good role models, and support pupils who are at risk of being victimised. Positive features of the programme are *pupil participation in prevention* and *relationship-enhancing measures between pupils*. Both these measures can contribute to reducing bullying if implemented systematically. One key measure is negative however. In the evaluation, the term used for peer supports is *pupils as players*. According to the evaluation, if pupils are trained to function as observers or rapporteurs, it increases bullying of boys and is ineffective for girls. The role of peer support often means that pupils find themselves in a difficult and exposed position. The direct costs of Friends are high.

**The Olweus Programme** is a preventive and remedial programme focusing on bullying. It is the most comprehensive of the programmes and contains many different measures that reinforce foundation values and prevent, detect and combat bullying. It has more measures than any of the other programmes, effective and ineffective ones as well as some that risk increasing bullying. The advantages of the programme include that it emphasises responsibility by everyone and that there are requirements for systematic implementation and a whole school approach, which are prerequisites of success. The prescribed measures that the evaluation found effective include: *follow-up and evaluation* through the programme's pupil questionnaire, *measures for dealing with bullies and victims* and *staff training*. The Olweus Programme also prescribes *rules on behaviour*, *disciplinary strategies* and *case documentation* that are effective against bullying of boys, and a system for monitoring school breaks that is effective against bullying of girls. However, one of the programme's more conspicuous measures is Olweus lessons – timetabled *special lessons* for all classes, which, according to the evaluation, are linked to increased bullying of girls and young boys. The Olweus Programme also provides its own *training material*, which, according to the evaluation, is ineffective. The programme's breadth, it includes several effective measures, also has a downside. School staff who were interviewed about work-

ing with the programme said that it is time- and resource-intensive and that this results in boredom and lower priority being given to other school activities. The Olweus programme puts extensive demands on staff and is the most expensive programme in the evaluation.

**Lions Quest**, **SET** and **Second Step** are programmes that reinforce foundation values. A positive feature is that they prescribe some effective measures, such as *staff training* and *rules on behaviour*. A negative feature is that key components of these programmes are *special lessons* to reinforce foundation values and the *training material* they provide for this. Timetabled special lessons for all classes advocated by the programmes increased bullying of girls and young boys, according to the evaluation. It has not been demonstrated that the training material has any effect on bullying or degrading treatment. Lessons can be perceived as tedious and dull and the exercises as contrived. Pupils said that the behaviour practised in the special lessons only seemed to apply during these lessons. Other norms often applied during breaks, in the corridor and in the school canteen. It is not clear how time can be created to schedule special lessons as lessons on foundation values are not part of the current timetable. These programmes are among the most expensive. However, in most cases, Lions Quest provides financial support from Lions.

**School Comet** can be regarded as preventive. The programme is not primarily aimed at combating bullying. Teachers are trained to reinforce positive behaviour by giving praise and ignoring negative behaviour so that the latter eventually ceases. Unruly children should be helped to stop seeking attention by fighting and arguing. The parts of the programme that can have positive effects on combating bullying are those that prescribe *disciplinary strategies*, *rules on behaviour* and *staff training*, which can be effective against bullying of boys if used deliberately and systematically, as described earlier. Teachers say the programme has contributed to creating a positive attitude in the school. However, the programme also advocates measures that are ineffective against bullying and this is perceived as resource-intensive. The initial programme costs for training are high.

**School Mediation** is a programme of mediation and conflict resolution that aims to develop strategies for resolving conflicts, thereby creating a better school atmosphere. Its primary aim is not to combat bullying, though representatives claim that the programme can also do this. A positive aspect for combating bullying is that the programme advocates measures that are effective, according to the evaluation, such as *pupils' active participation in prevention, follow-up and evaluation* and *systems for monitoring school breaks*. A negative aspect is that, if used as a procedure for resolving conflict, the key mediation measure has been shown to increase bullying of girls. School Mediation can have positive effects in areas other than combating bullying however. The programme costs are relatively low.

### Researchers' recommendations

The researchers question the use of anti-bullying programmes created in cultures and contexts other than where they will be used. Swedish school legislation requires systematic measures for combating bullying, harassment and degrading treatment. The programmes can satisfy this requirement if attention and resources are instead focused on following the programmes.

Measures that prevent, detect and remedy bullying must be based on research into what works. Well-grounded, systematic plans should be based on the measures identified as effective in this evaluation. Anti-bullying measures based on mediation, timetabled special lessons for all classes, and the use of pupils as players, in the sense of observers and rapporteurs, should be avoided. Comprehensive and systematic implementation of measures, a healthy school climate and pupil participation are crucial to success.

The overall view of bullying that emerges in this evaluation implies that in using their measures to prevent, detect and remedy bullying, schools must avoid the risk of treating different bullying patterns as equivalent and also be particularly aware that some individuals may be at continuous risk over a long period. The schools must be aware that measures against degrading treatment and bullying require different kinds of interventions, such as those aimed at helping girls and boys respectively and those that deal with social and physical bullying. The fact that a small proportion of pupils are subjected to sustained bullying over a whole school year or longer requires special and specific measures. Schools must therefore implement targeted measures that increase the chances of detecting and remedying long-term bullying. Schools must also be aware that bullying can occur in classrooms that are under direct teacher supervision.

The introduction of methods or approaches for combating bullying and degrading treatment must be based on well-conducted surveys of pupils' vulnerabilities and experiences that are relevant to the specific school, systematic monitoring of the pupils' situation, and evaluation of the school's measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment.

New approaches must be supported by all the staff and pupils in the school. All the measures for combating bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination must be made clear to all the parties involved. Inadequate involvement leads to resistance among staff.

No specific single programme can be recommended in its entirety for compulsory schools in Sweden. The programmes can be used as inspiration and a source of specific measures, but as some of their measures are ineffective and others counter-productive, the programmes should not be used in their entirety. The measures described in the National Agency for Education's general guidelines on promoting equal treatment and preventing discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment are a good starting point for planning the school's anti-bullying measures.

It should be possible to modify the questionnaire developed for the evaluation so that it can be used by schools to identify degrading treatment in their own circumstances.

### The findings are in line with previous initiatives

The chapter on background describes a number of government initiatives concerning bullying and degrading treatment in schools that have been carried out over the past twenty years. It is interesting to note that the findings of this evaluation are broadly in line with these ones.

After the project *Att förebygga, upptäcka och åtgärda mobbning (Preventing, detecting and remedying bullying)* (1993), the conclusion was reached that there are no ready-made models that are valid in all situations. This has been repeated a couple of times since then, and it is also a key finding of the current evaluation.

In *Kränk mig inte (Don't abuse me)* (1995) and *Olikas lika värde – om arbetet mot mobbning och kränkande behandling (We are all equal – on combating bullying and degrading treatment)* (2003), it was stated that methods for preventing and remedying bullying and degrading treatment must be deliberately chosen on the basis of specific problems to be solved and goals to be achieved. Choosing the right method and implementing appropriate measures requires a thorough survey of the situation to be carried out at the school. Work on foundation values must be integrated into the daily activities of the school. Putting the work on norms and values into separate lessons, according to the representatives of the Foundation Values Project, as summarised in *Värdegrundsboken (The foundations value book)* (2002), goes against the whole idea of viewing foundation values as a perspective that should permeate all activities in the school.

The Child and Pupil Protection Act, which was introduced in 2006 and the content of which was brought into the new Education Act and Discrimination Act, builds on these conclusions. It advocates that work on foundation values should be well thought through and permeate all activities, allocation of responsibility should be systematic and clear, surveys should form the basis of choosing preventive measures, all staff and pupils should be involved, there should be documentation, efforts should be made to detect and remedy occurrences of degrading treatment, etc. This also corresponds closely with the evaluation's findings.

### Concluding remarks

The evaluation indicates that measures for combating degrading treatment and bullying should be based on the school's own circumstances and that surveys and evaluations should be used deliberately and systematically and involve all the staff and pupils in the school. Pupils should be involved in analysis and planning, but they should not be used as mediators or pupil supports for the purpose of functioning as the adults' eyes and ears. The measures laid down in the Education Act and the Discrimination Act stipulating that school measures for promoting equivalent treatment and preventing discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment must be described in annual plans for combating discrimination and degrading treatment (equal treatment plans) and be based on research and proven experience. All these receive strong support in the findings of this evaluation.

The evaluation has produced important data about effective anti-bullying measures, especially concerning the gender aspects of the effects of various measures, which are useful to schools when planning and choosing specific anti-bullying measures. The schools have also gained access to data about measures they may find useful for tackling ongoing bullying. Schools now have every opportunity to choose to implement measures that are effective. Regardless of the measures chosen, to be successful it is essential that systematic implementation is the essence of the process, that a whole school approach is taken, that a healthy school climate exists and that the pupils are involved.

It has become clear that some bullying is difficult to tackle but that the measures that can be useful are now known. The prolonged exposure to risk by 1.5 per cent of pupils must not be ignored and should be given the required attention. These are the pupils whose self-esteem is undermined during their time at school, and this can have a negative effect on the rest of their lives.

The work with specific anti-bullying programme concepts in schools has been shown to be complex. Neither the schools nor the programme creators appear to be aware of the difficulties and risks associated with introducing manual-based programmes for dealing with the complex, serious and difficult problems posed by bullying and degrading treatment that is part of the multi-faceted everyday reality of schools. Perhaps, it is wise for teachers not to follow manuals without reflection but, instead, to choose what they consider useful from the programmes and manuals available. Using programmes costs time and money and, in the worst case, can be counter-productive. The use of programmes does not replace the requirements of the Education Act and the Discrimination Act for active, supportive, preventive and remedial measures.

The use of programme concepts is not in itself an adequate method for effectively preventing and remedying bullying and fulfilling the requirements of the legislation. The National Agency for Education does not endorse the use of any programme in its entirety. Parts of the programmes can serve as inspiration and a source of specific measures. A systematic approach involving surveys, evaluation, pupil participation in planning, and well-grounded plans that comply with the National Agency for Education's general guidelines on promoting equality of treatment and preventing discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment are in line with the evaluation's findings and recommended by the National Agency for Education.

This evaluation and Ramböll's evaluation of the National Agency for Education's university course *Mobbning, diskriminering och kränkande behandling – skolpraktik och forskningsperspektiv (Bullying, discrimination and degrading treatment – school practice and research perspectives)* confirm that success lies in reinforcing teachers' professionalism through training so that they can deal confidently with problems as they arise in the everyday life of the school instead of needing to slavishly refer to manuals and concepts.

The National Agency for Education will disseminate the new knowledge gained from the evaluation in order to support schools in their work in this area. The Agency will be publishing a book to make the findings of the evaluation available, primarily intended for those working in the school: *Vad fungerar? Resultat från utvärdering av metoder mot mobbning (What works? Findings from an evaluation of anti-bullying measures)*.

The Agency intends to adapt the questionnaire used in the evaluation and make it available to schools to use in their own surveys of degrading treatment.

The Agency regularly works with the Child and School Student Representative, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate, the Equality Ombudsman and the Swedish Work Environment Authority to develop information and support for school measures to combat discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment. The findings of the evaluation will be valuable within this framework.

The data collected within the framework of the evaluation can be used to generate further knowledge about bullying and degrading treatment and about school measures for addressing these problems. The Agency intends to make the data collected available to researchers interested in working further with the material.

2.

Assignment

## 2. Assignment

On 15 February 2007, the government gave the National Agency for School Improvement the *Assignment for an educational initiative on research-based programmes for combating bullying in schools* (U 2007/1205/S). In connection with the changes to the agencies in the field of education, the assignment was transferred to the National Agency for Education on 1 October 2009. The goal is for the methods used by schools to combat bullying and degrading treatment to be based on evidence and to be quality assured. The assignment was broadened on 15 May 2008 to cover discrimination.

The assignment has three parts:

- A survey of evaluated programmes against bullying<sup>4</sup>
- Education about bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination for teachers and other school staff
- An evaluation of existing programmes used to combat bullying and degrading treatment

For the first part, a survey of evaluated programmes, Tomas Matti compiled the evaluations of the 21 programmes presented in the report *Olikas lika värde (We are all equal)*.<sup>5</sup> Representatives of each of the 21 programmes were asked to send in information about the evaluations of the effects of their programmes. The aim was to identify the scope and quality of the evaluations. Only the evaluations of the Olweus Programme fulfilled the scientific requirements. The conclusion was that knowledge of the effects of the programmes used by schools in combating bullying was very poor.

For the second part of the assignment, education and training for school staff was started in spring 2008 at eleven universities and university colleges in Sweden by the National Agency for School Improvement. The course *Mobbning, kränkande behandling och diskriminering – skolpraktik och forskningsperspektiv (Bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination – practice in schools and research perspectives)* covers ten higher education credits<sup>6</sup> and improves the participants' competence in developing their schools' work on measures to combat bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination.

The third part, the evaluation assignment, consists of two parts: a review of knowledge and an evaluation. The review of knowledge, *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)*, examined the concepts of bullying from different perspectives and described and analysed the theoretical foundations of the eight programmes covered in this report. It was published by the National Agency for Education in 2009.<sup>7</sup>

This report presents the evaluation of the schools' work on preventing, detecting and remedying bullying and degrading treatment. The work started in autumn 2007, and by spring 2008 it covered eight programmes: the Farsta

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4 National Agency for School Improvement, 2007a

5 National Agency for School Improvement, 2003.

6 Initially, the course covered 7.5 credits and was known as *Mobbning – skolpraktik och forskningsperspektiv (Bullying – practice in schools and research perspectives)*, but with the extension of the assignment from the government, the content and scope of the course was broadened.

7 National Agency for Education, 2009d.

Method, Friends, Lions Quest, the Olweus Programme, Social and emotional training (SET), School Comet, School Mediation and Second Step. The selection was made by the National Agency for School Improvement. The criteria were that the programmes should be used in many schools or that there should be indications of their effectiveness.<sup>8</sup>

### Aims and questions

As the school staff need “knowledge based on science and well-proven experience of preventing, detecting and dealing with bullying” in their work to combat degrading treatment, the aim of this evaluation is to “evaluate the effects of existing methods used in schools to combat bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination”.<sup>9</sup>

Fundamental questions covered in the report:

- What experiences have teachers, pupils and other school staff gained from working with the eight programmes?
- How and in what way are school measures effective in terms of preventing and remedying bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination?

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8 National Agency for School Improvement, 2007c.

9 Ministry of Education, 2007b.



3.

Background

## 3. Background

This chapter contains a discussion of key concepts, a description of theoretical perspectives on the subject and a section covering previous studies on school measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment.

### 3.1 More stringent requirements for combating bullying and degrading treatment

Perceptions of bullying, its causes and how schools can work to prevent and remedy the problem have varied. The curriculum for compulsory schools, Lgr 1969 (National Board of Education, 1969), highlighted the problem of pupils being isolated from their peer groups. The task of dealing with the problem was primarily assigned to the pupil welfare staff. The concept of bullying was introduced in the curriculum for compulsory schools, Lgr 1980 (National Board of Education, 1980),<sup>10</sup> and the requirement to create a school environment free from violence and harassment became a more important responsibility for the schools. The problem was moved into the classroom, and collective working methods and active pupil democracy were described as effective measures for combating bullying. Study days were arranged to raise the competence of teachers and school managers in the area, and schools were expected to draw up anti-bullying plans and create an organisation to prevent, detect and remedy bullying between pupils. Although preventative work had been moved to where the teaching was taking place, much of the remedial work rested with the pupil welfare team or a group set up specifically to tackle bullying incidents, commonly referred to as the bullying team.

In Lpo 94 (Ministry of Education, 2006), the description of the requirements for schools and teachers was made more rigorous. Several concepts were also used to shed light on the problem of pupils being mistreated. The task of the school is to actively combat bullying, harassment and discrimination. Teachers should *“focus attention on bullying and, in consultation with other school staff, take the necessary measures to prevent and counteract all forms of degrading treatment”* (p. 9). Bullying has become part of a larger problem and now comes under the concept of degrading treatment. The work on combating degrading treatment and bullying has also become part of the school’s work on foundation values with ramifications for all school activities and in which everyone involved is required to share responsibility.

The Education Act adopted in 1985 has been revised on a number of occasions, and the requirements for the way schools combat bullying and degrading treatment have been clarified on a regular basis. In 1990, the following modification was made to Section 2 of the Education Act, *“that everyone who works in a school should promote respect for the intrinsic value of every person”*. In 1993, the concept of degrading treatment was introduced, *“Everyone who works in a school should make every effort to prevent any attempt by pupils to subject others to degrad-*

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10 For a description of bullying from an historical perspective, see the National Agency for Education (2009) *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)*, Stockholm, the National Agency for Education and Fritzes.

*ing treatment.*” (Education Act, Section 2, 1993:167) In 1999, this formulation was made more specific and the concept of degrading treatment was linked to bullying and racism, “*Those who work in a school shall actively combat all forms of degrading treatment such as bullying and racist behaviour.*” (Education Act, Section 2, SFS 1999:886) The tightening of the Education Act and the introduction of the concept of degrading treatment as a legal concept made it clear that the school’s ability to create an environment in which degrading treatment does not occur is no longer merely an internal matter for the school but one with possible legal sanctions.

In 2006, special legislation in terms of the Child and Pupil Protection Act (BEL) (SFS, 2006:67) was introduced with a prohibition on discrimination and other degrading treatment of children and pupils. With the introduction of the BEL, the responsibility of principal organisers to children and pupils in organisations covered by the Education Act was extended and clarified. Liability for damages was introduced if representatives of an organisation failed to take active measures against discrimination and other degrading treatment. Despite the fact that schools had long had the task of preventing and combating degrading treatment, the majority only had an action plan for combating bullying. With the introduction of this legislation, schools were required to draw up equal treatment plans with a systematic approach and descriptions for working with measures to combat discrimination, harassment and other degrading treatment.

From 1 January 2009, the requirements in the child and pupil protection legislation were transferred to the Education Act and the Discrimination Act. Chapter 6 of the new Education Act sets out the regulations that apply to combating degrading treatment. Under the Education Act, schools have an obligation to adopt targeted measures to prevent and remedy degrading treatment of children and pupils. The Discrimination Act contains prohibitions against seven specific types of discrimination.<sup>11</sup> This Act is monitored by the Equality Ombudsman (DO).

The Child and School Student Representative (BEO) in the Swedish Schools Inspectorate has supervisory responsibility. One of the BEO’s tasks is to represent children and pupils who believe they have been subjected to degrading treatment at school.<sup>12</sup> By following the BEO’s work, it can be seen that there has been a steady increase in complaints of degrading treatment since 2006. In 2009, 603 cases were reported, an increase of 14 per cent from 2008. The most frequent type of complaint concerns a boy in compulsory school being subjected to degrading treatment at the hands of one or several other boys. Half of the cases reported come from the three metropolitan areas of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. Of the complaints, 40 per cent relate to staff in compulsory schools who have subjected a pupil to degrading treatment. It is common for these complaints to refer to experiences of adults in the school questioning pupils’ reported experiences of being subjected to degrading treatment and/or looking the other way when it occurs.<sup>13</sup>

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11 The types of discrimination are gender, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation and age.

12 In 2008, the BEO and the Swedish Schools Inspectorate received approximately 500 complaints of degrading treatment. Since the BEO was formed in 2006, 59 decisions regarding compensation have been taken, 21 of these concerned cases of degrading treatment by adults.

13 Link retrieved 10/03/09 from the Swedish Schools Inspectorate’s homepage: [www.skolinspektionen.se/sv/BEO/Nyheter/Fordubbling-av-antal-anmalda-krankningar-sedan-2003/](http://www.skolinspektionen.se/sv/BEO/Nyheter/Fordubbling-av-antal-anmalda-krankningar-sedan-2003/)

The principal organiser of the school is responsible for ensuring that the school carries out targeted measures to prevent discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment of children and pupils. School measures should be documented in an annual plan for combating bullying and degrading treatment, and the content should be continuously followed up and evaluated (National Agency for Education, 2009a).

In July 2010, a new Education Act was passed (Ministry of Education, 2010). The Act came into force on 1 July 2011. The wording of Section 5 is based on human rights, “*Everyone who works in education should promote human rights and actively combat all forms of degrading treatment.*” (Ch. 1, Sec. 5) The new act clearly emphasises that, just as for teaching, it is essential for the school’s measures against discrimination and degrading treatment to be based on research and proven experience. An amendment for compulsory notification is being introduced. Staff in schools who learn that a pupil feels subjected to degrading treatment are obliged to report it to the head teacher. The head teacher, in turn, is then required to report the matter to the school’s principal organiser.

### **3.2 The concepts of bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination**

In this evaluation, bullying has been defined as per the terms of reference given to the National Agency for School Improvement as “*a repeated negative act in which one or more individuals deliberately and intentionally try to cause someone harm or distress*”. The definition is taken from the National Agency for Education’s general guidelines and comments for promoting equality and preventing discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment (National Agency for Education, 2009a).

Research into bullying has been carried out for four decades. During this period, several different definitions of the concept have been used. The most common definition is the one formulated by the psychologist Dan Olweus, “*Bullying is when one or more persons repeatedly subject somebody to negative acts over a certain period of time. A negative act is when someone causes another person harm or distress.*” (1991)

The definition has influenced the way we perceive and understand bullying. It has also affected the research that has been conducted and the way we believe we can remedy bullying (cf. National Agency for Education, 2009a).

A characteristic of the most common definition of bullying is that it is repeated and continues over a long period of time. Definitions of bullying also bring up differences in balance of power as part of bullying. Bullying as a concept, however, is not without problems, according to, for example, Eriksson et al. (2002). According to later research, the accepted definition is too narrow and at the same time too broad (Frånberg, 2003). As bullying, in terms of this definition, means that the negative acts must be repeated to be regarded as bullying, single acts of degrading treatment, which can be very serious for the victim, are overlooked.

In subsequent research conducted during the 21st century, the accepted concept of bullying has been further problematised, including by groups of Japanese researchers (Taki et al., 2008) who introduced the concept of *ijime*, which is usually translated as indirect aggression. Japanese research into bullying

started in the 1980s after a new form of negative behaviour in schools attracted attention. The typical description of *ijime* is a deliberate act that hurts someone mentally by ignoring, excluding or threatening him or her. Even if it is carried out publicly, the behaviour cannot always be punished under the law. The bullying and harm caused is often unseen, and victims tend to hide their sense of shame. *Ijime* is therefore difficult for a third party to detect. The mental suffering caused by *ijime* is nonetheless just as serious as physical suffering. To be able to focus on this new type of bullying in school, Japanese researchers distinguish between *ijime* and violence.

This research emphasises that there is little stability over time with regard to who the bully is and who the victim is. Bullying problems do not apply to just a few pupils but to a succession over time. The research also suggests that bullying has a cultural basis. The frequency of bullying is connected to the degree of tolerance developed within the cultural context in which the bullying occurs.

As the accepted concept of bullying has been considered problematic, the concept of degrading treatment has come to be regarded as more appropriate, and it is thus used more frequently (Eriksson et al., 2002, 2002). So, what are the main features of the concept of degrading treatment? According to the National Agency for Education's general guidelines and comments (2009),<sup>14</sup> degrading treatment is when a child's or pupil's dignity is violated. Such acts can be performed by and directed at one or more individuals. Degrading treatment can be visible and physical, or hidden and subtle. It can be expressed through derogatory forms of address, spreading of rumours, ridicule or physical violence. Excluding or threatening somebody can also be regarded as degrading treatment. In contrast to bullying, degrading treatment may only occur on a single occasion. Harassment is degrading treatment that is linked to one of the types of discrimination.

The purpose of the Discrimination Act (2008:567) is to combat harassment and discrimination and to promote equal rights and opportunities regardless of gender, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, sexual orientation and age. Discrimination can also mean that institutions, through their structures and practices, disadvantage children or pupils in a way that is linked to one of the forms of discrimination, so-called structural discrimination.

### **3.3 Theoretical perspectives on bullying and degrading treatment**

Bullying is perceived in different ways depending on the perspective or angle from which it is viewed. It can be compared with studying social phenomena through different kinds of glasses. Understanding bullying is thus partly in the eyes of the viewer. Children, young people, teachers and parents may have different experiences of bullying and thus different perceptions of what bullying is. From a research perspective, it can be argued that our understanding is coloured by the scientific tradition we take as our starting point. This means that the measures we consider appropriate will vary depending on our perceptions. It

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<sup>14</sup> *The National Agency for Education's general guidelines and comments on promoting equal treatment and preventing discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment* (National Agency for Education, 2009).

also means that no perspective can be considered all-embracing. In actual fact, different aspects of bullying are studied. Some perspectives overlap, some are completely different with regard to their starting points and others pose different kinds of questions. Questions asked within the framework of one perspective will only receive answers that are possible within that perspective. The different perspectives thus approach what is to be studied in different ways.

The most common way to look at bullying is from the *individual psychological perspective*. This starts by looking at forms of aggressive behaviour that can be physical or psychological in nature. In the research into school bullying, attempts to identify the specific characteristics of perpetrators and victims respectively have been dominant. In this way, bullying is limited to behaviour and acts occurring between individuals. Thus, the focus will be on the personality traits and behavioural patterns of the individuals involved. One argument in favour of this perspective, as pointed out by the authors of *Skolan – en arena för mobbning (The school – an arena for bullying)* (2002), is that it may seem easier to remedy the problem if measures are directed at individuals instead of at unknown members of a group, or social patterns and structures.

According to this tradition, a bullying situation consists of a perpetrator, an individual or group that is stronger than the victim, often just one person. A bully does not have to be stronger in any absolute sense. It is sufficient that he or she is perceived to be stronger. The victim is the weaker party, possibly as a result of specific personal characteristics or a lack of suitably adequate resources. Some researchers also refer to a new type of situation characterised by ‘provocative victims’ in which the victim may induce bullying through various forms of provocation. However, it is very difficult to assess such a situation as it may entail a risk that such a description corresponds with the bully’s own rationalisation of the situation, exemplifying the classic alibi that “He was the one who started it.” Possible rationale for the concept of a provocative victim is not to explain away or trivialise the bully’s acts but to distinguish this category of bullying from one in which the victim is not considered to have been provocative. Arguments, aggression or negative acts between two equally strong participants, irrespective of whether they involve repeated acts that may have been going on for a long time, are not regarded as bullying. Bullying must therefore be distinguished from rivalry, conflict and competitiveness.

If we examine bullying from a *sociocultural perspective*, we can find other explanations why some people are bullied whilst others become bullies. As regards preventing bullying, it becomes necessary to shift the focus from one pupil bullying another to the whole picture and to the school as an environment for learning and development. Looking at bullying from a sociocultural perspective also means that we ignore the psychological characteristics of the individuals involved and look instead for explanations in the context. Inclusion and exclusion are seen as part of the way children behave when they interact with each other (Wrethander Bliding, 2002). The sociocultural perspective has been advocated by the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotskij, amongst others. Vygotskij believed that the surrounding environment was an essential part of human development that influenced human behaviour and also put its stamp on the attitudes, norms and values that people develop.

Vygotskij also believed that children act and understand the world using language as well as intellectual and physical tools. These tools look different to each

individual, depending on his or her circumstances and experiences. It is therefore impossible to address different bullying problems in the same way.

*Educational sociologists* adopt a critical perspective in their research into school activities. For example, they have devoted special attention to questions of democracy by asserting that the school as an institution is part of an undemocratic system in which education is conducted (e.g. Beynon, 1985). Some aspects of schooling literally cultivate bullying. Schools are authoritarian structures embracing censure, punishment and disciplinary measures in order to exercise power and control. Other researchers argue that as social problems can often be explained at a structural level, it is not possible to try to resolve them at an individual level. Instead of focusing on problem pupils or problem behaviour, it becomes necessary to examine the social structure embedded in the school (Yoeneyama and Naito, 2003), and instead of changing pupils, it becomes necessary to change the school or even the pedagogical paradigm defining the relationship between pupils and teachers.

Kristina Bartley (2007) also problematises the school's democratic mandate by examining how it has been strengthened by pupils' entitlement to damages for proven degrading treatment. Bartley discusses the situation of children from a power perspective in the spirit of Foucault. The exercise of power in school can be described as individualising, differentiating, comparing, standardising and ranking certain individuals using different methods. These methods lead to standardisation and common rules on how we should act. Thus the exercise of power in schools is about standardising and disciplining. In Bartley's opinion, school measures frequently target the pupil's behaviour. This also means that the function of disciplinary punishment is to reduce deviations from the norm and to remedy pupil behaviour, which in Foucault's terms can be described as dressage mechanisms.

Changing schools for the better and addressing the bullying problem is no easy task. There are researchers who believe that some problems can be reduced by paying greater attention to the curriculum's intentions regarding tolerance and respect for people with different opinions. Enhancing the opportunities for collaboration, problem solving and critical thinking is also considered a key ingredient of the school's work. Gender researchers also maintain that the school must abandon its current approach, which is largely based on rationality that is consistent with masculine thinking, and instead devote more attention to the expressive and emotional world of the pupils.

### **3.4 Previous surveys of school measures to combat bullying and degrading treatment**

For as long as there has been an explicit requirement for schools to combat bullying and degrading treatment, the national school authorities have produced surveys of the pupils' school situation and school environment, as well as materials clarifying the school's mandate and providing advice on how measures can be organised. It is virtually impossible to give a comprehensive account of the reports and programme materials produced. To put our study into context, we have chosen to present reports from national school authorities in which the purpose has been to provide a picture of school measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment. Lastly, in this section, a summary is provided of some of the recurring measures described in the surveys.

*Preventing, detecting and remedying bullying:* In 1993, the National Agency for Education allocated SEK 19 million to 19 municipalities to intensify their preventive and remedial measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment. The aim of the project was to reduce bullying by finding successful models for preventing, detecting and remedying it, and to support these models and disseminate knowledge about them (National Agency for Education, 1994). Many of the schools involved in the project worked with a plethora of established programmes. One of the findings of the project was that there were no ready-made models that were valid in all situations. Measures are needed at school, class and individual level. Adults in the school must show what they stand for, set limits and quickly intervene in suspected cases of bullying. The pupils must be given influence and participation in this process. In order to disseminate good examples, school experiences were summarised in the booklet *Kränk mig inte (Don't abuse me)* (National Agency for Education, 1995).

*Year of foundation values:* 1999 was designated as the Year of Foundation Values by the Ministry of Education and, in connection with this, a project on foundation values was launched.<sup>15</sup> The aim was to give prominence to issues concerning foundation values in preschool and school, and combating bullying and degrading treatment were viewed in this project as part of the school's mandate to strengthen the democratic process (Zackari and Modigh, 2002). Two national centres for foundation value issues were set up in 2001: the Centre for foundation values at Umeå University, and the Centre for Foundation value studies at the University of Gothenburg. The purpose of these centres was to strengthen the scientific basis for school work on foundation values.

A summary of the Foundation Values Project can be found in *Värdegrundsboken (The Foundation Values Book)* (Zackari and Modigh, 2002). It describes the school as a unique place where people from different backgrounds and circumstances and with different values meet, and the basis for the school as a safe place for all pupils is that the principle of equality for everyone can be applied there. Good quality communication between teachers and pupils, and between pupils, is described as crucial in its impact on the way the school manages its task of preventing bullying and degrading treatment. Spaces outside the classroom where the adult-pupil ratio is low are described as areas where the practice of foundation values is put to the test and where the risk of being subjected to bullying and degrading treatment is especially high. Complete reliance on discussions of foundation values is problematic since the connection between the values people advocate in theory and the way they act in practice is often tenuous. The schools that have been most successful in combating bullying and degrading treatment are those at which all the staff, with the help of the pupils, have taken joint responsibility for the work. Ready-made models and methods are not recommended. Instead, the importance of a comprehensive strategy based on the school's policy documents and an analysis of the school's work on foundation values and the situation of pupils at the school is emphasised. Practical measures to combat bullying and degrading treatment are also considered part of a school's work on foundation values and is integrated into all its activities.

The fact that the foundation values should be integrated into other activities and not considered as peripheral means that regular teaching of all subjects

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15 The project ran from 1 february 1999 to 31 march 2000.

must allow time for issues concerning foundation values. Some subjects, however, are more or less suitable for teaching foundation values. Subjects such as social studies, history, religion and philosophy provide natural entry points for discussion of themes such as democracy and democratic values (Zackari and Modigh, 2002, p. 89).

According to the representatives of the Foundation Values Project, putting the work on norms and values into standalone lessons is to go against the whole idea of foundation values as a perspective that should permeate all the activities at the school. *“The working environment in the daily life at school provides the richest opportunities for working with norms and values. In our view, foundation values can therefore never be reduced to the same level as syllabus subject.”* (Zackari and Modigh, 2002, p. 91)

*National action plan:* Partly as a result of the initiative during the Foundation Values Year, the National Agency for Education is intensifying its efforts to encourage schools to develop measures for combating bullying, degrading behaviour and discrimination. In 2001, the Riksdag approved a national action plan against racism, xenophobia, homophobia and discrimination (Hjelm-Wallén and Sahlin, 2001). The same year, the National Agency for Education was given a mandate to survey the prevalence of racism, ethnic discrimination, sexual harassment, homophobia and gender-related bullying in the school. The mandate resulted in several studies. A more extensive survey of pupils in years 2, 5 and 8, and year 2 at upper secondary school, focused on the occurrence and scope of degrading treatment (Osbeck, Holm and Wernersson, 2003).

The study focused on the importance of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and class/social group in relation to degrading treatment. The study showed that the majority of pupils thrived and felt safe at school but that satisfaction declined with increasing age and that pupils with foreign backgrounds and pupils with low socioeconomic status (SES) were less satisfied than other pupils. Girls were subjected to more degrading treatment of a sexual nature, whilst boys were more often subjected to degrading treatment with homosexual insinuations. The survey showed that the school does not provide any safe areas where pupils can feel confident that they will not be subjected to degrading treatment. Pupils were most vulnerable outdoors and in corridors where the adult-pupil ratio was low; the classroom came a close second. The belief in the ability of adults to handle degrading treatment decreased the older the pupils were. Pupils with a foreign background felt they received less support and assistance from adults in school when they felt badly treated. In schools with teacher teams, high adult-pupil ratios and well-worked-out measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment, pupils were happier, but the study did not indicate that these factors had any significant impact on bullying frequency. The results indicated that the use of direct measures needs to be developed in proximity to the specific context together with pupils, without anybody being seized by moral panic. As mentioned previously, empathy, the ability to express oneself verbally, and physical strength have upsides and downsides. More attention should be paid to this dilemma in the school (Osbeck et al., 2003, p 188).

In parallel with the study described above, an in-depth study of degrading treatment in the school's informal learning environments was also conducted on behalf of the National Agency for Education (Bliding, Holm and Hagglund, 2002). The study showed the importance of age in relation to degrading treat-

ment. Older pupils often used their age as a means of exercising control over young pupils. The study highlighted a number of critical situations that could lead to exclusion of a pupil or group of pupils. One such example was the transition between school years 6 and 7 when many pupils move from a small primary school to a larger lower secondary school. There was a lack of contact between pupils of different ages and classes, and to counteract degrading treatment, adults in the school need to have carefully thought out strategies for developing social relationships between pupils. Adults also need to be aware of critical situations during the hours at school when the risk of being excluded is particularly great.

Within the framework of the government mandate regarding degrading treatment and discrimination, the National Agency for School Improvement produced support material for preschools and schools, *Olikas lika värde – om arbetet mot mobbning och kränkande behandling (We are all equal – on combating bullying and degrading treatment)* (National Agency for School Improvement, 2003). The aim was to disseminate knowledge on the research results produced within the framework of the study on the prevalence of degrading treatment and discrimination in the school initiated by the National Agency for Education and to show good examples of how schools tackle these problems. This material corresponds to the brochure *Kränk mig inte (Don't abuse me)*, which was published in 1995 by the National Agency for Education. The publications come to the same conclusion that there are no methods and procedures that are valid in all situations. Methods to prevent and remedy bullying and degrading treatment must be chosen deliberately on the basis of the problems to be solved and the objectives to be achieved. In *Olikas lika värde (We are all equal)*, successful work on combating bullying and degrading treatment is linked to known factors for outstanding work in school improvement, such as clear and responsible leadership at municipal and school level that sets clear goals and requirements, an effective system of evaluation and a shared overall view of the school's mandate, which leads to a common approach to combating bullying and degrading treatment. Other success factors include good relations between teachers and pupils and between the pupils themselves, a comprehensive strategy for combating bullying and degrading treatment with which everyone is familiar, pupil influence and participation in the process, and the integration of work on foundation values in daily activities.

*Olikas lika värde (We are all equal)* also presents 21 different methods and programmes that have frequently been used in Swedish preschools and schools.<sup>16</sup> “A basic idea behind the majority of methods is to enhance the staff and pupils’ knowledge and understanding of problems regarding degrading treatment. Another unifying feature in virtually all methods is the use of dialogue as an instrument. Individuals’ democratic, empathic and social skills are expected to grow through dialogue. Through dialogue, an understanding of other people grows and problems and opportunities can be made visible. Furthermore, most methods seem to focus on either preventive or remedial measures, which means that it may be necessary to use a range of different approaches in different situations. Being able to make well-considered choices of approaches and methods requires a high degree of aware-

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16 Seven of the programmes that form the basis of this evaluation can be found among the 21 methods and approaches.

*ness and knowledge. To be able to choose the 'right' method and take appropriate action, one must thoroughly identify the exact situation at one's own school.*" (National Agency for School Improvement, 2003, pp. 55–56)

*Research overview:* As part of the efforts to encourage research in the area and to help schools understand and combat bullying, the National Agency for Education initiated a research review (Eriksson, Lindberg, Flygare and Daneback, 2002). The review shows how the research field has been dominated by studies within the discipline of psychology, which in turn has contributed to bullying problems being largely based on an individualistic perspective. To broaden the understanding of bullying at school, the authors called for further studies that put bullying in relation to the school as a system.

*Attitude studies:* The National Agency for Education's recurring attitude studies<sup>17</sup> measure pupils' sense of well-being and safety at school, as well as the situation regarding bullying and degrading treatment. The 2009 study showed that the vast majority of pupils enjoyed school and that the sense of well-being had increased somewhat since the first study in 1993 (National Agency for Education, 2010). Of the pupils in school years 7–9, 95 per cent stated that they always or usually felt safe in school.

The study on attitudes in 2006 (National Agency for Education, 2007a) showed that insecurity among young pupils with foreign backgrounds was somewhat higher than for pupils with Swedish backgrounds. Racism and violence were most prevalent in years 7–9. In 2006, 27 per cent of pupils in years 7–9 stated that violence occurred often or sometimes at school. The use of crude words and profanities was described as part of everyday life at school. In 2009, these problems decreased and the proportion of pupils stating that violence occurred at school had also decreased.

The proportion of pupils stating that they felt bullied or harassed has not changed between the different surveys. In 2009, 6 per cent of the pupils in years 4–6 (approximately 17 000 pupils) stated that they felt bullied by other pupils at least once a month and 2 per cent of the pupils felt they were bullied by teachers at least once a week. In years 7–9, 6 per cent felt they were bullied and harassed by other pupils. The corresponding figure for upper secondary pupils is 2 per cent. This corresponds to approximately 28 000 pupils in total. Of the pupils, 3 per cent felt they were bullied by teachers at least once a week.

In all, 15 per cent of pupils from year 4 through to upper secondary school feel they have been subjected to degrading treatment from other pupils at least once a week. The proportion of pupils who stated that they had been subjected to degrading treatment by other pupils has remained unchanged since 2006. The proportion of pupils in years 7–9 who believe that the school actively discourages bullying and other degrading treatment has increased from 50 per cent in 1993 to 78 per cent in 2009. The corresponding proportion for teachers was 67 per cent in 1993, and this increased substantially to 91 per cent in 2009. Eight out of ten teachers felt that they had the competence to combat bullying and degrading treatment.

It is interesting to note that the proportion of pupils who believe they have a part in deciding who they sit next to during lessons<sup>18</sup> has decreased from four

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17 Previously conducted in 1993, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006 and 2009.

18 The question was only put to pupils in years 4–6.

out of ten to three out of ten. From a strict pupil participation perspective, it can be concluded that pupil influence is declining, whilst from a bullying and degrading treatment perspective, the interpretation might be that teachers are working, to a greater extent, to try to prevent pupils from being in a situation during lessons when they feel insecure and excluded.

*Child and Pupil Protection Act:* When the Child and Pupil Protection Act was introduced in 2006, the government gave the National Agency for Education a mandate concerning discrimination (see, e.g., National Agency for Education, 2007b). Its purpose was to monitor the implementation of the new Act and provide a basis for assessing the measures that needed to be taken to ensure compliance. This follow-up consisted of three studies: an interview study to survey children's and pupils' views and experiences of discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment in school (National Agency for Education, 2009c); a questionnaire and interview study to survey the implementation of the Child and Pupil Protection Act by schools and preschools (National Agency for Education, 2009b); and an inventory of the physical environment in compulsory and upper secondary schools with regard to accessibility for pupils with functional impairments (National Agency for Education, 2008). The results show close similarities with studies previously conducted by the National Agency for Education. Again it was found that most instances of degrading treatment occurred outside lessons (National Agency for Education, 2009c). The design of the school's physical environment, such as dark corridors and hidden recesses, contributed to harassment occurring without adults being aware of it or being able to intervene. Discrimination and degrading treatment were linked to notions of what was considered normal and abnormal.

According to the interview statements, being a secular Christian is normative, as is being white and heterosexual. The perception of gender differences as normal, viewing boys and girls as being both different and complementary, pervades all activities and, in a similar way, pupils with learning difficulties are categorised as deviants. For example, being fat, small in stature for one's age or having few material resources also entails a risk of being subjected to degrading treatment. The study also shows that discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment rarely occur for a single reason; instead they occur where power relations based on gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability and religion intersect. Other reasons include material resources, appearance and age (National Agency for Education, 2009c, p. 11).

The respondents' own proposals for measures to prevent discrimination and degrading treatment were for more information and training for pupils and staff, greater pupil democracy, strategies to enhance the sense of community at school, more actively involved adults who stay with pupils outside lesson hours, and greater effort to create a pleasant and fresh-looking physical environment (National Agency for Education, 2009c).

The survey of how the Child and Pupil Protection Act has been implemented in practice showed that 96 per cent of Sweden's compulsory schools had an equal treatment plan (National Agency for Education, 2009b). There were shortcomings in the development of the plan in terms of pupil participation and follow-up, and the use of evaluations as a basis for formulating the action plan. The majority of schools worked preventively against discrimination and other degrading treatment. Their measures included 'comfort' rules, which

were developed with pupils, and theme days to support prevention. Six out of ten compulsory schools stated they also had timetabled classes for all pupils to promote equal treatment and prevent various forms of degrading treatment. Eight out of ten compulsory schools said they worked on the basis of one or more methods to prevent and/or remedy various forms of degrading treatment. The most common programmes were Charlie, the Farsta Method, Friends, the Olweus Programme and SET. Nine out of ten compulsory schools have a pupil welfare team and/or an anti-bullying team responsible for remedial measures.

Based on the survey of how the Child and Pupil Protection Act had been implemented, the National Agency for Education came to the conclusion that school staff found it difficult to have an overview of the legislation relating to discrimination and degrading treatment (National Agency for Education, 2009b). The National Agency for Education also proposed an initiative to develop the competence of staff in preschool, school and adult education within the field and to introduce a norm-critical perspective into the objectives of teacher training. When the Child and Pupil Protection Act ceased to apply on 1 January 2009 and its provisions were transferred to the Discrimination Act, the National Agency for Education issued new general guidelines: *To promote equal treatment and prevent discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment*. These guidelines emphasised the need for schools to reflect on norms and values.<sup>19</sup>

*The Swedish Schools Inspectorate:* In autumn 2009, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate conducted a quality audit of measures employed by 50 schools to combat harassment and degrading treatment (National Agency for Education, 2010). This report shows that many schools failed to put a stop to harassment and degrading treatment and that many of them also trivialised pupils' experiences of bullying. At several schools, pupils avoided seeking help from adults at the school when they felt bullied, as they lacked confidence in the ability, willingness and/or opportunity of adults to help. One of the reasons for the pupils' low level of confidence was that the adults did not share a common view and approach for dealing with cases of degrading treatment and bullying. The majority of the schools studied often had written procedures for remedial measures, but in many schools these procedures were not anchored among the staff. Surveys of the pupils' psychosocial working environment were often flawed, and existing survey results provided no obvious basis for developing anti-bullying measures. Once again the problem of inadequate adult-pupil ratios during lesson-free hours was highlighted.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate criticised shortcomings in the schools' work on foundation values since it did not permeate all school activity. One obstacle could be that many schools had chosen to have special lessons to reinforce foundation values. These lessons were often based on material from one or more programmes such as Olweus, SET or Lions Quest. Teachers and head teachers felt that the material provided them with confidence in their work on norms and values. Many pupils were critical of these lessons as they did not see any connection with their own daily lives. Another obstacle might be the lack of common fora in which staff could conduct structured dialogues about norms and values.

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19 See p. 9 in *General guidelines and comments. För att främja likabehandling och förebygga diskriminering, trakasserier och kränkande behandling (To promote equal treatment and prevent discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment)* (National Agency for Education, 2009a).

What is important for good anti-bullying measures? Several of the surveys that have been described point to the same factors:

- The school should work actively, in a structured way and involve all staff in order to create a common approach and share the responsibility of combating bullying and degrading treatment.
- Schools should integrate work on foundation values into everyday life and allow pupils to participate and influence the process.
- Schools should work determinedly to strengthen trust between teachers and pupils.
- Schools should work determinedly to create good relationships between pupils of different ages and from different classes.

Many also point to the same practical measures:

- There should be time and structures for dialogue on norms and values.
- The school should have clear procedures that are followed by all staff to help prevent and remedy bullying.
- Follow-ups and evaluations of the pupils' working environment should provide guidelines for the school.
- The school should have a clear plan that is updated through annual follow-ups and reviews. Pupils, parents and staff should be involved in this.
- The presence of adults outside timetabled teaching hours is of great importance.
- The school should have and apply clear rules with consequences.
- School staff should be well trained on measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment.

# 4.

## Methodology overview

## 4. Methodology overview

The government mandate made explicit mention of an approach based on evidence and science. This was taken extremely seriously during the evaluation. An accurate account of the deliberations and a detailed description of the methodology used in the evaluation can be found in a comprehensive methodology appendix<sup>20</sup> published for downloading on the National Agency for Education's web page. A short description of how the evaluation was conducted follows.

### Evaluation design

The effects of anti-bullying methods are difficult to measure because there is always much more than just the effects of the methods to be assessed. Following a review of previous research, the effects measured were found to be consistently small.

Accepted practice of evaluating evidence-based programme implementations rests almost exclusively on the randomised control model. It is not possible for a Swedish state agency, which does not have the legal right or moral authority to intervene in schools, to order schools to work with an anti-bullying programme, the effects of which are uncertain. Swedish schools are obliged by law to combat discrimination and degrading treatment and are constantly working to combat bullying, irrespective of whether they introduce a particular anti-bullying programme.

As a result, the programme evaluation must take into account the programme context, which is made up of the school's formal or informal use and experiences of different programmes, sub-programmes or individual measures, as well as the school's formal obligations regarding prevention, detection and remedying of bullying and other degrading treatment.

A longitudinal, quasi-experimental design using individual data was selected. For each of the eight programmes, four compulsory schools should be included in the evaluation, together with eight schools that did not work with any particular programme that would function as control schools. All pupils in years 4–9 at these 40 schools completed a questionnaire on three occasions, at intervals of just over six months, about their experiences of degrading treatment. The interviews should be conducted at the schools in order to obtain in-depth information about the schools' measures. Basic data, such as teacher-pupil ratios and parental levels of education, were also collected.

### Selection of programmes

The National Agency for School Improvement chose to evaluate six specific anti-bullying programmes. The number was later increased to eight due to an additional mandate. Selection criteria for the programmes the Agency selected for evaluation were that they should be widely used in Swedish schools and/or that there should be indications that they were effective. There was also an aim to include different kinds of programmes.

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<sup>20</sup> *Evaluation of anti-bullying methods. Methodology appendix and attachments to report 353* (National Agency for Education, 2011), pdf.

The Farsta Method and Friends were chosen because they are widely used. Increasing use of SET and a doctoral thesis indicated that it would also be effective.<sup>21</sup> The Olweus Programme was evaluated by the Olweus group and others and was widely used. School Comet was evaluated by the City of Stockholm, which considered it effective against bullying. A Norwegian evaluation by Thomas Nordahl et al., *Förebyggande insatser i skolan (Preventive measures in the school)* (2006), indicated that Lions Quest (Mitt valg i Norge, My Choice in Norway), Second Step and School Mediation were effective. These programmes became the focus of the evaluation.

### Schools and pupils participating in the evaluation

The National Agency for School Improvement contacted schools asking if they wished to participate in the evaluation. The head teachers or persons responsible were informed about what the participation entailed by telephone and in writing. They were requested to establish possible interest among other members of staff, and subsequently a verbal agreement was made on participation. Schools were contacted as users of a particular programme or as ‘non-programme users’ – control schools. The schools were not offered remuneration for participation. However, feedback on the observations of bullying in their school and an invitation to a free two-day conference on bullying were promised once the evaluation was complete.

These contacts never touched on whether the schools used programmes other than the ones they had been contacted about as users.

Information about schools using programmes was collected by the Agency in connection with activities for school staff in other contexts. Representatives of the programmes were also asked to give examples of schools working with their programme.

For each programme, two schools were chosen that had worked with the programme for some time and two that were just starting with the programme. For School Comet, the group had to settle on three schools in the end. A further eight schools were also chosen that did not work with any programme. In a theoretically ideal evaluation, schools that had not had any involvement with an anti-bullying programme would not be included in the study. Ideally, a control school would have a placebo programme that was completely ineffective. It is, of course, not impossible to conduct such an evaluation ethically or practically. Schools that did not work with programmes were intended to serve as a comparison with schools that were using a programme.

The aim was for the schools to be compulsory schools with pupils from different years, distributed across Sweden. All pupils in years 4–9 in the target schools would participate. The aim was that there should be no fewer than 100 pupils participating from any school.

An overall assessment of the 39 schools in the evaluation based on a number of comparison categories shows that the schools were representative of Sweden’s approximately 4 700 compulsory schools.

The schools assisted by supplying lists of pupils and home addresses. All parents/guardians were informed by letter about the evaluation and the impor-

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21 Kimber, Birgitta, *Att främja barns och ungdomars utveckling av social och emotionell kompetens. Teori och praktisk tillämpning för pedagoger (Promoting children’s and young people’s development of social and emotional skills. Theory and practical application for pedagogues)*, 2004.

tance of their child participating. They were given the opportunity to say if they were not willing to participate, and in such cases the pupil did not participate. Schools were asked whether any guardians needed information in another language. The letter was translated into 21 languages. The procedure was approved by the Central Ethical Review Board.

### Interviews

Every school is socio-psychologically and culturally unique. Social, cultural, individual psychological and interpersonal conditions can prevent or allow variations in bullying behaviour. It was therefore important to relate the efficacy of the outcomes from each individual school to a specific school context. The qualitative data of the study consist of two rounds of interviews.

Group interviews focusing on the schools' measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment were conducted with school management, pupil welfare staff, teachers and pupils at all 39 schools in autumn 2008. The interviews were of an exploratory nature. Specific interview guides were developed for pupils, teachers, school management and pupil welfare teams (see Methodology appendix, Attachments 2 and 3). The aim was to obtain a general picture of each of the schools and its anti-bullying measures, and an understanding of the conditions for this work in the school's decision-making, and norm and quality assurance systems. Questions were asked about the perception of bullying and degrading treatment, and its extent and causes at the school. Staff at the schools were also asked about their experiences of working with the programme for which the school had been selected. Basic facts about the municipality and the school and a description of the school's published information on its measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment were collected for each of the schools in the evaluation.

A third of the schools, 13 schools with a positive, negative or unchanged frequency of bullying, had a follow-up visit. Further in-depth interviews with the foregoing groups, as well as with non-teaching staff and parents, were conducted a year later. The aim was to understand changes in the frequency of bullying observed between the first and second questionnaires, and to deepen understanding of the schools' measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment.

The survey is based on approximately 840 individual and group interviews conducted on two occasions, in the autumns of 2008 and 2009.

### Questionnaires

When the scope of bullying in a school is investigated, pupils are usually asked if they have been bullied. Sometimes the questioner provides a definition of bullying. For this evaluation, the research team developed its own questionnaire in which the different views of pupils on what constitutes bullying had no impact on the result. The questionnaire consists of two parts: it allows pupils to describe what has happened and why. This design, which was developed within the framework of the project, constitutes an important advance in the mapping process.

The pupils completed the questionnaire on the Internet. Contact persons at the schools supplied login codes and usually organised completion in computer rooms. In some cases, all pupils had their own e-mail addresses to which access

codes and information were sent, and the pupils themselves then took responsibility for answering the questions.

Pupils who had been subjected to degrading physical or social treatment several times a month or more when the intention was to harm or intimidate were classified as bullied by the researchers. If they had only been subjected occasionally and there had been malicious intent, they were classified as having been subjected to degrading treatment.

By asking what happened, the research team could also distinguish between different forms of bullying. The questionnaire contains questions about what pupils had been subjected to, e.g. blows or exclusion, how often this had occurred and how the intent had been perceived. Social bullying is defined as degrading treatment aimed at damaging the pupil's relationships but without violence. Physical bullying can also destroy relationships but covers physical blows. The reasons given for the bullying, for example, gender, ethnicity or sexual identity, provided a perception of bullying, degrading treatment and harassment that could be linked to the forms of discrimination in Swedish schools.

Data at school or group level may show significant statistical changes, whilst bullying of an individual may remain unchanged. This requires a balance to be struck between data at individual and school level, which the evaluation has taken into account. The evaluation includes data from a cohort of pupils who completed the questionnaire on all the occasions (same individuals responded on all three times), as well as cross-sectional data from different groups of pupils who completed the questionnaire on different occasions (all pupils in years 4–9 in different years).

Pupil surveys were conducted during the period May–June 2008 to October–December 2009. The response rate was 76.1 per cent of a total of 10 919 pupils on the first occasion, 74.3 per cent of a total of 10 660 pupils on the second occasion, and 70.6 per cent of a total of 10 523 pupils on the third occasion.

A survey of the staff was also conducted. The aim was partly to obtain additional information about the use of measures at the schools and partly to gain broader knowledge of the staff's experiences of anti-bullying measures and conditions at their school for conducting such work.

#### A first result – schools do not work with just one programme

After the first few school visits, it became clear that not a single school could be regarded as typical in terms of using just one programme. All the schools had contact with or used components from several programmes. This also applied to the control schools, whose management said they did not use any programme. This meant that it was impossible to proceed with the initial planned strategy of comparing the extent of bullying in schools using different programmes to acquire knowledge of the effects of different programmes.

This insight naturally created doubts about the results of other programme evaluations that have been carried out in which changes in bullying frequency have been attributed to the programmes that the schools claim to have been using and that the schools' measures had not been monitored more closely through the use of qualitative data. Above all, however, it meant that it was imperative to change the focus of the evaluation. The evaluation could not describe the effects of programmes in the way originally intended. A re-evaluation of the evaluation structure and focus was required.

## Effects of individual measures instead of programmes – a reappraisal of the evaluation strategy

An evaluation of anti-bullying programmes carried out by Ttofi, Farrington et al. published by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) in 2009 drew conclusions about the effects of components, namely the individual measures used in programmes. These could cover, for example, systems for monitoring school breaks or cooperative teams.

Inspired by this, a number of individual measures of relevance to this evaluation were identified. In autumn 2009, the evaluation team compared its view of the individual measures identified with those of the representatives of the programmes in the evaluation. Based on the school descriptions compiled by the researchers after the interviews during the first few school visits, the measures used in each school were identified as well as how the schools worked with them.

The strategy was modified to evaluate the effects of individual measures rather than the effects of whole programmes.

Having noted that the measures were seldom used singly, but frequently in combination, the evaluation team chose to study the effects of commonly recurring combinations of measures. The report on the results describes the impact of individual measures and combinations of measures on bullying.

The schools' experiences of working with the different programmes were examined using interviews, as described in the report on results.

Successful approaches were described by providing examples of how anti-bullying measures had been organised in schools that used such procedures in a similar way and where the bullying frequency was low or had decreased. This combines the use of quantitative and qualitative data. Schools using individual measures were grouped into clusters. The successful school clusters – successful groups of schools using similar measures – share common features, not only in their choice of measures but also in the way they organise and reason their approaches.

Within the framework of the evaluation, the journalist Mats Wingborg, under the scientific leadership of economist Stefan de Vylder, also mapped the resources the different programmes used with regard to time and money.

Experiences of working with the programmes, the relationship between effective measures and what the programmes prescribe, and programme costs provided a basis for discussing the programmes' potential for supporting schools.

5.

Experiences  
of programme  
implementation

## 5. Experiences of programme implementation

### 5.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this part of the evaluation is to describe the experiences of school staff and pupils of working with the eight programmes included in the evaluation.<sup>22</sup> The report is based on interviews with school staff and pupils conducted at 31 schools at the initial stages of the project and from follow-up interviews at eleven of these schools.<sup>23</sup>

The study shows that none of the measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment at the schools surveyed was influenced by the use of just a single programme. The variation between the schools surveyed with regard to bullying of pupils can thus not be specifically attributed to the implementation of any one programme. The implementation of one or more of the programmes on which our study focuses is an integral part of the schools' measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment.

In the initial stages of the study, schools were selected that designated themselves as users of a particular programme or as a control school (see section on study design). This means that the categorisation of schools by programme, performed during the initial phases of the project, was not random. The staff and pupils at schools that were designated as using programme X at the initial stage had experience of working with the programme in their own school context. All or some of the staff (and possibly pupils) had also received information about or training in this programme. In the first round of interviews, the focus was on experiences of working with a particular programme at each of the 31 schools that signed up as working with one of the eight programmes. This means that these interviews provided comprehensive data describing staff and pupil experiences of working with the programme with which the school was originally associated. Consequently, although the majority of schools worked with several different programmes, the research team chose to revert to the programme associated with the different schools at the start of the study. Each programme was thus represented by four schools, with the exception of School Comet.<sup>24</sup> The schools initially included in the category of control schools are not covered in this section.

### 5.2 Experiences of programme implementation

The eight programmes are presented separately in alphabetical order. The aims of the programme are presented first. The presentations are based on the sur-

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22 In the process of the evaluation, the National Agency for School Improvement initially formulated the following questions with regard to this aim: Is the programme time- and resource-intensive – does it integrate well with established procedures? Is the programme perceived as complicated and difficult to understand and implement correctly? Does the programme have credibility? Does the programme create a sense of security or do those who are going to implement it feel uncertainty? Is the programme viewed as following the intentions of the curriculum? Does the programme also contribute to school improvements in other ways? (National Agency for School Improvement, 2007b).

23 The eight schools that functioned as *control schools* were not included in the part describing experiences gained during implementation.

24 Additional information can be found under Programme Selection in the methodology section.

vey of programmes presented in the first report of the evaluation project *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs* (*Speaking of bullying – and what is being done*) (National Agency for Education, 2009d), and on interviews with programme representatives for each of the eight programmes. After the description of the programme's aims, which are also presented in relation to the 18 (components) measures that receive special attention in the evaluation (see, e.g., Section 7.3) – a short presentation is given of the other programmes with which the schools were working. After this, the respondents describe how the programme was initiated and implemented, and the reasons underlying the programme selection. Experiences of staff and pupils working with the programme are reported thematically. These themes are based on the experiences the school staff and pupils describe for each of the programmes. Some of these themes recur in several programmes, while others are programme specific. A summary then focuses on the relationship between the intentions of the programme described and the reality as expressed through the experiences of the respondents. After a review of the eight programmes, the chapter concludes with general reflections on the experiences of respondents of implementing the programmes in a complex school environment.

It is important to emphasise that the descriptions by the staff and pupils of their experiences of working with the programmes do not necessarily represent the programme representatives' views of the aims of the programmes. In many cases, they provide a good illustration of the discrepancy that exists between the aims and how they are experienced, understood and implemented by staff and pupils. It is also important to point out that the thematic sections are primarily based on difficulties respondents encounter when attempting to implement the programme. In these descriptions, the research team also wishes to highlight the differences in the respondents' experiences. What some point out as a problem may not be regarded as a problem by others and may indeed be seen as something positive.

### The Farsta Method<sup>25</sup>

In the categorisation of programmes for combating bullying and degrading treatment (National Agency for School Improvement, 2003, 2007a), the Farsta Method is placed in the category of preventive and remedial anti-bullying programmes.

### Intentions underlying the programme<sup>26</sup>

The Farsta Method presents a structure for addressing bullying. At schools using the method, there should be a treatment team (often designated the [anti-] bullying team). Members of the team include school staff with a special interest in combating bullying and degrading treatment. It is recommended that the group include people with different areas of competence, such as pupil welfare staff, teachers and staff from leisure-time centres. At least one person should not be tied to classroom teaching, as there must be a degree of flexibility in the

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25 The author of the programme points out that the Farsta Method is just that – a method. In its description of the Farsta Method, the research team uses the term programme and equates the Farsta Method with the other programmes in the study.

26 See also *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs* (*Speaking of bullying – and what is being done*) (National Agency for Education, 2009d).

group so that it can quickly respond to suspected incidents of bullying. It is usually recommended that the school's head teacher not be a member of the group. School management should be a last resort to which unresolved cases can be referred and to which decisions about making a police report and/or relocation of pupils can be taken. Each teacher team should have a member responsible for dealing with bullying issues.

Once a suspected incident of bullying is reported to the team, the following measures are taken:

- The team is summoned to investigate and define the situation.
- If the incident is defined as bullying, someone on the team contacts the victim in order to obtain a clearer picture of the situation.
- Intervention interviews are conducted with the bullies. Two members of the team contact the alleged bullies one at a time and hold what is termed a 'surprise' interview with them. This interview follows a format that gives the bullies little opportunity to defend their acts. The purpose of the interview is to emphasise that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- For one to two weeks the bullies are monitored closely so that the victim is not subjected to further harassment.
- After one to two weeks, follow-up interviews are held with the bullies so that the team can be confident that the unacceptable behaviour has stopped. If necessary, these interviews can be repeated.
- If the bullying continues, the incident is referred to the school management together with information regarding a possible police report and/or relocation of the bully.

The victim's parents are contacted when the team holds the first interview with the victim. It is recommended that the team wait to inform the parents of the bully until after the first follow-up interview has been held. If it is found that the bullying has not stopped, the parents are contacted. The idea is that bullies must be given the chance to change their behaviour and that parental involvement risks complicating the situation. The recommendation to wait before contacting the bullies' parents has been criticised. It is considered contrary to the intentions of the curriculum, as this states that parents and school should work together with regard to the socialisation and development of the child. It is usually therefore recommended that, after the initial 'surprise' interview, bullies be encouraged to inform their parents themselves about their involvement in bullying and that the school subsequently contacts the parents to check that they have been informed.

Training in the Farsta Programme consists of one day's basic training for those in the intervention and anti-bullying teams. Table 5.1 shows our assessment of the Farsta Method in relation to the 18 measures that are given special attention in this evaluation (see, e.g., Section 7.3). The assessment is based on the importance that the research team has assigned to each of the measures and on the interview with a representative of the Farsta Method. The assessment indicates that the method includes 6 of the 18 measures.<sup>27</sup>

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27 This assessment is based on the programme description in *På tal of mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)* (National Agency for Education, 2009d), the interview with a representative of the Farsta Method and the importance the research team assigned to the 18 measures. See attachment 4 in Evaluation of anti-bullying methods. *Methodology appendix and attachments to report 353* (National Agency for Education, 2011), pdf.

**Table 5.1** Measures in the Farsta Method

Measures in the Farsta Method	Comments of programme representative
Training material	
Staff training bullying/degrading treatment	
Cooperative teams	
Case documentation	
Dealing with bullies	Yes, intervention interview
Dealing with victims	

Our assessment differs in some respects from that of the programme representative who felt that follow-up was part of the method in the follow-up interviews that should be held with victims and their parents, and that, indirectly, a disciplinary strategy is implicit in the threat of a police report. The programme representative did not consider that *dealing with victims* was a measure in the programme. With respect to the importance that the research team assigned to this measure, the team considers that the Farsta Method includes this measure as interviews are held with the victim to identify the victim's experiences and to follow up the implemented measures.

### Schools using the Farsta Method

In a teacher survey of all the schools covered in the study in autumn 2009, 18 of the 39 schools stated that they used the Farsta Method. This means that it is the most commonly used programme in our evaluation. When enrolling in the study, four of these schools designated themselves as Farsta schools. Two of the schools had followed the Farsta Method for a long period, whilst the two other schools had only started using the programme recently. Two of the schools were visited during the first and second round of interviews.

The schools combined the Farsta Method with a peer support model (Friends) and/or a programme that reinforces foundation values (SET, Lions Quest or School Comet). One of the schools also said it used the Olweus Programme.

### Experiences using the Farsta Method

#### *Initiation, reasons and implementation*

The two schools categorised as established had used the Farsta Method between ten and fifteen years. The respondents at these schools found it difficult to remember where the initiative to introduce the method originated. One of the new schools needed to streamline its remedial measures in order to relieve pressure on the pupil welfare team. The school management knew of the Farsta Method and took the initiative to adopt the programme. This initiative was anchored among teaching staff through the school's teacher group.

At two of the schools, the programme was implemented by a group of adults who had been trained in the method and who subsequently formed the school's anti-bullying team. The two remaining schools endeavoured to anchor the programme among adults throughout the school. At one of these schools, there was a desire to give all teachers basic training in the programme. At the other school, one teacher in each teacher team was chosen to take the training course and then join the school's anti-bullying team.

None of the schools reported any resistance to the introduction of the Farsta Method. At one of the schools, the explanation given was that the formation of

a group with special skills and special responsibilities for dealing with cases of bullying facilitated the work of the class teachers and the pupil welfare staff.

Training costs are low as the majority of schools opted to train only a limited number of staff. Once the school starts working with the programme the only costs are staff working hours.

Five themes recurred in the staff experiences of using the Farsta Method: anchoring anti-bullying measures, work of the anti-bullying team, information to parents, the Farsta Method's interview approach, and the method's focus on remedial anti-bullying measures. Few pupils had direct experience of the method.

#### *Anchoring anti-bullying measures*

There are two dimensions to anchoring anti-bullying measures. The first is quantitative and concerns anchoring in the sense of the number of people who are or feel they are involved in the work. The second is qualitative and concerns how great a part the programme material is considered to play in the work. With regard to the Farsta Method, the interviews concern the first dimension: anchoring. The method is based on a group at the school having primary responsibility for remedial measures for tackling bullying and degrading treatment. The interviews show that this can easily lead to inadequate anchoring of anti-bullying measures among other staff and pupils at the school, which in turn can result in too much responsibility being put on the anti-bullying team to handle all the school's work on combating bullying and degrading treatment. At two of the schools, it is clear that the anti-bullying team is living a life of its own and that staff not directly involved in the group's work are poorly informed about membership of the team and how it works. An example of inadequate anchoring is when the anti-bullying team at one of the schools changed its name to the equal treatment team without teachers being aware of it. The pupils at these schools do not have any knowledge of the anti-bullying team either. At one of the schools, inadequate anchoring of the anti-bullying team's work was not described as a problem, as the aim of the work was regarded as limited.

*"The idea isn't that there should be heaven on earth. The idea is that bullying should stop now! After that we can get to grips with what has really happened. But the bullying must stop now! That is the aim of the group."* [teacher]

At the two established schools, a number of attempts have been made to anchor the team's work with all the staff. At one school, there is a clear link between the anti-bullying team and the school's peer supports, as some of the adults on the team are also involved in the peer support activity and have responsibility for it. This means that issues raised with the pupils at the meeting can be dealt with directly in the anti-bullying team. The importance of this link becomes apparent when the teachers and the peer supports are informed of the work of the anti-bullying team. At the other recently established school, when the method was implemented there was already a strategy in place for anchoring this work among the teaching staff. One teacher from each of the teacher teams should be trained in the method and then join the school's anti-bullying team. The task of these so-called Farsta teachers is also to prevent and detect bullying in their respective teacher teams.

#### *The anti-bullying team*

The setting up of an anti-bullying team with primary responsibility for addressing bullying incidents forms the core of the Farsta Method. Charging a group-

with this responsibility is seen as an advantage as it creates a clear structure for implementing remedial measures and for bullying matters to be dealt with swiftly. One teacher relates how, when she was new to the school, she reported an incident to the anti-bullying team and *“it took only a week or so and they had dealt with it, and I think that was great”* [teacher]. The work of the anti-bullying team also eases the workload of mentors and class teachers.

The composition of the anti-bullying teams varies. At one of the schools, the head teacher is part of the team. Another school has deliberately decided to keep the head teacher and the counsellor off the team to enable them to take over if the team fails in its efforts to resolve a bullying case. It is difficult for a team to start working on a case quickly if all the members are working full time as teachers. It is therefore common for one or more members of the pupil welfare team to be members of the anti-bullying team, as they are able to use their time more flexibly. Some teachers say that if collaboration in the teacher teams works well at the school, then participation in the operational work of the anti-bullying team is a marginal problem. Some schools emphasised the importance of including members of staff in the team with special involvement in bullying and degrading treatment issues.

One of the schools emphasised instead the importance of distributing team work to facilitate anchoring of anti-bullying measures among all the staff. One problem all four schools said they had was lack of time. The amount of time teams spend on the work varies. Some teams only meet when there is a case to deal with. At one school, the whole team used to meet when they had a case but they no longer had time to do so. Contact within the team is increasingly carried out by e-mail. At two schools, the team meets regularly to discuss the situation among the pupils even when they have no cases to deal with.

#### *Parent contact*

The question of when parents should be informed that their child has been bullied or involved in bullying is one that concerns staff at all four schools. At two schools, the municipal school office has decided that parents of both the victims and the bully should be informed as soon as a school starts dealing with a case of bullying.

School management, anti-bullying teams and teachers at all the schools said they understood that parents wanted and were entitled to be informed of their child's school situation. At the same time, schools that had been working with the method a long time talked about a number of cases in which parent involvement had complicated their work, *“It has been difficult ... and really ruined everything ... how we work in the school ... it really gets tough if you have to sort out things later when parents are also at each other's throats.”* [anti-bullying team] The failure of the anti-bullying measures is attributed to the behaviour of the parents. *“We've spent lots of time and invited the parent and talked to the parent and allowed her to participate in lessons and everything, so we have really given support and invited her to come and see for herself what it is like.”* [anti-bullying team]

The speed of response and the way parents are informed vary from school to school. What happens most often is that a surprise interview is conducted with the bullies before their parents are contacted. During the interview bullies are encouraged to go home and tell their parents what they have done. The pupil is given one evening to inform his or her parents and, after that, the pupil's men-

tor or someone from the anti-bullying team contacts the parents. One of the schools sends written information home informing the parents that their child is participating in a series of interviews because he or she has been involved in bullying. If the parents have any questions, they are asked to get in touch with the child's mentor. There were strong reactions to this practice at one school, *"A parent turned on me last spring in middle school who thought it was a hell of a thing to do to put so much responsibility on a boy in year 5 that he had to go home to his parents and tell them all this. 'You can think what you like,' I said, 'but that is how we work here, and if you think it's a problem you can take the matter further. We do this to help children grow up. They must take responsibility and go home and tell their parents instead of them hearing about it on the phone. The child at any rate has a chance to talk about it himself."* [the equal treatment group]

#### *Interviews*

At all the schools, the staff who work actively with the interviews, in accordance with the Farsta Method, are positive about the structure of the surprise interviews conducted with the bullies. They think that the element of surprise and the factual basis of the interview mean that the bullies realise the seriousness of their behaviour and they do not start trying to defend themselves. The fact that the interview is conducted by someone other than the pupil's mentor/class teacher makes it more serious. The interview is simple and "feels safe somehow" [head teacher]. A teacher points out that it is important to stick to the model as the method for conducting interviews becomes increasingly refined the longer people use it. At one of the schools, the members of the anti-bullying team also said that the lack of ambiguity and the importance of starting on a factual basis were an advantage as the majority of pupils at the school had foreign backgrounds, *"It is impossible to misunderstand the message ... and you can see that there are nearly always results."* [anti-bullying team]

A head teacher at one of the four schools believes the interview with the bullies is problematic as it is so obvious that it is an unfair interview with two well-prepared adults (the interview leader and a secretary) surprising an accused pupil, which does not give the pupil any real chance to give his or her side of the story. The head teacher therefore stresses that adults who interview the bullies must be sensitive, adapt the interview to the pupil to whom they are talking and have a respectful enough approach for the bully to realise that he is liked as a person, even though the adults have difficult matters to discuss with him or her and do not accept his or her acts.

#### *Focus on remedial measures*

All four schools emphasise that the Farsta Method is a remedial programme and that the method is seen as effective in bringing bullying cases to a swift conclusion. School staff also give some examples of the limitations of the method. Staff at one school highlight the problem of pupils who are excluded. In such cases, it is difficult to accuse any one person or persons of bullying, *"then you work and try to strengthen the whole group and strengthen the pupil instead ... so they will be able to meet instead."* [head teacher]

One head teacher says that the method does not help them reach those who legitimise bullying by being active bystanders. The head teacher believes this is due to the basic theoretical assumption of the model that the cause of bullying lies primarily in the personal characteristics of the bully and not in the patterns

of interaction within a group of pupils and this means that even those who are not directly involved in the bullying need to be aware of their involvement.

The respondents say that another group that is unaffected by the method is the so-called relapse bullies, *“When it has been tried, they know, they come in and they know exactly what is going to happen, and then the model doesn’t work ... and then there are other things perhaps ... because they just don’t care.”* [head teacher]

Pupils know what constitutes acceptable behaviour, but this awareness is not reflected in the way the pupils behave in real situations. The schools point out the importance of having a fallback strategy in the event that the anti-bullying team fails.

### **Concluding comments on the Farsta Method**

These reflections are made in relation to the intentions underlying the Farsta Method, the respondents’ experiences of working with the method and the questions posed during the National Agency for School Improvement’s initial planning of the evaluation.

The respondents say that when the intentions of the Farsta Method meet established practice in schools, difficulties arise in creating the flexibility required for the anti-bullying team to work effectively. The intention of the method is for the team to act swiftly when suspicions of bullying arise. This requires resources in terms of time from the adults working in the anti-bullying team. There also needs to be some flexibility in the way team members can use their working hours, as the time from which they are informed about a suspected case of bullying until they start to investigate and address it should be short. Teachers can be involved in working with the programme at schools where there is close cooperation in the teacher teams. At schools where there is no such cooperation, it is impossible to live up to the intended speed of response.

Adults in the adult group (anti-bullying team) who work directly with the method feel that it works well for dealing with acute cases of bullying immediately. Teachers and other staff who are not directly involved in the work, and pupils who have not been bullied and are not bullies have poor knowledge of the method. All that is known is that there are different views on when parents should be informed that their child has been involved in bullying.

Those working with the programme feel that training and practice are required to conduct the pupil interviews in accordance with the structure described in the programme manual. Several of the respondents point out that the interview with the bullies is most effective when the manual is followed to the letter. Invaluable support is provided when the interview with the bullies is conducted by two adults together, but this if, of course, a matter of resources.

There is no resistance to the programme among staff at the four schools, which can be interpreted as the programme having legitimacy. This in itself may not mean that the staff have a positive attitude to the programme however. The work is carried out by a small group, which means that the majority of staff do not need to get involved. Many lack any knowledge of working with the programme. In one of the adult groups, there is dissatisfaction that teachers overuse the team and even cases that teachers themselves can address are referred to the anti-bullying team.

When and how parents should be contacted is an issue that creates uncertainty and disagreement at all four Farsta schools. There is a contradiction between

the curriculum's guidelines that "teachers should cooperate with and continuously inform parents about the pupil's school situation, well-being and learning" (Ministry of Education, 1994, p. 16) and the uncertainty about informing parents whose children have been accused of bullying. This is one reason that a decision has occasionally been taken at municipal level that schools working with the Farsta Method must inform parents prior to the interviews.

## Friends

Friends can be described as a peer support model (National Agency for School Improvement, 2003, 2007a). The programme's primary aim is not to combat bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination. It is commonly used as part of the schools' preventive measures. The aim of the programme is to give pupils an active role in the prevention of bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination.

### **Intentions underlying the programme<sup>28</sup>**

Two peer supports are appointed in each class. It is recommended that teachers prepare for the peer support election by discussing the school atmosphere, everyone's responsibility to create a good atmosphere in the class and the school, and the duties of peer supports with the pupils. Pupils who are considered positive role models and good friends should be chosen as peer supports. It is recommended that the election be carried out anonymously and reasons given. According to the authors of the programme, the best results are achieved if the pupils can explain their choices in conversation with a teacher or other adult.

Peer supports at the school are led by a group of adults. It is assumed that the pupils have a good insight into pupil relationships and can therefore help the adults to detect bullying and degrading treatment. Peer supports are also required to act as good role models by supporting those pupils who are at risk of or are being subjected to bullying and degrading treatment.

The programme begins with a short training session for all staff. There is then a theatrical performance to inform and inspire the pupils. Once the school has appointed a group of peer supports, they attend a short training course arranged by Friends. It is assumed that the school will have regular contact with Friends regarding further short training courses and inspirational input targeting teachers and peer supports.

The programme focuses on prevention through peer support activities, but it also includes recommendations for remedial measures. It is recommended that the adult group working together with the peer supports has members from the pupil welfare team, school management and teachers. This group is expected to assume primary responsibility for the school's preventive and remedial measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment. It is recommended that individual structured interviews are included in the remedial work – as in the Farsta Method.

According to Friends, the following requirements must be met if schools are to work successfully with the programme: the school management must be an active driving force; commitment must be total; all staff must share a common approach; and clear, shared goals must be set for the prevention of bullying and

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28 See also *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)* (National Agency for Education, 2009d).

degrading treatment. Table 5.2 shows our assessment of the Friends Programme in relation to the 18 measures that are the focus of special attention in this evaluation (see, e.g., Section 7.3). The assessment is based on the importance that the research team has assigned to each of the measures and an interview with a representative from the Friends Programme. The assessment indicates that the method includes 7 of the 18 measures.<sup>29</sup>

**Table 5.2** Measures in the Friends Programme

Measures in the Friends Programme	Comments of programme representative
Follow-up/evaluation	
Relationship-enhancing measures pupil–pupil	Cornerstone of the programme
Pupils as players	Important
Pupils active in prevention	Important particularly in prevention
Training material	
Staff training bullying/degrading treatment	
Parent information/training	

Our assessment differs from that of the programme representative in respect of the measure *relationship-enhancing measures teacher-pupil*. The programme representative views the work with peer supports as a relationship-enhancing measure teacher-pupil. It can certainly fulfil this purpose, but as the research team has assigned a different importance to this measure, this is used in our assessment. The programme representative also points out that the programme is being developed to better correspond to the current requirements for a plan against discrimination and degrading treatment. This also means that they plan to provide clearer instructions for follow-up and evaluation.

### Schools working with the Friends Programme

In a teacher survey of all the schools covered in the study in autumn 2009, 15 of the 39 schools said they worked with Friends. When applying to take part in the evaluation, four of these schools categorised themselves as Friends schools. The programme has recently been established at two of these, whilst two have longer experience of working with the programme. One of the four schools has been visited twice. It was common for these schools to combine this work with a remedial programme such as the Farsta Method or a foundation values programme such as SET or Lions Quest.

### Experiences of working with the Friends Programme

#### *Initiation, reasons and implementation*

At all four schools, the initiative to introduce Friends came from members of staff who felt a need to involve pupils in preventing bullying and degrading treatment. Friends was chosen because, in two of the cases, the schools had previously worked with a type of peer support programme that was becoming ineffective. The schools needed a new start. At the other two schools, the choice of Friends was described as a coincidence. The programme's strong marketing was thought to be one of the reasons the school staff knew about it.

<sup>29</sup> The basis of this assessment is the programme description in *På tal of mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)* (National Agency for Education, 2009d), the interview with a representative of the Friends Programme and the importance the research team has assigned to the 18 measures. See Attachment 4 in the Evaluation of anti-bullying methods. *Methodology appendix and attachments to report 353* (National Agency for Education, 2011), pdf.

Representatives for the Friends organisation conducted a short training course for the staff and pupils at all the schools. At three of the schools, training has adhered to the recommended concept. All staff have received a half day's training in the programme. At the fourth school, teachers in the anti-bullying team and peer support group have completed programme training. At the same time, training aimed at all staff and pupils has been postponed because of the school's tight financial situation.

Teachers appreciate the training that has been carried out and emphasise that it is important that the school draws up a plan on how new pupils and teachers learn about the programme. One of the established schools has carried out regular short training courses, and the teachers feel this is good for the school, "*You need this kind of input in some sort of way ...*" [teacher]

The programme is introduced to pupils by means of a theatrical performance, which is followed up by discussions in small groups of pupils under the guidance of a teacher or another adult. At one of the schools, the anti-bullying team expressed dissatisfaction with the way some of the teachers conducted the interviews with the pupils. They felt that some teachers involved themselves closely in the interviews but that there were groups of pupils who "*just wandered in after five minutes*" [the anti-bullying team]; the respondents interpreted this as a lack of involvement on the part of the teachers who had not devoted enough time to the interview. The intention behind the interview, or perhaps behind the whole programme, does not seem to have been properly anchored amongst the teachers. The anti-bullying team said that teachers who felt uncertain about the interview with the pupils should have been given support.

At the four schools, the school management, teachers and pupils were overwhelmingly positive to Friends. They believed that the programme broadened the school's measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment by involving the pupils as well. The difficulties that the schools seem to have experienced, and which they have dealt with in various ways, concern the way peer supports are appointed, their function as positive role models, their task of functioning as a link between the teachers and the pupils, as well as the function of the adult team.

#### *Appointing peer supports*

The interviews show that the adults leading peer support activities at the schools often have an idealised view of how the school appoints peer supports. A typical idealised view is that pupils inform their mentor or class teacher that they are interested in becoming a peer support. The teachers then interview those who are interested to establish which two pupils are best suited for the task. After this, the peer supports for the class are appointed by the teacher.

This view clashes with the description given by the interviewed pupils and the teachers who do not lead peer support activities. The method of appointing peer supports varies not only between the four schools, but also between classes at one and the same school. In some classes, there is a secret ballot among the pupils. Some class teachers then modify the results in favour of those pupils they consider to be the most suitable candidates. Other teachers let pupils vote for two representatives in an open vote. Several pupils believed that the election had taken place without a proper strategy. One pupil said, for example, that the class had elections for the pupil council. The two pupils who received most

votes became the class representatives on the pupil council. Two of those who did not receive enough votes to become representatives on the pupil council were then appointed as peer supports by the teacher – “*and that’s not what they wanted, but no one was keen on it really*” [pupil].

The method used for appointing peer supports can lead to different problems. One teacher describes how one ballot was a direct violation of one of the pupils voted in. In a secret ballot, the boys in the class were asked to vote for a girl, and the girls were asked to vote for a boy. The teacher believes that a girl was voted for by the boys “*out of pure mischievousness*” [teacher]. The teacher felt obliged to protect the girl by ignoring the outcome of the ballot and withholding what had happened from the class. Another problem is that the election sometimes turned into a popularity contest amongst the pupils. Many teachers believed that the popular pupils might not always have been those best suited to act as peer supports.

#### *Peer supports as role models*

All four schools highlighted the problem of pupils sometimes being appointed who could not cope with the task of being peer supports. This was handled in different ways. Adults can talk to the pupils to try to make them change their attitude, and sometimes the pupils themselves want to resign or are dismissed by the adults. The majority of schools endeavour to keep the same peer supports throughout their time at school. This can be problematic, however, as relationships in a group of pupils constantly change. One pupil said that one of the so-called ‘friends’ of the class always made comments when others did something wrong. The pupil raised this with his teacher but did not see the teacher trying to do anything about it. When asked why classmates voted for this friend, one pupil replied, “*that was how it turned out*” [pupil]. The school staff and pupils thought it was self-evident that peer supports should be kind, calm and respected by their classmates. The members of one of the anti-bullying teams, however, gave a different perspective on peer supports. They think that well-behaved, kind pupils have trouble being listened to when they try to reprimand their comrades, “*It feels as if you should do things the other way round*” [anti-bullying team], i.e. make pupils who are not so well behaved peer supports. There are also descriptions of how pupils who were first considered inappropriate in the role of peer supports have been positively affected by their task.

#### *The role of peer supports*

All four schools say that the primary role of the peer supports is to function as a link between pupils and staff at the school. According to the staff, the most worthwhile task the Friends Programme can perform is to involve the pupils in preventing bullying and degrading treatment. They believe that the pupils have a unique opportunity to provide the adults with an insight into the school’s peer networks and what is going on in the relationships between pupils. The peer supports should inform the adults if they feel any pupil is being excluded from the group. The adults should then take responsibility for addressing the problems the peer supports have brought to their attention.

The pupils pointed out that there is a risk their peers will see them as ‘sneaks’. One head teacher said it was important that peer supports did not become the school’s anti-bullying police as the primary responsibility for the school’s anti-

bullying measures must lie with the adults. It was also emphasised that it was important that the pupils appointed as peer supports dared to take a position and stand up for their views.

The second important task of peer supports is to be good role models and provide active support to pupils who are on the fringes of the peer group. Pupils describe how this task can sometimes be difficult. As peer supports, they are often told that they should take care of people. The anti-bullying team at one school said that peer supports *“can get some crap [from other pupils] like you are in Friends, go and get me some milk, you are in Friends pick up the chewing gum.”* [anti-bullying team] One pupil said there was an image that the peer supports must be perfect, *“If some girls are arguing and maybe I get involved and get a bit upset, I may say something, then the guys can react, oh! but you shouldn’t say anything you are a peer support, and you can’t be mean, you must always be nice.”* [pupil]

Peer supports can feel compelled to intervene and protect vulnerable pupils. This may lead to a situation in which other pupils feel that not intervening and providing support to the victim is allowed, *“If you are a member of Friends they don’t do anything, it feels as if they are thinking, ‘I don’t need to help. Someone from Friends will come.’ They say we must go there, because they are not so serious about it either. They don’t know what it’s like. You feel a bit under pressure sometimes.”* [pupil]

Some of the peer supports say that they themselves would not look for a Friend if they felt lonely or vulnerable because they would think that the peer support was only being a friend because it was his or her job. Empathising with a victim can also mean that he or she ‘clings on’ and this is also felt to be somewhat problematic, *“You have to make it clear in a way that makes them understand that you are not their best friend, but I’m not going to bully you.”* [pupil] Caring for a classmate who is not normally your friend can lead to the experience of feeling victimised increasing rather than decreasing, *“You don’t want to make it obvious that you are being bullied, so that is why I am talking to you. That can also be mean.”* [pupil]

A third important task of peer supports is to carry out large- or small-scale activities to raise the level of well-being among pupils at the school. This task is more common at schools that have recently adopted the programme. At one school, the teachers said that activities such as Christmas parties and celebrations on Valentine’s Day helped to create a positive atmosphere at the school.

Some activities carried out by peer supports have met with little success with the rest of the pupils. At several schools, peer supports talk about, for example, a ‘Hello’ exercise. For a week, they greeted schoolmates who they did not mix with normally, but this was not appreciated as much as they had expected. Peer supports have also been asked to carry out evaluation exercises in their classes. If the pupils do not receive any direct support from the class teacher, they can find this task difficult, *“There is quite a bit of fighting and stuff, or hassle, because the teachers can’t tell us what to do, we have to do things ourselves, so there is a whole load of talk and stuff but ... When they don’t really understand, it is difficult to explain. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t, yeah, not so good.”* [pupil] The Friends at one school said that in the peer support group, they discussed the stupid comments made and they then asked their class teachers to talk about this in their classes. At all four schools, the peer supports gave examples of how

they had been mocked for their work. At one school, pupils put up hearts in the whole school, which other pupils thought was corny. The pupils said that all pupils must be involved in activities to create a positive atmosphere, “*so everyone can say hi and not just us.*” [pupil] To make the peer support’s task easier, more information is needed about Friends and what a Friend is expected to do.

At one school, the attitude to peer supports has changed – once it was positive and appreciative, but now they were branded as corny. The adults had then tried to avoid talking about Friends whilst peer support activities had continued as usual. Teachers at two of the schools felt that the programme worked best among pupils at the lower and intermediate levels. Young pupils think the task is fun. They feel important, and being a peer support could suit the pupils’ image. Among the lower secondary school pupils, it may feel less cool. These teachers believe that lower secondary pupils must be treated in a different way. At one of the other schools, the teachers did not feel that it was a problem to get secondary school pupils to become involved as peer supports. The school management did not see this as a problem since they felt that the involvement would strengthen the pupils’ civil courage. The pupils were given additional responsibilities but with adult support. The pupils at this school felt that the measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment at the school worked well because peer support activities and the work of the adults in the school’s anti-bullying team complemented each other.

#### *The adult team*

The four schools have a more or less clear division of responsibilities between a group of adults who lead the peer support activities and a second group of adults who are directly responsible for addressing cases of bullying and degrading treatment, often known as the anti-bullying team. Adults in charge of peer support activities could be recreation instructors, pupil assistants, special needs teachers or teachers. Members of this adult group share a keen interest in issues related to bullying and degrading treatment.

There is a risk that the peer support group will lead a life of its own, without contact with other school activities. At the four schools, there was often a direct link to the group responsible for pupil welfare at the school (pupil health team/pupil welfare team) because one of the adults leading the peer supports was also a member of the school’s pupil health team. The relationship with the school’s teaching staff seemed more of a problem. One of the schools found a solution to this because the adults in charge of peer supports at the school also had special pedagogical responsibility for the teacher teams. The teachers at this school said that during the teacher team meetings they received reports from the special pedagogues about the problems discussed at peer support meetings, “*It is important that everyone knows that this is a pupil we must keep a particularly close eye on, and those on break duty can perhaps be a little more vigilant.*” [teacher]

The frequency of peer support meetings varied greatly between the four schools, from a couple of times a term to once a fortnight. Some schools had a clear structure with regard to the form and content of the group’s meetings. At other schools, the adults said that they had to steal time for meetings with the pupils, as no time was set aside specifically for this purpose. At some schools, the peer support group was too large. It is difficult to create security and trust in a group with many pupils from different classes. Schools have tried to solve this

in different ways, for example, by dividing the peer support group into work teams or by school year.

### **Concluding comments on the Friends Programme**

These reflections are made in relation to the underlying intentions of the Friends Programme, respondents' experiences of working with the method and the questions posed during the National Agency for School Improvement's initial planning of the evaluation.

The intention of the Friends Programme is to involve pupils in the process of creating a positive work environment free from bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination. A peer support group has a central role to play in this work. The peer supports, with adult support and help, should act as positive role models who are actively involved in prevention. When these intentions meet established practice in schools, difficulties arise to create a favourable situation for peer support tasks. A critical point is the election of peer supports. Several of the schools seemed to find it difficult to adopt a common approach. This may have been due to a lack of understanding of the difficulties associated with the election process. The study also shows that the task of a peer support can put a pupil in an exposed position. The role of the peer supports is to be involved in creating a positive work environment, but the job also presupposes that there is already a good atmosphere between pupils and teachers, and between the school's pupils if the election of peer supports and the role they assume is to be a positive experience.

According to representatives of the Friends Programme, the adult team responsible for peer support activities should be involved in the school's preventive and remedial measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment. If schools choose to divide the responsibility between several groups, there is a risk that responsibility for the work will be split and be less effective. The adults in charge of peer support activities also point out that a prerequisite for an adult team to succeed in its work is that it is allocated resources in terms of working hours.

The schools feel that the training carried out by the Friends organisation provides them with a good introduction to working with the programme. They do not think that it is complicated or difficult to understand. The implementation of the programme varies between and within schools. Such variation can be necessary and positive, but it may also contribute to the programme having no effect or even a negative effect. An example of such a variation is the method of appointing peer supports.

Teachers who are directly involved in working with the programme see it as a good complement to the school's measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment that are completely controlled by the school staff. Many pupils, especially younger ones, regard the task of being a peer support an honour. However, there are pupils who believe that peer supports are a group who have been awarded their position on the grounds of popularity and not merit, and that they often act in their own interests. At schools where peer supports have been branded 'wets', these pupils have experienced difficulty functioning as role models. This in turn has led to the legitimacy of the programme being undermined in some pupil groups. The freedom of action by the peer supports is determined by the norms and culture at the school before the programme is implemented as well as the method used to appoint pupils as peer supports.

Adults and pupils who are actively involved in peer support activities are not given enough time for the task. For the adults directly involved in the work, the programme creates a sense of security, while the attitudes of the rest of the staff seem more uncertain. This can have negative consequences since all teachers must be involved in the appointment of peer supports.

### Lions Quest

In the categorisation of programmes for combating bullying and degrading treatment (National Agency for School Improvement, 2003, 2007a), Lions Quest is placed in the group that reinforces foundation values.

#### Intentions underlying the programme<sup>30</sup>

The Lions Quest programme was developed in the USA in the early 1980s with the aim of helping teachers to work with ethics and quality of life issues in the prevention of drug abuse among young people (see also National Agency for Education, 2009d). In 1987, Lions Quest was introduced in Sweden and translated and adapted to Swedish conditions. It is not primarily a programme for the prevention of bullying and degrading treatment. Instead its aim is to foster moral and ethically thinking individuals who can stand up for their opinions. According to the programme representatives, this will also strengthen pupils' ability to resist bullying and degrading treatment.

The programme's training material '*Together*' is based on fundamental values and provides an ethical framework for the whole programme, the aim of which is to help young people resist negative pressures. The ethical framework includes the concepts of self-discipline, respect, empathy, good judgment, responsibility, honesty, reliability and commitment – qualities and skills that the pupils are expected to develop. The theoretical sections blend what is called 'encourager' and practical exercises.

The positive commitment that pupils should develop concerns the family, school, friends and the community. To achieve these goals, pupils practise critical thinking and developing social relationships.

The training course lasts for two days and is intended for all the school staff. The training material, '*Together*', serves as the programme manual, and teachers are expected to go through the material sequentially, as the exercises are intended to systematically develop and enhance emotional skills. The authors recommend that a minimum of half an hour a week is devoted to the material.

Table 5.3 shows our assessment of Lions Quest in relation to the 18 measures that are given special attention in this evaluation (see, e.g., Section 7.3). The assessment is based on the importance that the research team has assigned to each of the measures and on the interview with a representative from Lions Quest. The assessment indicates that the method includes 5 of the 18 measures.<sup>31</sup>

Our assessment differs in two respects from that of the programme representative. It applies to the *relationship-enhancing measures teacher-pupil and the*

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30 See also *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)* (National Agency for Education, 2009d).

31 This assessment is based on the programme description in *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)* (National Agency for Education, 2009d), the interview with a representative from Lions Quest and the importance the research team has assigned to the 18 measures. See Attachment 4 in the Evaluation of anti-bullying methods. *Methodology appendix and attachments to report 353* (National Agency for Education, 2011), pdf.

**Table 5.3** Measures in the Lions Quest Programme

Measures in the Lions Quest Programme	Comments of programme representative
Follow-up/evaluation	In several stages over an eight-month period
Special lessons	
School rules	Yes, drawn up together
Training material	
Staff training bullying/degrading treatment	

*relationship-enhancing measures pupil-pupil.* The programme representative views the work with the material as a relationship-enhancing measure. The material can certainly fulfil this purpose, but as the research team has attributed different importance to these measures, this is used in our assessment (see Attachment 4 in the Methodology appendix). The programme representative points out that the aim of the Lions Quest programme is to realise the school's goals of creating a positive school environment, and that Lions Quest is not a programme that directly targets bullying and degrading treatment. To be successful, it is essential that all staff are involved in working with the programme.

### Schools working with the Lions Quest programme

In a teacher survey sent out in autumn 2009 to all the schools in the study, 8 of the 39 schools indicated that they worked with Lions Quest. When applying to take part in the evaluation, four of these schools designated themselves 'Lions Quest schools'. The programme is established at two of these schools, whilst at two others it is regarded as recently established. One of the four schools has been visited on two occasions.

According to the teacher questionnaire, the four schools combined Lions Quest with the Farsta Method, Friends, SET, School Comet or Second Step.

### Experiences of working with the Lions Quest programme

#### *Initiation, reasons and implementation*

The initiative to adopt Lions Quest at the four schools came primarily from the school management. The schools usually first introduced life skill lessons and then looked for a programme to provide support for these lessons, "*People ... have been on other courses ... life skills courses... And then the idea is that you can complement this with Lions Quest, but everything has been decided by the management.*" [teacher] There are several reasons why Lions Quest was chosen. It was a natural choice at one of the lower secondary schools because the primary school that feeds pupils to it was already working with Lions Quest. To create consistency, they chose to invest in training in the programme. The teachers at another school said that the choice was made more randomly. At all the schools, the programme's connection with Lions Clubs International was important when the programme was introduced. It is common for school staff who are actively involved in Lions to introduce the programme. The local Lions Club has also contributed financially to the training of school staff at all four schools.

All four schools have participated in basic training in Lions Quest. Some of them have also completed a one-day supplementary training course. Lions Quest training at two of the schools was conducted together with other municipal compulsory schools. First, a pilot training course was carried out by a small group of teachers in one of the municipalities, "*and everyone was really, really*

*positive about this, because it is practical, so it's not just some sort of general theory. The programme or exercises are really very practical and specific and, so, in principle you can use them exactly as described. And the teachers thought that was extremely appealing and there was a lot to choose from – a great big bank of ideas.*” [head teacher]

This municipality used funds from the Lions Club to train all staff, teachers, canteen staff, cleaners and caretakers in municipal compulsory schools, *“that is everyone who works in the school environment who comes in contact with the pupils”* [head teacher]. The two-day basic training course was followed up by a one-day course, and new employees received a two-day follow-up course. The positive attitude displayed by school authorities has meant that Lions Quest *“became some sort of signal to municipal schools that everyone should work with it”* [head teacher]. Teachers at the school say that, even prior to the training course, staff were really committed to creating a healthy school climate and to actively combating bullying and degrading treatment, but that the introduction of Lions Quest *“meant that everyone acquired a common view of what prevention entailed”* [teacher].

The management at one school decided to train teachers in years 4 and 5 in Lions Quest. The teachers said that they did not feel they needed the training. Some teachers subsequently worked a great deal with Lions Quest, some a little less and some not at all. Then there was pressure from teachers in years 7–9 who also wanted to take part in the training because some of their lower secondary colleagues had been allowed to take part in the first round of training together with teachers from years 4 and 5. The school arranged training for these teachers and, at the same time, the teachers who had participated earlier received follow-up training. Head teachers have also taken part in the training.

One teacher said that Lions Quest was not implemented as a model for the school's anti-bullying measures *“because it is not a bullying model. It is preventive. It works with a group atmosphere and getting children to start talking about their feelings.”* [teacher] Schools implement Lions Quest as a kind of preventive life skills model.

All the school staff expressed appreciation for the Lions Quest training. They did exercises and ... *came together* [head teacher]. There was no resistance to the introduction of the programme at three of the four schools. A group of teachers at the fourth school was unwilling to introduce the programme in its classes. The teachers said they did not have time. Lions Quest would take too much time away from Swedish, mathematics and English, *which are much more important than working with groups and social issues* [teacher]. The school management then decided that everyone should work with Lions Quest, and only then did the teachers who were sceptical and/or uncertain accept the programme. Some of the school's teachers were given the task of supporting those who were uncertain. These teachers did not think it was really about uncertainty but about someone else taking responsibility, coming in and “fixing it”. To kick off the work, teachers spent half a study day practising exercises on each other, *“and I think that is really important because there, before that day many people came and said, ‘I have so much correcting to do, I really need to do that, I must plan that, maybe we can,’ ‘no’ we said, ‘now we have decided on this’ ... And we are so proud [laughs] that we did not give in but said ‘Let’s go for it NOW!’ and they thought it was really good.”* [head teacher]

One of the schools said there had been some resistance to working with Lions Quest, but that this had nothing to do with the programme itself. Instead it was because the school had, in a very short period of time, implemented many different measures to create a safe and healthy environment for the pupils, and it had been difficult for the teachers to assimilate each and every one of them. The teachers were wondering how they should use all this, and they had difficulty differentiating between the parts that had been good and those that had not been so good, *“there has just been no stopping and we have felt yes, we think this part works, we want to keep it and work with it.”* [anti-bullying team]

Three themes were recurrent in the staff and pupil experiences of working with Lions Quest: programme flexibility, use of the programme in special lessons and the contents of the programme manual.

#### *Degree of flexibility*

Several teachers point out that the advantage of working with Lions Quest is that the material is easy to follow and that it does not have to be followed slavishly, *“We do not follow the manual from cover to cover. We choose a section that is relevant at a particular time. Pupils in the class were talking a lot about alcohol and so we focused on that ... expressing opinions for and against.”* [teacher]

The degree of flexibility in the way Lions Quest is used varies between the four schools. Three of the four schools have added an extra lesson each week or fortnight to raise the level of well-being at the school and to enhance the feeling of comradeship. Staff assume that Lions Quest is useful for training the emotional and social skills of the pupils. How Lions Quest is used in lessons varies between schools and between teachers at each of the schools. At one school, teachers are expected to devote lesson time to the class council, reading and Lions Quest. Depending on the teachers' priorities, a group of pupils can virtually avoid all contact with the Lions Quest exercises, an observation that came out in the interviews with pupils at the school.

One of the four schools does not work with Lions Quest in special lessons. Instead, teachers provide their pupils with training in social and emotional skills when necessary. Teachers use programmes such as Lions Quest at the beginning of a year when the pupils have to stay indoors during breaks because of the weather, when there is a conflict or when a new pupil joins the class. Lower secondary teachers have also taken a joint decision to occasionally cancel pupils' options during the school year and to work with Lions Quest instead. Teachers then choose exercises that match the needs of their particular group of pupils. They also look for other material. Year 9 pupils describe how they can carry out Lions Quest exercises during regular lessons, such as English. They believe that the exercises have brought pupils in the class closer together. For example, they do the exercise in which a member of the group has to fall and the other group members have to catch that person.

One teacher gives a practical example of how Lions Quest was used to meet particular needs. When the pupils in her class became increasingly irritated with each other, she broke off all teaching and carried out what is known as an EQ session (a lesson aimed at training pupils' emotional skills) during which different approaches could be used with the class. The Lions Quest material was used with other material in this process. After a few weeks this initiative was followed up with new exercises to see if the pupils' attitudes had changed. Crisis meetings

with parents were also held at which all the staff involved in working with the pupils took part. Joint decisions were taken on measures for dealing with pupils who arrived late. A series of meetings was also arranged with the most disruptive pupils and their parents. The teacher says that the Lions Quest training had a positive impact on her work with the class. Among other things, the teacher used so-called encouragers.

### *Special lessons*

Several teachers and pupils were dubious about devoting special lessons to Lions Quest. Pupils said that the lessons can seem tedious and dull, and teachers describe how pupils have subsequently become less enthusiastic.

The head teacher at one of the schools says that the teachers can feel that the lessons are contrived, *“the class might have been bang in the middle of a science theme, studying sewage treatment or whatever, and then they have suddenly gone over to Lions Quest; it felt as if there was no real reason for it.”* [head teacher] A teacher at this school said that the pupils finally refused because they felt they were repeating the same things. The teachers felt the same, *“To put it bluntly, we couldn’t see that Lions Quest really had any very positive effect.”* [teacher] At the time of the interview, teachers at the school were working more randomly with Lions Quest when the need arose.

The school management at one school expressed the fear that teachers only worked on foundation value issues during the time set aside for Lions Quest and that these did not permeate class activities during the rest of the school day.

*“That is the risk ... if you don’t talk about it later ... because you don’t really want to have that at a specific time but that it was integrated into and used as methods in all subjects. An approach. So, I think we must talk about this so that teachers don’t say, ‘Now it’s time for Lions Quest’ and then afterwards, during the rest of the school day everybody can forget about it and you have done what you think you should.”* [head teacher]

There is a difference between lessons in which pupils are encouraged to express their opinions and values, and the reality that confronts them outside these lessons when opinions and values are put to the test. An example of this is a description of how one of the schools failed to get three pupils to feel they were part of the class. These pupils had been victims of degrading treatment and had wanted to change class. It had been a problem for several years, *“They don’t seem to be sorting it out, it’s just going on.”* [pupils] According to the pupils, the victims’ situation has become neither better nor worse, *“It has got better and worse, you see it ... Yes, I don’t know. I think things are the same. That things ... go up and down really.”* [pupils 36]

### *Programme use and content*

Opinions vary between schools on how the Lions Quest material and the exercises should be used. One head teacher thinks teachers have a positive attitude to the programme because they see it as a source of exercises and activities that they can use as they please. Several exercises train collaboration in an enjoyable way. The material includes, for example, exercises on how to form groups in a playful way, *“The games can really help create a good sense of cohesion and the pupils find each other across the boundaries in the classroom. The atmosphere becomes much more open and there is more laughter.”* [teacher] The pupils believed that

the purpose of the exercises was for them to get to know each other better, and at one school the pupils interviewed said the exercises were fine as long as they were not used too often.

At several schools, pupils and teachers felt that many of the exercises were similar and that they did the same things over and over again. Meanwhile, there were teachers who appreciated the common approach of the material. Despite this, these lessons required more thorough planning than other lessons. *“It is not like your own subject. If I have finished talking about the diet circle, then we can talk more about this or discuss things from another angle.”* [teacher]

If teachers use Lions Quest as lesson plans regardless of what is suitable for each group of pupils, then the exercises can easily leave the pupils indifferent or even create a negative attitude to life skill lessons. Pupils at one of the schools described how an exercise aimed at pupils getting to know one another felt embarrassing because the pupils already knew each other so well that they did not need to ask personal questions to find out who in the group played a musical instrument and so on, *“Perhaps it was mostly the mentors who wanted to get to know us.”* [pupils] The pupils felt that if the exercises were more tailored to the group, they would feel more meaningful, *“but I suppose they are following something they have to do.”* [pupil]

At several of the schools, the teachers and pupils said that certain exercises could be regarded as silly, which led to some pupils behaving irresponsibly when they should do them. One group of pupils believed that it would be more effective if committed teachers spent time among the pupils at the school during breaks and in the gym and talked more with pupils outside class and not only when telling them off.

Teachers and pupils describe, in different ways, how it can be difficult for teachers to reach the pupils they really want to reach using the lessons in Lions Quest. A group of teachers also describe the difficulty of working with the exercises on their own. The teachers said that if two teachers were running the lessons, one could give special attention to the pupils who could not manage the exercises. One head teacher described how teachers had to stop using Lions Quest exercises in classes because the pupils had been too rowdy.

A group of teachers described the same ambivalence to the programme, *“You don’t know how big an effect Lions Quest has on the climate in the classroom and how much other factors affect it.”* One teacher said, *“We have been working with this life skills material for a number of lessons, but unfortunately it has not, as I see it ... it should have been a bit more effective, but unfortunately it hasn’t been.”* [teacher] Several teachers said that the school management did not realise that working with Lions Quest would require a great deal of preparation. According to the teachers, when there is not enough time, it easily happens that teachers do not prepare properly. If they did, they would probably have been more successful. Staff at the four schools emphasised that Lions Quest cannot be the only measure used to combat bullying and degrading treatment as it is not an anti-bullying programme, *“But it is preventive, however, it is not a model you can use after the event, that’s the difference, they are two different things, so you can’t work with Lions Quest and skip the [preventive] work.”* [teacher] One school invested heavily in training staff in many different methods for combating bullying and degrading treatment. This provided teachers with a variety of tools for this work, but some of them said that there was still no strategy in place for

dealing with individuals' attitudes to colleagues and pupils. Otherwise there was a risk that the school's work on foundation values would not be integrated in its daily work, *"And then, there is a risk that you are getting nowhere, if the problem is actually with the staff... you have to be aware of yourself and what you are doing."* [anti-bullying team]

### **Concluding comments on the Lions Quest Programme**

These reflections are made in relation to the intentions underlying the Lions Quest Programme, the respondents' experiences of working with the method, and the questions that were posed during the National Agency for School Improvement's initial planning of the evaluation.

Lions Quest material is organised in different themes containing both theoretical sections and practical exercises (National Agency for Education, 2009d). The material is intended to be used sequentially. When the programme confronts established practice in the studied schools, more often than not, the material is used as a bank of ideas from which teachers can select specific exercises. The practical exercises in the material seem to be far more important than the theoretical sections. The amount of time schools used for the programme did not always live up to the minimum half an hour a week recommended by the authors. In most cases the programme manual was not followed as intended.

The majority of the teachers feel that training in Lions Quest has been enjoyable and inspiring. They think many good exercises are included in the programme material to train collaboration and give pupils in a group an opportunity to get to know each other, which can create a positive group atmosphere. The programme is regarded as easy to understand. At the four schools, the programme was purchased to help teachers create quality content for life skill lessons.<sup>32</sup> The positive attitude developed by the teachers through training in the programme has not been very easy to pass on to the pupils. There is an intentional progression in the programme material, which does not seem to be easy to apply in practice. The pupils at the four studied schools describe several exercises as silly, and teachers say it can be difficult to keep some pupils focused. This was felt to be the greatest problem among pupils at lower secondary level.

The teachers give various examples of how they handle the pupils' negative attitudes to the exercises. One approach has been to abandon the aim of working continuously with the programme material. At one school this meant that the teachers removed lessons in life skills from the timetable and instead used the lessons when they felt that it was necessary to focus on pupils' social skills. On these occasions, they browsed through the exercises in the Lions Quest material. Another approach, as in other schools, is to keep lessons in life skills on the timetable but vary the content. The method for doing this varies between and within one and the same school.

One of the reasons for introducing Lions Quest to the four schools was to make it easier for the teachers to create meaningful content for life skill lessons. Introducing a new approach that should be adopted by everybody at the school is a difficult process. There are teachers in the study who say that the programme has made it easier to create meaningful content, but there are also others who have difficulty leading the programme exercises. Sending out pupils

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32 The research team uses this as a generic term for lessons that are intended to help pupils develop their social skills.

who disturb exercises, for example, becomes counterproductive and means that pupils learn something other than what was intended.

### The Olweus Programme

In the categorisation of programmes for combating bullying and degrading treatment (National Agency for School Improvement, 2003, 2007a), the Olweus Programme is placed in the category of preventive and remedial anti-bullying programmes.

#### Intentions underlying the programme<sup>33</sup>

The aim of the Olweus Programme is to reduce bullying problems in schools by working with several different measures at the same time. The programme was first used in 1985 based on research conducted by Dan Olweus. The schools implement the programme in collaboration with staff responsible for the Olweus Programme.

According to the written instructions for teachers, the pupils first complete a questionnaire to identify the extent and type of bullying at the school. The survey is then conducted once a year to monitor developments at the school. A theme day about bullying is arranged early in the process, common school rules against bullying are decided on and an improved system for monitoring school breaks is introduced. The teachers form discussion groups that meet regularly. Continuous training in the method is carried out in these groups. Parents are called to meetings and the pupils together with their teachers develop classroom rules against bullying. Class meetings, which may include role play about bullying, are subsequently held at least once a week to increase knowledge of bullying. There should also be regular contact with parents about the social climate in the class.

If bullying occurs, the pupil's teacher should intervene straight away and interview both the bully and the victim. These interviews should be structured and make it clear that the bullying has been recognised and that steps will be taken to ensure it stops. Individual and joint interviews are conducted with the parents of both the bully and the victim. An action programme is drawn up and follow-up meetings arranged.

Table 5.4 shows our assessment of the Olweus Programme in relation to the 18 measures focused on in this evaluation (see, e.g., Section 7.3). The assessment is based on the importance the research team has assigned to each of the measures and on an interview with a representative of the Olweus Programme. The assessment shows that the method includes 14 of the 18 measures.<sup>34</sup>

The assessment of the measures shows that the Olweus Programme contains measures that originate from prevention, detection and remedial work. The representative of the Olweus Programme felt that only two of the measures were not in the programme: mediation and cooperative teams. Our assessment differs in two respects from that of the programme representative: *the relationship-*

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33 See also *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)* (National Agency for Education, 2009d).

34 The basis of this assessment is the programme description in *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)* (National Agency for Education, 2009d), the interview with a representative of the Olweus Programme and the importance the research team has assigned the 18 measures. See attachment 4 in the Evaluation of anti-bullying methods. *Methodology appendix and attachments to report 353* (National Agency for Education, 2011), pdf.

*enhancing measures teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil*, for which the research team focused on how the schools organised activities to create a greater sense of closeness, whilst representatives of the Olweus Programme focused on how the teachers organised work in the classroom. The programme representative says that the disciplinary strategies are based on a scale of sanctions that should be followed when bullying is detected. The first step is a discussion with the perpetrator about the school's rules against bullying, followed by subsequent meetings. If the bullying continues, the bully's parents are called to a meeting. If the bullying still continues, bullies spend their breaks with a teacher. In the event of repeated aggression/violence, 'time out' may be used, which means that the pupil is placed in an empty room together with a teacher for three to eight minutes. The programme advocates a system for monitoring school breaks in which those on duty are encouraged to monitor places where bullying is particularly frequent. The programme representative also says that the programme recommends that a logbook should be kept in which those on break duty enter any incidents of bullying.

### Schools working with the Olweus Programme

In a teacher survey of all the schools covered in the study in autumn 2009, 8 of the 39 schools indicated that they worked with the Olweus Programme. When applying to take part in the evaluation, four of these schools designated themselves as Olweus schools. At two of the schools, the programme was established, whilst at the other two it had only recently been established. One of these has been visited twice.

According to the teacher survey, two schools worked only with the Olweus Programme. The interviews revealed that even these schools used other measures when combating bullying and degrading treatment. A third school combined the Olweus Programme with SET. The teachers at the fourth school stated that they combined the Olweus Programme with the Farsta Method, Friends, SET and measures that were not linked to any of the programmes studied.

**Table 5.4** Measures in the Olweus Programme

Measures in the Olweus Programme	Comments of programme representative
Follow-up/evaluation	Regular questionnaires, pupils, staff
Special lessons	Regular class meetings
Pupils as players	Pupils to inform adults if somebody is bullied
Pupils' active participation	Pupils' active participation in theme days about bullying
Disciplinary strategies	Scale of sanctions for bullying
Classroom rules/school rules	Worked out together with pupils
School assemblies about bullying	Cultural day about bullying. Contributions from pupils, all staff and parents informed about the school policy and questionnaire results
Training material	
Staff training	
Parent information/training	
Break monitoring system	
Case documentation	Recommendations exist
Dealing with bullies	Grounds for suspicion – investigation – measures
Dealing with victims	Protection of victims

## Experiences of working with the Olweus Programme

### *Initiation, reasons and implementation*

At three of the four schools, the initiative to adopt the Olweus Programme came from municipal level. The fourth school emphasised how the idea of introducing the programme essentially grew out of discussions between the school management and the school safety team. There is continuing contact between the municipality and the school about the implementation of the programme.

Three of the four schools say their reason for choosing to work with the Olweus Programme is that it is based on research. The fourth school emphasises the same point, even though it does not state this as a direct reason for introducing the programme. Even though a school may consider it already has effective anti-bullying measures in place, the fact that a programme has a firm basis in research can be a compelling argument for introducing it, *“Since he [Olweus] has conducted research in this, he could prove ... and he believes it is important to have the whole concept so that all staff are involved. The research team did not have this; it was the teachers who were involved in our anti-bullying plan from the beginning.”* [head teacher] The head teacher quoted above emphasises the research basis of the Olweus Programme and that it stresses the importance of creating broad groups of players at the school. All staff should be active. The school staff think that anti-bullying measures require broad responsibility and also stress the importance of all the staff being united. One school cites the lack of broad responsibility for bullying issues as the reason it abandoned a programme in favour of the Olweus Programme. It was regarded as important that all staff work in the same direction and are positive role models for the pupils, *“But the Farsta Method has felt more and more so ... when something happens, you offload this to a special group in the organisation, the school safety team, and it feels increasingly wrong to act in this way ... If the caretaker goes and says ‘damn kids’, you have lost the whole point.”* [head teacher].

At the same time, it seems that the involvement by all categories of staff in discussion groups is a complex matter. Those with positions of responsibility at the school, e.g. the head teacher, influence interaction in the group in a particular way that can have an inhibiting effect or lead the discussion in a different direction to the one intended, *“Yes, that individuals can perhaps feel inhibited by the presence of a head teacher. That may have happened. There’s a head teacher in the group I am in, but people don’t feel inhibited in that way. However, the head teacher can be held responsible, she is given the blame for things regularly, and I don’t think it is the right forum. This can really irritate me.”* [pupil welfare team]

Other reasons given by school staff for choosing the Olweus Programme were its close collaboration with parents, its preventive approach and its broad target group, i.e. it works with children and young people of different ages. School staff consistently say that implementation of the Olweus Programme has been a methodical process. The programme is perceived to be comprehensive, like a *‘huge concept’* as the head teacher at one of the four schools expressed it. Starting all processes simultaneously is demanding. The clear structure of the process facilitates this, but it can also seem rigid, *“[The Olweus Programme] is a research-based programme so there were precise instructions on how everything should happen or be done, with key staff, coordinators, parent meetings and staff meetings, this file, the chapters and which chapters to work with, the order to do so, all the classroom*

*rules against bullying, and so the whole concept is very clearly presented. It is absolutely essential that we work that way.*" [head teacher]

In the school's procedure for implementation, roles are allocated to different people, for example, a coordinator and a number of discussion leaders. These discussion leaders, who are designated as key people at the school, play a crucial role in the process as they lead activities in small groups of staff. Some of the discussion leaders at the school feel that the work required of them is too demanding, such as having to enthuse colleagues.

The resistance that the implementation processes have met at the four schools has primarily concerned the intensity of the work required and how staff should be compensated for this, "*There wasn't any real resistance to the programme itself, to implementing it, but what came up was the time factor, 'how can we make time', because a lot of time must be set aside and that is time we take from the children.*" [head teacher]

At one of the schools where the programme is established, the head teacher describes how staff resistance to the intensity of the work required declined when they saw the benefits of their work. Today, they have made a joint decision to work on becoming a certified Olweus school.

How the implementation phase works also depends on the local conditions at the school. The teachers at one of the new schools describe how this phase coincided with a major cut-back programme at the school when approximately ten persons were made redundant. In group discussions it was not easy to ignore the difficult situation the school found itself in.

At the schools where the programme is established, the teachers also describe the resistance from pupils, which they have had to deal with. This particularly concerns the difficulty pupils face in understanding why they are working with this when they do not feel that they have any serious bullying problems, "*But sometimes it can be a bit much too 'Ah bullying again' and bullying questionnaires and 'Have I bullied anybody?' Things like that. And then it feels a bit over the top, and they are overdoing things.*" [pupil]

The school staff who have worked with the Olweus Programme have mainly positive experiences of it. For example, the staff say that the training has broadened their knowledge and made them better able to enter into problems and tackle issues as and when they arise. The procedure has become better known and is now perceived as clear. It is also considered an advantage that the teachers working most closely with the children concerned are also responsible for the anti-bullying measures.

Three aspects of the Olweus Programme recurred in the respondents' experiences of working with it: programme flexibility, anchoring of anti-bullying measures and the programme's potential for contributing to school improvement from a broader perspective.

### *Degree of flexibility*

As mentioned earlier, the Olweus Programme has a specific procedure that must be followed if the programme is to be effective. At one of the schools where the programme is established, the head teacher considered that the programme's perceived rigidity an asset in the school's current situation. The programmes are being introduced into existing school activities, which have cultures that are slow to change, at the same time as other activities are already in progress. One

of the schools, prior to introducing the Olweus Programme, made a point of not working with rules other than those that apply in the community outside the school. This clashes with the programme's requirements, *"Then we have the rules that apply in the rest of the community. We have followed them here. Children are allowed to eat sweets, for example, but they must learn how to eat them. They can't sit and [gorge] and not answer questions because people don't behave that way, we don't sit like this, and eat and chew and spit ... And then there's the hat and all that, which other schools have rules about, that you are not allowed to wear your hat, but here they are allowed to and, yes, if they want their hood up they can, if it feels better ... All this about having your hood up or not, it can't be that important."* [pupil welfare team]

At some schools, staff describe how the introduction of the Olweus Programme has meant that they have phased out other anti-bullying measures. Teams that have had special responsibility for bullying issues have been disbanded. The responsibility for bullying issues has been moved further out in the organisation, to each individual teacher. Peer support systems have sometimes been phased out on the grounds that the responsibility for bullying issues cannot lie with the pupils. At one of the schools where the programme is established, the system still seems to exist but under a different designation, namely as pupil safety representatives. All four schools believe it is possible to have special lessons, such as life skills, to reinforce foundation values and integrate these with the Olweus or class meetings.

The interviews show that phasing out existing systems is not a simple process. There can be confusion about the rules that apply, who to turn to and who is responsible. It turned out that the pupils at one of the schools where the programme is established had not been informed or had not noticed that the former safety team had been disbanded. The overview that the safety team previously conducted of all the bullying cases at the school seems to have disappeared. Today, the class teachers themselves have action plans and notes from the discussions that have been held. At the same time, thanks to the Olweus questionnaire, they have access to information and an overview, which was previously lacking.

#### *Anchoring anti-bullying measures*

The implementation of the Olweus Programme is not a one-time process. At one of the schools where the programme is established, the head teacher believes that the process has lost momentum and thus decided to intensify the implementation of the programme: *"But we noticed that things do not keep going of their own accord. You have to work at keeping methods and processes like these running, and work at keeping the level of commitment up, and at enthusing each other and in this way keeping it alive."* [head teacher] Key staff once again had a reduction in teaching hours, and the school decided to arrange seven meetings with discussion groups each term. They were tasked with developing ideas of how to intensify the process of implementation. They had a supervisory role and were available one hour a week when teachers could consult them and get advice and suggestions about working with pupils at class meetings.

Another difficulty of keeping the implementation process current is that the training for new teachers, the one-day introduction course, was felt to be inadequate. Knowledge of the programme varies greatly in the work groups. *"I think*

*they should learn much more about the Olweus Programme when they come to our school, and it feels like the process is stalling a lot because of this.*" [teacher]

At one of the schools where the programme is established, the head teacher says that the opportunity to become a certified Olweus school may have been a driving force.

#### *School improvement*

Judging from the respondents' experiences of working with the programme, it appears that it not only addresses issues of bullying and degrading treatment, but that it also furthers school improvement. It seems that it can trigger discussion processes involving all of the school staff, thus enabling further processes and collaboration, which in turn can lead to school improvement in a broader sense. The head teacher at one of the schools where the programme is established also describes how staff in the discussion groups started working with the processes, *"The training is collegial in the pedagogical groups we have had, people help each other, they give each other support in these difficult issues and learn from each other."* [head teacher]

The school nurse and recreation instructor at one school describe how different groups of staff have gained a better understanding of each other's roles and perspectives, *"In the pedagogical discussions there was a moment at the end or at the start when we discussed Olweus, and after that we have had open discussions about things ... [pupil welfare team] It increases ... contact between teachers at the school. By sitting and meeting in these groups, people meet each other regularly, those working with the younger children and those working with the older ones. It has a ripple effect."* [head teacher]

#### **Concluding comments on the Olweus Programme**

These reflections are made in relation to the intentions underlying the Olweus Programme, respondents' experiences of working with the method and the questions posed during the National Agency for School Improvement's initial planning of the evaluation.

The aim of the Olweus Programme is to be a fully comprehensive anti-bullying programme. The responsibility for implementation should lie with all the staff at the school. This should involve the pupils in the process through discussions, class meetings and theme days. The school anchors the Olweus Programme among staff by organising discussion groups that are aimed at training staff on bullying issues as well as introducing and anchoring the programme. Respondents feel that one of the strengths of the programme is that it adopts a holistic approach. The greatest difficulties are caused in the interface between the programme and established school practice. It takes time for a school to change its working culture and requires the staff to support and welcome the innovation. This requires that the changes are firmly anchored amongst the staff and that there is a clear strategy for implementing them. At a couple of the four schools, the initiative to introduce the programme came from municipal level, which means that introducing the programme at an individual school requires an additional degree of sensitivity and commitment. The strategy for anchoring the programme, by means of discussions involving all staff, shows that the authors are aware of the problems of the anchoring process.

School staff and pupils say that schools can experience problems when introducing the Olweus Programme, if the responsibility for anti-bullying measures

has previously largely been with an anti-bullying team. Placing the responsibility for remedial measures on all school staff requires time, and the school can find itself in a no-man's-land where anti-bullying measures do not function effectively. The study shows that schools where the programme is established, partly because of its scope, can end up 'exhausted' where parts of the programme decline in importance.

All the schools describe the introduction of the Olweus Programme as intensive in terms of resources and time. All staff should be involved in discussion groups, continuous class meetings should be held, break duty should be intensified, and the work of dealing with bullies and victims should be shared by all the teachers. Time and resources are essential to maintain programme implementation. As their resources have been reduced, some schools find it difficult to provide the time the staff feel that the implementation requires.

The programme is regarded as being in line with the intentions of the curriculum and the foundation values of the school, and because it is based on research, it has legitimacy at the studied schools. At the schools that feel they have had adequate resources to work with the programme as intended, the programme has created security, but at one school that experienced difficulty meeting the programme requirements, it created uncertainty and some frustration.

During the introductory phase of the programme, discussion groups were created in which all members of staff took part. By creating a forum in which all the staff can discuss how to create a safe and positive working environment, the programme can also provide a basis for improving activities in the school that goes further than measures intended purely for combating bullying and degrading treatment.

### SET – Social and emotional training

In a categorisation of programmes for combating bullying and degrading treatment (National Agency for School Improvement, 2003, 2007a), SET is placed in the category of programmes that reinforces foundation values. The programme can be seen as a preventive programme to combat bullying and degrading treatment.

#### **Intentions underlying the programme**<sup>35</sup>

SET takes social and emotional learning (SEL) as its point of departure. It is described as a pedagogical programme that aims to provide pupils with social and emotional training in order to develop their social and emotional skills. The programme aims to affect individuals' behaviour and prevent social problems and mental ill health. It also claims to be able to influence group climate and attitudes between adults and pupils at the school.

Through the programme, pupils should be systematically trained to develop their ability to manage their emotions, use problem solving strategies, manage stress, increase their self-awareness, and develop their empathy and motivation.

The programme is implemented at the school as part of the timetable. The programme includes training material for pupils, as well as guidance for teachers for each school year from preschool up to and including upper secondary school. To be effective, the authors emphasise that the programme should

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<sup>35</sup> See also *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)* (National Agency for Education, 2009d).

permeate all other teaching at the school. The programme is dependent on all teachers at a school taking active responsibility for implementation. Close adherence to the manuals and being faithful to the programme are also emphasised as necessary for it to be effective.

SET trains a group of teachers who then take responsibility for training and mentoring their colleagues. Training of mentors takes seven days. SET is a long-term process and it takes three years to fully implement the programme. Working with SET at a school requires time, since the programme recommends that one to two hours a week should be set aside for SET training. There is also the time required by mentors for planning and mentoring other teachers.

Table 5.5 shows our assessment of SET in relation to the 18 measures, which are the focus of special attention in this evaluation (see, e.g., Section 7.3). The assessment is based on the importance that we attributed to each of the measures and on the interview with a representative of SET. The assessment indicates that the method includes 5 of the 18 measures.<sup>36</sup>

**Table 5.5** Measures in SET

Measures in SET	Comments of programme representative
Special lessons	
Classroom/school rules	Creating rules and respect for rules as a step in learning “consequences of breaking the rules”
Training material	
Staff training	
Parent information/training	

Our assessment differs in some respects from that of the programme representative interviewed because the research team has assigned different degrees of importance to some of the measures. This applies to the measures *relationship-enhancing measures teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil*, *pupils as players* and *pupils’ active participation*. Like the programme representatives of Lion’s Quest, the Olweus Programme and School Comet, the SET representative views the approach that the programme aims to apply as relationship-enhancing, whilst the research team focuses on different ways of creating the conditions for positive meetings.

The programme representative for SET also sees pupils’ participation in the exercises during life skill lessons as an expression of pupils as players and pupils’ active participation.<sup>37</sup> The interviewed programme representative says that the programme’s primary aim is to prevent bullying and degrading treatment by equipping pupils with protective and resilient shields. Since SET wishes to provide both the staff and pupils with a common language, it is essential that the whole school agrees on adopting the programme. The interviewed programme representative says that School Comet can be a good complement to working with SET.

### Schools working with SET

In a teacher survey to all the schools included in the study, 15 of the 39 schools indicated that they were working with SET. This means that it is a very fre-

<sup>36</sup> The basis for this assessment is the programme description in *På tal of mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)* (National Agency for Education, 2009d), the interview with a representative of SET and the importance the research team has assigned to the 18 measures.

<sup>37</sup> See the meaning given by the research team to these two measures in Attachment 4 in the Evaluation of anti-bullying methods. *Methodology appendix and attachments to report 353* (National Agency for Education, 2011), pdf.

quently used programme in our evaluation. When they enrolled in the study, four of these schools designated themselves as SET schools. Two of the schools were established and two were newcomers. One of the four schools has been visited on two occasions.

The four schools combine the SET programme with the Farsta Method, Friends, School Comet and/or School Mediation.

### **Experiences of working with the SET programme**

#### *Initiation, reasons and implementation*

At all four schools, the initiative to introduce SET came from municipal and/or school management level, but the background to the initiative differs. At one of the schools, the pupil welfare team played an active role in assessing the appropriateness of adopting the programme. At two of the schools, the rough way some pupils addressed each other combined with a general sense of unease during breaks and lessons prompted the school management to think, *“If we can help them to reflect on or calm down and find solutions to their problems, maybe they will feel better and things will be quieter. That’s how our thinking went.”* [head teacher] In contacts with SET, one head teacher adopted the programme because it seemed robust and was said to be based on evidence.

At the fourth school, the municipal school management team took the initiative to introduce SET into all the municipal schools as a project that was partly financed by EU funds. Some time later, lower secondary schools in the municipality took part in another project in which SET was one of the fundamental elements, *“so that was SET two in our sense of the term, so we really are ‘SET oriented’.”* [head teacher]

All four schools have followed the strategy for implementing the programme recommended by the programme authors. A group of staff was trained as ‘pilots’ and, in turn, the group trained the teachers who would lead the lessons in SET. The majority of schools refer to these lessons as ‘life skills’. There are differences in all the schools in terms of who have completed the training, how the programme has been implemented by staff and the impact the programme has had.

One school introduced life skill lessons before having any contact with SET. The quality of these lessons varied a great deal and many teachers felt unsure about their content. The pupil welfare team had produced material with exercises for each of the teacher teams at the school. The school invited people who had worked with life skills to come and describe their experiences, and materials of different kinds were purchased. Members of the pupil welfare team also presented an objective for life skills and provided some exercises to teachers at the teacher team meetings *“but there were many who still thought it was difficult.”* [pupil welfare team] The head teachers say they would have been obliged to remove life skill lessons from the timetable if they had not received the offer to train pilots in the SET method. The teachers say the training has provided them with a more positive attitude to SET and to life skill lessons. As an introduction to the programme, several schools were given a lecture by Birgitta Kimber. Pilot training was then carried out under the leadership of other programme representatives. It was usually teachers who were trained as pilots. Some of the pupil welfare team also participated in training at two of the schools. The criteria for pilot training were a voluntary basis, a strong sense of commitment and a positive attitude. To facilitate support for the programme amongst the staff, one

of the schools chose to train one pilot per teacher team. The pilots were given the task of training and mentoring their colleagues in the work with SET. This input was often a monthly feature of staff meetings over a ten-month period. Kitchen staff and caretakers were also trained at one of the schools. The teachers at one of the schools believe that mentoring should continue because not all staff have yet acquired the approach advocated in the programme. Some schools have asked the pilots to provide support over and above the mandatory training, and mentoring as and when needed.

One head teacher said that teachers who completed the pilot training are positive and have chosen to do the training and assumed the responsibilities of a mentor. They may find it difficult to create the same positive attitude to the programme among their colleagues. The head teacher plays a key role *“always keeping an eye on the situation and how things are working and whether everyone is actually implementing the programme ... if we don't do this, then I think there are many who will lose their way, or we will lose along the way.”* [head teacher]

School staff as well as pupils have experience of working with SET. The experiences are presented as four themes: anchoring the programme, which refers to the difficulty entailed in getting all teachers at a school to use the programme; the requirement to work with the programme during specially timetabled lessons; the programme's flexibility in terms of working according to the manual; and the contents of the process.

#### *Anchoring the programme*

All four schools have one lesson in life skills per week on the timetable, usually led by the class teacher. SET is one of the programmes in our study that requires all teachers at a school to take active responsibility for implementation. The programme aspires to engage all pupils at the school. The measure also entails priorities that have an impact on the whole school. These are important reasons for resistance and anchoring problems having been the subject of so much attention in the interviews conducted at the four schools where SET has been implemented. Teachers and pupils may be opponents of the programme.

There has been much debate about the amount of time devoted to life skills. The schools have chosen to create time in slightly different ways. At one school, the introduction of life skills led to *“rather fierce resistance in the beginning”* [head teacher] as time was taken from games and health, *“and that annoyed them”* [head teacher 2] and from the sciences, *“they became furious”* [head teacher]. Some schools took time from pupils' options, and time for working with the programme was often placed in the so-called mentor period. The head teacher and pupil welfare team at one school described how some teachers initially used life skill lessons as general mentor time for information and class councils. As a consequence, teachers who used the lessons to train life skills challenged their colleagues' use of the time. An evaluation of the lessons was performed and teachers were placed in cross-sectional groups to discuss their findings, *“And there it emerged that some things worked splendidly ... whilst others needed support and help ... in some form, preferably that somebody else came and took the lessons.”* [head teacher]

One head teacher said there are teachers who have a talent for talking to pupils. There are also teachers to whom it does not come as naturally. Frequently, they do not have the motivation required to make life skill lessons meaningful

and worthwhile. Forcing a teacher who feels uncomfortable leading exercises in the SET programme to carry them out can be counter-productive.

Several teachers see resistance to the programme as evidence of teachers' uncertainty. A description of how a teacher felt in the initial phases of working with life skill lessons serves to illustrate the uncertainty and frustration expressed by several teachers, *"there is always a breaking-in period for everything. I felt like this in the beginning that, well, it's good I felt ... but now you will have one more thing to prepare and panic about, and then Wednesday comes and it is time, have you checked what you are going to do with your pupils, no I don't have a clue and oh, panic almost, because there had been no time to do any planning for it. But now it has been a while since then, and it has become routine and we have better material, and I have been on a training course, and now it feels different in some way, now it feels more routine and I am positive."* [teacher]

A recurring problem in all the schools was encouraging all teachers to use the time allocated for life skills to something resembling the contents of the SET manual. This created a dilemma that was emphasised by the teachers, head teachers and pupils and could be seen as a challenge to the deeply entrenched image of the autonomous teacher who, by virtue of professional competence, has both the right and the responsibility to choose the content and the form of the teaching. One head teacher describes how individual teachers believe that lessons in life skills are "waffle" *"it is nothing new, this is something we work with all the time."* [head teacher] *During the training, several teachers at the school had a negative wait-and-see attitude, "we are already doing this, we don't have to deal with this, and this is maybe the parents' responsibility."* [teacher] Some teachers in years 6–9 said that their subjects were more important.

Pupils at several schools described how teachers fill the lessons with different content and attach varying levels of importance to them. There are teachers who prefer to conduct class council meetings rather than work on relationship-enhancing exercises. This freedom means that pupils at the school are exposed to the programme to varying degrees and in different ways. It could also be said that resistance to the programme is reflected in the manner in which teachers choose to deal with the life skill lessons.

All four schools have tried different strategies for responding to teachers who have a negative attitude to the programme. During life skill lessons at one of the schools, one of the pilots actively worked with teachers who felt unsure or did not understand or believe in the relevance of the measure. When the programme was adopted at another school, strict adherence to the programme manual was required. This gave rise to some resistance, and since then teachers have increasingly taken the liberty of filling these lessons with content as they see fit, *"We couldn't do anything about it before, but now we work so we can feel greater inner satisfaction, and if people feel uncomfortable with it then they don't have to use it."* [head teacher]

### *Special lessons*

Staff at several schools point out that the allocation of special lessons to work with pupils' relations is a problem. At one of the schools, the teachers for years 4–6 say they do not want the timetable to be inflexible. When it became a requirement for one life skill lesson a week to be added to the timetable, one of the teachers described the reaction of the teacher team, *"shit, it's always so incred-*

ibly difficult to lock things on the timetable [raps the table], it becomes so inflexible ... We didn't really want it to be our responsibility, so we were a bit stubborn about it." [teacher] The teachers in years 4–6, however, expect a fixed time on the timetable to be needed to work with SET at lower secondary level. They think it is more difficult to make it a natural part of teaching in systems in which subjects are taught by subject teachers however.

One head teacher questions the idea of placing so much emphasis on special lessons for developing good relationships and positive attitudes among the pupils. He points out that what is important is the attitude advocated in the SET programme, which means that pupils should behave well 24 hours a day and not only during lessons in life skills. The pupil welfare team at one of the schools where the programme is established makes a similar point, *"why should we take it up in the life skill lesson, this talking about how we should listen and respect each other, we can do that when it is appropriate in everyday life, when something happens, or when it is appropriate in some other context."* [pupil welfare team]

One teacher says he feels ambivalent about SET and life skills. On the one hand, he and his colleagues appreciated the training, however, implementing SET led to a change in his approach towards pupils when situations arose in the classroom and the corridor. When pupils are in year 7, many exercises work well, but the older the pupils become the harder it is to motivate them, *"You create a small artificial reality, that on such and such a day and such and such a time, we do this, and as it were play this."* [teacher] The teacher wonders whether so much time in years 8 and 9 should be allocated to life skills, *"once a week when there are children who don't know their multiplication tables, or the four points of the compass, or the continents in the world, you understand what I mean. We have such a massive amount of knowledge instead to work with ... as a mentor I have learnt a lot of things through this programme, absolutely, and acquired great tools ... I have called this life skills or SET, in real life ... I mean, when a situation crops up, the way you tackle it ... a real situation that is not artificial like in a SET lesson where it says something like this: Lisa is sitting in the classroom, she is being bullied by Pelle ... and then all the children are expected to give the politically correct answer and they are looking at the clock and thinking it's really boring and absolutely ridiculous and they want to get out of there."* [teacher]

The majority of the pupils were not convinced that life skill lessons have an impact on the working environment at the school. Some pupils, however, say that if it has been rowdy and time is spent discussing this in life skill lessons, then the situation usually *"improves anyway"* [pupil].

#### *Degree of flexibility*

There are divergent opinions amongst the teachers about the procedure, which is a core component of the SET programme. Many teachers appreciate that there is a ready to use concept, *"I think this feels good and the exercises we have done with the pupils have worked extremely well, I believe. And they have become active and I look very favourably on this now and I hope it continues."* [teacher] The teachers appreciate that the material is well thought through and that the different exercises build on each other, *"it's based on research so it must be good"* [teacher]. Other teachers feel that the programme is too controlled and that the material must be adapted to each individual school.

There are also teachers who are opposed to having to follow a manual, *“It’s probably deep-rooted in a teacher’s soul, the right to choose your own methods. There are always manuals, but you are free to make your own choices ... and slavishly following some training material, it doesn’t work.”* [pupil welfare team]

#### *Content of the process*

According to the pupils, some common exercises in life skill lessons are sitting in a circle and describing the high point of the week, something good and something bad. There can also be discussions about degrading treatment and bullying. Some pupils say they have teachers who do not dare to talk about relationships, *“They feel embarrassed doing things like that.”* [pupil] The pupils think that is one of the reasons teachers choose to fill the lesson with different content to that prescribed by the programme.

Several teachers feel that the programme is limited when it comes to working over a long period with older pupils. Similar exercises recur all the time and can wear pupils out and cause the older ones to lose interest. There is too little variation. The pupils’ reaction is that they know it already. Several teachers say that older pupils need more advanced questions. In an evaluation at one of the schools, it emerged that the older pupils felt that some of the content was too childish. A teacher at the school also said that pupils sometimes showed an ironic side when they were going to do exercises from the SET manual. This teacher believes it is important as a teacher to adopt the approach to pupils according to SET and that the lessons can be important in year 7 but that it should be possible to make more effective use of the time in years 8 and 9. Several teachers describe their solutions to this problem. At one of the schools, teachers in year 9 tried to link the content of life skill lessons to some of the school subjects. For example, teaching on sex and relationships has been blended into life skill lessons. At another school, some of the teachers in year 9 chose to allow the pupils to plan and conduct the life skill lessons themselves. The objective was for the activity they chose to be enjoyable and inspire their classmates. Pupils have chosen, for example, to massage each other.

Many pupils laugh a little when they describe the exercises they perform in life skills, *“The lessons are a bit over the top, like we did that kind of thing when we were about nine years old.”* [pupil] The pupils poke fun at the lesson content. They think the content should be more informative and not so old-fashioned. One pupil describes the exercises as, *“it is like [in a disguised voice] hold your hand a bit so, think of something funny, then we are a happy family.”* [pupil] The pupils also say that many pupils are flippant, act the fool during lessons and believe that school could manage just as well without lessons in life skills. They do not think the atmosphere between pupils would deteriorate. At the time of the interview, one class had bullying as a theme in their life skill lessons. They have been out on the football pitch, played games and talked about trusting each other, *“If, for example, the teacher says those who have bullied somebody should go to that side, those who haven’t bullied anybody should go to that one instead, and then they ask if you feel guilty about bullying that person and ...”* [pupil] One of the pupils did not feel that this kind of exercise was suitable as there are pupils who feel pressurised by others.

Several teachers experienced failure conducting life skill lessons in precisely those classes in which they felt the pupils had the greatest need to improve their

relationships. One teacher said that there was a group of boys in her class that did not find the lessons worthwhile, and that she and her colleague thought that they were precisely the ones who needed the lessons most. The teachers at another school attempted to divide a class into two smaller groups, but despite this the pupils were far too rowdy. They did not listen to each other, and the teachers gave up because they were not able to conduct the lessons.

If the programme is to have a positive impact on pupils, then the teachers themselves must practise “to change your way of thinking ... because it’s not only a question of intellectually understanding the way you should do it, but what you must also do is practise the new approach.” [pupil welfare team] The school staff said it is easy to miss this if a school timetable has life skill lessons without providing everybody with training in the programme.

Some teachers described not only how the available exercises helped them but also that they were trying to be receptive to the approach. They described how they had focused on praising pupils instead of criticising them and that this had often been successful. One teacher gave a specific example of a boy who had *“messed another boy around for a long time and been really rotten, and then everything was fine for two days, it was really calm, then I called him out of the classroom and he said ‘What’s up now?’ and then I said ‘but I just want to say that things have gone really well for two days now. How happy I am and you are fixing this really well. You are really good!’ ... his mother rang and said ‘That was great.’”* [teacher]

Several teachers and head teachers pointed out that the aim of the programme is not specifically to combat bullying and degrading treatment but that it can lead to a reduction in bullying. One group of teachers believe that in order for pupils to develop greater tolerance and improve their relationships, adults themselves must behave according to the SET programme. Teachers summarise the foundation values in SET as, *“accepting each other for the person he or she is, viewing each other as an asset and not a liability in life, and appreciating each other”* [teacher].

### **Concluding comments on SET**

These reflections are made in relation to the intentions underlying the SET programme, the respondents’ experiences of working with the method, and the questions posed during the National Agency for School Improvement’s initial planning of the evaluation.

The intention of the SET programme is to develop pupils’ social and emotional skills. A positive approach between teachers and pupils, and between pupils should permeate all activities at the school. Special lessons should provide extra training. A programme manual provides the material for these lessons. A problem that SET shares with all the programmes that require the involvement of all the staff at a school is getting them to act in unison. The intention of the SET programme can easily be opposed by school staff who are not convinced of the need for lessons in life skills, do not feel at ease with the content of the lesson material or cannot empathise with the basic approach advocated by the programme.

The SET programme is not felt to be resource-intensive as lessons in life skills are incorporated into the regular activities of the school. Some teachers said that it takes time to plan the lessons to get them to work. It is not possible to simply select an exercise from the material. Staff do not feel that the pro-

gramme is difficult to understand but that some of the exercises can be difficult to perform in a way that is conducive to developing the pupils' social skills. Sensitivity is required with regard to the way the exercises are 'received' by the pupil groups. If the teachers manage to adapt the material to the group's conditions, then they discover that it provides a sense of security. Otherwise the implementation of the lessons can create uncertainty among the teachers. Provided the lessons have a positive impact, the programme is viewed as being in line with the school's mission "to promote understanding of other people and the ability to empathise" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 3). Several of the pupils interviewed make negative comments about some of the programme exercises. There are exercises that are felt to be "old-fashioned and corny" [pupil]. The pupils also said that exercises on the bullying theme can cause pupils to feel pressurised and thus be counterproductive in terms of combating bullying and degrading treatment.

The legitimacy of the programme varies at the schools studied depending on how well the process has been anchored among the staff. Since the programme strives to create a shared strategy, it can contribute to school improvement from a wider perspective, but the programme itself does not include any strategies for attaining this.

### School Comet

School Comet is not included in the category of programmes for combating bullying and degrading treatment carried out by the National Agency for School Improvement 2007 (National Agency for School Improvement, 2003, 2007a). School Comet belongs to the group of programmes that reinforces foundation values.

### Intentions underlying the programme<sup>38</sup>

Comet or COmmunications METHod, which was developed by Martin Foster on behalf of the City of Stockholm, aims to support and help unruly and disruptive children, and create a positive classroom atmosphere in which children can work undisturbed. Comet trains mentors who in turn train others in the method. One of the main aims is to give prominence to positive behaviour and to break negative spirals in which negative reactions can be a way for disruptive children to attract attention. School Comet's strategy is to try to ignore negative behaviour and extinguish it. Teachers must adapt their behaviour to achieve change in the classroom.

School Comet is a manual-based programme in three parts. The first part focuses on leadership, the teacher's approach in the classroom and the importance of motivating pupils. This can involve creating a points system to focus attention on positive behaviour. The second part focuses on 'buddy' groups in the classroom with pupils working together to train concentration and cooperation. The third part of the manual concerns strategies that pupils can use to respond to provocation.

Table 5.6 shows our assessment of School Comet in relation to the 18 measures that are the focus of special attention in this evaluation (see, e.g., Section 7.3). The assessment is based on the importance that the research team has as-

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38 See also *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)* (National Agency for Education, 2009d).

signed to each of the measures and an interview with a programme representative of School Comet. The assessment indicates that the method includes 5 of the 18 measures.

**Table 5.6** Measures in School Comet

Measures in School Comet	Comments of programme representative
Disciplinary strategies	Applies the school's standard sanction system
Classroom/school rules	Recommended
Training material	
Staff training	
Parent information/training	

As is the case in other programmes, our assessments differ in some respects from those of the interviewed programme representative because we assign different degrees of importance to some of the measures. The representative of School Comet believes that the programme includes the measure *relationship-enhancing measures teacher-pupil* and *pupil-pupil*. The representative of School Comet also believes that the programme includes *follow-up/evaluation*, as goals are set for individual pupils and then followed up in the mentor groups. This differs from the view of the research team, which focuses on the method for monitoring the school's measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment (see Attachment 4 in the Methodology appendix). The programme representative points out that the programme is based on theories in so-called Classroom Management. The teachers should achieve a positive classroom climate by giving pupils more attention and providing them with positive reinforcement when they behave well. According to the representative, the programme recommends that staff make the consequences of behaviour more predictable and democratic, based on the school's foundation values. The programme representative believes that changing the negative behaviour of individuals or groups of pupils can be a step in counteracting bullying and degrading treatment, even though the programme has not been developed for this specific purpose.

### Schools working with School Comet

In a teacher survey to all the schools in the study, 11 of the 39 schools indicated that they worked with School Comet. This means that it is a frequently used programme among the schools studied. When enrolling in the study, three of these schools designated themselves as School Comet schools. The programme is established at one of the schools whilst the two others are beginners. The two schools at which the programme is established and one of the beginner schools have been visited twice.

One of the beginner schools combines School Comet with the Farsta Method and the Friends programme. According to the teacher survey, two schools are working solely with School Comet, but in the interviews it emerged that these schools also used other kinds of interventions in their measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment.

### Experiences of working with School Comet

#### *Initiation, reasons and implementation*

The initiative to adopt School Comet has taken fairly different forms at the three schools. At one of the schools, the initiative came from municipal level.

A head teacher responsible for pupil welfare issues was able to offer training to staff at the school through the municipality's School Comet instructors. The school chose to train some employees who urgently needed training of this kind due to the nature of their pupil groups. In total, about ten employees participated in the training. At another school, a parent who knew about School Comet through her work in another municipality recommended it to the head teacher. After the head teacher had looked at the material and the school had listened to a lecture by a researcher from Uppsala, the staff made a joint decision to adopt School Comet. At the third school, the initiative for adoption came from the head teacher and the safety team.

Opinions concerning the way School Comet relates to measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment vary between the three schools. At one school, Comet is not the programme used for combating bullying and degrading treatment. Instead, it is used to guide the work with pupils who have complex behavioural problems at the school. Another school uses School Comet as one of a number of programmes for combating bullying and degrading treatment. The measures implemented with School Comet are considered preventive and as creating a sense of security and an atmosphere in which children can work undisturbed at the school. The third school started working with School Comet in autumn 2008 as a major initiative to combat bullying and degrading treatment. Staff at the school felt that the use of preventive measures could improve the school. They wanted to work on recognising and reinforcing positive behaviour. Several of them also said that there was a link between a lack of pedagogical leadership in the classroom and bullying, and they therefore found School Comet useful.

The reasons for introducing the programme vary. Staff at one of the schools felt that they had a complex problem in some cases with individual pupils. At another school, staff had experienced a lack of success with earlier initiatives. A municipal evaluation showed that the situation at the school was problematic. The school wanted broader staff involvement in the work of combating bullying and degrading treatment and to get away from the former situation in which a special team at the school had been responsible for these issues. Instead, the school wished to focus on the daily interaction in the classroom, which was considered fundamental. The school therefore considered it important that all pedagogical staff receive the same level of training as the teachers who had trained as mentors. Another reason the school started with School Comet was to get off to a relatively quick start, which the head teacher pointed out also involves money. All three schools said that important reasons for their choice were that the programme had a scientific basis and that it had been tested, *"We had learnt about this programme via the family support project, and when people in the municipality started talking about choosing one of these programmes that was based on research ... different programmes, we thought it would be good to be able to use School Comet."* [head teacher]

The implementation of the programme at the two schools that introduced it to all their staff was both similar and dissimilar. One of the schools opted for training two of their own pedagogues who then trained all the other staff. The other school worked with external instructors and thought it was an advantage that all the pedagogical staff received the same training. This applied to staff who had teaching posts. Other staff, such as the school management, received

training but only during the two introduction days. It was difficult in practice for them to participate in the rest of the activities, since the training is based on tasks carried out with groups of children.

These schools worked with training in a similar way. In total they had between eight and ten days of training spread out over a longer period. They were also given classroom tasks with which to work between the meetings, which were generally held fortnightly. Staff at one of the school emphasised that they worked at both individual and group level. While the school focused on individual children, staff also worked with parents who also had remedial programmes at home.

Neither of the two schools that introduced the programme for all the staff said they faced any great resistance to its introduction. However, there were individual teachers who were unsure and thus doubtful. It has also been said that the programme is demanding, very work-intensive and “a bit of a hassle”.

*Interviewer: “There wasn’t any kind of fundamental resistance ...?” Head teacher 1: “No, it was more that it was troublesome ...” Head teacher 2: “Yes, exactly ... A bit ... yes ... yes what was that about the peas and ... ugh!... There you go [laughter] ... a bit ... A bit problematic ...” [school]*

Some teachers said there was initial resistance that could be described as fatigue amongst the staff “confronted with yet another project”. This is true not only for the introduction of School Comet but other programmes as well, *“There were a lot of questions to start with, and we felt that there had been a project the year before, and now there was going to be something new again, and we felt we were not being given the chance to finish things properly.”* [teacher] One member of staff believed that it would have been better if the whole school had reflected together on the shortcomings of the previous programme and attempted to develop it, instead of putting it on hold and starting on a new programme, *“It felt a bit of a jump in some way.”* [teacher]

During the first visit to one of the schools where the programme had recently been established, the school staff described the difficulties of solving the problem of compensating teachers for their work with School Comet, *“We have preparation time of ten hours per week, and then we should also fit in time to study Comet. And then there was a union discussion that in-service training should not be taken from that time.”* [teacher]

In general, the respondents have positive experience of working with School Comet. Five themes recurred in school staff reports: the aim of the programme of reinforcing positive behaviour, flexible use of the programme manual, parent contacts, contents of the manual and the programme’s focus on measures to reinforce foundation values.

#### *Reinforcing positive behaviour*

One of the schools where the programme had recently been established had been working with School Comet for almost a year when it was amalgamated with another school. It was not until then that it became clear how far the previous staff had come in reinforcing the pupils’ positive behaviour and ignoring the negative aspects, instead of as is sometimes the case, the other way round, *“Some of the staff here [the new staff] started shouting ‘Who is going to deal with this, and now we must have consequences, now there must be punishment.’ We don’t use that word any longer, but it was there in the attitude. Then we said,*

*'this won't do, we can't have things like this, because then we will get an atmosphere that we won't be able to handle. Because if we are a bit prickly, us adults, then the children will be even more prickly,' and it was really then that we realised the change that had taken place at this school last year.*" [pupil welfare team]

Two of the schools emphatically point out how giving prominence to positive behaviour not only benefits the climate in the classroom but also the working atmosphere between the teachers at the school.

Having positive experiences, however, does not mean that difficulties of working with the programme are not noted and discussed. Below is a description of some of the difficulties that were highlighted in the interviews.

#### *Degree of flexibility*

It is one thing to argue that the programme needs to be supplemented in certain areas and a different matter to appreciate that all parts of a programme are not applicable, beneficial or simply do not match a particular person's way of working. At the school where the programme was established, the equal treatment team thought that it was debatable if a teacher could completely or partially opt out of working with School Comet. *"It depends on how strict the policy is at the school and where formal responsibility lies, if I don't comply with this code, then I shouldn't be here."* [equal treatment team]

A more liberal perspective emerged later among a group of teachers at the school. A typical feature of this perspective is that teachers want to stress the importance of choosing the suitable parts themselves, *"eventually it ends up with me choosing the part that suits me and my class ... and I can mix different methods ... I don't have blind faith in any programme ... which suits everybody ... If you are going to implement this fully according to Comet, it will require an enormous amount of strength and energy."* [teacher]

If the basic intention is to reinforce positive, and ignore or extinguish negative behaviour, it is crucial that pedagogues are consistent and that they share a common approach.

Staff at one school described how during training, they started working ambitiously with pupils at individual and group level. As working at individual level is resource-intensive, the teachers at the school decided to work with the programme at group level and with reinforcement of positive behaviour in the group.

#### *Parent contacts*

The school management at one of the schools emphasised the difficulty of explaining the programme's core methodology to parents. They found that parents could react negatively to their child being 'socialised' through conditioning.

*"There is a risk with respect to Comet ... and it is that ... the parents, some parents can feel that it is like ... like ... a conditioned reflex ... they react to it, 'Why should they get rewards or why ...' They think it's slightly strange, or how should I put it, they haven't really understood ... that the parents don't buy the concept ..."* [head teacher]

#### *Content of the process*

The school staff pointed out that some of the programme's content is particularly important for the programme to work well. One head teacher said it is crucial that *"the pupils are involved in creating the frames"* that should apply to

the school and the consequences of breaching them. The head teacher thus emphasised that a pupil-centred democratic approach should form the foundation for working with School Comet.

Teachers at one school felt it was crucial that the school formulated suitable goals that really inspired pupils to work in a specific direction. One teacher pointed out that when staff had worked with School Comet for a long time with a class, continuously, formulating attractive goals can be a challenge.

Working with a programme is not an automatic process, nor is working with School Comet. The teachers at one school said that regular updating is crucial if School Comet is to have a future. One teacher group highlighted one reason for School Comet's success as its clarity about how and for what praise should be given, *"I mean we have had reward systems and so on before, but with Comet you have to be so clear to the children about what exactly you are rewarding. You must be much clearer yourself or together with the adults in the teacher team about what you want to reward. Not just say this lesson has been great, and that's the end of it. What we should say is that this lesson has been fine and then point out specifically what has been good. And likewise when you praise children, you should be very clear about why, often you simply pat them on the back and say 'Well done!' But what exactly was well done? And that it's immediate. I buy that about being clearer about what exactly you are rewarding, and what you are not going to give attention to in future, it's both parts."* [teacher]

School staff emphasised that it is essential that teachers have a common approach to pupils if the programme measures are to be effective. One school highlighted the difficulties of having a completely uniform approach and consistently working in the same way. The teachers believe that the work with School Comet has benefited from them working as class teachers. They thought it was difficult in a subject teacher system, in which pupils meet a number of different teachers, to give pupils a consistent experience of how to respond to positive and negative behaviour.

#### *Focus on reinforcing foundation values*

The review of evaluations of anti-bullying programmes (National Agency for School Improvement, 2007a) used the category programmes that reinforce foundation values. Judging from how head teachers, teachers and pupils describe School Comet, it could belong to this category. The programme also includes ideas on how negative behaviour can be treated. None of the respondents, however, mentioned School Comet in connection with anti-bullying measures. At the school where the programme is established, staff stressed that School Comet needs to be supplemented with other measures, and they mention life skills and Charlie. School F, alongside School Comet, has primarily used the equal treatment plan as a basis for combating bullying and degrading treatment.

One school assumed that the research team was interested in its work with the Farsta Method, as the interviews focused on bullying and degrading treatment. The staff were surprised when it turned out that it was School Comet in which the research team was interested. This was in spite of the fact that the staff had recently decided to work with School Comet at the school. It had difficulty seeing School Comet as a programme for combating bullying and degrading treatment. Head teacher: *"... when it said in the email that it was different anti-bullying programmes, then I thought it must be the Farsta Method you were*

*referring to because that is the general one.*” Interviewer: *“Yes, exactly.”* Head teacher: *“Comet is a small, small, piece or fragment of all the work.”* [The head teachers described School Comet as a method of working with special pupils with more general problems, such as conflicts – in general, in groups or in class.] Head teacher: *“It is more a method at that level, not specifically for bullying. You are the first person to use the word bullying in connection with Comet.”* [school]

### **Concluding comments on School Comet**

These reflections are made in relation to the intentions underlying School Comet, the respondents’ experiences of working with the method and the questions posed during the National Agency for School Improvement’s initial planning of the evaluation.

School Comet is a programme to help teachers create a positive classroom climate by giving prominence to pupils’ positive behaviour. The programme aims to help teachers change their behaviour towards disruptive pupils and restless classes by emphasising positive behaviour and discouraging negative behaviour by ignoring it. The programme is manual-based and focuses on measures at individual and class level. The programme can also be of indirect help to schools in combating bullying and degrading treatment. The programme was integrated into the preventive measures at the schools studied.

The programme was highly valued amongst school staff because it can create a common, positive approach to pupils. The schools included in the study use the programme flexibly. This is questionable since the programme is dependent on teachers developing a consistent approach to the pupils. If teachers use the programme flexibly, unfamiliar behavioural patterns may be discarded. This can result in the behaviour that the programme advocates having no real impact. Teachers’ and pupils’ descriptions of the programme give an indication of this type of simplification. A measure used to create order in a class is often used as an illustration describing the programme content: the teacher rewards the pupils by putting peas in a tin and when the number of peas gets to X, the class receives a reward.

Staff feel that the programme is time and resource intensive, which may be the reason several of the schools in our study have experienced difficulty implementing and adhering to the programme in its entirety. School staff feel they are rewarded for their efforts provided they succeed in implementing the programme in its entirety. Teachers who can make the programme work feel that it creates a sense of security and provides them with fresh insights and new skills. Since the programme emphasises a positive approach, it can be described as being firmly anchored in the curriculum’s foundation values. Once a positive approach is firmly anchored in a school, it can help create a positive attitude to measures for improving the school, even though the programme itself does not contain any organisational models for this.

### **School Mediation**

School Mediation comes under the category of mediation and conflict resolution models (Agency for School Improvement, 2003, 2007a). The primary aim of the programme is not to combat bullying, even though many schools use the programme as part of their measures for combating degrading treatment and bullying.

### Intentions underlying the programme<sup>39</sup>

The aim of School Mediation is to help pupils develop strategies for conflict management and to create a calm and peaceful atmosphere between them. A conflict is seen as a disagreement between two parties and as a natural part of interpersonal relationships. People can develop by learning to handle conflicts constructively. The representative for School Mediation sees a connection between conflicts and bullying as bullying can be said to be rooted in unresolved conflicts. Bullying can be prevented by acquiring the constructive approach to resolving conflicts that School Mediation provides.

One or more adults at a school are trained as mediation coordinators. The coordinator's role is to appoint and train pupil mediators, receive reports of mediation cases, decide if the case is suitable for mediation and select the pupils who should act as mediators. Coordinators should also provide support for the pupil mediators, and act as mediators themselves in conflicts that are considered too difficult for pupil mediators to handle. The role of the mediation coordinator also involves updating staff, pupils and parents about how the school is working with the programme. Pupils who are interested in being a pupil mediator apply for the task.

The mediation coordinator interviews those who are interested. It is recommended that a representative of school management and an experienced pupil mediator take part in these interviews. Pupils selected to be mediators should be representative of the pupils in the school. Pupils who are appointed as pupil mediators receive mediator training. They are then available when conflicts arise that are appropriate for pupil mediation.

When a conflict is reported for mediation, the coordinator contacts those involved to offer mediation. Participation in mediation is voluntary. If the parties are interested and the conflict is considered appropriate for pupil mediation, two mediators are appointed. In the mediation interview, the two pupil mediators should act impartially and lead the interview in such a way that the parties concerned find solutions to the problem or problems that caused the conflict. The aim is for the parties in the conflict to find solutions that both sides can accept, with nobody feeling like a loser. It is a win-win strategy. The interview should be based on facts and the feelings of those involved.

Certain criteria are important if implementation of School mediation is to be successful. First and foremost, it is crucial that adults understand that they are responsible for the school's measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment and that they are ultimately responsible for finding solutions in conflict situations. One criterion that is more directly related to the programme is that staff, pupils and parents should be informed about the school's work with School Mediation. Another criterion for success is that there are real enthusiasts who can drive the programme forward and that the mediation coordinators have chosen this task out of personal interest. It is important that the process develops in tandem with the knowledge and understanding of pupils and staff. The school's pupil mediators require continuous training and should hold regular meetings.

Table 5.7 shows our assessment of School Mediation in relation to the 18 measures that are the focus of special attention in this evaluation (see, e.g., Sec-

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<sup>39</sup> See also *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)* (National Agency for Education, 2009d).

tion 7.3). The assessment is based on the importance the research team has assigned to each of the measures and on an interview with a programme representative of School Comet. The assessment indicates that the method includes 9 of the 18 measures.<sup>40</sup>

**Table 5.7** Measures in School Mediation

Measures in School Mediation	Comments of programme representative
Follow-up/evaluation	Mediation meetings followed up + external evaluation material
Pupils as players	Mediator. Provide information about their role
Pupils' active participation in prevention	Conflicts are stopped through mediation as a means of preventing possible bullying
Classroom/school rules	A theme day where rules are discussed
Training material	
Staff training	
Break monitoring system	Recommendation that pupil mediators should be active during breaks
Case documentation	Agreement after mediation
Mediation	

Just as in several other assessments of measures, the programme representative wishes to include the measures *relationship-enhancing measures teacher-pupil* and *pupil-pupil* in the programme. The programme representative believes that elements such as theme days with collaborative exercises promote positive interaction between pupils and between pupils and teachers. The research team instead highlights the ways schools organise themselves to create greater closeness between individuals (see Attachment 4 in the Methodology appendix). School Mediation is a programme that teaches a model for conflict resolution, but the programme representative maintains that the programme also helps prevent bullying and degrading treatment, since such cases often start off as a conflict. The programme representative claims that the programme also includes cooperative teams. If mediation is regarded as part of remedial measures for dealing with bullying and degrading treatment, then the adult team with responsibility for initiating and supporting mediation efforts becomes a cooperative team. When the programme representatives describe mediation as a measure that can prevent bullying and degrading treatment, the adult team does not become a cooperative team in the way the research team uses the term.

### Schools working with School Mediation

In a teacher survey to all the schools in the study, 7 of the 39 schools indicated that they were working with School Mediation. When enrolling in the study, four of these schools designated themselves 'School Mediation schools'. The programme is established at two schools, and at two others it has recently been established. One of the four schools has been visited twice.

It is common for schools to combine School Mediation with a remedial programme such as the Farsta Method. One of the schools reports using a number

40 The basis for this assessment is the programme description in *På tal of mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)* (National Agency for Education, 2009d), the interview with a representative of School Mediation and the importance the research team has assigned the 18 measures. See Attachment 4 in *Evaluation of anti-bullying methods. Methodology appendix and attachments to report 353* (National Agency for Education, 2011), pdf.

of additional programmes: SET, School Comet and Second Step. One school combines School Mediation with the Olweus Programme.

### **Experiences of working with the School Mediation programme**

#### *Initiation, reasons and implementation*

At all four schools, the initiative to introduce School Mediation came from municipal level or the school management. In the case of two of the schools, a decision had been made at municipal level that all schools in the municipality were to take part in the training, *“The schools got orders so to speak from above ... it isn't something that has emerged at the school.”* [pupil welfare team 32] The school management at two of the schools decided that the schools in an entire school management district should introduce the programme *“because we wanted the whole training programme, we thought it would be more effective ... and you get greater unity than by sending somebody here and somebody there”* [school management].

The two schools where the programme is established were part of a major school mediation initiative that was launched throughout the county in the early 2000s. These schools implemented the programme by sending interested teachers on a six-day training course. Teachers at one of these schools then gave 20 pupils about 15 training lessons in the programme. The school launched a school mediation programme. Several of the pupils became such skilled mediators that they were used as mediators in a few cases, even after they had left the school and started at upper secondary school. After the initial pupil training was completed, attempts were made to train additional pupils. During the 2006–2007 school year, a new initiative was taken for interested pupils in years 7 and 8. The method was presented as role play and pupils had to enter their names for training. However, this time the pupils did not take things as seriously. Several of those who enrolled had a tendency to become involved in conflicts. The school's School Mediation initiative ceased almost completely after that.

At the other school where the programme was established, nobody worked systematically with the programme after training. School Mediation failed because there were discussions about the amount of time staff were expected to spend on the mediation process. *“The head teachers felt that this should be done during normal working hours together with everything else you have to do, and in the end it all gets out of hand, then you start reacting, and there were discussions and then suddenly there wasn't that much interest.”* [pupil welfare team] After discussions about time, the process ran out of steam. During the 2006–2007 school year, one of the teachers at the school took the initiative to relaunch the programme by training pupils in year 6 to use School Mediation. At the same time, the school registered to take part in the evaluation of programmes on combating bullying and degrading treatment.

The two schools that designated themselves as recently established programme schools began the process by training a group of interested teachers. They in turn trained a group of pupils. Pupils at one of the schools gave the training a relatively cool reception. They said that the programme would not be used much at the school, *“it would be used more for individuals, in case there should be something like ... looking for a job or if you were going to look for an argument with your mate or something like that.”* [pupil]

The other school where the programme had recently been established gave the programme far greater importance. The implementation of the programme

does not differ in any significant way from the other three schools. The programme was introduced to the pupils on a theme day to combat bullying and degrading treatment. Pupils in years 5 and 6 were allowed to apply or put forward the name of a peer they considered suitable for the task. Twenty-four pupils received training on about six occasions, each lasting two hours. The most obvious difference between this school and the other three schools that designated themselves as School Mediation schools was that this school set up procedures for working with the programme immediately. These procedures included how to introduce the programme to pupils at the beginning of each new school year and how to organise mediation in specific cases.

Implementation got off the ground at three of the four schools when, after they had completed training, staff started a training course for pupil mediators. The majority had a positive attitude to the programme, *“Mostly, I think it has turned out well, things have improved afterwards, they don’t have these huge conflicts, they are not best mates, they aren’t, but they don’t have those awful conflicts they once had, they have been made to look each other in the eye and talk to each other, and I think that just that bit is so terribly important.”* [management group]

Despite this, at the time of the interview, only one of the schools where the programme had recently been established can be said to have had a group of pupils who functioned as school mediators. This is interesting as all the schools applied to take part in the evaluation as School Mediation schools. Staff descriptions of their experiences of working with the programme therefore revolved around the fact that they failed to get the programme to work as intended.

#### *Anchoring the programme*

There were staff at all four schools who spoke warmly of the programme and its potential for providing pupils with greater understanding of how to deal with conflicts constructively. However, three of the four schools had a common problem in that they failed to stick to the fundamental ideas of the programme during the implementation.

Although at the time of the interview, only one school had a group of pupils that functioned as school mediators, the idea was still alive at the three other schools. Staff at two of these schools were working on a way to use mediation that did not correspond completely to the intentions underlying the programme. These enthusiasts say that the strategy for conflict resolution that underpins School Mediation is outstanding so they want to provide all pupils with the opportunity to acquire it. For this reason a teacher with special skills at one of the schools took on the task of training all pupils in year 6 to use School Mediation. At the other school, there were plans to provide introductory training in mediation for all pupils in year 7. The basic intention was not to train a group of pupils as school mediators at the schools, instead the teachers wanted to teach all the pupils how they could deal with conflicts constructively. The teachers wanted *“everybody to think along these lines.”* [pupil welfare team]

There are many reasons three of the four schools failed to develop a school mediation programme that corresponded to the intentions of the programme. The coordinator function is crucial, and the person in this role is expected to organise training of pupils, allocation of mediation cases and information for parents, and ensure that the intentions underlying the programme are maintained, even among pupils and staff not directly involved in school mediation.

Staff who underwent training in School Mediation did so out of personal interest. Those who subsequently took on the task of coordinator were regarded as real enthusiasts. Despite this, three of the four schools did not succeed in maintaining the programme's original idea. The main reason the schools gave for this was the lack of time, *"Time, time, time ... That is the only thing because there is interest, really genuine interest in this question of mediation, and that's not because of some enthusiast, there is genuine interest in seeing that this is a fantastic model, and we see when we use it that it is effective, and we feel that I think ... I know that several others think it is a good model, to use yourself, it has added an extra dimension to our work, in all the different discussions, both with parents and with colleagues."* [pupil welfare team]

School staff say that a fundamental requirement for conducting good mediation is that there are one or two teachers who have time to work with mediation. Whoever takes on the task of running the school's mediation programme must also be able to use this time with some degree of flexibility. Teachers who have undergone training have not been given opportunities to combine the task of coordinator with teaching.

Members of the pupil welfare team have become involved in the process at the schools in which the programme has recently been established. The reason for this is that they have a special interest in School Mediation and can also use their working hours more flexibly than teachers.

#### *Task of pupil mediators*

Active pupil mediators at the school where the programme was recently established enjoy high status amongst their peers. Staff at the school see this as the key criterion to successful mediation. The three remaining schools have not really been successful in creating or maintaining the same attitudes amongst pupils. Pupils in conflict will often be reluctant to take part in mediation because they do not feel secure with each other. There are many reasons the schools have failed to give school mediators this status.

Head teachers, teachers, pupil welfare staff, pupils and parents need to understand the programme if a group of pupil mediators capable of handling these tasks is to be set up. Statements from teachers, pupils and parents at the schools surveyed demonstrate a lack of understanding of the programme, and the absence of a school culture creating favourable conditions for pupils to mediate between members of their own group. A normative system and a culture based on a positive attitude to pupils and peers must exist or be created when the programme is introduced. The programme does not make all this happen automatically, but some teachers still believe that there would be greater impact if all teachers at the school participated in programme training. A statement that shows a lack of understanding of the pupils' pivotal role in the programme comes in the matter-of-fact attitude of many of the pupils who enrolled for training, *"they, yeah most of them just say, we got off school."* [pupil]

It is difficult to assemble a suitable group of pupil mediators. However, many of the pupils who enrolled say that it is really difficult to know who is suitable. One school gives an example of a pupil who was considered unsuitable but who, on being entrusted with the task, rose to the occasion. Other pupils have been suitable, in the adults' view, but have not enjoyed sufficient status amongst their peers. Pupils say that those who spread rumour and gossip are definitely unsuitable as mediators.

Parents say that the confidentiality imposed on mediators can be too great a responsibility for the pupils to bear. Parents have also expressed criticism of the excessive responsibility that is placed on pupil mediators. A group of parents question the fact that pupils are asked to act as 'mini-teachers' when they try to help their peers resolve their conflicts.

The difficulties associated with the task of a pupil mediator are one reason only one school had an active pupil mediation team at the time of the interview. Some conflicts at two of the other schools went to mediation, but this was then carried out by an adult school mediator. At the school where mediation is led by pupils, there are also adult mediators on hand to provide support.

### **Concluding comments on School Mediation**

These reflections are made in relation to the intentions underlying School Mediation, the respondents' experiences of working with the method, and the questions posed during the National Agency for School Improvement's initial planning of the evaluation.

Teachers and other staff are positive about the underlying intention of the programme to teach pupils a strategy for conflict management. Despite this, only one of the four schools that enrolled to take part as School Mediation schools worked actively with pupils as mediators. Two of the remaining schools occasionally used elements of the mediation programme under the supervision of an adult who had undergone training. One reason respondents experienced difficulties is that schools had not made sufficient time and resources available for adult teams to run mediation programmes. Another reason appears to be the difficulties involved in appointing suitable pupils as pupil mediators.

None of the respondents found the programme complicated or difficult to implement correctly. The programme is more difficult to implement than programme representatives and school staff perhaps realise, and this may explain why implementation has failed in some cases. Simply assigning pupils a task that directly involves them in advising their peers will not create a positive atmosphere between pupils (and teachers) at school. If this is to work, such an atmosphere must already exist when the programme is implemented, or there should at least be an awareness that the school must strive to establish such an atmosphere. Having peers as mediators requires trust in peer relationships.

The programme was inadequately anchored at all four schools. It is really only the pupil and adult mediators who are directly involved and sufficiently conversant with the programme. The programme's legitimacy at three of the four schools was therefore open to question. This is partly because the programme does not take sufficient account of the varying conditions at schools for developing the mediation process. Even if training has provided a clear and concrete picture of the process, this shortcoming can create some uncertainty when the programme is implemented at schools where conditions are unfavourable.

The curriculum clearly states that the school should strive to gradually give pupils greater responsibility and influence over their working environment. Whether pupils are capable of taking responsibility depends on their knowledge and maturity. The parents' view that too great a responsibility was being placed on pupil mediators should therefore be heeded. The programme emphasises the importance of the voluntary nature of the process, with regard to taking on the task as school mediator and participating in mediation. Mediation should be

carried out with the help of adults. Adults have the primary responsibility for ensuring that no participant is subjected to degrading treatment.

## Second Step

In a categorisation of programmes for combating bullying and degrading treatment (National Agency for School Improvement, 2003, 2007a), Second Step is placed in the category of programmes that reinforce foundation values. It can be viewed as a programme for preventing bullying and degrading treatment.

### Intentions underlying the programme<sup>41</sup>

The aim of the programme is to train pupils in essential social skills and increase their emotional competence. The programme is also intended to prevent aggressive behaviour and provide a basis for positive social interaction. Prevention should start early to have the greatest possible effect. Second Step's goal is for children or pupils to be better able to understand and get along with others, to solve social problems, use social skills in different contexts and to manage anger.

Another aim of the programme is to help children or pupils to be better and more independent problem solvers, which in turn strengthens their self-esteem and enhances their readiness to receive knowledge. The cornerstone of the programme may be regarded as the importance of acquiring a language to express feelings in words.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is a fundamental starting point for Second Step. Learning consists of three parts:

- *Empathy*: the aim is to strengthen children's or pupils' ability to recognise the feelings of others, to take on others' perspectives and to respond empathically to other people.
- *Impulse control and problem solving*: the aim is to limit excessive impulse-driven and aggressive behaviour in children or pupils. This is achieved by the children or pupils learning problem-solving strategies and practising social skills.
- *Self-control*: the aim is for children or pupils to gain control over their anger, learn to recognise signs of anger and be aware of what can trigger anger. The aim is also to learn methods for managing anger.

Under teacher guidance, pupils discuss a situation depicted on a poster for half an hour a week. The programme material covers six basic emotions: joy, sadness, anger, surprise, fear and dislike. Different facial expressions are described that match the feelings depicted in the pictures. Pupils are encouraged to empathise with the situations depicted in the pictures and to come up with suggestions for handling and relating to them. Pupils may also have to evaluate various problem-solving suggestions and try to find suitable solutions that they then put into practice. Skills and problem-solving strategies are tested in role play with the teacher. The guidance booklet has a detailed description of strategy and implementation. The structure of the lessons is systematic, so it is easy to follow them after a day's training.

Table 5.8 shows our assessment of Second Step in relation to the 18 measures that are the focus of special attention in this evaluation (see, e.g., Section 7.3).

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41 See also *På tal om mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)* (National Agency for Education, 2009d).

The assessment is based on the importance the research team has assigned to each of the measures and on an interview with a programme representative of School Comet. The assessment indicates that the method includes 6 of the 18 measures.<sup>42</sup>

**Table 5.8** Measures in Second Step

Measures in Second Step	Comments of programme representative
Follow-up/evaluation	Emphasised, encouraged. Schools receive help to develop follow-up tools
Special lessons	
Classroom rules/school rules	Joint agreements teachers-pupils
Training material	
Staff training	
Parent information/training	

Our assessment of the measures differs from that of the programme representative on three points. The programme representative sees *relationship-enhancing measures teacher-pupil* as a quality that is developed through the programme as it develops a new approach for building positive relationships. *Relationship-enhancing measures pupil-pupil* is also in the programme according to the author, since the programme's aim is to create social acceptance of diversity. The research team adopts an organisational perspective on these two measures.

The programme representative also considers the measure pupils as players part of the programme as pupils practise their social skills. According to the research team's assessment, the meaning of the measure pupils as players is that pupils play a role in prevention and help staff by being their 'eyes and ears' and informing them about what is going on among pupils. The representative for Second Step points out that the programme does not specifically target bullying and degrading treatment. The programme can therefore only be assumed to have an indirect impact on bullying and degrading treatment as it trains social skills. In the training of social skills, pupils learn how to respond to different kinds of behaviour, for example, how to be admitted to a game.

### Schools working with Second Step

In a teacher survey of all the schools in the study, 6 of the 39 schools indicated that they were working with Second Step. When enrolling in the study, four of these schools designated themselves as Second Step schools. Of these, only one can be regarded as a school in which the programme had recently been established. Two of the four schools have been visited twice (schools 12 and 24).

According to the teacher survey, one of these schools works solely with Second Step, but in the interviews it emerged that even this school was using other measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment. One school combined Second Step with the Farsta Method. Two schools said they combined Second Step and SET. The younger pupils at these schools use Second Step material in their life skill lessons, whilst the older ones work with SET.

42 The basis of this assessment is the programme description in *På tal of mobbning – och det som görs (Speaking of bullying – and what is being done)* (National Agency for Education, 2009d), the interview with a representative of Second Step and the importance the research team has assigned the 18 measures. See Attachment 4 in *Evaluation of anti-bullying methods. Methodology appendix and attachments to report 353* (National Agency for Education, 2011), pdf.

## Experiences of using Second Step

### *Initiation, reasons and implementation*

Life skill lessons were introduced at two of the schools. Teachers and school management felt that a common approach had to be adopted in these lessons, and they looked around for a programme to help with this. The choice fell on Second Step which was seen as a programme aimed at helping pupils “*develop and learn about themselves and enhance their social skills*” [head teacher]. One of these schools already had experience of using Second Step. Teachers in years F–5 worked with the programme, and it was considered an advantage that pupils in years 6–9 already had experience of using the method. The head teacher at the other school chose the programme.

Staff at the school where the programme had recently been established wanted to work systematically and develop a common approach to the pupils. A teacher describes how Second Step was chosen, “*I had read in the paper about Second Step, that it was excellent material, and I thought yeah this might be something, so I raised it in the group ... we were discussing conflicts and how we could improve the atmosphere between pupils ... so I presented it and then we talked a bit about what to do, and then there were some who said there was something else too ... but we thought, no we’ll take Second Step, and so they ordered the material, and then a group came from Second Step to introduce the material ... and we had to start trying to talk about this, and all the lessons and everything were on the back of the cards. So we thought that if you are unsure, this is very useful. So we decided we would choose it.*” [teacher]

At the fourth school, the initiative to introduce Second Step was the result of a political decision. A survey of pupils in the municipality was carried out that showed that violence and drug use were common. The municipality then decided to make resources available for working with ethical issues. Officials and politicians were instructed to examine different programmes. By introducing Second Step at all schools from year F–9, politicians and officials wanted to create a common approach to working with ethical issues, “*It came like from above, and then it was just a question of getting on with it.*” [teacher]

At yet another of the schools, political decisions have had a decisive impact on the way the school works with the programme. This school introduced Second Step on its own initiative for years F–6. A decision was then taken at municipal level that all school staff from year F–9 should be trained to use SET. This led to the teachers at this school using both SET and Second Step to provide content for life skill lessons. Teachers at all four schools have undergone a one-day training course in using the programme. Other staff at two of the schools also participated in the training. Participants at three of the schools are positive to the training and felt that they had acquired an understanding of the programme and how to use the material. Teachers at the fourth school are critical to the training. Teachers say that the people who introduced the programme had not actually worked with the material themselves but had been appointed to sell it, “*and that didn’t make it easier to get it working.*” [head teacher] “*It was just a case of here’s the box.*” [teacher] Staff in the pupil welfare team believe that many teachers thought “*Oh God! Not this too!*” [pupil welfare team] After the inadequate training, teachers asked for help and guidance on working with the programme. The school management asked the mentors to help each other, but beyond that no effort was made to facilitate implementation.

There is always a risk that teachers will lose their enthusiasm for working with the programme. One of the schools in which the programme had been established had a long-term strategy for implementation and maintaining interest in the programme. They conducted an internal skills development day and some of the teachers who were still enthusiasts held workshops for their colleagues and talked about their work. Programme representatives carried out a supplementary training day, and the counsellor initiated an improvement group in which representatives from all teacher teams meet regularly to share tips and ideas. Work with Second Step is also monitored in the annual evaluation of the school's action plan for combating degrading treatment. In the evaluation, teachers must answer questions about how they work with the programme. At two of the other schools, there were fewer measures in place for improving opportunities for anchoring the programme.

Several teacher teams at one school appointed a Second Step mentor. The mentor compiles material for his colleagues ahead of every lesson. Teachers do not have time to discuss the format of the lessons since time for work in teacher teams is limited, but the teachers interviewed were satisfied with this way of organising the planning.

Work with Second Step is timetabled to take place in the mentor period or life skill lessons. One head teacher believes that the strength of the programme is that it provides a framework for working with life skills, which means that everybody at the school can feel at ease and secure with the task. Some teachers believe that work with Second Step has had an effect since they feel that "teasing" in the classroom has subsided and that the programme has developed pupils' language. None of the schools has carried out evaluations corroborating this. The problems encountered by the respondents when working with Second Step are presented below, under three headings: anchoring the programme, contents of the process and special lessons.

#### *Anchoring the programme*

All programmes that require the creation of a whole school approach to combating bullying and degrading treatment encounter difficulties becoming anchored at a school. At one of the Second Step schools, this was particularly obvious. Partly in connection with the introduction of the programme as a result of a political decision, the head teacher said, "*It is much more difficult to anchor it among teachers and staff. Teachers and staff have a lot of their own opinions and thoughts, and when it does not evolve from the school's own activities, it's hard to get this anchored, and there are still some who are positive and some who are negative.*" [head teacher]

Programme training did not help to inspire teachers and, according to the head teachers, several teachers have also declared themselves incompetent as regards working with Second Step, "*that is probably the most obvious opposition we have seen. But I have no training in this, I have not been trained in this. I do not know what to do.*" [head teacher] Teachers describe how they were urged to "*take their card and then do as it says, and that is not how relationships between people are built up or changed for the better.*" [teacher] Teachers say that the work must be developed on the basis of the teachers' own interests and knowledge. The pupil welfare team has discussed going in and helping teachers work with Second Step, but they believe that it is not possible because "*it is a programme where you*

*should be present at all stages, and we cannot cover all classes.*” [pupil welfare team] The team has thus planned and conducted its own initiative for pupils in year 7 to improve the working climate among pupils at the school. The teachers and school management feel this is a positive step, but the chances are that teachers will be less likely to work with Second Step during the time set aside for it.

On the other hand, teachers at another school feel that training in Second Step has been both positive and necessary, *“It was really great I thought, since we were going to work with it, and you got an insight into the material’s structure and what it was going to be like [inaudible]. Otherwise I would not have dared to start with it, well I would have dared, but I felt much more confident. So the training was great.”* [teacher]

All four schools timetabled one lesson a week to improve the pupils’ social skills, mainly using Second Step. Two schools placed the lesson in the mentor period, which meant that work with Second Step competed with class councils and class issues of a practical nature. Pupils say that the mentor period is used to check the register and to discuss shared class activities, *“... sometimes it takes only ten minutes then we can go, don’t have a clue why.”* [pupil] Teachers say that they take the liberty of using the mentor period set aside for working with Second Step in different ways, as the school management assumes they are working with Second Step. The time set aside for working with Second Step should also be used for class councils. Teachers highlight this as one of several reasons why they work so little with Second Step, *“The class council is intended to teach the pupils to work according to democratic principles ... and that they should... plan their class councils ... and then perhaps you shouldn’t become fixated on a ready-made script, if you can call it ready-made, every time because then the pupils won’t have a chance to do this, to learn how to lead a meeting.”* [teacher]

#### *Content of the process*

Teachers have different opinions about working with the manual. Recreation instructors at one school were the driving force in the process in life skill lessons. The head teacher at the school thinks that it is essential that teachers themselves do this work. By following the detailed instructions in the Second Step manual, the teachers have been able to take over responsibility, and the recreation instructors have been able to function as coaches instead.

Some teachers say that it is an advantage that pupils do not use Second Step to discuss their own conflicts but instead learn conflict management by examining situations from the outside. Teachers think that pupils also develop their vocabulary by putting words to the situations depicted in the material. Pupils learn to express feelings in words and to see several possible interpretations. Other teachers have the opposite opinion. They believe that value exercises and discussions about ethical issues should be based on something real that has happened to the pupils. A teacher group also says that the picture-based approach in the Second Step material runs the risk of becoming monotonous and boring in the long run. Teachers say that there are situations and pupil groups in which a certain type of exercise does not work. They point out that there are differences in pupils’ prior knowledge but when Second Step is applied, it is assumed that all pupils have the same level of knowledge, which is felt to be somewhat problematic. There is a risk that the manual will dictate work in life skill lessons and that no room will be left for the professional considerations that teachers

otherwise try to incorporate when planning their teaching. Many teachers have the impression that it is essential to follow the programme manual and believe they have been left to read up on the material themselves. There are also teachers who emphasise the importance of not following the manual slavishly however.

The details in the manual may also mislead teachers into believing that they do not have to do any preparation for their lessons. One teacher says that the sessions need to be prepared in a different way to other lessons because the subjects that are taken up may be sensitive. A readiness to deal with reactions from pupils is required. The fact that virtually all pupils feel that the best way to react if they are hit is to hit back becomes a problem when the idea is to do the opposite through discussion.

A teacher said she had been forced to remove exercises as they were difficult to implement with the whole class. She also found that a number of exercises caused pupils to get angry with each other, *“I think it was a bit heavy, it didn’t make the climate better straightaway after the first year, and it led to several conflicts which I had to resolve later instead.”* [teacher]

The Second Step material exists in an adapted form for different ages but teachers were still not really satisfied with how it works. In schools in which the majority of teachers actively worked with the programme, criticism was directed at the tasks in the manual. Teachers at an F–6 school said that the tasks worked well in year F–4 but that pupils in years 5–6 found them too childish. Pupils in year 6, in particular, found themselves in a no-man’s land as the material for F–6 was too childish for them, and at the same time they did not have sufficient maturity for material intended for years 7–9, *“No it’s difficult, with younger teenagers, because they have their defence systems operating in many of these kinds of activities. They think it’s ridiculous and they don’t want to ... let themselves go, and open up. That’s the way it is. And this means you have to be a bit smart when approaching them with questions like these. So they understand that there is something that means something. But then standing and carrying on with a load of paper and drawing circles ...”* [teacher]

One school solved the problem by allowing the teachers to decide whether they wished to use Second Step in lessons with years 5 and 6. Another school solved the problem by purchasing training material from SET for the older pupils. Second Step is picture-based material and head teachers believe that it is suitable for younger pupils while SET is more suitable for older ones. Pupils also say that some exercises in Second Step feel childish. There are also exercises, such as the exercise with a secret friend, that are felt to be counterproductive, *“It feels a bit odd if you never talk to that person then it feels ... more like you are mean in that way.”* [pupil]

A majority of the pupils at one school came from an immigrant background. Teachers at this school say that working with the pictures in the material may present problems, as a large proportion pictured blonde children. The pupils found it difficult to identify with the children in the pictures. There is a risk that they will not be as affected by them.

Life skill lessons based on Second Step vary in popularity among pupils at the four schools. Teachers think that the fun games that occur now and then are the most appreciated. Many of the pupils were convinced that they had learned something from this process, but whether it also meant that they had become

better friends was less clear. Other pupils were dubious about the degree of artificiality in the programme content, *“so, when you are at lessons talking about it, then straightaway when you get out into the corridor, that’s what it is like. You don’t bother with it.”* [pupils] Sometimes pupils felt that the content was unrealistic.

### *Special lessons*

Views on whether life skills should be taught in special lessons varied amongst teachers. Several teachers expressed scepticism because they thought it took too much time from regular teaching. Some of these teachers felt that they were working with life skills every day as they were constantly monitoring what was happening during breaks. They doubt they need something more. Other teachers appreciated the life skill lessons as they provided a clearer structure for their work.

Teachers say that Second Step helps children develop a sense of right and wrong. Many teachers pointed out that it does not automatically mean that pupils will manage to act on this in daily activities. There is a difference between being able to talk about what is right and wrong, and behaving correctly in real-life situations. Several teachers and head teachers highlighted this difference and found it difficult to see the effects of working with the programme, *“the kids still fight; there are problems in the classes.”* [head teacher] Other school staff said they saw some results from the work. In classes in which teachers had put great effort into the lessons using Second Step, they felt they could see that there was greater order and that attitudes between pupils had improved. Teachers also witnessed pupils applying skills in conflict resolution when fights broke out in the school playground.

Several pupils also described how many pupils did not take the life skill lessons seriously. Instead they drew or threw paper at each other. *“They don’t listen, they say that they understand, but then they go ahead and do it anyway.”* [pupils] One pupil thought they acted childishly.

### **Concluding comments on Second Step**

These reflections are made in relation to the intentions underlying Second Step, the respondents’ experiences of working with the method and the questions posed during the National Agency for School Improvement’s initial planning of the evaluation.

Second Step aims to improve pupils’ social skills and self-esteem by helping them acquire a language that expresses feelings and opinions constructively. This may also impact indirectly on the frequency of bullying and degrading treatment. However, schools and individual teachers employed different approaches to the programme. In the interface between the programme and established school practice, a new meaning emerges that is based on the conditions prevailing at the individual school. The reasons for this may lie in the school organisation, teachers’ attitudes and skills, and the attitudes of pupils.

Once Second Step is integrated into a school’s activities, the process requires no additional resources other than time. With good introductory training, staff find the programme manual simple and easy to understand. Feedback from the four schools also shows the value of introducing programmes with a relatively clear manual convincingly, clearly and positively to ensure that teachers find the programme easy to understand and implement. The aim of the programme

reflects the school's mandate to promote understanding of fellow human beings. If teachers fail to create a positive working atmosphere during the lessons when working with the exercises, however, the programme may create uncertainty in both teachers and pupils.

At all four schools, one of the reasons for introducing the programme had been to establish a common approach to the creation of a safe and positive work environment in the whole school or municipality. All the programmes that were introduced with this intention had difficulty establishing their credentials. Second Step was no exception. If attempts to create a whole school approach are successful, the programme may also be able to contribute to school improvement in other ways.

### 5.3 Concluding reflections

The teachers were generally very positive about the programmes with which they worked, provided they could use them flexibly. Teaching is a complex task with a long list of requirements. Measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment affect, and are affected by, all aspects of this task. Placing parts of this process within a programme may provide security through the creation of shared approaches and methods. In many cases, negative experiences of a programme by staff and pupils do not appear to be due to the programme itself. The same programme is perceived in different ways by different schools and by different groups in one and the same school. In these concluding reflections, the research team has chosen to highlight different perspectives that school staff and pupils experienced from working with the programmes included in the study.

#### **The programme process from a school improvement perspective**

Studies of school measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment often demonstrate that it is essential for prevention, detection and remedial measures to impact all school activities and involve all school staff (see, for example, Nordahl, 2006; Rigby, 2001, 2002; Thompson, Arora and Sharp, 2002). Issues related to the schools' ability to create a culture with optimal conditions for inspiring and involving staff and pupils are of paramount importance to research into school improvement. Thompson et al. (2002) highlight the connection between the development of measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment, and change processes in schools, *"a project will, in effect, be a process of general change in the school as a whole and will need its leaders and the school managers to be aware of the nature of change processes in school"* (ibid, p. 180).

Despite this connection between the survey findings of anti-bullying research and issues that engage school improvement researchers, bullying surveys that pose questions about school improvement and school improvement research related to schools' measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment are relatively rare. Ahlström (2009) makes this connection when he asks what it is in the structure, culture and leadership of schools that determines how schools succeed in restricting bullying. The study points to three factors that have a positive impact on pupils' perceptions of the frequency of bullying at a school: opportunities for pupils and staff to exert formal and informal influence, a collaborative school culture, and school leadership that inspires improvement and, at the same time, takes ethical responsibility. A Norwegian study demonstrates the

importance of schools' readiness to introduce a programme. Otherwise, there is a risk that work will be turned out to be a short-run project that disappears once the initial enthusiasm has waned (Vere Midthassel and Ertesvåg, 2008). The study shows that schools that were well acquainted with anti-bullying measures and had a stable leadership were most successful in programme implementation. Ertesvåg et al. (2009), who studied the ability of schools to develop a programme process after the initial implementation phase, observed that *"The one school that successfully continued the work after the programme was characterised by strong and supportive leadership, leadership at many levels, they made plans and saw them through, renewed activities and new members of staff were introduced to and included in the work according to the programme principles"* (Ertesvåg, Roland, Sørensen Vaaland, Størksen and Veland, 2009, p. 1).

In the planning and implementation of the qualitative part of the evaluation, the research team had the intention not only of charting the schools' implementation of programmes for combating bullying and degrading treatment but also to create a picture of schools' capacity for improvement (see, e.g., Blossing, 2004a; Blossing, Hagen, Nyen and Söderström, 2010; Ekholm, 1989; Ekholm and Miles, 1985; Fullan, 2001). The findings from the team's interview survey show that the way a programme is initiated and implemented, and the schools' ability to work with changes plays a vital role in how head teachers, teachers, pupil welfare staff and pupils experience working with the programme.

The majority of the schools in our study report that the initiative for introducing the programme came from school management and/or municipal level (20 out of 31). At the schools that designated themselves Olweus schools, three out of four say that the initiative came from municipal level. The initiative to introduce SET and School Mediation had been taken at both municipal and school management level (8 out of 8). Lions Quest was primarily initiated by the school management at each school (4 out of 4). All the schools working with Friends said the initiative came from one or more members of staff (4 out of 4). Given the limited number of schools in the survey, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about how the different programmes were generally initiated. The research team is able to demonstrate that few schools base the introduction of a programme on prior knowledge and experience built up through a systematic follow-up and evaluation of the school's measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment. Programmes are chosen for a number of reasons. A member of staff may hear about a programme or the management at a school or municipal level may wish to adopt a common approach in the process in a school or the whole municipality, or perhaps a tempting offer is received about a good programme at a reasonable price. Purchasing a programme may also be an attempt by school management to raise staff commitment to combating bullying and degrading treatment.

The decision to introduce a programme is often inadequately anchored among school staff and not at all among pupils. School staff at many schools see the programme as yet another in a series of projects that in the initial stages requires commitment but quickly fades away in favour of something new, provided nobody rocks the boat. Teachers' fatigue when faced with yet another project paints a vivid picture of what is sometimes referred to as the 'kangaroo school' (Salo, 2005; Tiller, 2000), a school which jumps from one guru to another, from one value to another, pursued under strong external pressure. There

is a tendency for foundation values at such a school to be confused and have a weak identity. Change requires anchoring and takes time.

The majority of schools in our survey also show shortcomings in the implementation of the programmes. Some of these shortcomings can be attributed to programme training. Several programmes offer a brief introduction that does not provide school staff and pupils with a thorough understanding of the programme's aims, theoretical assumptions, form and content, or a description of the skills required to work with the programme. Of the programmes studied, only the Olweus Programme includes a long-term strategy for the implementation process. It is also up to the schools themselves that purchase a programme to create favourable conditions for implementation. Many schools lack the ability to work systematically with a programme or do not use this ability when a programme is to be introduced. When a programme is introduced and staff are trained, it is common for the school to lack plans on how work with the programme is to be maintained and developed. It is also common practice for the programme's role in the whole school approach to combating bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination not to be clear. In our material there are also examples where the opposite is true, namely schools have a plan and organisation of how its staff should intensify and develop the programme process, involve new staff and new pupils, and the problems the programme is intended to solve.

Our interviews show that inadequate anchoring of the decision to introduce a programme or in the implementation process easily leads to resistance amongst the staff. This has obvious negative consequences, as the survey shows that all programmes, with the possible exception of the Farsta Method, assume that the majority of school staff (teachers) actively contribute to the programme process. The degree of involvement required varies among the eight programmes. Some programmes (Olweus, SET, Second Step, School Comet, Lions Quest) demand a great deal of involvement from teachers. When working with these programmes, teachers are expected, for example, to conduct lessons aimed at developing pupils' social skills, implement sanction systems at individual and group level and/or change their approach to pupils and their behaviour. In other programmes (Friends and School Mediation), all teachers are expected to be involved in the selection of pupil representatives for tasks related to combating bullying and degrading treatment, and a small group is expected to be more closely involved in leading peer support activities and mediation initiatives.

Many programme authors do not seem familiar with how differently a programme can be interpreted and managed, and the programmes provide little scope for meeting the varying circumstances and needs of schools. Our study shows, for example, that even the Olweus Programme, which has a long-term strategy for implementation, is liable to fail if a school does not have the resources required to fully implement the programme.

A common perception among the teachers interviewed is that working with a programme is easy, especially if the programme is based on clear processes, but pupils' experiences of the way schools work with programmes demonstrate that this is an illusion. Poor knowledge of the programmes' intentions and the efforts required by staff may result in pupils feeling that a programme does more harm than good. Specific examples of programme features that, according to the pupils interviewed, may give rise to negative experiences are the way in which peer

supports or pupil mediators are selected, the content of programme sessions, and the approach taken when interviews are conducted with bullies.

### (Non-)awareness in programme selection

Once again, it is essential to point out that several programmes do not claim to contribute specifically to preventing or remedying bullying, but together they provide examples of the broad approach Swedish schools are taking to addressing the problem of bullying and degrading treatment. Programme selection is based on schools' descriptions of programmes that are generally used in initiatives to prevent, detect and remedy bullying, degrading treatment and discrimination. It is thus vital to study schools' work with the programmes in relation to the assumptions made about what they are expected to contribute to schools' anti-bullying measures. It is interesting to note that in our interviews, school staff rarely explain their choice (or rejection) of programmes on the basis of knowledge they have gained in the field of bullying research. This indicates a, in every case discursive,<sup>43</sup> non-awareness that the programmes or use of the programmes have a view of the causes of bullying that determines a programme's effectiveness.

Knowledge and readiness to use a variety of strategies are needed in schools' measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment. School staff need knowledge about different ways of looking at bullying and its causes and how these relate to the programmes' different approaches and to the measures created or selected by the school's own staff (see, e.g., National Agency for Education, 2009d).

The causes of bullying are complex and this is especially evident in bullying research in which the researchers' different perspectives on the problem give rise to a range of causal explanations. A gross oversimplification suggests that the causes of bullying could lie with the victim,<sup>44</sup> the oppressor,<sup>45</sup> in interpersonal relations<sup>46</sup> or in the school environment<sup>47</sup> (see also Eriksson et al., 2002; Granström, 2007). Each of the programmes included in this study could be placed in one or more of these explanatory categories. Even the programmes that do not claim to directly target bullying and degrading treatment, through the role assigned to them in schools' anti-bullying measures, can be expected to primarily have an impact on one or more of these four categories.

The non-awareness, found by the research team in a majority of the schools included in the study, of why a particular programme was selected can be attributed to the individual schools and the programmes and their representatives. Most programmes are vague about the assumptions underlying the programme's form and content.

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43 Begreppet diskursivt medvetande (The concept of discursive awareness); see Giddens (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. California: The University of California Press.

44 This can be linked to Konrad Lorenz's studies of animals' aggressive behaviour in groups (Lorenz, 1974) and Peter-Paul Heinemann's reference to Lorenz in relation to bullying of children and adolescents (Heinemann, 1972). Olweus also presents his own and others' research of the typical victim of bullying (Olweus, 1992).

45 Much of Olweus' research can be found in Olweus, 1992, 1996 and 1999. Further examples are given in *Skolan – en arena för mobbning (The school – an arena for bullying)* (Eriksson, Lindberg, Flygare and Daneback, 2002).

46 See, for example, Björk (1995, 2000), Bliding (2004), Hägglund (2007), Osbeck (2006) and Salmivalli (2001).

47 See, for example, Allen (2010), Colnerud (2004), and Colnerud and Thornberg (2003).

Non-awareness among school staff is also evident when it comes to assessing the impact of programmes on the prevention of bullying and degrading treatment. At several points in the interviews, staff said to the interview team that they hoped the selected programmes were having a positive impact on the preventive, detecting and remedial measures, although no evidence was obtained of this. In most programmes there is no requirement for follow-up. Of the eight programmes, only the Olweus Programme requires regular charting of the bullying situation in the school. The programme also provides practical assistance for doing this.

### Hidden programme effects<sup>48</sup>

To promote measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment, schools also have the task of formulating *“procedures and rules in their activities ... so as to minimise the risk of structures that contribute to discrimination developing”* (National Agency for Education, 2009a, p. 15). Despite this, the descriptions of measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment provided by school staff and pupils include several examples of how programme measures can lead to effects that risk being counter-productive and creating a discriminatory and negative school environment. The risks may be built into a programme or occur in the interface between the programme and school practice. This evaluation has revealed hidden programme effects in both staff and pupil descriptions of working with the eight different programmes. All the programmes in our study contain elements that may, in the interaction between a particular programme and established school practice, lead to pupils feeling vulnerable.

A programme's impact is determined to a great extent by the varying circumstances existing in schools. Studies of school bullying often emphasise that it is essential that there is a trusting atmosphere between pupils and teachers if a school is to succeed in restraining bullying and degrading treatment (see, e.g., Björk, 1995; Fors, 1995). In a school or class in which the relationship between teachers and pupils is based on openness and respect, it is easier to create fruitful and honest dialogue than in schools or classes where there is distrust. For example, this could mean that while the measure special lessons in the former case may provide the positive effects programme authors and schools strive for, in the latter case the lessons may contribute to pupils experiencing greater vulnerability. In a distrusting environment, it may be difficult for those pupils who are on the fringes of the peer group to disclose thoughts and views that differ from those advocated by pupils with higher status.

If bullying is viewed from a power perspective, it is also important to examine the way the school exercises power over pupils. There is a risk that the measures implemented to combat bullying and degrading treatment per se may subject pupils to degrading treatment. The power game that drives bullying and degrading treatment is based on manipulative factors in which the bullies attempt to create insecurity in the victim (Fors, 2007). To some extent, this description is similar to the element of surprise in the Farsta Method, which is intended to create uncertainty in the suspected bullies. According to Fors, the use of this strategy carries the risk of helping to legitimise degrading treatment as a means of combating bullying.

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48 This concept can be compared with the concept of 'the hidden curriculum' (Broady, 1981).

Skilful players in the bullying game immediately guess, of course, that they must submit to the threat in order to escape temporarily. The risk is that revenge will be taken on the victim, as it was the victim who reported the matter. The bullying is then carried out in a different arena (Fors, 2007, p. 34).

The interview held with the bullies can be seen as one in which the script is already written and pupils have been assigned the role of perpetrators from the outset. There appear to be differences in how the teachers in our study describe these interviews, which may mean that there are differences in their awareness of the risks involved in the interview. The interview's structure may itself constitute abuse and ultimately prove counter-productive. There are staff who claim to be both surprised and impressed by how bullying of a pupil can quickly be stopped through the interview technique. It is also obvious that the bullies must clearly understand that bullying is unacceptable, but if the manner of the reprimand makes them feel they are in the position of the accused without any possibility of a dialogue with the prosecutor, it can help the pupil to learn a new way of treating others, which is neither the intention of the school staff nor the programme. In the interviews, teachers and pupils also describe how the selection of peer supports became a demonstration of power as pupils were elected so they could be ridiculed and subjected to degrading treatment.

If bullying in schools is seen as an effect of the work by pupils on their relationships, of which inclusive and exclusive actions are core elements (Bliding, 2004), then it is vital to examine how schools use the programme as a resource. The intention underlying all the programmes is to work by different means for the inclusion of all pupils in a school-wide and classroom community. Our study, however, provides several examples of how programme elements are used as a resource for exclusion. One example is the value exercises in which pupils who cannot quickly decode the norms in a group can be put in a situation that contributes to their exclusion. Several pupils point out that in discussions about norms and values, it is easy to understand and adhere to the rules accepted by the school and the staff but that it is not self-evident they are the norms and values that are then rewarded in peer relationships outside class. It can be just as obvious in these lesson situations that pupils concur with the norms and values advocated by the most influential pupils in a group. Pupils' standpoints do not become more or less valid, but they need to be understood and interpreted using different kinds of logic. Putting it more directly, it might be argued that these lessons help develop a kind of double standard, in other words, an awareness that certain values and norms apply and are to be observed in one context, whilst different values and norms apply in another. The losers are the pupils who do not understand the situation and are thus constantly placed in a deviant and vulnerable position. This reasoning is reminiscent of Ola Sigurdsson's description of directions within ethics that accept a kind of double standard, which means *"that it may be useful for society if the masses believe that there are such things as rights, whilst an enlightened elite knows the true state of affairs, that these rights are in fact arbitrary and conventional values."* (Sigurdson, 1995, p. 8)

### **Pupils' roles**

The fact that adults in the school bear primary responsibility for the school's measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment is evident in the school's regulatory documents. The adults interviewed in our survey see this as

self-evident. At the same time, according to the school's regulatory documents it is part of the school's mandate to provide pupils with influence and responsibility for their working environment, and the form and content of the education. Pupils' lack of influence is a general problem (see, e.g., Forsberg, 2000; Soderstrom, 2006). The 2009 National Agency for Education's attitude study (National Agency for Education, 2010) shows that pupil influence increased from 1993 onwards. Despite this, more than half of the pupils still feel that they cannot play a part in influencing school rules or the content of teaching.

Our study shows that pupils' lack of formal influence also applies to the school's measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment. Students often have a perception of the extent of bullying and degrading treatment within their own class or year and can describe situations in which they themselves or their peers feel vulnerable, but they have little knowledge what the school is doing to address the problem. It is remarkable how unaware most of the interviewed pupils are of the school's anti-bullying measures. They seldom know the programme or programmes with which the school is working. Their views are not sought when the programme is purchased, nor when a school wishes to evaluate the effects of a programme measure. Awareness is greater among pupils who are directly involved as peer supports or mediators, but not even these pupils have any deeper understanding of their role in the school's measures as a whole. Pupils are 'targets' that are subjected to the school's measures, irrespective of whether they have a role in the process.

The programmes studied also assume that pupils have no say in the introduction of a particular programme. Nor do the programmes studied require pupils to be involved and formally active in the process. If the pupils' experience of formal influence is weak, their experience of responsibility is clearer. Schools working with Friends and School Mediation allocate pupils a pivotal role and give them great responsibility. A common description of the role of peer supports is that they should be the staff's eyes and ears in the school's pupil culture to which adults claim they have no access. In the feedback from schools working with these programmes, staff often highlight the positive aspects of assigning responsible tasks to pupils. Many of the pupils who are school mediators or peer supports are also positive about the task. There are also examples of pupils who find the task difficult. They claim they end up being the adults' extended arm, which can lead to harassment from other pupils. Other pupils take the role of a good friend seriously and can feel it is a stressful responsibility.

Whilst formal influence over the school's work with the programme is weak, informal influence is that much stronger. Pupils and teachers describe at length how pupils influence the school's measures for combating and preventing bullying by being active or passive. This informal influence may be seen in pupils who sabotage contact and value exercises, behave irresponsibly when selecting peer supports or apply for the task of school mediator on the grounds that they avoid certain lessons.

There are many reasons for taking pupil criticism of the content of many of the exercises included in the programmes for strengthening foundation values very seriously. In interviews, the programme representatives stressed that the programmes were important for strengthening the relationship between teachers and pupils and between pupils. This can, of course, be achieved through contact and value exercises, but behind the pupils' critical attitude, an impression

emerges that many exercises fail to engage the pupils and arouse their interest or curiosity. Pupils also describe how they know what is right and wrong in discussions and exercises led by teachers but that this knowledge is not self-evident when they interact outside the classroom.

In all programmes based on assigning pupils an active role in the school's measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment, there are a number of potential dilemmas in using pupils' peer relationships as a resource for resolving serious conflicts among pupils. On whose terms is it done? Is it on the pupils' terms and/or the adults'? And who bears responsibility for any possible repercussions?

### **Role of school staff**

The majority of the programmes included in the study highlight the importance of having a shared view on how to act to prevent bullying and degrading treatment and create a positive school environment.<sup>49</sup> The schools' action plans for combating bullying and degrading treatment outline the common strategy for the process. Few teachers in our study can describe with certainty the common strategy outlined in the school's action plan. At the same time, the teachers interviewed display a great deal of commitment to their own pupils and their well-being in school. A traditional image of the teaching profession emerges in the interviews, in which practice is largely dependent on the individual teacher's own experiences and views (Hargreaves, 1998; Lortie, 1975). The teachers adopt the common strategy, as well as the programme or programmes the school claims to be using, on the basis of their own individual knowledge, experiences and interests. Few programme concepts provide a framework for addressing this problem. The majority of programmes are based on a short introductory period of training, after which the work of driving the process forward is left to the staff themselves. If a programme concept does not immediately suit a teacher's needs and understanding of meaningful measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment, it is natural for them not to work with the programme. These deviations from the official work of the school on equal treatment are often not vocalised and occur silently. The deviations became evident in the teacher interviews but were especially clear in the pupil interviews.

Arguments by teachers and other school staff for or against a programme very often demonstrate a relatively superficial understanding of bullying as a phenomenon and methods for dealing with the dynamics of pupil groups to minimise the risk of bullying and degrading treatment. One reason for this may be that training programmes often present the programme's form and content and are not based on the conditions, experiences and knowledge of the individual school. Programme authors have a programme concept that schools want to buy and programme training seldom matches the school's knowledge and experiences of combating bullying and degrading treatment. A specific example of when programme concepts and staff experiences do not match is when teachers fail in carrying out special lessons with content from, for example, Lions Quest, Olweus, SET or Second Step, and thus may first need to deepen their knowledge of leadership and group dynamics. The responsibility for planning that programmes match specific school practice should lie with the programme

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49 On the importance of building on a shared holistic approach to the prevention of bullying, see also, for example, Rigby (2001, 2002).

instructors and the staff in the individual school who are responsible for purchasing a particular programme. The Olweus Programme is an exception. The programme's requirement that school staff be organised into discussion groups enables teachers to highlight problems they encounter in the programme process and to receive support, which in turn can enhance their competence.

Several of the teachers interviewed point out that there are too many different groups involved in preventing bullying and degrading treatment and that there is no communication between them. At a school there may be a group of adults with responsibility for working with the school's peer supports, an anti-bullying team that is responsible for immediate remedial measures, a pupil welfare team that encounters bullying problems when dealing with special needs pupils, and a school improvement group responsible for promoting development at the school and that therefore may have special responsibility for planning improvements in this area. The holistic view of pupils and their school situation is at risk of being lost. There is a risk that the groups' roles will become unclear. The same applies to certain functions such as that of the school nurse. Such lack of clarity risks enfeebling measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment.

Teachers, like pupils, are seen as supernumeraries who are instructed to follow a programme manual that they do not always find meaningful. When a programme manual is used to direct discussions between teachers and pupils, there is a risk that the discussions may be perceived as originating from a fixed artificial reality in which the parties involved are not genuinely interested in each other.

Many of the programmes studied emphasise the importance of creating an approach among teachers and pupils that promotes mutual respect and trust throughout the school day. Setting up special classes for training pupils' social skills risks creating an artificial distinction between the school's dual tasks of nurturing and educating children. A school class is a group of children or adolescents who have not chosen of their own free will to be together. It is a unique group that is completely different from most other groups that teachers, children and youngsters otherwise join, such as the family, the peer group and groups that are formed round shared interests (Goldlinger, 1979). These young people have found themselves in the same group due to similarities in age and where they live. The teacher has become the leader of this particular group, by chance, through his or her choice of profession. It is in this group, composed of differences, that children, young people and teachers can learn about themselves and others. The common bond is an interest in developing and learning. The teacher's unique skill is to organise this learning. Teachers need methods that lay the foundation for meaningful learning and that nurture respect and tolerance. Allen (2010) has demonstrated the link between bullying and teachers' knowledge and skills in guiding teaching (*'Classroom Management'*). There is a risk that a distinction between the tasks of educating and nurturing may contribute to a de-professionalisation of the teaching profession.

We wish to emphasise the importance of basing a school's measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment on the pupils' knowledge and experience of their school and its working culture on the staff's knowledge of their own school's circumstances and needs, as well as on research that can help to broaden and deepen understanding of the field. The experiences school staff and

teachers have of working with the programmes show that no single programme is the solution to the problem of bullying and degrading treatment at schools. Different programmes can meet different needs in this area, but no programme is impervious to the conditions that exist at a specific school. Schools must grapple with their individual circumstances to find their own strategies for overcoming obstacles to the creation of a safe and trusting school environment. There are no easy solutions.



6.

Costs of working  
with programmes

## 6. Costs of working with programmes

A more detailed version of the analysis of the costs incurred when a school introduces and works with an anti-bullying programme is available in full on the National Agency for Education's web site.

The estimates of costs and time required were carried out after checking with the programme representatives. For each of the programmes, the head teacher at a school recommended by the programme representatives was interviewed to show how the resources were used for the programme. Later in the document, these schools are referred to as the control schools.

### 6.1 Types of costs

Schools in Sweden can purchase programmes to prevent bullying. What do the different programmes cost the schools? The schools have direct costs, such as course fees and costs for working hours, but sometimes the schools also receive financial support or grants to introduce the programmes.

Different approaches are used to implement the programmes in the schools. This may include training all or some of the school staff by sending them on a course or by programme representatives coming to the school and conducting the course. Another option is for the school to train an instructor who then trains staff at the school. The programmes also have their own training materials.

This approach means that there are direct costs for schools wishing to implement a programme: course fees, costs of training instructors and costs of inviting speakers from the programmes. There are also costs for materials, travel and accommodation in connection with courses, and costs for staff to replace regular teachers during their training. (Some of the direct costs are invoiced by the programme makers and some, such as costs for replacement teachers, travel and accommodation, etc., are paid for directly by the schools.)

The direct costs do not give the whole picture however. School staff (and sometimes pupils) must spend time on the programmes. This requires resources in the form of working hours (here a distinction is made between working hours required for training, meetings, etc. and working hours required for holding special lessons).

However, the schools can also apply for financial support to help fund the introduction of the programmes. A number of different organisations provide financial support or grants to schools wishing to introduce an anti-bullying programme.

### 6.2 Cost comparison

To allow comparisons of costs, the evaluation team has created a hypothetical school. The total costs for this school are estimated. In the study, the hypothetical school is called school H. It is a school for pupils from preschool to year 9 with a total of 300 pupils. Preschool F, with years 1–3, has two classes in each year. In years 4–9, there is one class per year. This means a total of 14 teaching

groups. There are 30 teaching posts at the school, including recreation instructors and the head teacher. There is also a school caretaker and the school canteen staff, making a total of five additional members of staff. The programme is to be implemented throughout the school.

Below is a review of the costs of the different programmes, estimated using our H school as the model.

- Point 1 specifies the *direct costs*, excluding VAT, for each programme over a three-year period.
- Point 2 gives an estimate of school H's *time expenditure* for implementing the programme over a three-year period, excluding class lessons.
- Point 3 specifies whether *special class* lessons are recommended for the programme.
- Point 4 indicates whether the programme recommends *pupil involvement* in the implementation.

#### **The Farsta Method:**

- Approximately SEK 5 000, but there may be additional costs for travel.
- About 340 staff working hours.
- There are no special lessons.
- Limited pupil participation

#### **Friends:**

- SEK 75 000. There may be additional costs for stand-in teachers, travel, etc.
- About 650 staff working hours.
- Eight lessons per school year (with 14 teaching groups, in school H this means 112 lessons per year and 336 lessons over a three-year period in addition to preparation time for teachers).
- Pupils should take part in peer support meetings. Over a three-year period, this means about 1 140 pupil hours for school H. The pupils should also act as peer supports and take part in programme lessons eight times a school year

#### **Lions Quest:**

- SEK 53 000. However, the real cost is at most SEK 27 500, as schools that use the programme always receive financial support from Lions Clubs.
- A minimum of 600 staff working hours (exact estimate not available), but the time expenditure is low.
- One lesson a week (with 14 teaching groups, in school H this means 560 lessons per year, based on 40 working weeks a year, and over a three-year period 1 680 lessons in addition to preparation time for teachers).
- Pupil participation in Lions Quest lessons etc.

#### **Olweus:**

- Approximately SEK 35 000. However, the cost can be much higher if the school is not able to share instructor training costs with other schools. In addition, there may be further costs for stand-in teachers, travel, etc.
- About 3 000 staff working hours.
- One lesson a week during the first three terms. After this, one lesson a fortnight during the remaining three terms (with 14 teaching groups, in school H this means a total of 1 680 lessons during the first three terms, based on 40 working weeks a year, and then a total of 840 lessons during the three

remaining terms. The total number of lessons over a three-year period is 2 520 in addition to preparation time for teachers.)

- Pupils are involved because they take part in lessons once a week etc.

**SET:**

- From SEK 36 000 to approximately SEK 100 000 depending on how the training is organised and the quantity of materials bought by the school. There may be additional costs for stand-in teachers, travel, etc.
- About 1 200–1 400 staff working hours.
- Two lessons a week (with 14 teaching groups, in school H this means 560 lessons a year, based on 40 working weeks a year, and 3 360 lessons over a three-year period in addition to preparation time for teachers.)
- Pupil participation in two lessons a week etc.

**School Comet:**

- SEK 60 000 if a new School Comet mentor is trained each year. In addition, there may be further costs for stand-in teachers, travel, etc. Mentor training is usually carried out once in a three-year period and the cost is SEK 20 000.
- About 630–1 140 staff working hours, depending on how many take part in the School Comet training in the school. If the training is carried out only in one of the three years, which is more often the case, the cost is one-third of this.
- There are no special lessons.
- Limited pupil participation.

**School Mediation:**

- Approximately SEK 33 000, but there may be substantial additional costs for stand-in teachers, travel to courses, etc.
- A minimum of 720–1 025 staff working hours depending on the number of mediation coordinators at the school. In addition to this, further time may be required for theme days and network meetings (arranged by some but not all schools/municipalities).
- No, there are no special lessons.
- Extensive pupil participation. The programme is based on pupil mediation measures. Uncertain how much time is involved.

**Second Step:**

- SEK 30 000–43 000 depending on the extent of training etc.
- 1 650–1 820 staff working hours (depending on what the school wishes to implement).
- One lesson a week (with 14 teaching groups, in school H this means 560 lessons per year, based on 40 working weeks a year and 1 680 lessons over a three-year period in addition to preparation time for teachers).
- Pupil participation in Second Step meetings each week etc.

Comments: These figures are based on what the programme representatives want schools using the programmes to implement and not on what schools actually implement. A plus sign (+) in front of a programme's direct costs means that the mean value of its maximum and minimum direct costs is used. This gives the following figures in the Table:

**Table 6.1** Programme cost estimated per pupil per year

Programme	Estimate over 3 years for a standard school with 300 pupils					
	Direct costs	Working hours/ resource use	Lesson hours	Total staff hours (working hours + lesson hours)	Workcosts + lesson costs at SEK 220 per hour	Estimated annual cost per pupil
The Farsta Method	SEK 5 000	340	No	340	74 800	SEK 89
Friends	SEK 75 000	655	336	991	218 020	SEK 326
School Comet	SEK 60 000	867	No	867	190 740	SEK 279
Lions Quest	SEK 39 750	+600	1 680	2 280	501 600	SEK 602
Olweus	SEK +34 200	3 008	2 520	5 528	1 216 160	SEK 1 389
SET	SEK +68 000	+1 320	3 360	4 680	1 029 600	SEK 1 220
School Mediation	SEK +32 625	+900	No	900	198 000	SEK 256
Second Step	SEK +36 500	+1 735	1 680	3 415	751 300	SEK 875

The symbol + means that an average of maximum and minimum values has been used.

### 6.3 Cost analysis of schools' anti-bullying programmes

The comparison shows significant differences. This applies to the direct costs and time expenditure. It is unclear how the time required should be valued in money terms (see below). An overall conclusion, however, is that the time required entails a higher cost for schools than the direct costs of the programmes.

This is particularly true with respect to the lesson hours required.

The programmes with the highest direct costs (for training, materials, etc.) are Friends, SET (but here the cost can vary depending on different options) and School Comet (cost can be reduced if the schools do not train new School Comet mentors every year).

The following programmes are in an intermediate group as regards direct costs: Lions Quest (assuming that the school receives financial support from a Lions Club), School Mediation (stand-in teacher costs etc. can be very high), Second Step (exact cost varies depending on options chosen), and Olweus (costs can be much higher if a school takes all the responsibility for training an instructor).

Schools that use the Farsta Method have by far the lowest direct costs.

There are significant differences between the programmes as regards the time required, although these figures are uncertain. The Olweus Programme requires the greatest number of staff working hours, followed by Second Step, SET, School Mediation and School Comet (if new mentors are trained every year). Friends and Lions Quest require far fewer staff working hours (hours for staff for the last programme are not available).

The Farsta Method is the programme with the lowest costs by far, both in terms of direct costs and time required, and requires the fewest staff working hours.

There are significant differences between the programmes as regards the use of lesson hours. SET recommends two lessons a week for each pupil. Lions Quest and Second Step recommend one lesson a week. Friends recommends eight lessons per school year. The Farsta Method, School Mediation and Second Step do not require lesson hours.

Over a three-year period, the total number of lessons linked to a programme will be quite considerable in the case of SET, Olweus and Second Step. One of the control schools reports that the extensive use of lesson hours may clash with other proposals for how this time should be used.

Programmes that use lesson hours require teachers to prepare these lessons as well as the pupils' attendance. Two of the programmes also require extensive pupil participation. These are School Mediation, which is based on training pupil mediators, and Friends in which the pupils participate in peer support meetings.

#### 6.4 Estimation difficulties and possible solutions

This comparison is not without a number of problems however. The first is that comparisons are made between programmes with different aims and content. Another is that it is difficult to compare direct costs, as some costs may be hidden, e.g. when stand-in teachers are required or staff must travel to courses etc. A further problem is that the programmes offer different kinds of additional services, and it can be difficult to determine what these costs may be. (For further comments, see the full report by Winborg, Mats, *Skolornas kostnader för att arbeta med program mot mobbning (Schools' costs for working with anti-bullying programmes)*, in the National Agency for Education's PM, web address, [skolverket.se/vardegrund](http://skolverket.se/vardegrund)).

A major reservation regarding resource usage estimates is that they are based on schools fully or, at least, almost fully implementing the programmes. This is what the programme representatives assume and recommend. However, schools sometimes only use certain parts and select measures from a programme. In such cases, the direct costs are lower and less time is required.

In the Table above, the cost is estimated at SEK 220 per staff hour. However, how the time required actually affects schools' finances is unclear. Ultimately, it is a question of the impact of the implementation of the programmes on school staff duties. If, after implementing the programmes, schools continue with the same tasks but in slightly different ways, the staff have not been allocated less time for other activities. If, on the other hand, the programmes involve extended duties, then other activities must be changed or the school will be faced with increased staff costs. It is not possible on the basis of this study to determine the current situation in this respect. However, it is interesting to note that three of the control schools (those using Olweus, SET and School Mediation) say that they now work more on preventing bullying than they did before the programme was implemented. Staff interviewed at other control schools say they work about as much with preventing bullying as before but in a different way.

A measure of the amount of time required can be obtained by investigating whether school staff believe that the time required for the programmes is appropriate use of working hours. Six of the eight representatives interviewed at the control schools stated that staff were happy to devote their time to the programmes. Two representatives at the control schools said that staff at times preferred to work with other tasks such as planning or learning to use computer programmes. These data are unclear because only the school management or the staff responsible for the anti-bullying programmes were interviewed. The picture might have been different if all the school staff had been interviewed.

Another way to investigate this would be to estimate how much on average a school (similar to school H and not using any of the programmes) works with the mandatory plan for combating discrimination and degrading treatment.

These staff working hours could then be compared with those spent by staff using the programmes. However, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Anna

Wide) considers that it is impossible to estimate to what extent schools work with plans for combating discrimination and degrading treatment, as no empirical data are available and, secondly, that the plans also include measures (surveying, follow-up, etc.) that are usually not part of the programmes. Schools using the programmes must also further develop their plans for combating bullying and degrading treatment (responses from control schools also make this clear).

There is an additional problem with estimating resource use. Through investigating the amount of time required by the programmes at the schools, it turns out that five of the eight control schools studied (the control schools are chosen by the programme representatives to show how the programme works) also use one or more additional anti-bullying programmes. Four of the schools use two programmes in parallel and one of the schools uses three programmes in parallel. Representatives of the three remaining control schools state that they have modified the programmes to at least some extent.

As schools in reality use several programmes and modify them, estimates of direct costs and resource use primarily become measures of what resource use might look like if a school confined itself to just one programme rather than estimates of schools' actual resource use.

## **6.5 External support to schools for programme implementation**

A further point worth mentioning when analysing costs is that many schools are offered financial support, especially when introducing the programmes. Five of the eight programme representatives confirm that this happens or that financial support of this kind is common. One programme representative says that the programme is new, but that they expect to receive external financial support (Friends). Two representatives say that it is unusual for schools to receive financial support for implementing the programmes (Farsta Method and Olweus). However, in one of these cases (Olweus), it turns out that the control school received extensive financial support for implementing the programme.

It is especially common for municipalities to provide special financial support to schools that implement programmes. Other organisations that have provided financial support for programmes include county administrative boards, county councils, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities, the Swedish National Institute of Public Health, the private sector and various foundations. Two of the programmes have their own sponsors. Schools using Lions Quest have favourable opportunities to receive financial support from local Lions Clubs, and Friends has allocated money to some schools (Friends received support from the Gålö Foundation for this purpose).

In some cases, financial support may mean that more time is required for writing applications and reports. Sometimes the time required for this is at municipal level if several schools partner up to make joint applications. However, neither the programme representatives nor the control schools have reported the amount of time such administrative work involves.

Obviously, there are many in society who consider it urgent that schools initiate anti-bullying programmes. There is some inequality here as schools that do not use any programme, but which work actively to combat discrimination and degrading treatment, do not receive financial support of this kind. The possibility of receiving financial support for initiating programmes is also one of

the reasons schools use several programmes in parallel (representatives for two control schools indicated this).

For schools with tight finances, support of this kind for conducting anti-bullying programmes may be a way to pay for the in-service training of school staff. Anti-bullying programmes can involve costs for the schools – but they can also open up new financial opportunities.

7.

Effects of different  
measures – an analysis

## 7. Effects of different measures – an analysis

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into three parts. Part one begins with an account of the number of pupils who were subjected more or less frequently to negative acts at the time of the first survey. This gives a picture of how widespread bullying was in relation to school pranks. It also presents bullying frequencies in different years, gender differences between social and physical bullying, the perpetrators of bullying, the places where bullying occurs, and victims' perceptions of why they have been victimised. In the latter case, the reasons given by the pupils have been related to the forms of discrimination. The reactions of victims to acts regarded as negative are also described, as well as pupils' victimisation in relation to their sense of coherence. The chapter then goes on to describe how bullying has changed between the first and the last surveys, overall and for the pupils who participated in both surveys.

Part two describes the effects of individual measures and combinations of measures (sometimes referred to as groups of measures or component clusters) on bullying and degrading treatment. A variety of measures are used to estimate the effects that make it possible to report the impact on boys and girls separately. Different measures generally affect boys and girls differently.

Part three describes groups of schools (here referred to as school clusters) with similar approaches to combating bullying and degrading treatment on the basis of, e.g., teacher-pupil ratios, proportion of teachers with a higher educational qualification in special education, and anchoring of anti-bullying measures among the staff and other groups. Differences and similarities in these areas may give us a better understanding of why some schools succeed better or worse in reducing bullying compared with others. A presentation then follows of school clusters that have been successful in reducing bullying during the measurement period and those that have not. The chapter concludes with a detailed qualitative description, analysis and discussion of why some schools and groups of schools are more successful than others in combating bullying and degrading treatment.

### 7.2 Bullying at the time of the first survey – a snapshot

#### Scope

In order to estimate the proportion of pupils who are victims of bullying, data on how often pupils have been subjected to acts they perceive as negative have been combined with data in which the victim assesses the intention underlying such acts. Pupils who have been subjected to one or more negative acts in the last few months<sup>50</sup> on repeated occasions, when the intention was to intimidate or cause harm, are categorised as bullied.

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50 In this context, the term negative acts refers to pupils who have been “pushed, held”, “threatened with being hit”, “struck, kicked”, “mocked, teased or called nasty names”, “excluded, ostracised” and subjected to “malicious gossip” (other pupils have tried to get peers to dislike them). Anyone who is subjected to any of the first three acts mentioned is described as *physically bullied*. A pupil who is subjected to any of the last three acts mentioned is described as *socially bullied*, and if the pupil is subjected to any of the acts above he or she is categorised as *bullied* – provided that the acts have i) been repeated almost daily, several times a week or a month, and ii) according to the questionnaire responses have been performed with the intention of causing harm or intimidating the victim.

**Table 7.1** Table of categories showing different grades of seriousness of pupils subjected to negative acts

Victimised/ Why victimised?	0. No/ No idea/ Don't know	Some time	Several times a month	Several times a week	Nearly every day
In fun			1. Subjected to pranks		
Disagreement		2. Seldom victimised due to disagreement		3. Often victimised due to disagreements	
Don't know		4. At risk of further victimisation		5. Victimised with unclear intent	
Harmed/ intimidated		6. Degrading treatment		7. Bullied	

Table 7.1 shows all the response combinations for the different categories: the higher the value, the greater the degree of victimisation.

Figure 7.1 shows that the proportion of pupils bullied was just over 8 per cent at the time of the first survey.<sup>51</sup> The proportion subjected to degrading treatment, that is pupils who have occasionally been victims of one or more negative acts carried out with the intention of causing harm, was about 11 per cent. The intention is unclear in the group of pupils who were subjected to negative acts and who did not have a clear idea of whether they were seriously intended or carried out “for fun”. Those pupils, who do not meet the criteria to be categorised as bullied or subjected to degrading treatment but who nevertheless were the victims of others’ negative acts, are categorised here as “victimised with unclear intent” and “at risk of further victimisation”.<sup>52</sup> The proportion of pupils in these groups was 2.6 and 20 per cent respectively. Other pupils were not subjected to negative acts (approximately 38 per cent), or the acts were considered to have been carried out for fun (approximately 16 per cent) or as a result of disagreement (approximately 5 per cent). In the last two cases, the degree of severity has been assessed as less than if the intention had been to cause harm and intimidate or if the intention had been unclear (see section on outcome measures in the Methodology appendix<sup>53</sup> for further details).

The difference between the proportion of boys and girls bullied at the time of the first survey was very small, 8.0 and 8.2 per cent respectively.<sup>54</sup> The gender difference in the proportion of pupils subjected to degrading treatment was somewhat higher at 9.9 per cent for boys and 12.2 per cent for girls. With regard to victimisation in a broader sense, covering pupils who have been categorised as “victimised with unclear intent”, “at risk of further victimisation”, “subjected to degrading treatment” and “bullied”, girls were generally victimised more (45.4 per cent) compared with boys (38.1 per cent). The biggest gender

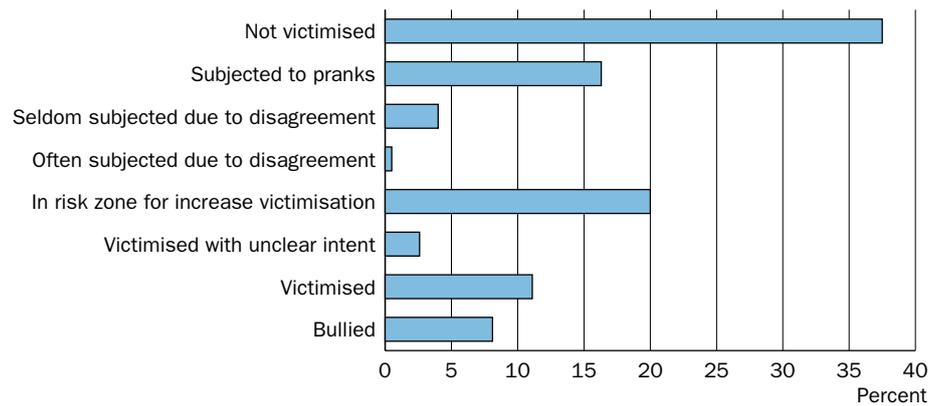
51 Of the 8 347 pupils who answered the questionnaire, 7 999 answered the questions that form the basis for categorising different types of bullying. At the time of the first survey, the number of pupils bullied was 647, which corresponds to 8.1 per cent.

52 Pupils who responded that they did not know why they had been subjected to negative acts and who were still victimised frequently (“almost daily”/“several times a week”) are described as *victimised with unclear intent*. Pupils who have been victimised less frequently (“several times a month”/“occasionally”) were *at risk of further victimisation*.

53 *Evaluation of anti-bullying methods. Methodology appendix and attachments to report 353* (National Agency for Education, 2011), pdf.

54 Of the 4 143 boys who answered the survey, 4 004 responded to questions that form the basis for categorising different types of negative acts. In the first survey, the number of boys bullied was 321 (8 per cent). Of the 4 187 girls who completed the survey, 3 978 responded to questions that form the basis for categorising different types of negative acts. In the first survey, the number of girls bullied was 325 (8.2 per cent).

**Figure 7.1** Proportion (percent) of pupils bullied in the first survey



**Table 7.2** Proportion of pupils bullied in different school years

		School year						Total
		4	5	6	7	8	9	
Subjected to bullying	No	741	748	1 139	1 637	1 578	1 491	7 334
		89.7 %	90.6 %	92.8 %	92.7 %	91.5 %	92.7 %	91.9 %
	Yes	85	78	89	129	146	118	645
		10.3 %	9.4 %	7.2 %	7.3 %	8.5 %	7.3 %	8.1 %
n =		826	826	1 228	1 766	1 724	1 609	7 979

The tables show results from the first survey.

difference was for pupils who had been “subjected to pranks”. Twice as many boys (21.8 per cent) as girls (10.7 per cent) had been victims.

Table 7.2 shows the frequency of bullying in different school years. As is evident in Table 7.2, the proportion of pupils bullied was slightly higher in the lower years (8.8 per cent in years 4–6) than in the higher years (7.7 per cent in years 7–9). To some extent, these findings are in line with earlier research, which showed that the proportion of pupils bullied tends to decrease with age (see Olweus, 1994; King et al., 1996; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000; Smith et al., 2001). Boys were more often victims of physical bullying (5.1 per cent) than girls (3.1 per cent). This pattern exists in all school years. Girls were generally more exposed to social bullying (7.4 per cent) than boys (5.5 per cent).<sup>55</sup> The gender differences were highest in years 6 and 7 in which the proportion of girls bullied was 4 and 5 per cent higher respectively than the corresponding proportion for boys. Amongst the youngest pupils, years 4 and 5, the proportion of pupils who were socially bullied was slightly higher among the boys. This is mainly because boys in years 4 and 5 were more often victims than girls of some of the negative acts that are part of social bullying: “mocked, called nasty names”. As regards “excluded, ostracised”, which are also part of social bullying, gender differences were insignificant in years 4 and 5. Similar findings have been reported by other researchers (see, for example, Craig et al., 2001).

<sup>55</sup> The absolute/relative frequency of pupils physically bullied was 329 /4.1 percent (n = 8 034). Distributed by gender, the corresponding frequency for boys is 202/5.1 percent (n = 3 957), and for girls 126/3.1 percent (n = 4 060). The absolute /relative frequency of pupils socially bullied was 510/6.5 percent (n = 7 881). Distributed by gender, the corresponding frequencies for boys is 220/5.6 percent (n = 3 946) and for girls 289/7.4 percent (n = 3 918).

**Table 7.3** Who is/are the perpetrator(s)

	Physically bullied						Socially bullied					
	Pushed, held tight		Threatened with blows		Hit, kicked		Mocked, teased, called nasty names <sup>1</sup>		Excluded, ostracised		Rumour spreading <sup>2</sup>	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
One in my class	35.6 %	30.9 %	30.4 %	35.4 %	34.6 %	35.1 %	22.7 %	24.9 %	32.0 %	32.9 %	31.2 %	32.4 %
One in another class	26.7 %	22.7 %	30.4 %	30.1 %	32.7 %	27.8 %	16.7 %	19.6 %	17.7 %	18.4 %	19.1 %	19.8 %
Several in my class	45.0 %	51.8 %	42.0 %	42.5 %	45.7 %	49.5 %	51.4 %	52.7 %	58.9 %	59.8 %	46.5 %	45.5 %
Several in another class	46.1 %	46.4 %	48.6 %	44.2 %	42.6 %	45.4 %	48.6 %	44.5 %	46.9 %	37.6 %	42.0 %	37.4 %
No. respondents	180	110	181	113	162	97	216	281	175	234	157	222

1 Pupils who have been teased, mocked can sometimes find it difficult to remember who has/have carried out the acts.

2 More difficult to know who has/have been spreading malicious rumours, try to get others to think badly about oneself. Given this background, these questions contained further alternatives not shown in the tables – “don’t remember” (mocked, teased) and “don’t know” (spreading rumours). The percentage figures for these alternatives were relatively low: “can’t remember”, boys = 13.0 percent, girls = 8.2 percent; “don’t know”, boys = 9.6 percent, girls = 8.1 percent.

### Who are the perpetrators and where does bullying occur?

Table 7.3 shows which pupils have bullied others. Since pupils can choose multiple responses to these questions, the total in the table columns adds up to more than 100 per cent. According to boys and girls who have been socially and physically bullied, the perpetrators were usually “several in my class”. This is particularly true of those pupils who have been socially bullied in the sense of being mocked and excluded, of which more than half (51 to 60 per cent) point out “several in my class” as the perpetrators. The option “several in another class” was also relatively common, especially among boys who had been physically bullied. When we look at those who were the perpetrators of physical or social bullying, the pattern of findings is largely the same as above to all questions with the exception of “threatened with blows” the perpetrator was usually “several in my class”.<sup>56</sup>

Table 7.4 shows where bullying occurred according to the bullied pupils. (Since multiple responses could be chosen, the total in the table columns exceeds 100 per cent).

Physical and social bullying mostly occurred in the playground, in and around the toilets, in corridors or in the classroom. This pattern of responses<sup>57</sup> is in line with other research in the field (see, e.g., *Blueprints for Violence Prevention, Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme*).

The proportion of pupils bullied in the classroom when the teacher was present is remarkably high. For example, 26 per cent of boys who had been physically bullied reported that they had been “beaten, kicked” in the classroom while the teacher was present, and 38 per cent of girls who had been socially bullied reported they had been “mocked, called nasty names” in the classroom when the teacher was present. The proportion of pupils who had been “mocked, excluded” and victims of malicious rumours in the classroom with the teacher

56 The statistics also include data on the perpetrators. In the first survey, 6.7 per cent of boys and 4.0 per cent of girls indicated that they had bullied or subjected others to degrading treatment, socially or physically, or both socially and physically. In the third survey, the numbers had dropped to 4.5 per cent of the boys and 3.0 per cent of the girls saying the same thing.

57 Of the 647 pupils socially and/or physically bullied, 398 to 606 answered the questions about where the bullying occurred.

**Table 7.4** Where bullying takes place

	Physically bullied						Socially bullied					
	Pushed, held tight		Threatened with blows		Hit, kicked		Mocked, teased, called nasty names		Excluded, ostracised		Rumour spreading	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Can't remember/ have no idea	22.7 %	19.8 %					12.1 %	7.8 %	26.4 %	19.8 %	32.1 %	24.1 %
In the classroom with teacher present	22.7 %	28.8 %	27.2 %	21.7 %	26.3 %	24.0 %	34.4 %	37.7 %	24.7 %	34.1 %	29.5 %	18.2 %
In the classroom teacher not present	32.0 %	41.4 %	37.8 %	41.7 %	38.1 %	41.7 %	47.0 %	41.6 %	29.9 %	34.9 %	38.5 %	33.2 %
Total in classroom	54.7 %	70.2 %	65.0 %	63.4 %	64.4 %	65.7 %	81.4 %	79.3 %	56.6 %	69.0 %	68.0 %	51.4 %
In changing room, in school canteen	31.5 %	30.6 %	33.9 %	30.4 %	33.1 %	33.3 %	40.9 %	31.3 %	29.9 %	42.7 %	39.1 %	31.4 %
In school play-ground, around toilets, in corridors	67.4 %	70.3 %	77.8 %	73.9 %	73.8 %	72.9 %	68.4 %	75.8 %	55.7 %	67.7 %	57.7 %	60.0 %
On the way to or from school, on school bus	22.7 %	25.2 %	26.1 %	31.3 %	30.0 %	34.4 %	24.2 %	24.6 %	23.6 %	26.3 %	32.7 %	29.1 %
After school hours			40.6 %	54.8 %	35.0 %	43.8 %	34.0 %	37.7 %	28.2 %	41.8 %	36.5 %	52.3 %
No. respondents	181	111	180	115	160	96	215	281	174	232	156	220

Empty table cells mean that the alternative where the act took place is not included. For example, it is reasonable to assume that pupils subjected to threats of violence or who have been beaten/kicked find it easier to remember where this took place, compared to other types of negative acts of a less violent nature.

present was 35, 26 and 22 per cent (compared with the proportion of 18 per cent “pushed”, 22 per cent “threatened”, and 21 per cent “beaten, kicked”). In other words the classroom seems to be a relatively common venue for acts categorised as social bullying. The findings show similarities with so-called *ijime*, a Japanese variant of bullying characterised by exclusion processes carried out by peers in the classroom.<sup>58</sup>

#### Victims' perceptions of why they have been bullied

Table 7.5 shows how pupils who have been bullied answered the question, “If you have been the victim of something we have asked about, for example, if you have been teased, ostracised, threatened, hit, called nasty names in school or on the Internet – what do you think the reason is?” This is a multiple choice question for which pupils may choose multiple responses, which is why the total in the table columns exceeds 100 per cent.<sup>59</sup>

58 According to Taki (2001), *ijime* is not a form of behaviour typical of 'problem children' but something that is part of 'normal' children's repertoire of behaviour. *Ijime* should not be regarded as antisocial behaviour but as asocial behaviour that: i) targets pupils who are in weaker positions in the same group and ii) is performed with the intention of humiliating or causing psychological harm. Which pupils are in a superior or subordinate position varies with the group situation, which is the reason the balance of power in the group also varies (Taki 2001, 2003). Compare a ball game lesson in gymnastics – where there is a tendency for the element of competition to undermine consideration for pupils who are 'performing less well' and who thus become easy targets for nasty comments – with a maths lesson in which other skills are rewarded. The pupil who is exposed to ridicule in the former situation may serve as a model in the latter.

59 In the battery of questions dealing with specific types of negative acts (have been “pushed”, “threatened”, “hit”/“kicked”, “mocked”/“teased”, “excluded”, “victim of rumours”), we have asked about the intention underlying the act (if it was in fun, to cause harm/intimidate, etc.). Here we are interested in the pupils' perceptions of why they have been the victims of negative acts.

**Table 7.5** Bullied pupils' views on why they were bullied

	Physically bullied		Socially bullied		Bullied	
I have a different skin colour	17.9 %	55	11.8 %	53	11.7 %	67
others stronger than me	36.7 %	113	27.6 %	124	28.3 %	162
others think that as a boy I am too "girlish"	16.6 %	51	13.3 %	60	12.4 %	71
others think that as a girl I'm too "boyish"	14.3 %	44	14.0 %	63	12.6 %	72
because of my religion	14.0 %	43	9.8 %	44	9.6 %	55
others are jealous of me	31.8 %	98	36.7 %	165	34.4 %	197
I am a boy	13.3 %	41	8.2 %	37	9.4 %	54
I am a girl	21.1 %	65	19.8 %	89	19.0 %	109
I come from a different country	19.5 %	60	14.9 %	67	14.3 %	82
I belong to a different ethnic group	15.6 %	48	12.2 %	55	11.2 %	64
one of my family is different	21.1 %	65	14.2 %	64	15.4 %	88
difficult for me to read, write or concentrate	22.7 %	70	19.3 %	87	18.0 %	103
I am visually impaired, hearing impaired, deaf or have a functional disability	14.9 %	46	11.8 %	53	11.7 %	67
I am too thin/fat according to others	46.1 %	142	44.0 %	198	42.2 %	242
don't know/have no idea	29.2 %	90	30.0 %	135	31.8 %	182
No. respondents		308		450		573

The main reason bullied pupils gave for being subjected to acts they perceived as negative is related to their physical build, that they were too thin or too fat in the opinion of other pupils (42 per cent). Other reasons frequently given were that other pupils were envious of them (34 per cent), that they did not know why they were victims (32 per cent), that other pupils were stronger than them (28 per cent).<sup>60</sup> The responses were the same among physically and socially bullied pupils respectively, even though what was most or least frequent varied somewhat.

The responses were basically the same for the boys and the girls. The most common reason for bullied boys was "others are stronger", followed by "too thin or too fat", "others are envious" and "no idea". The most common responses among bullied girls were, in descending order: "too thin/too fat according to others", "others are envious" and "no idea". Physically bullied girls showed a slightly different response pattern in that 43 per cent gave their gender ("that I am a girl") as the reason they had been subjected to acts they perceived as negative. This was the second most frequent response among these girls after "too thin or too fat" (57 per cent).

Reasons given related to the forms of discrimination

Gender is one of the forms of discrimination. Other forms of discrimination include ethnic origin, religion or other belief, sexual orientation, functional disability, transgender identity and age.<sup>61</sup> Some of the responses given in Table 7.5

60 When we compare the responses of bullied pupils with the responses of pupils who were victims less frequently of malicious acts (*subjected to degrading treatment*) or negative acts with unclear intent (*victimised with unclear intent and at risk of further victimisation*), the relative frequencies, with one exception, were higher for bullied pupils. The exception is the response "don't know" for which the relative frequency was 59 per cent in the group of pupils who were at risk of increased exposure to bullying (compared with 32 per cent in the group of bullied pupils). In ten of fifteen responses, the response frequency was nearly twice as high or higher among bullied pupils. For example, the proportion who stated "I belong to another ethnic group" was 4 per cent in the group *subjected to degrading treatment* and in the group *victimised with unclear intent* compared with 11 per cent in the group of bullied pupils.

61 The Discrimination Act (2008:567)

can be linked to the forms of discrimination. For example, the responses “come from another country”, “belong to a particular nation” and “have different skin colour” were regarded as indicators of ethnicity. The ethnic origins of the pupils who chose these responses were different from what the pupils themselves regarded as the norm. The options “have difficulty reading, writing or concentrating” and “am visually impaired, hearing impaired or have a physical disability” may be regarded as operationalisations of functional disability, which is one of the forms of discrimination. The responses mentioned and others that can be linked to the other forms of discrimination such as “for the sake of my religion” and “others think that I am too girlish to be a guy” are chosen less frequently than responses like “too thin or too fat”, “others are stronger” and “don’t know”. This is also the case when we look at the responses of bullied pupils in schools that had a lower proportion of pupils with immigrant backgrounds compared with those in schools with a higher proportion of such pupils.<sup>62</sup>

Adding together the percentages of the responses that indicate the same kind of discrimination provides a more focused picture of the reasons pupils gave for being bullied. Of the 573 pupils bullied, 82 (14 per cent) chose the response “come from another country”, 64 pupils (11 per cent) “belong to a particular nation” and 67 pupils (12 per cent) have “different skin colour”. As it was possible to select multiple responses, the pupils may have given all three reasons. A closer examination of the material shows that 37 pupils (6.5 per cent) chose all three options, 21 pupils chose two (3.6 per cent) and 60 only chose one option (10.5 per cent). In total, 118 pupils, or 20.6 per cent, chose at least one of the options, which gives a more accurate picture of the relative importance of ethnicity as a reason for bullying. In Table 7.6, the responses from Table 7.5 have been grouped according to whether they can be linked to the forms of discrimination. The proportions refer to the proportion of pupils choosing at least one of the options for the different groups.

From Table 7.6, it is evident that girls have given reasons for bullying that can be linked to discrimination on the basis of gender to a far higher degree than boys. Bullied boys have given discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin as reasons to a much greater extent than girls. Reasons that can be linked to discrimination because of religion or other belief were equally common, in relative terms, among boys and girls. Reasons related to discrimination due to functional disability were also relatively evenly distributed between the genders except for pupils who were physically bullied. Here, the proportion for girls was higher.

Reasons other than forms of discrimination were generally more common as reasons for bullying. Of the bullied pupils, 90 per cent chose at least one of the following responses: “others are stronger”, “envious”, “somebody in the family is different”, “too fat or too thin” and “don’t know/have no idea”. This does not,

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62 To get an idea of the ethnic composition of pupils in the schools participating in this study, we have taken “the proportion of pupils entitled to mother tongue tuition” as the starting point. The National Agency for Education has provided information on how large this proportion was at each school in the study. This information was then registered for all pupils at the respective schools. According to information from the National Agency for Education, the national average for this parameter was 16.6 per cent in 2007 and 18.1 per cent in 2008, giving an approximate value of 17.35 for the period 2007/2008. Schools for which the value was 17 per cent or lower thus had a lower proportion of pupils with an immigrant background than schools for which the value was higher than 18 per cent. The greatest difference was in the response “come from another country” for which the proportion was 19 per cent in schools with higher proportions of immigrants compared with 12 per cent in schools with a lower proportion of pupils with a foreign background.

**Table 7.6** Bullied pupils' views on why they were bullied in relation to different forms of discrimination

Forms of discrimination	Physical bullying			Social bullying			Bullying		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
Gender	43.2 %	18.1 %	28.2 %	29.8 %	16.8 %	24.2 %	31.6 %	17.6 %	24.8 %
Ethnic affiliation	28.8 %	27.5 %	28.2 %	15.9 %	28.3 %	21.3 %	16.3 %	24.8 %	20.6 %
Religious or other belief system	15.2 %	13.2 %	14.0 %	8.5 %	11.5 %	9.8 %	8.2 %	11.2 %	9.6 %
Transgender identity/sexual orientation	27.2 %	22.5 %	24.4 %	20.5 %	26.2 %	22.9 %	20.4 %	21.6 %	20.9 %
Functional disability	32.0 %	24.7 %	27.6 %	23.6 %	26.2 %	24.7 %	23.1 %	23.4 %	23.2 %
Reasons other than forms of discrimination	90.4 %	89.6 %	89.6 %	94.2 %	84.8 %	90.0 %	92.5 %	87.8 %	90.1 %
Total	125	182	308	258	191	450	294	278	573

Gender: I am a boy/girl; Ethnic affiliation: different skin colour, comes from a different country, belongs to a different ethnic group; Religious or other belief system; Transgender identity/sexual orientation: Others think that as a boy I am too "girlish"/as a girl too "boyish"; Functional disability: find difficulty in reading, writing or concentrating, I am visually/hearing impaired, deaf or have a functional disability; Reasons other than forms of discrimination: others are stronger, others are jealous, someone in my family is different, I am too fat/thin others thin, don't know/no idea.

of course, detract from the fact that a fifth of bullied pupils gave ethnicity as the reason they were subjected to acts they perceived as negative. Based on the questionnaire data, it is impossible to comment on what bullied pupils perceive as 'worst', regardless of whether the reasons given are similar in type (e.g. "come from another country", "belong to a particular nation", "different skin colour") or completely different (e.g. "ethnicity" and "too thin or too fat"). It is clear, however, that bullied pupils, regardless of the reasons, reacted, to a greater extent than other vulnerable pupils with feelings of dejection and shame.

#### Pupils' reactions to negative acts

The figures in Table 7.7 indicate that pupils' reactions to negative acts vary between categories depending on how often they occur and whether the act is perceived as malicious. (As pupils could choose multiple responses to the question on "how it felt", the total in the table columns exceeds 100 per cent.)

Indifference was the most common reaction of pupils involved in pranks (67 per cent). As bullying and malice on the part of the perpetrators increased, the proportion of pupils who were indifferent decreased, and it represented 24 per cent in the bullied category. The picture is the reverse as regards feelings of dejection: the proportion of distraught or dejected pupils increases with the degree of seriousness, from 9 per cent in the group subjected to pranks to 50 per cent among pupils who had been bullied.

**Table 7.7** Feelings associated with being subjected to negative acts by type of victimisation

		Subjected to pranks	Seldom victimised due to disagreement	Often victimised due to disagreement	In the risk zone for increased victimisation	Victimised with unclear intent	Degrading treatment	Bullied
Recall the last survey when you were subjected to something we asked about ... how did it feel afterwards? <sup>1</sup>	I became angry	22.2 %	31.7 %	44.4 %	32.8 %	32.8 %	37.1 %	40.2 %
	I didn't care	67.1 %	55.0 %	48.1 %	44.4 %	38.9 %	36.9 %	23.6 %
	I became sad	8.8 %	15.0 %	18.5 %	28.0 %	37.4 %	38.7 %	50.4 %
	I felt worthless	5.6 %	7.2 %	18.5 %	14.1 %	31.3 %	21.2 %	38.7 %
	Other	14.2 %	12.2 %	7.4 %	13.4 %	19.1 %	13.4 %	18.6 %
No. respondents		374	180	27	844	131	591	478

<sup>1</sup> The survey questions were formulated as follows: recall the last survey when you were subjected to something we asked about, for example, been teased, ostracised, threatened, beaten, called nasty names in school or via the net. How did it feel afterwards? The number of pupils subjected to negative acts in the first survey was: bullied 647, degraded 887, victimised with unclear intent 208, at risk 1 596, often victimised due to disagreement 40, seldom victimised due to disagreement 319, target of pranks 1 301. How many answered the question "how did it feel" can be seen in the table above.

There are some gender differences. Bullied boys reacted mostly with anger (47 per cent), while bullied girls predominantly reacted with feelings of dejection (59 per cent). With regard to socially bullied pupils, girls reported feelings of worthlessness (48 per cent) to a greater degree than boys (35 per cent) as well as dejection (59 per cent among girls, 43 per cent among boys). These findings are consistent with other research, according to which girls tend to react negatively to destructive relational bullying more often than boys (Crick et al., 2001).

Feelings of shame were most common among pupils categorised as bullied (39 per cent) and bullied with unclear intent (31 per cent). The pupils in these categories had all been subjected to negative acts on repeated occasions in the last few months. The difference is that the intention was malicious in the category of bullied pupils and unclear in the second category. In the category “subjected to degrading treatment”, the proportion of pupils reporting feelings of worthlessness was lower (21 per cent) than in the category “victimised with unclear intention” (31 per cent). A possible explanation for the findings is that it is the repetition of negative acts that arouses feelings of shame rather than occasionally being subjected to malicious acts. Frequently being a victim and experiencing feelings of worthlessness can be likened to constantly being reminded of not being welcome in the community. This is a situation that few could cope with without adverse effects to their self-image, with all that this entails in terms of school difficulties and psychosocial problems (see, e.g., Lindberg, 2007).

#### Pupils’ bullying in relation to their sense of coherence

The original SOC questionnaire was developed to assess the life situation of adults.<sup>63</sup> A person with a strong sense of coherence handles demands and pressures in different areas of life adequately. The sense of coherence means that such stress factors are perceived as comprehensible, manageable and meaningful.

These three elements are different aspects of the term SOC. The original questionnaire was modified in this study to capture how pupils perceive school as an area of life (cf. Bowen et al., 1998). Some of the findings from the questions in the SOC component of meaningfulness are shown below. Table 7.8 shows the proportion of positive responses as well as an average value for meaningfulness.<sup>64</sup>

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63 A person growing up and living in favourable circumstances who has access to social support and has a strong ego and other so-called *general resistance resources* will, according to Antonovsky (1987), develop a strong *sense of coherence*. General resistance resources offer the individual life experiences characterised by *consistency* (stability and predictability, which create security), *balance* between over- and underloading (balance between stress/demands and available resources) and *participation* in processes that affect/are important to the individual’s daily life (Antonovsky, 1979). Consistency of experiences refers to the SOC component comprehensibility. Balance between over- and underloading, and between stress/demands and available resources refers to the SOC component manageability. Participation in decision-making processes refers to the SOC component meaningfulness (1987:92). Put another way, the term sense of coherence (SOC) may be seen as an individual’s propensity to observe and relate to life in general “rather than as a response to a specific situation” (Antonovsky 1987:75). In this sense, SOC is part of the individual’s *global orientation*. We have modified the SOC questionnaire in order to capture the pupils’ *local orientation*, i.e. how they perceive the school as an area of life.

64 In addition to the response “yes”, pupils could also choose “yes and no” or “no”. The original responses in the battery of questions about pupils’ sense of coherence have the following values: 1 = yes, 2 = yes and no, and 3 = no. Questions that are formulated positively such as “I look forward to going to school” have been re-coded so that high values correspond to a positive response (1 = no, 2 = yes and no, 3 = yes). Only pupils who answered all the questions in each SOC component are included in the calculation of the mean value for meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability.

**Table 7.8** Pupils bullying in relation to meaningfulness (KASAM) by younger and older pupils

		School year					
		4-6			7-9		
		Not victimised	Victimised (but not bullied)	Bullied	Not victimised	Victimised (but not bullied)	Bullied
Number in group		1 082	1 546	252	1 911	2 795	393
I look forward to going to school	yes	67 %	53 %	39 %	36 %	28 %	19 %
I think it's fun being in school	yes	65 %	51 %	35 %	35 %	29 %	22 %
I look forward to learning new things in school	yes	78 %	70 %	61 %	51 %	45 %	44 %
KASAM: Meaningfulness	Mean	7.94	7.49	6.81	6.82	6.47	5.89
High values = positive.	No. re-sponses	1 026	1 438	234	1 780	2 559	348
Max. value: 9							

As the table shows, the proportion of pupils who think it is fun to be in school and who look forward to going to school and learning new things was consistently lower among bullied pupils than among pupils who were at risk in other ways or not at risk at all. The greatest difference between not bullied (65 per cent) and bullied pupils (35 per cent) is in the younger age group (years 4-6), as reflected in the question on whether they thought it was fun to be in school. The mean value, which is a composite score for meaningfulness, decreased with the degree of victimisation regardless of whether the pupils were older or younger. Among the pupils who were not bullied, it can be noted that younger pupils, to a greater degree than older ones, found school meaningful.

Findings for the SOC components *comprehensibility* and *manageability* were very similar to those for meaningfulness. Comprehensibility and manageability decreased with the degree of bullying regardless of whether the pupils were younger or older (see Tables A. 1 and A. 2 in the Table attachment).

Table 7.9 presents the composite scores for each SOC component distributed by different pupil categories, and younger and older pupils. As the table shows, meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability decreased, as did the

**Table 7.9** Pupils' bullying in relation to *meaningfulness, comprehensibility, manageability* and *sense of coherence* (KASAM total) by younger and older pupils

		School year					
		4-6			7-9		
		Not victimised	Victimised (but not bullied)	Bullied	Not victimised	Victimised (but not bullied)	Bullied
Number in group		1 082	1 546	252	1 911	2 795	393
KASAM: Meaningfulness	Mean	7.94	7.49	6.81	6.82	6.47	5.89
Max. value 9	No. responses	1 026	1 438	234	1 780	2 559	348
KASAM: Comprehensibility	Mean	10.45	9.83	9.13	9.95	9.45	8.23
Max. value 12	No. responses	1 014	1 411	231	1 737	2 535	345
KASAM: Manageability	Mean	13.92	13.11	11.99	13.11	12.31	11.10
Max. value 15	No. responses	1 007	1 419	232	1 753	2 530	343
KASAM: Total	Mean	32.31	30.46	27.94	29.88	28.26	25.26
Max. value 36	No. responses	991	1 380	230	1 710	2 485	339

High values = positive

**Table 7.10** Pupils' bullying by number of friends in the class, number and percent

		Socially and/or physically:			Total
		Not victimised	Victimised (but not bullied)	Bullied	
How many friends do have you in the class?	Not one	17 0.6 %	45 1.0 %	69 10.7 %	131 1.6 %
	A good friend	56 1.9 %	128 2.9 %	51 7.9 %	235 2.9 %
	2–3 good friends	342 11.4 %	778 17.9 %	162 25.1 %	1 282 16.1 %
	4 or more good friends	2 422 81.1 %	3 110 71.6 %	296 45.9 %	5 828 73.0 %
	Don't know	151 5.1 %	285 6.6 %	67 10.4 %	503 6.3 %
	Total	2 988 100.0 %	4 346 100.0 %	645 100.0 %	7 979 100.0 %

SOC mean, in relation to the degree of bullying, regardless of whether the pupils were younger or older.

Overall, the findings indicate that pupils' sense of coherence is associated with the degree of bullying in the life situation reflected by the school. If Antonovsky (1987) is correct in his reasoning that individuals' SOC is not stabilised until they are "young adults", there is every reason to believe that it is possible to influence bullied pupils' sense of coherence by making comprehensive changes in their school situation.<sup>65</sup>

#### Pupils' social relationships and bullying

As Table 7.10 shows, bullied pupils have fewer good friends than pupils who are victims of negative acts without being classified as bullied, and pupils who were not bullied at all.<sup>66</sup>

Bullying in relation to the pupil's relationship with the teacher points in the same direction. Bullied pupils trusted teachers less than other groups of pupils. For example, 27 per cent of bullied pupils said they trusted all or most teachers compared with 55 per cent in the non-bullied group. Of the bullied pupils, 22 per cent said they did not trust any teacher, while the corresponding percentage in the non-bullied group was 6 per cent (see Table A.3 in the Table attachment).<sup>67</sup> The pattern of pupils' perceptions of the number of teachers who care about them was similar. For example, 17 per cent of bullied pupils said that

65 Adult individuals with a weak or moderately strong SOC can reinforce their sense of coherence, even though permanent change is rare. In cases in which SOC changes more permanently, the reason is not found in isolated events, such as successful consultations with professionals in the health service. If anything, more permanent changes occur because such consultations lead the individual to participate in/enter radically diverse/changed institutional and sociocultural contexts. This in turn leads to the establishment of new patterns of experiences – experiences that mean that the degree of consistency, load balance and participation in socially valued decision-making processes is changed and remains over time (Antonovsky, 1987:123).

66 When we exclude the response "do not know", the relationship between pupils' bullying and number of friends becomes significant ( $\chi^2$  (6, N = 7 476) = 611.426,  $p < .0005$ )).

67 The relationship between pupils' victimisation and trust in teachers was significant. ( $\chi^2$  (6, N = 6 742) = 286.731,  $p < .0005$ )).

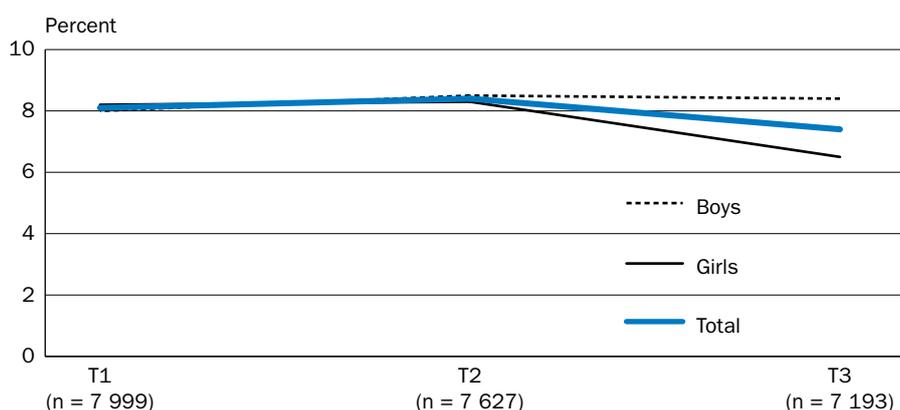
no teacher cared about them. In the non-victimised group, the proportion was 2 per cent (see Table A.4 in the Methodology appendix, Table attachment).<sup>68</sup>

Naturally, the frequency of bullying is closely linked to pupils' social ties to peers and teachers. The link was even stronger in terms of pupils' victimisation in relation to classmates and teachers who care. A significantly higher proportion of bullied pupils (19 per cent) had very poor social ties (no friend in the class and no teacher who cared) compared with pupils who were not bullied (0.3 per cent) or pupils subjected to negative acts but not classified as bullied (0.4 per cent). (See Table A. 5 in the Table attachment.)<sup>69</sup> Judging from the findings, there is reason to believe that measures that promote social relationships reduce bullying.

### Bullying over time

In the initial survey, the bullying frequency of boys and girls was almost identical at approximately 8 per cent. The frequency of bullying fell by almost one per cent over the whole survey period.<sup>70</sup> Bullying of girls decreased while bullying of boys increased slightly (Figure 7.2).

**Figure 7.2** Total bullying and distribution by gender in percent



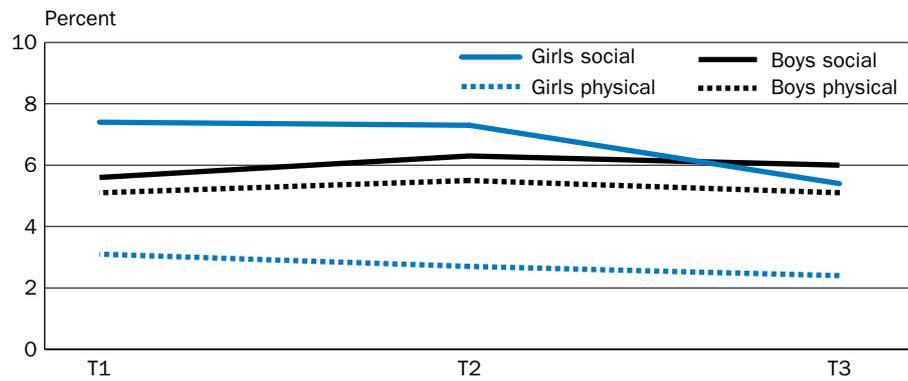
In the second survey, bullying increased slightly. One of the reasons for the increase in self-reporting may be that pupils at some schools, which had recently introduced an anti-bullying programme, had become more aware of what bullying is, how it is expressed, its consequences, etc. The fact that in the first survey bullying was just as frequent among girls as boys does not mean that they were generally subjected to the same type of bullying. Figure 7.3 shows that social bullying of girls was almost two percentage points higher than of boys. On the other hand, physical bullying of boys was two per cent higher than of girls. This

68 The relationship between pupils' bullying and teachers who care was also significant. ( $\chi^2$  (6, N = 7 125) = 507.524,  $p < .0005$ ).

69 The relationship between pupils' bullying and social ties to peers and teachers was significant. ( $\chi^2$  (6, N = 4 098 709) = 835,  $p < .0005$ ).

70 If we look at specific issues related to whether the pupil was the victim of isolated acts that can be categorised as bullying, the frequencies at the time of the first and the last survey were as follows: mocked, called nasty names (4.5 and 3.9 %), that pupils tried to get others to dislike the pupil by "badmouthing" them (2.6 and 2.5 %), cyber bullying (1.0 and 1.0 %), excluded (1.7 and 1.7 %), teacher or other member of staff said nasty and unpleasant things to the pupil (1.3 and 1.3 %), touched sexually (1.0 and 1.5 %), pushed, held (2.0 and 2.2 %), threatened (2.7 and 2.4 %), hit, kicked (1.5 and 1.6 %). It should be noted in this context that the frequency of "cyber bullying" was low compared to other acts.

**Figure 7.3** Physical and social bullying by gender in percent

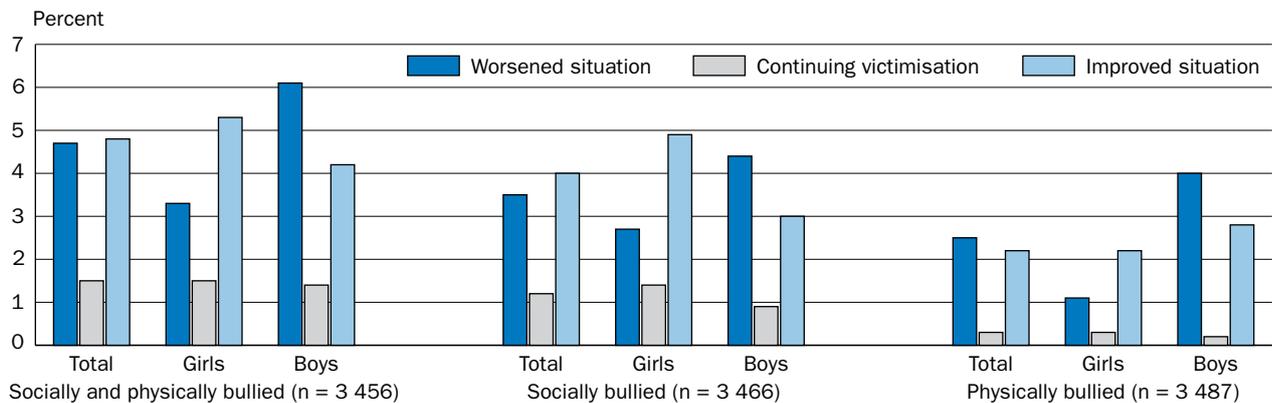


gender pattern is in line with findings from previous studies (for an overview, see Erikson et al., 2002). As far as the girls are concerned the change in trend was positive. Physical and social bullying both decreased over the survey period. However, the corresponding trend for boys was negative.

#### Changes in bullying at individual level

During the survey period, some pupils finished compulsory school while others started in year 4. These pupils did not have the opportunity to take part in more than one or two of the surveys. The findings in the previous section refer to the former and latter groups of pupils as well as to the pupils who participated in all three surveys. As individual pupil responses were registered over a period of time, it was possible to study, in greater detail, the pupils who participated in all three surveys. The findings provide a clearer picture of how stable or changeable bullying is. To determine whether various measures have reduced the bullying of individuals who have been bullied for varying periods, it is useful to follow the same pupils during the whole period over three surveys. Three groups of pupils whose exposure to bullying changed between the first and last surveys have been identified. One group consists of those who were not initially subjected to bullying but who were bullied at the time of the last survey (*worse situation*). Another group consists of pupils who were bullied in the first and the last survey (*continuing victimisation*). A third group consists of pupils who were bullied at the time of the first survey but not the last survey (*improved situation*).

**Figure 7.4** Changes in different types of bullying at individual level, total and by gender



A fourth group consists of pupils who were not subjected to any form of bullying (no change/not bullied). (This group is not shown in Figure 7.4.)

As shown in the figure, the proportion of pupils who had been bullied for the whole survey period was 1.5 per cent (*continuing victimisation*). The gender difference is marginal. There are clear gender differences among those whose situation had either improved or deteriorated. The proportion of boys whose *situation had deteriorated* was almost twice as great (6.1 per cent) as the corresponding group of girls (3.3 per cent). In relative terms, more girls (5.3 per cent) than boys (4.2 per cent) had an *improved situation*. The proportion of boys whose situation had deteriorated is thus greater than the proportion whose situation has improved, while the reverse is true for girls. All in all, the findings indicate that the bullying situation worsened for boys and improved for girls. This is consistent with the overall change shown in Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.4 also shows that just over one per cent of pupils were subjected to social bullying in both surveys. The proportion of girls was slightly greater than the proportion of boys. The gender pattern is otherwise the same as above. Relatively speaking, the situation deteriorated (rather than improved) for more boys, and improved (rather than deteriorated) for more girls.

The change in physical bullying, with one exception, shows a similar pattern. The proportion of pupils who *continued to be victims* exposed to physical bullying was almost the same for boys and girls. For boys, the situation essentially changed for the worse, while the situation for girls changed for the better. The exception is those whose situation improved, for which the proportion of boys was greater than the proportion of girls. This shows that there was greater variation in physical bullying of boys than of girls.

Figure 7.4 shows that the bullying reported in one single survey conceals the fact that a smaller proportion of pupils were subjected to bullying over a long period (*continuing victimisation*) and that bullying is a changing phenomenon for the majority of pupils who are bullied. This does, of course, not lessen the seriousness of the bullying problem. Subjection to bullying is a violation that tends to have negative consequences for a pupil's self-image, school situation, health and well-being in the short and long term (Lindberg and Johansson, 2008).

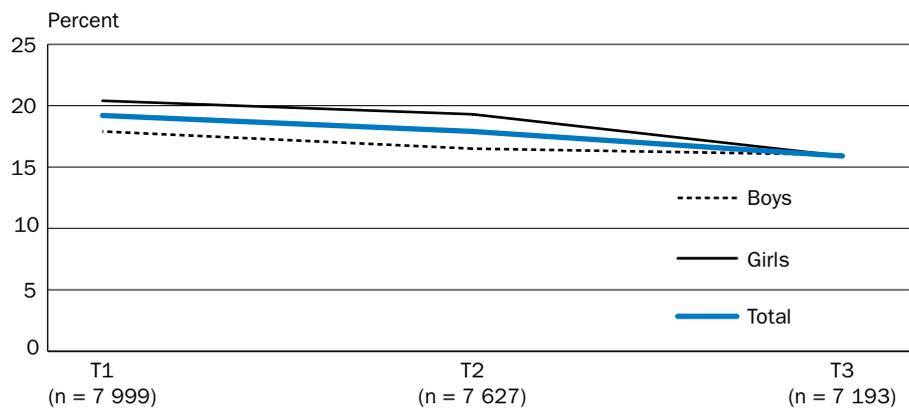
### Bullying and degrading treatment over time

If we include not only bullying but also degrading treatment, the overall findings show that degrading treatment decreased.<sup>71</sup> The proportion of girls who said they had been subjected to degrading treatment in the first survey was just over two percentage points greater than the proportion of boys. The difference between girls and boys was the same when the second survey was conducted. At the time of the last survey, there was little difference between the genders in this respect. Overall, the proportion of pupils who were subjected to degrading treatment decreased by just over three per cent during the survey period. The change in physically and socially degrading treatment over time, with one exception, shows a similar pattern to the one described earlier with respect to bullying alone.

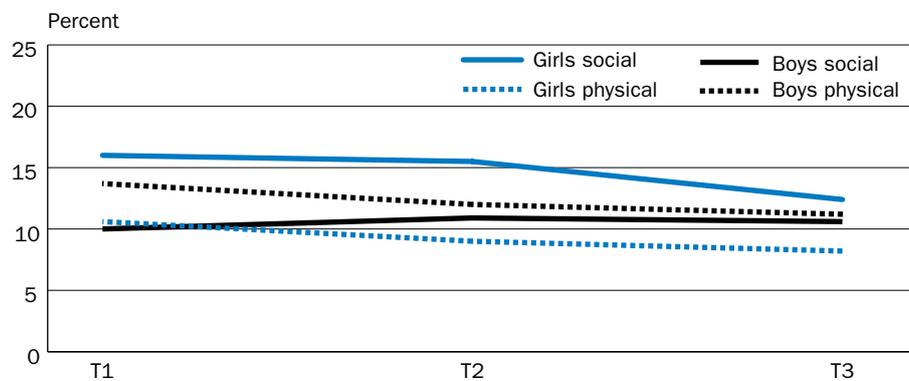
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71 In this section bullying and degrading treatment are treated jointly. Bullying and degrading treatment both refer to negative acts intended to cause harm and intimidate. The difference is that in the case of bullying the acts have occurred on repeated occasions.

**Figure 7.5** Social and physical victimisation by gender in percent



**Figure 7.6** Physical and social victimisation by gender in percent



As far as girls were concerned, there was a reduction in victimisation throughout the survey period. As regards boys, there was a decrease in the physical aspects of degrading treatment and an increase in the social aspects. The proportion of girls subjected to degrading social treatment was greater than the proportion of boys, however, even in the last survey.

### Summary

Essentially, the findings in Section 7.2 show the following:

- The proportion of pupils bullied at the time of the first survey was 8.1 per cent. The difference between boys and girls was small, but boys were physically bullied to a greater extent than girls and girls were socially bullied to a greater extent than boys.
- The perpetrator or perpetrators were usually “several in my class”. Bullying occurred mostly in the playground, in and around the toilets, in corridors or in the classroom. Bullying in the classroom with the teacher present was relatively high.
- The most common reasons bullied pupils gave for why they had been bullied were that others thought they were “too thin or too fat”, “other pupils were envious”, “they did not know”, and that “other pupils were stronger”. With regard to reasons that can be linked to the forms of discrimination, bullied girls gave gender as the reason more often than boys. Bullied boys for their

part gave ethnic origin as the reason to a greater extent than girls. It is worth noting that reasons related to the forms of discrimination were given much less frequently compared with other reasons, such as being too thin or too fat in the opinion of other pupils, or that other pupils were envious or stronger.

- Feelings of shame were the most common reactions to negative acts among bullied pupils. The findings indicate that it is the repetition of negative acts that has a detrimental effect on pupils' self-esteem rather than being subjected to degrading treatment, i.e. occasionally being subjected to malicious acts.
- Pupils' sense of coherence (SOC) is linked to their degree of victimisation.
- Bullied pupils have fewer good friends, trust teachers less, feel to a lesser extent that teachers care about them, and have very poor social ties to others in school compared with pupils who are not bullied.
- Overall, the frequency of bullying decreased during the survey period. There was a decrease in bullying of girls. At the same time this increased slightly for boys.
- Bullying reported in one survey does not show that a small proportion of pupils are subjected to bullying over a long period and that bullying is a changing phenomenon for the majority of pupils bullied. The proportion of pupils bullied throughout the survey period was 1.5 per cent. For 4.8 per cent of respondents the situation improved (from being bullied to not being bullied). However, for 4.7 per cent the situation deteriorated (no bullying to being bullied).
- Overall, the proportion of pupils who were subjected to degrading treatment during the survey period decreased. In contrast to bullying, over time there was a reduction in gender differences as regards degrading treatment.

### 7.3 Effects of individual and groups of measures

After reporting the extent of bullying, this section reports on the effects of *individual measures* (components) and *groups of measures* (component clusters) on the scope of bullying, degrading treatment and perpetrators.

The section starts off by examining the effects of measures on bullying in three tables. The first shows the effects calculated in three different ways for bullying as a total and disaggregated into social and physical bullying. The next two show the effects on boys and girls respectively. The comments first describe the significant effects in relation to measures on bullying as a whole, and thereafter the effects on social and physical bullying, taking into account gender factors.

The effects are reported using Odds ratios<sup>72</sup> based on different data: data from all pupils who answered the questionnaires (aggregate level) and data from the cohort of pupils responding to all the questionnaires (individual level).

A brief description of the models used for calculating the effects follows (for a more detailed description, see the section on different approaches to calculating effects in the Methodology appendix).

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72 An Odds ratio is the ratio of two probabilities that an event will occur. The probability prior to a certain point in time is divided by the probability after the point in time. If the probability decreases, the ratio will be greater than 1 since a larger number is divided by a smaller one. If the Odds ratios in the tables in this evaluation are greater than 1, they show that the risk of being bullied decreased and the situation improved.

In model 1, measures and groups of measures (component clusters) are related to changes in the proportion bullied at the first and last survey (aggregate level). Positive outcomes indicate that the measure reduces bullying. With model 1 there is a risk that measures that had a low equivalent effect in both questionnaires are disregarded. Model 2 is used to compensate for this. Model 2 measures the effect of measures on the basis of differences in the frequency of bullying in the last survey (aggregate level). If the proportion bullied is significantly lower in schools in which the measure is strong, it indicates that the measure has a positive effect on bullying. Model 3 is based on calculating the effects on individuals bullied for short or long periods (individual level). The measures are related to the proportion of individuals whose *situation worsened* (not bullied in the first questionnaire, but in the last) or who *continued to be bullied* (bullied in both questionnaires). Positive outcomes indicate that the measure reduces bullying.

When assessing the effects, those from model 3 (individual level) are given greater importance than the effects calculated using model 1 or 2 (aggregate level). From the models at the aggregate level, the effects from model 1 are given greater importance than those from model 2. The Methodology appendix contains a more detailed description of the methods and models used to assess the effects.

#### Effects on bullying – individual measures

Tables 7.11, 7.12 and 7.13 show significant effects at 0.05 and 0.01 levels in the form of Odds ratios (OR). An Odds ratio exceeding 1 means that the measure reduces bullying, i.e. it has an effect. An Odds ratio of less than 1 means that bullying has increased, i.e. the measure is counter-productive. Non-significant Odds ratios mean that the measure has no impact on bullying, i.e. it is ineffective.

The commentaries sometimes describe the effect in terms of relative risk reduction. The absolute risk reduction for different measures can be seen in the tables included in the Table attachment, which also reports the confidence intervals for the Odds ratios and, in certain cases, the relative risk reduction (see A.6 to A.40 in the Table attachment). Most of the single measures show some form of significant effect on bullying, as can be seen from tables 7.11–7.13.

#### Follow-up and evaluation

Identifying the situation of the pupils in terms of bullying and degrading treatment provides a picture and overview of the conditions at the school that can serve as a starting point and basis for decision-making on possible adjustments to the school's work in this area. *Follow-up/evaluation* reduces bullying. The risk of bullying continuing is reduced by 37 per cent at schools where follow-up is carried out regularly and this has a direct impact on anti-bullying work, compared with schools where follow-up is carried out intermittently without any impact on bullying or where the measure is not used.<sup>73</sup> *Follow-up/evaluation* reduces social and physical bullying of girls but not of boys. In the group of girls who were bullied for a short period (worse situation) or long period (*continued bullying*) (model 3), the risk of social bullying decreased by 48 per cent in

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73 The extent to which the risk of bullying or continuation of bullying is reduced for different measures is not shown in tables 7.11–7.13. The relative reduction in risk for different measures and groups of measures is shown in the Table attachment.

**Table 7.11** Effects of individual measures and combinations of measures on bullying

Measures and combinations of measures	Model I: Change in bullying over time			Model II: Effect in last survey			Model III: Effect on individuals bullied shorter or longer periods		
	Social/Physic.	Social	Physical	Social/Physic.	Social	Physical	Social/Physic.	Social	Physical
C1: Follow-up/evaluation	1.32 <sup>1</sup>		1.56 <sup>1</sup>	1.31 <sup>1</sup>		1.40 <sup>1</sup>	1.63 <sup>1</sup>	1.90 <sup>2</sup>	
C2: Relationship-enhancing measures teacher-pupil									
C3: Relationship-enhancing measures pupil-pupil			1.35 <sup>1</sup>	1.29 <sup>2</sup>	1.30 <sup>1</sup>	1.36 <sup>1</sup>	1.44 <sup>1</sup>		
C4: Special lessons									
C5: Pupils as players	0.80 <sup>1</sup>	0.77 <sup>1</sup>							
C6: Pupils active in prevention				1.37 <sup>1</sup>		1.53 <sup>1</sup>	1.70 <sup>1</sup>		
C7: Disciplinary strategies	1.61 <sup>1</sup>	1.67 <sup>1</sup>							
C8: School rules				1.27 <sup>1</sup>	1.23 <sup>1</sup>				
C9: School assemblies about bullying									
C10: Training material									
C12: Staff training (bull, degr. trt.)							1.37 <sup>1</sup>	1.43 <sup>1</sup>	
C13: Parent information/training									
C14: Break monitoring system	1.30 <sup>1</sup>			1.29 <sup>1</sup>	1.30 <sup>1</sup>				
C15: Cooperative teams	1.30 <sup>1</sup>			1.50 <sup>2</sup>	1.41 <sup>2</sup>	1.39 <sup>1</sup>	1.76 <sup>2</sup>	1.48 <sup>1</sup>	1.61 <sup>1</sup>
C16: Case documentation							1.41 <sup>1</sup>	1.41 <sup>1</sup>	1.70 <sup>1</sup>
C17a: Dealing with bullies									
C17b: Dealing with bullies			1.83 <sup>2</sup>	1.40 <sup>1</sup>	1.45 <sup>1</sup>	1.73 <sup>2</sup>	1.76 <sup>2</sup>	1.75 <sup>1</sup>	2.57 <sup>2</sup>
C18a: Dealing with victims									
C18b: Dealing with victims			1.83 <sup>2</sup>	1.40 <sup>1</sup>	1.45 <sup>1</sup>	1.73 <sup>2</sup>	1.76 <sup>2</sup>	1.75 <sup>1</sup>	2.57 <sup>2</sup>
C19: Mediation									
Component cluster 1	1.31 <sup>1</sup>								
Component cluster 2			1.37 <sup>1</sup>	1.23 <sup>1</sup>	1.25 <sup>1</sup>		1.34 <sup>1</sup>		
Component cluster 3, see special lessons									
Component cluster 4				1.36 <sup>2</sup>	1.28 <sup>1</sup>	1.42 <sup>2</sup>			
Component cluster 5									
Component cluster 6									
Component cluster 7									

<sup>1</sup> Significant at 0.05 level.

<sup>2</sup> Significant at 0.01 level.

schools where the measure was strong compared with schools where follow-up/evaluation was weak or non-existent.

### Relationship-enhancing measures pupil-pupil

*Relationship-enhancing measures* reduce bullying of individuals who have been bullied for short or long periods. Bullying in the group decreased by 29 per cent in schools using a deliberate strategy of creating a sense of community and promoting pupil relationships compared with schools where this was lacking or they were only used on an ad hoc basis. The measure mainly reduces physical bullying of boys. Amongst the boys bullied for short or long periods, relationship-enhancing measures also reduced social bullying. The risk of social bullying of boys continuing decreased by 40 per cent at schools where the measure was strong as opposed to schools where it was weak.

### Pupils as players

A strong measure in terms of *pupils as players* means that the schools have internally or externally trained pupils who function as observers and rapporteurs.

**Table 7.12** Effects of individual measures and combinations of measures on bullying of girls

Measures and combinations of measures	Model I: Change in bullying over time			Model II: Effect in last survey			Model III: Effect on individuals bullied shorter or longer periods		
	Social/Physic.	Social	Physical	Social/Physic.	Social	Physical	Social/Physic.	Social	Physical
C1: Follow-up/evaluation	1.51 <sup>1</sup>	1.52 <sup>1</sup>	1.86 <sup>1</sup>					1.98 <sup>1</sup>	
C2: Relationship-enhancing measures teacher-pupil									
C3: Relationship-enhancing measures pupil-pupil									
C4: Special lessons				0.42 <sup>2</sup>					
C5: Pupils as players									
C6: Pupils active in prevention	1.85 <sup>1</sup>		2.91 <sup>1</sup>						
C7: Disciplinary strategies									
C8: School rules									
C9: School assemblies about bullying	1.94 <sup>1</sup>	2.03 <sup>1</sup>							
C10: Training material									
C12: Staff training (bull, degr. trt.)			2.02 <sup>2</sup>						
C13: Parent information/training									
C14: Break monitoring system	1.46 <sup>1</sup>				1.49 <sup>1</sup>				
C15: Cooperative teams									
C16: Case documentation									
C17a: Dealing with bullies	1.50 <sup>1</sup>	1.52 <sup>1</sup>							
C17b: Dealing with bullies									
C18a: Dealing with victims	1.67 <sup>2</sup>	1.58 <sup>1</sup>							
C18b: Dealing with victims									
C19: Mediation				0.58 <sup>1</sup>		0.38 <sup>2</sup>			
Component cluster 1	1.82 <sup>2</sup>	1.65 <sup>2</sup>	1.93 <sup>1</sup>						
Component cluster 2									
Component cluster 3, see special lessons				0.42 <sup>2</sup>					
Component cluster 4				1.38 <sup>1</sup>	1.36 <sup>1</sup>				
Component cluster 5				6.36 <sup>1</sup>	<sup>1</sup>				
Component cluster 6				0.49 <sup>1</sup>		0.38 <sup>1</sup>			
Component cluster 7									

<sup>1</sup> Significant at 0.05 level.

<sup>2</sup> Significant at 0.01 level.

One example of this is peer supports. A weak measure means that this is lacking or that the peer supports were untrained. *Pupils as players* shows negative effects on bullying when calculations are based on how the proportion of bullied pupils changed between the surveys. This is because there was a positive effect in the first survey that no longer existed in the second survey. The measure is also counterproductive for social bullying of boys and the change in effect is the same – a positive effect in the first survey that no longer exists in the second.

### Pupils' active participation in prevention

*Pupils' active participation in prevention* reduces bullying, including of individuals who have been bullied for short or long periods (model 3). In schools that use this measure extensively, for example, those that allow pupils to carry out different activities, such as running the school cafeteria, talks with friends, etc., the risk of bullying continuing decreased by 39 per cent compared with schools where this measure was lacking or hardly used. The measure reduces physical bullying, particularly among girls.

**Table 7.13** Effects of individual measures and combinations of measures on bullying of boys

Measures and combinations of measures	Model I: Change in bullying over time			Model II: Effect in last survey			Model III: Effect on individuals bullied shorter or longer periods		
	Social/Physic.	Social	Physical	Social/Physic.	Social	Physical	Social/Physic.	Social	Physical
C1: Follow-up/evaluation									
C2: Relationship-enhancing measures teacher-pupil									
C3: Relationship-enhancing measures pupil-pupil	1.38 <sup>1</sup>		1.56 <sup>1</sup>	1.60 <sup>2</sup>	1.63 <sup>1</sup>	1.71 <sup>2</sup>	1.82 <sup>2</sup>	1.70 <sup>1</sup>	1.66 <sup>1</sup>
C4: Special lessons									
C5: Pupils as players	0.76 <sup>1</sup>	0.64 <sup>1</sup>							
C6: Pupils active in prevention									
C7: Disciplinary strategies	2.14 <sup>1</sup>	2.78 <sup>2</sup>		1.96 <sup>1</sup>	2.58 <sup>1</sup>				
C8: School rules				1.35 <sup>1</sup>		1.37 <sup>1</sup>			
C9: School assemblies about bullying		0.50 <sup>1</sup>							
C10: Training material									
C12: Staff training (bull, degr. trt.)							1.66 <sup>2</sup>	1.67 <sup>1</sup>	
C13: Parent information/training									
C14: Break monitoring system									
C15: Cooperative teams				1.66 <sup>2</sup>	1.46 <sup>1</sup>	1.68 <sup>2</sup>	2.25 <sup>2</sup>	1.78 <sup>1</sup>	2.02 <sup>2</sup>
C16: Case documentation					1.32 <sup>1</sup>	1.44 <sup>1</sup>	1.53 <sup>1</sup>		1.95 <sup>2</sup>
C17a: Dealing with bullies									
C17b: Dealing with bullies			1.98 <sup>1</sup>	1.60 <sup>2</sup>	1.71 <sup>2</sup>	2.21 <sup>2</sup>	2.11 <sup>2</sup>	2.44 <sup>2</sup>	3.35 <sup>2</sup>
C18a: Dealing with victims									
C18b: Dealing with victims			1.98 <sup>1</sup>	1.60 <sup>2</sup>	1.71 <sup>2</sup>	2.21 <sup>2</sup>	2.11 <sup>2</sup>	2.44 <sup>2</sup>	3.35 <sup>2</sup>
C19: Mediation									
Component cluster 1									
Component cluster 2	1.35 <sup>1</sup>		1.59 <sup>1</sup>	1.48 <sup>2</sup>	1.57 <sup>2</sup>	1.54 <sup>2</sup>	1.82 <sup>2</sup>	1.78 <sup>2</sup>	
Component cluster 3, see special lessons									
Component cluster 4				1.36 <sup>1</sup>		1.45 <sup>1</sup>			
Component cluster 5									
Component cluster 6	2.80 <sup>1</sup>								
Component cluster 7									

<sup>1</sup> Significant at 0.05 level.

<sup>2</sup> Significant at 0.01 level.

### Disciplinary strategies

*Disciplinary strategies* reduce bullying. In the first survey, the frequency of bullying was higher in schools with strong disciplinary measures than in schools with weak disciplinary measures. In the last survey, the relationship was the reverse. Changes in the effects were significant. The measure reduces the risk of bullying by slightly less than 30 per cent at schools where the measure was considered strong compared with schools where it was weak. The measure has an effect on bullying of boys, particularly on boys who were subjected to social bullying over time.

### School rules

*School rules* have a positive effect on bullying. The risk of being subjected to bullying in the first survey was reduced by about 20 per cent at schools where school rules were drawn up cooperatively between staff and pupils compared with schools where such rules were either lacking or drawn up only by the staff. School rules have a significant effect, primarily on physical bullying, but only of boys not of girls.

### **School assemblies about bullying**

The measure *school assembly about bullying* reduces bullying of girls, particularly social bullying. For boys, if anything, the measure was counter-productive.

### **Staff training**

*Staff training* reduces bullying of individuals bullied over short or long periods (model 3). At schools where the majority of staff received training on bullying or degrading treatment, the risk of bullying was reduced by 25 per cent compared with schools where the staff did not receive training or where only some staff received training. The pattern differs for girls and boys. Staff training reduces physical bullying of girls and of boys who have been socially bullied for short or long periods.

### **Break monitoring system**

The measure combination *system for monitoring school breaks* reduces bullying. The risk of bullying is reduced by just over 20 per cent at schools where the monitoring system is timetabled based on identifying 'dangerous places' and developed in the sense that activities are arranged during breaks by staff, compared with schools where monitoring is lacking or not applied. The monitoring system primarily reduces bullying of girls. At schools where the system was considered strong, bullying of girls was reduced by just over 25 per cent compared with schools where the measure was considered weak.

### **Cooperative teams**

The measure *cooperative teams* also reduces bullying of individuals who have been bullied for short or long periods (model 3). In the latter case, the risk of bullying was reduced by 41 per cent at schools where the teams consisted of staff with special competence (social or special pedagogues, nurses, counsellors, etc.) and ordinary teachers compared with schools where cooperative teams either did not exist or were only run by staff with special competence. The effects apply exclusively to bullying of boys.

In three of the schools, pupils were also members of the cooperative team. The cooperative teams, which also involve pupils, work mainly with preventative measures but also on determining remedial measures. It is important that pupils at the school know how remedial work is carried out.

### **Case documentation**

Schools are required to document incidents, i.e. the investigation, measures and follow-up that should be carried out in the event that a pupil is bullied or subjected to degrading treatment. The documentation can also be used to identify risk factors in the school. *Documentation of cases* reduces bullying of individuals who have been subjected to it over short or long periods. At schools where documentation is carried out in accordance with established routines, bullying of this group was reduced by about 30 per cent compared with schools where there were no routines or they were not followed. Documentation of cases reduces bullying, especially physical bullying of boys.

### **Dealing with bullies and victims**

The measures *dealing with bullies* and *dealing with victims* produce different results depending on the categorisation on which the analysis is based. If the

analysis is based on a categorisation in which strong measures are equated with “remedial, follow-up and processing/supportive routines” and weak measures are equated with “absence/existence of remedial routines” and “remedial and follow-up routines exist”, then both measures reduce bullying (social and/or physical) of girls. At schools where the measure *dealing with bullies* (C17a) was considered strong, social and physical bullying of girls was reduced by almost 40 per cent and social bullying of girls by just over 30 per cent compared with schools where the measures were considered weak. *Dealing with victims* (C18a) reduced the social/physical and social bullying of girls by just over 30 per cent at schools where the measure was considered strong as opposed to weak.

If the analyses are conducted based on a categorisation in which “remedial/follow-up” and “remedial/follow-up/processing/supportive” (strong) are compared against “lacking/remedial measures” (weak), the analyses show that *dealing with bullies* (C17b) and *dealing with victims* (C18b) both reduce bullying (social and/or physical) including bullying of individuals over short and long periods. In the latter case, the risk of bullying was reduced (social and/or physical) by just over 40 per cent at schools where the measures were considered strong as opposed to schools where they were weak. The corresponding figures for social and physical bullying were 41 and 60 per cent respectively.

Both measures reduce social and physical bullying of boys. In the group of boys who had been bullied for short periods (*worse situation*) or long periods (*continuing victimisation*), the risk of social bullying was reduced by 56 per cent at schools with strong measures compared with schools with weak measures. The corresponding figures for physical bullying were just over 67 per cent.

As far as boys were concerned, it appears to be important that remedial and investigatory/follow-up routines exist for dealing with bullies and victims. The analyses do not provide support for the notion that processing/supportive routines reduce bullying of boys.

### Special lessons

The effect of the measure *special lessons* (such as lessons in life skills, foundation values, Olweus lessons, togetherness lessons) differs from the measures reported earlier. Special lessons showed negative effects on bullying of girls and physical bullying of young boys (see Table A.39 in the Methodology appendix, Table attachment). In schools where the measure was considered strong, bullying was significantly higher in the last survey than in schools where it was considered weak. The categories “weak” and “strong” are defined as follows: schools that lack special lessons, arrange these when necessary (e.g. after incidents) or that carry out such lessons in certain classes have been categorised as ‘weak’, while schools with lessons for all classes have been categorised as ‘strong’. A possible explanation for these effects is that special lessons are not always appropriate for all groups of pupils. Instead of arranging such lessons on a routine basis for all pupil groups, perhaps the measure should be adapted to gender and age.

### Mediation

The measure *mediation* shows some negative effects. At schools where mediation is used as a routine when pupils are in conflict with each other, there is a higher risk that girls are subjected to bullying than at schools where it is not used as a routine. At schools where there are no mediation measures or there are only elements of mediation, the risk of physical bullying of girls is reduced by

just over 61 per cent compared with schools where mediation is used as a routine in the event of conflicts between pupils. Closer examination shows that the effects hold for older girls (years 7–9) for whom the risk is reduced by just over 80 per cent if mediation is ‘weak’ as opposed to ‘strong’ (see the tables A.25, A.30 and A.37 in the Table attachment). One reason mediation is counter-productive could be that bullying is not perceived as a conflict between equal parties and, hence, the conditions for mediation to function do not exist.

### Other measures

The measures *relationship-enhancing measures teacher-pupil, training material* and *parental information/training* appear to be ineffective. They show no significant effects on bullying.

### Effects on bullying – groups of measures

After reviewing the effects of individual measures on the frequency of different types of bullying, this section will cover measures that are connected to or associated with each other – groups of measures (see component clusters 1–7 in Tables 7.11 to 7.13).

For the 39 schools covered in the study, it is more common for certain measures to occur together. For example, it is more common for strong *relationship-enhancing measures teacher-pupil* to occur jointly with strong *relationship-enhancing measures pupil-pupil*. Schools where these measures are strong use a conscious strategy containing specific acts to create closeness/relations. The groups of measures have been formed on the basis of empirical combinations of measures. The measures in the example above form the measure combination *relationship-enhancing measures* (component cluster 2).

If specific measures in a group of measures show a reduction in bullying whilst others do not, the overall effect of the combination may be to reduce bullying. This is the case with, for example, *relationship-enhancing measures* with measures between teachers and pupils not showing any significant effects, while *relationship-enhancing measures* between pupils have effects as does the component cluster, in particular for boys. The measures in this and similar cases can be said to harmonise with each other. If the effects fail to materialise, the accumulated effect is not sufficient to give a result, which could be due to the measures neutralising each other.

The measure combinations that are linked directly to the work of combating bullying and degrading treatment will be discussed first below, followed by the different groups of measures that are indirectly linked to the anti-bullying work.

### Combinations of direct measures

The direct measure combination *detection and remedial measures* (component cluster 1) reduces bullying. The risk of bullying is reduced by just over 20 per cent at schools where the measure combination is strong compared with schools where it is weak. In the first survey, detection/remedial measures showed no effect. In the last survey, the effects were almost significant (0.06). The changes over time were significant however. It is worth noting that the frequency of bullying in the first survey was somewhat higher (8.5 per cent) at schools with strong use of this measure combination than at schools where it was weak (7.9 per cent), whilst the situation was the reverse in the last survey (6.6 per cent in

schools where it was strong and 7.8 per cent in schools where it was weak). The frequency of bullying thus decreased at schools that regularly carry out follow-up with a direct bearing on anti-bullying, have well-developed and timetabled systems for monitoring school breaks based on identifying dangerous places, organise activities for pupils during breaks, and have remedial follow-up and processing/supportive measures for pupils involved in bullying. *Detection and remedial measures* have an effect, particularly on girls. Social bullying of girls decreased by just over 35 per cent, and physical bullying by almost 50 per cent at schools where the measure combination was considered strong compared with schools where it was weak.

The direct measure combination *pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work* (component cluster 4) has an impact on bullying. At schools where pupil participation was strong with well-developed cooperative teams, school rules developed in cooperation between staff and pupils, and pupils had been internally or externally trained to function as observers and rapporteurs, the risk of bullying was reduced by almost 25 per cent compared with schools where pupil participation was described as weak. Closer examination shows that the effects on girls and boys differ somewhat. As regards girls, the effects are particularly conspicuous for social bullying. At schools where the measure combination was considered strong, there was a reduction in the risk of social bullying by just over 25 per cent for girls generally, and by just over 30 per cent for older girls (years 7–9) compared with schools where the measure combination was weak. Even though no effect can be observed on physical bullying of girls in general, a deeper analysis shows that the risk of physical bullying was reduced by almost 39 per cent amongst older girls (years 7–9). For boys the pattern was different. The effect was particularly prominent for physical bullying. The risk was reduced by almost 30 per cent. The greatest effect can be observed for young boys. In this group, the risk was reduced by just over 45 per cent.

### **Types of indirect measures**

The indirect measure combination *relationship-enhancing measures* (component cluster 2) reduces physical bullying generally and for individuals who have been bullied for short or long periods. Closer examination shows that the reductions can be exclusively attributed to a reduction in bullying of boys. At schools where relationship-enhancing measures were considered strong, the risk of physical bullying of boys decreased by just over 35 per cent compared with schools where the measure combination was weak. In the group of boys bullied for a short period (*worse situation*) or a long period (*continued victimisation*), there was also a reduction in the risk of social bullying of 43 per cent at schools where the measure was considered strong compared with schools where it was weak.

The indirect measure combination *pupil participation in indirect anti-bullying work* (component cluster 5) showed positive effects, particularly on social bullying of girls. Where pupils participated in indirect anti-bullying work that was considered strong, namely where pupils were very active in the prevention of bullying by running different activities, mediation was used as a routine when pupils were in conflict with each other, and school assemblies were held regularly on bullying of pupils, no social bullying took place amongst girls, while the proportion of socially bullied girls totalled 5.6 per cent at schools where pupil participation was considered weak. Active participation by pupils in

preventing bullying and school assemblies on bullying appear to counteract the counter-productive effect of mediation. The effect would probably have been even stronger if mediation had not been used at the schools where the measure combination “pupil participation in indirect anti-bullying work” was strong.

The indirect measure combination *formative measures* (component cluster 6) only reduces bullying of boys. At schools where the formative measures were strong, namely where disciplinary strategies existed to support teachers, training material was used systematically and parents were offered training on bullying and degrading treatment, the risk of bullying was reduced by just over 60 per cent compared with schools where these measures were less developed. Combining disciplinary strategies, training material and parent information/training contributed to strengthening disciplinary strategies as far as boys were concerned.

### Summing up – effects of measures and groups of measures against bullying

The analysis of anti-bullying measures shows the following:

- *Follow-up/evaluation* has an effect on bullying, particularly of girls who have been bullied for short or long periods and especially social bullying.
- *Relationship-enhancing measures* have an effect on bullying, particularly on boys who have been socially bullied for short or long periods.
- *Pupils' active participation in prevention* has an effect on bullying, in the first instance on girls who have been physically bullied for short or long periods.
- *Disciplinary strategies* have an effect on bullying, particularly on boys subjected to social bullying over time.
- *School rules* have an effect on bullying, particularly physical bullying of boys.
- The measure *school assembly about bullying* reduces bullying of girls.
- *Staff training* reduces bullying of individuals who have been bullied for short or long periods, particularly boys. As regards girls, there was a reduction in the first instance in the risk of physical bullying.
- The measure system for *monitoring school breaks* has an effect on bullying, particularly of girls.
- *Cooperative teams* have an effect but only on bullying of boys.
- *Case documentation* has an effect on bullying, particularly of boys who have been bullied for short or long periods.
- *Dealing with bullies* (C17a) reduced the risk of bullying of girls by almost 40 per cent and social bullying of girls by just over 30 per cent.
- *Dealing with victims* (C18a) reduced the risk of bullying of girls by just over 30 per cent at schools where the measure was considered strong. Dealing with bullies and dealing with victims (C17b and C18b) have an effect on social and physical bullying of boys. As far as boys are concerned, it appears crucial in dealing with bullies and victims that remedial and investigatory/follow-up routines are in place.
- The direct measure combination *detection and remedial measures* (component cluster 1) reduces bullying of girls.
- The indirect measure combination *relationship-enhancing measures* (component cluster 2) primarily reduces social bullying of boys subjected to bullying over short or long periods.
- The indirect measure combination *pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work* (component cluster 4) has a positive effect on bullying. As regards girls,

the effects are conspicuous for social bullying. For boys, the effect was particularly conspicuous regarding physical bullying.

- The indirect measure combination *pupil participation* (component cluster 5) showed positive effects on bullying, particularly on social bullying of girls.
- The indirect measure combination *formative measures* (component clusters 6) has the effect of exclusively reducing bullying of boys.

The individual measures that show the most significant effects in the different calculation models (ten or more) are those for which the anti-bullying work consists of the following measures: dealing with bullies and victims, cooperative teams, relationship-enhancing measures pupil-pupil and follow-up/evaluation. If all the measures that show significant effects in some respects are included, the anti-bullying work will consist of the following measures:

- Dealing with bullies
- Dealing with victims
- Cooperative teams
- Relationship-enhancing measures pupil-pupil
- Follow-up/evaluation
- Case documentation
- Disciplinary strategies
- Pupils active in prevention
- Staff training
- Break monitoring system
- School rules
- School assemblies about bullying

#### Effects on degrading treatment by individual measures and groups of measures

So far, the analyses have shown that some individual measures and groups of measures have a clearer effect on the frequency of bullying than others. In this section, the effects of individual measures and groups of measures are examined in relation to the broader definition of negative acts, namely bullying and degrading treatment.<sup>74</sup> The section will examine how the measures or groups of measures have an effect on perpetrators – those who subjected others to degrading treatment. This is done not only to study whether the measures may have effects other than those reported for bullying but also to examine whether individual measures or groups of measures can have an effect on the behaviour of perpetrators. As in the previous section, the reporting of effects is presented as Odds ratios.

#### Individual measures

The effects of individual measures on degrading treatment reveal similarities and differences compared with the effects on bullying.

##### *Follow-up/evaluation*

The measure *follow-up/evaluation* shows a positive effect on the perpetrators. In schools where the follow-up/evaluation is carried out regularly and it has a direct impact on bullying, the proportion of perpetrators is reduced by almost

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74 In this section the term degrading treatment is used and it also covers bullying.

37 per cent compared with schools where follow-up/evaluation does not take place, takes place intermittently or is carried out without any impact on bullying (weak).

*Relationship-enhancing measures pupil-pupil*

*Relationship-enhancing measures pupil-pupil* reduce degrading treatment. At schools where the measure was considered strong, the risk of degrading treatment was reduced by almost 20 per cent compared with schools where the measure was weak.

*Pupils active in prevention*

The measure *pupils active in prevention* reduces degrading treatment and has a positive effect on perpetrators. The risk of being subjected to degrading treatment was reduced by 20 per cent at schools where the measure was considered strong compared with schools where the measure was weak. As regards perpetrators, the proportion was reduced by just over 37 per cent at schools where the measure was considered strong compared with schools where it was weak.

*Disciplinary strategies*

*Disciplinary strategies* reduce degrading treatment. The risk of degrading treatment was reduced by just over 25 per cent at schools where disciplinary strategies were applied and teachers found support and acted in accordance with them compared with schools where disciplinary strategies were lacking or they existed but teachers acted independently of them.

*School rules*

*School rules* have a positive effect on degrading treatment. The risk of bullying was reduced by just over 17 per cent at schools where the measure of school rules was considered strong compared with schools where it was weak. The effect was significant, even in the initial survey, but as the change over time was not sufficiently large, the effect was not significant using model 1.

*Staff training*

*Staff training* only shows positive effects on the perpetrators. At schools where the majority of staff received training on bullying or degrading treatment, the proportion of perpetrators was reduced by 27 per cent compared with schools where the staff did not receive training or where only some staff received training.

*Break monitoring system*

The measure *system for monitoring school breaks* reduces degrading treatment. The risk was reduced by just under 20 per cent at schools with a developed monitoring system that was timetabled and based on 'dangerous places' and where special staff were present amongst the pupils arranging activities, compared with schools where the monitoring system was non-existent or only timetabled.

*Cooperative teams*

The measure *cooperative teams* reduces degrading treatment. The risk of being subjected to degrading treatment was reduced by 18 per cent at schools where

**Table 7.13** Effects of individual measures and combinations of measures on degrading treatment, victims and perpetrators

Measures and combinations of measures	Model I: Change in effect on degrading treatment over time		Model II: Effect in last survey	
	Degrading treatment	Victimised others for degrading treatment	Degrading treatment	Victimised others for degrading treatment
C1: Follow-up/evaluation				1.60 <sup>2</sup>
C2: Relationship-enhancing measures teacher-pupil				
C3: Relationship-enhancing measures pupil-pupil	1.26 <sup>2</sup>		1.26 <sup>2</sup>	
C4: Special lessons				
C5: Pupils as players		0.71 <sup>1</sup>		
C6: Pupils active in prevention	1.36 <sup>1</sup>		1.28 <sup>1</sup>	1.61 <sup>1</sup>
C7: Disciplinary strategies	1.58 <sup>1</sup>		1.40 <sup>1</sup>	
C8: School rules			1.26 <sup>2</sup>	
C9: School assemblies about bullying				
C10: Training material				
C12: Staff training (bull, degr. trt.)				1.40 <sup>1</sup>
C13: Parent information/training				0.49 <sup>2</sup>
C14: Break monitoring system	1.25 <sup>1</sup>		1.20 <sup>1</sup>	
C15: Cooperative teams	1.28 <sup>1</sup>		1.28 <sup>2</sup>	
C16: Case documentation				
C17a: Dealing with bullies				
C17b: Dealing with bullies	1.46 <sup>2</sup>			
C18a: Dealing with victims				
C18b: Dealing with victims	1.46 <sup>2</sup>			
C19: Mediation		0.37 <sup>2</sup>	0.77 <sup>1</sup>	0.50 <sup>1</sup>
Component cluster 1		1.53 <sup>2</sup>	1.23 <sup>1</sup>	1.35 <sup>1</sup>
Component cluster 2	1.25 <sup>1</sup>		1.16 <sup>1</sup>	
Component cluster 3, see special lessons				
Component cluster 4			1.29 <sup>2</sup>	
Component cluster 5				
Component cluster 6				
Component cluster 7				

<sup>1</sup> Significant at 0.05 level.

<sup>2</sup> Significant at 0.01 level.

the cooperative teams consisted of staff with special competence and regular teachers, compared with schools where cooperative teams were lacking or only had staff with special competence.

#### *Dealing with bullies and victims*

*Dealing with bullies* (C17b) and *dealing with victims* (C18b) reduce degrading treatment providing that strong measures in the form of “remedial/follow-up” and “remedial/follow-up/processing/supportive” exist compared with weak measures in the form of “non-existent/remedial measures”. The risk was reduced by about 30 per cent.

#### *Pupils as players*

The measure *pupils as players* only shows negative effects. When it comes to degrading treatment, the measure is counter-productive. The measure is also negative for perpetrators, as the proportion of pupils subjecting others to degrading treatment increased at schools where the measure was strong, compared with schools where it was considered weak.

### *Parent information/training*

*Parent information/training* is counter-productive as it shows a negative effect on degrading treatment.

### *Mediation*

The measure for *mediation* shows a negative effect on the frequency of degrading treatment. The effect is also negative on perpetrators. The proportion of pupils subjecting others to degrading treatment increased at schools where mediation was used as a routine to resolve conflicts between pupils compared with schools where it was lacking or not a routine. As in the case of bullying, it appears that the absence of mediation contributes to a reduction in degrading treatment and in the number of perpetrators.

### **Combinations of measures**

Three of the types of measures (component clusters) have an effect on degrading treatment and perpetrators – two direct types of measures and one indirect.

The first type of direct measure that shows a significant positive effect is *detection and remedial measures* (component cluster 1). This measure combination reduces the proportion of perpetrators by 30 per cent. As regards degrading treatment, the measure combination has a positive effect. The risk of degrading treatment is reduced by almost 16 per cent at schools where this type of measure is considered strong compared with schools where it is weak.

The measure combination *pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work* (component cluster 4) also has a positive effect on degrading treatment. At schools where these groups of measures were considered strong, the risk of degrading treatment was reduced by just over 19 per cent compared with schools where they were weak.

The indirect measures *relationship-enhancing measures* (component cluster 2) reduce degrading treatment. The risk of bullying is reduced by almost 20 per cent at schools where the measure combination is strong compared with schools where it is weak.

### **Summing up – effects of measures and types of measures on degrading treatment and perpetrators**

The majority of measures that were effective against bullying also show effects on degrading treatment and perpetrators of degrading treatment. It should be noted, however, that the effects are slightly less in the case of degrading treatment than for different forms of bullying. Overall, the effects of different measures on degrading treatment and perpetrators can be summarised as follows:

- The measure *follow-up/evaluation* only shows positive effects on perpetrators.
- *Relationship-enhancing measures pupil-pupil* reduce degrading treatment.
- The measure *pupils active in prevention* reduces degrading treatment and has a positive effect on perpetrators.
- *Disciplinary strategies* reduce degrading treatment.
- The measure *school rules* has a positive effect on degrading treatment.
- *Staff training* only has a positive effect on perpetrators.
- The measure *system for monitoring school breaks* reduces degrading treatment.
- *Cooperative teams* similarly have an effect on reducing degrading treatment.

- The measures *dealing with bullies* and *dealing with victims* reduce degrading treatment provided that the measures are “remedial/follow-up” and “remedial/follow-up/processing/supportive”.
- The direct measure combination *detection and remedial measures* (component cluster 1) reduces the proportion of perpetrators and has a positive effect on degrading treatment.
- The direct measure combination *pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work* (component cluster 4) has a positive effect on degrading treatment.
- The indirect measure combination *relationship-enhancing measures* (component cluster 2) reduces degrading treatment.

## 7.4 School clusters – contextual conditions and effects on bullying and degrading treatment

### Working methods for school clusters

The Methodology appendix describes the differences between school clusters in terms of methods used for combating bullying and degrading treatment. Table 7.15 recapitulates the essence of this. ± signs in the tables indicate whether the measure combinations are strong or weak in relation to the average for all schools in the study.

From Table 7.15, it can be seen that school clusters 3 and 8, in which the conditions set out in the preceding section for achieving success in combating bullying are less favourable, are also considered less developed for combating bullying and degrading treatment. For example, school cluster 8 has all the direct types of measures with values that are substantially below the averages for these groups of measures at all schools.<sup>75</sup> School cluster 3 shows four of seven groups of measures with values below the average. In school cluster 4, in which the conditions for succeeding in preventing bullying are more favourable than in school clusters 3 and 8, the view is that the working methods for combating bullying and degrading treatment are also more developed.

### School clusters – their structure and conditions

The requirements for anti-bullying measures to be successful include actively committed individuals and resources of various kinds, such as competent staff, organisational stability and staff who work together. The different methods and that the schools used combinations of measures were discussed in an earlier section. Based on this, schools could be grouped into clusters based on similarities in their working methods. This section provides examples of what different factors and contextual settings looked like for groups of schools with similar working methods for combating bullying and degrading treatment (school cluster).

75 Plus and minus signs indicate that the standardised values are about 0.60 standard deviations above or below the mean for different groups of measures (see Methodology appendix, 3.11, for further information). For example, the mean value for CC4 for all schools is 1.48 and the standard deviation is 0.48. The standardised value for CC4 in school cluster 8 is equal to minus 1.28 (-1.28). The figure -1.28 shows the magnitude in relation to the mean value or, more precisely, that the original value for CC4 in school cluster 8 (= 0.87) is 1.28 standard deviations under the mean value for the variable CC4 ( $-1.28 \times 0.48 = -0.6144 + 1.48 = 0.8656$ ). Another example is the following: the standardised value for CC4 in school cluster 1 is equal to 0.95. The figure 0.95 indicates that the original value in school cluster 1 (= 1.93) lies 0.95 standard deviations above the mean value for the variable CC4 ( $0.95 \times 0.48 = 0.456 + 1.48 = 1.936$ ).

**Table 7.15** Combinations of measures, in groups of schools with similar working methods

Combinations of measures (component clusters)	Groups of schools with similar ways of working (school clusters)								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Direct</b>									
<i>Pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work</i> CC 4: school rules + pupils as players + cooperative team	+	+	-			-	+	-	+
<i>Documentation, staff training</i> CC 7: documentation of incidents + staff training		+	-			+	-	-	+
<i>Detection/remedial measures</i> CC 1: Follow-up/evaluation + break monitoring system + dealing with bullies + dealing with victims	-	-		+		+	+	-	+
<b>Indirect</b>									
<i>Relationship-enhancing measures</i> CC 2: relationship-enhancing measures teacher-pupil + pupil-pupil			+	+		-	-		-
CC3: Special lessons	-		-		-	+	+		-
<i>Formative measures</i> CC 6: disciplinary strategies + train. mtrl. + parent information/training	-		-	+					-
<i>Pupil participation in indirect anti-bullying work</i> CC 5: pupils active + mediation + school assembly for pupils				+				-	+
Overall assessment	Less developed	Neither more/less developed	Less developed	More developed	Neither more/less developed	More developed	More developed	Less developed	More developed than less

As regards school cluster 9, in which there is only one school, this is not discussed any further in the text. However, the school cluster appears in the tables as it is part of the study material.

The section starts off with a description of a number of factors or comparative figures from the National Agency for Education's databases (see Table 7.16).

The nationwide average for the proportion of teachers with pedagogical qualifications from higher education was 85 per cent during the period 2007/08. For teachers with special pedagogical qualifications in higher education, the national average was 6.5 per cent. The corresponding percentages for all the schools in the study were 86 and 5 per cent, thus fairly close to national levels.<sup>76</sup>

During the period 2007/08, the teacher-pupil ratio was 8.3 teachers per one hundred pupils nationally, and the proportion of female teachers was just over 74 per cent. Of the schools participating in the study, the corresponding values

<sup>76</sup> The lowest proportion of teachers with a pedagogical qualification from higher education was in school cluster 3 (79 per cent), in which two of three schools had values below the national average and the highest value was in cluster 9 (97 per cent) – which only consists of one school. Otherwise, the schools in cluster 2 were all above the national average. With regard to teachers with special pedagogical qualifications from higher education, all the schools in school cluster 4 had a value below than the national average of 6.5 per cent. The single highest value was in school cluster 8, in which the proportion of teachers with special pedagogical qualifications from higher education was 23 per cent in one school.

**Table 7.16** Comparative figures by groups of schools

	Groups of schools (school clusters)									Total	National average 07/08
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
No. schools	5	4	3	6	6	6	3	5	1	39	
Teachers with higher education qualification in percent	90.2	93.1	78.6	80.7	85.6	88.0	86.3	84.7	97.1	86.3	84.9 %
Teachers with special educational qualifications from higher education in percent	7.0	7.9	5.9	0.4	4.3	3.4	6.0	8.6	12.7	5.3	6.5 %
Teachers per hundred pupils	8.6	8.8	8.8	7.2	8.4	9.0	8.5	9.0	8.6	8.5	8.3
Teachers, women in percent	70.5	68.1	65.1	70.3	77.5	75.0	70.9	70.1	75.5	71.7	74.4 %
Pupils entitled to mother tongue tuition, in percent	16.2	8.0	10.3	11.3	38.5	23.8	10.0	21.6	2.0	18.6	17.35 <sup>1</sup>
Parents' highest level of education, (percent) <sup>2</sup> :											
pre-upper secondary	4.2	5.3	2.7	3.0	12.0	6.5	3.5	8.2	0	6.0	4.8
upper secondary	48.6	49.8	47.3	43.8	35.7	52.3	36.3	54.4	40.0	46.1	42.9
post-upper secondary	45.4	43.0	48.3	51.2	42.5	38.7	59.0	35.4	59.0	44.9	49.8
School years in the school cluster included in the evaluation	Years 4–9	Years 4–9	Years 6–9	Years 4–9	Years 4–6	Years 4–9					

<sup>1</sup> According to information from the National Agency for Education, the national average for pupils entitled to mother tongue tuition was 16.6 percent in 2007, and 18.1 percent in 2008, which gives an approximate value of 17.4 for the period 07/08.

<sup>2</sup> Percentage figures are based on data from the National Agency for Education and apply to the period 08/09. The reason that the percentage figures total to more than 100% is because data on parents' highest level of education is lacking for some pupils in the participating schools. At the national level, non-response was 2.4 percent.

were 8.5 and 72 per cent respectively. These values are also close to the national average.<sup>77</sup>

The proportion of pupils entitled to mother tongue tuition was somewhat higher in the participating schools than the national average. The highest value, 39 per cent was in school cluster 5. At two of the schools in this cluster, the proportion of pupils entitled to mother tongue tuition was 98 and 94 per cent, which were the highest values of all the participating schools.

The national average for parents' highest level of education during the period 08/09 was approximately 5 per cent pre-upper secondary school education, 43 per cent upper secondary education, and 50 per cent post-upper secondary education. The corresponding proportions in the schools in this study were 6, 46 and 45 per cent respectively, which means that the educational level generally was somewhat lower among participating schools.<sup>78</sup>

Essentially, the schools in the study have comparative figures resembling those for schools nationally with respect to most of their parameters. This is interesting, not least, in providing an estimate of whether the frequency of bul-

77 The group of schools with the lowest teacher-pupil ratios was school cluster 4, with an average value of 7.16 for 6 schools (five of these six schools had a value below the national average). The highest teacher-pupil ratio was in school clusters 6 and 8. In the former group of schools, all except one had a value exceeding the national average; in the latter there were two schools. The highest teacher-pupil ratio at individual schools was 12.2 at one school in school cluster 5. With regard to the proportion of female teachers, this was lowest in school cluster 3. This group of schools also had the lowest value of all the schools with 46 per cent female teachers.

78 The lowest level of education was in school cluster 5 in which the proportion of parents with pre-upper secondary education was 12 per cent. At two schools, the proportions were 35 and 27 per cent. The highest level of education was in school clusters 7 and 9 in which the proportion of parents with post-upper secondary education was almost 10 per cent higher than the national average.

lying varies between schools that lie above and below the national average with regard to these parameters. As mentioned earlier, comparative figures for each individual school (39 schools) were incorporated into the data registered for all the pupils belonging to these schools. As a result, it is possible to examine outcomes from the pupil questionnaires in relation to schools with different contextual settings, such as teacher-pupil ratios.

When the frequency of bullying at these schools is related to the comparative figures, significant differences were obtained for four of them. This applies to teachers per hundred pupils, for which the proportion of physically bullied pupils was somewhat higher (4.6 per cent) at schools below the national average for teacher-pupil ratios compared with schools above it (3.7 per cent).<sup>79</sup> This also applies to the proportion of teachers with a special pedagogical qualification from higher education. At schools where the proportion of special teachers was below the national average, not only was the proportion of physically bullied pupils higher (4.5 per cent) but the proportion of pupils who were socially and/or physically bullied was also higher (8.7 per cent). The corresponding percentages at schools with more special teachers were 3.3 and 7 per cent respectively.<sup>80</sup> In schools at which the proportion of pupils entitled to mother tongue tuition exceeded the national average, the frequency of bullying was generally significantly higher than at schools at which the value was below the national average (social/physical bullying 10–7.4 per cent, physical bullying 5.3–3.6 per cent, social bullying 7.9–6.0 per cent).<sup>81</sup> Finally, it was evident that the parental level of education was associated with the frequency of bullying. At schools where the proportion of parents with post-upper secondary education exceeded the national average, the proportion of pupils bullied was significantly lower than at schools where the proportion of parents with post-upper secondary education was below the national average (social/physical bullying 7.1–8.6 per cent, physical bullying 3.5–4.4 per cent, social bullying 5.6–7.0 per cent).<sup>82</sup>

The majority of schools in the project were working with several different programs. Irrespective of whether schools were working with a programme, the conditions for achieving success in anti-bullying were more favourable at some schools than others. This is indicated, amongst other things, by the results of a web-based staff questionnaire distributed to a sample including head teachers, mentors/class teachers and teachers from all the participating schools (872 persons).

79 Here we give an example of how we determined the variables for the comparative figures. Schools which had a teacher-pupil ratio, either below or equal to 8.3 teachers per hundred pupils were assigned a value (1). Schools with a teacher-pupil ratio of 8.4 or higher are assigned a different value (2) which means the opposite. The new variable has then been related to dichotomous variables describing pupils' victimisation (physically, socially, and also socially and/or physically bullied). The relationship between teacher-pupil ratios and physically bullied pupils is as mentioned significant ( $\chi^2$  (1, N = 8 034) = 4.635,  $p < .031$ )).

80 The relationship between special teachers and physically bullied pupils:  $\chi^2$  (1, N = 8 034) = 7.443,  $p < .006$ . The relationship between special teachers, and socially and/or physically bullied pupils:  $\chi^2$  (1, N = 7 999) = 6.414,  $p < .011$ .

81 The relationship between the comparative number of pupils entitled to mother tongue tuition and bullying on the other hand was the following: socially and/or physically bullied:  $\chi^2$  (1, N = 7 999) = 13.666,  $p < .0005$ ; physically bullied:  $\chi^2$  (1, N = 8 034) = 11.505,  $p < .001$ ; socially bullied:  $\chi^2$  (1, N = 7 881) = 9.128,  $p < .003$ .

82 The relationship between comparative figures on parental level of education (above/below the national average in terms of post upper secondary education) and bullying on the other hand was the following: social and/or physically bullied:  $\chi^2$  (1, N = 7 999) = 5.587,  $p < .018$ ; physically bullied:  $\chi^2$  (1, N = 8 034) = 4.162,  $p < .041$ ; socially bullied:  $\chi^2$  (1, N = 7 881) = 5.719,  $p < .017$ .

Some questions deal with whether work on combating bullying and degrading treatment:

- a. is made difficult by a lack of resources, staff and/or financial resources (453 respondents)
- b. takes much time from other important tasks, such as teaching (455 respondents)
- c. is well anchored amongst all the staff at the school (457 respondents).

Just over half of the persons interviewed (483 or 55 per cent) responded to the questionnaire with options such as “matches very closely”, “matches quite well”, “matches quite badly”, “matches very badly”, “don’t know”. A quarter of the respondents were staff in the school’s safety or anti-bullying teams or similar.

With regard to whether the work to combat degrading treatment and bullying is made more difficult by a lack of resources, 62 per cent chose the option “matches very closely” or “matches quite well” (n = 279). The corresponding proportion for the statement that the work on combating degrading treatment and bullying takes much time from other important tasks, such as teaching, was 59 per cent (n = 267), and 81 per cent agreed with the statement that anti-bullying work was well anchored amongst all the staff (n = 369). These are relatively high figures. However, the non-response rate was too high for the results to be regarded as a direct reflection of the views of the surveyed groups. A simpler analysis of non-response can nevertheless give an indication of the extent to which the factors that are important in schools’ anti-bullying work are not always fulfilled. Questions a) and b), which are the statements expressed in a negative sense, can be taken as examples. If everyone in the non-response group had chosen the option “matches quite badly” or “matches very badly” – namely that they did not consider that anti-bullying initiatives were made more difficult by a lack of resources or took much time from other important tasks – the results would then have been that 32 per cent of the sample (279 of 872) considered that working against degrading treatment and/or bullying is made more difficult by a lack of resources, and 31 per cent (267 of 872) that anti-bullying work takes time from other important tasks. As a result, it is reasonable to assume that at least a third of school staff consider that work on anti-bullying is connected to certain difficulties (in reality the proportion is probably higher).

At the programme schools, there is a requirement that also seems to be difficult to satisfy – namely sticking closely to the programme or the requirement to “follow the manual”. Approximately 66 per cent (296 of 450) of the staff who responded to the questionnaire chose the option “matches very well” or “matches quite well” for the statement that the work against bullying and degrading treatment must be adapted to the situation, as it is difficult to base it on general strategies. If everyone in the non-response group had answered the opposite (if they had chosen the alternative “matches quite badly” or “matches very badly”), it would correspond to just over a third of the sampled population (296 of 872).

Table 7.17 shows the results of some of the questions in the staff questionnaire distributed by groups of schools with similar working methods against bullying and degrading treatment. The lower half of the table shows the results of questions related to the preceding section or, more precisely, questions that provide an indication of what pupils’ social relationships with their classmates and teachers were in the different school clusters.

**Table 7.17** Results from questionnaires to staff and pupils by groups of schools

	Groups of schools (school clusters)									Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
No. schools	5	4	3	6	6	6	3	5	1	39
Work combating degrading treatment/bullying made more difficult by lack of resources (staff and financial resources)	61 %	64 %	72 %	49 %	61 %	68 %	46 %	72 %	67 %	62 %
Work combating degrading treatment/bullying takes much time from other important tasks	62 %	67 %	53 %	65 %	63 %	62 %	38 %	56 %	50 %	59 %
Work combating degrading treatment/bullying is well anchored among all staff at the school	80 %	86 %	74 %	90 %	84 %	89 %	85 %	55 %	100 %	81 %
Work combating degrading treatment/bullying must be adapted to the situation	63 %	74 %	70 %	57 %	74 %	59 %	64 %	69 %	84 %	66 %
Work combating degrading treatment/bullying disrupted by frequent changes in organisational conditions	42 %	22 %	54 %	22 %	26 %	41 %	18 %	45 %	0	33 %
The table cells above show the percent responding "matches very/quite closely".										
Number pupils	1 509	957	497	1 030	1 259	1 010	744	1 247	94	8 347
<b>Friends in class</b>										
2, 3–4 or more	96 %	96 %	93 %	95 %	94 %	96 %	95 %	95 %	98 %	95 %
No one – a good friend	4 %	4 %	7 %	5 %	6 %	4 %	5 %	5 %	2 %	5 %
<b>Can rely on teachers</b>										
All – some teachers	82 %	86 %	78 %	82 %	81 %	81 %	78 %	75 %	96 %	81 %
One – no teachers	18 %	14 %	22 %	18 %	19 %	19 %	22 %	25 %	4 %	19 %
<b>Teachers care about you</b>										
All – several teachers	93 %	93 %	90 %	94 %	92 %	92 %	91 %	90 %	100 %	92 %
One – no teachers	7 %	7 %	10 %	6 %	8 %	8 %	9 %	10 %		8 %

Questions in the top half of the table relate to factors of importance for determining the success of the anti-bullying work. As can be seen from the results, there were differences between the school clusters in these respects. For example, school clusters 4 and 6 show positive results to the question of whether work on anti-bullying and degrading treatment was well anchored amongst all the staff. If adherence to the programme is essential to success, this question was answered relatively positively by staff in clusters 4 and 6. School clusters 4 and 7 differ from the other groups of schools in that a smaller proportion of staff agreed with the statement that anti-bullying work is made more difficult by a lack of resources.

School clusters 3 and 8 had conditions that were less favourable in several respects. One of these relates to the question on resources, for which 72 per cent of the respondents stated that work combating bullying and degrading treatment was made more difficult by the fact that there were insufficient resources. Another unfavourable factor is organisational instability. In clusters 3 and 8, the staff considered, to the greatest extent, that the organisational conditions often change. A third factor differentiating school clusters 3 and 8 in a negative sense is that a comparatively lower proportion of staff considered that work on combating bullying and degrading treatment was well anchored amongst all the staff.

In the bottom half of the table, showing pupils' social relationships with their peers and teachers, the percentage differences between school clusters was generally small. In school cluster 3, a relatively high proportion of pupils did not have any friends (7 per cent) and teachers who cared about them (10 per cent).

In school cluster 8, the lack of confidence was high (25 per cent) and the figure for teachers caring about pupils (10 per cent) was comparatively high.

Overall, the results show the following:

- Schools in the study have similar comparative figures to schools nationwide for the majority of the parameters.
- The patterns for the groups of schools with similar working methods for combating bullying and degrading treatment (school cluster) differ in a number of respects.
- The conditions in school clusters 3, 4 and 8 are less favourable than to those in school clusters 1, 2 and 7 with regard to teacher-pupil ratios, special teachers, proportion of pupils with a mother tongue other than Swedish and the parents' educational background.
- Conditions in terms of staff and financial resources, anchoring of anti-bullying work among staff, organisational instability, and social relationships between pupils and between teachers and pupils also appear to be less favourable in school clusters 3 and 8. Some of these are more favourable in school cluster 4 however.

### Scope of bullying in different school clusters

One factor that influences the measurement of effects is the frequency of anti-bullying in the initial situation being exceptionally high or low. In the former, the potential for change is greater than in the latter. In a worse starting situation, the probability is relatively high that change will go in a positive direction and vice versa. When the starting situation is better, the probability is relatively high that change will go in a negative direction.

Figure 7.7 shows the frequency of bullying in different school clusters in the first survey.

Compared with the frequency of pupils bullied in the total material (8.1 per cent), school cluster 1 had a much better starting situation, while school cluster 8 had a worse starting situation. Other school clusters were relatively close to the proportion that was bullied in the overall material.

As regards social and physical bullying, school clusters with better and worse starting situations were relatively similar. The only deviation in this respect is school cluster 5, which shows the worst starting situation with regard to the proportion of physically bullied pupils.

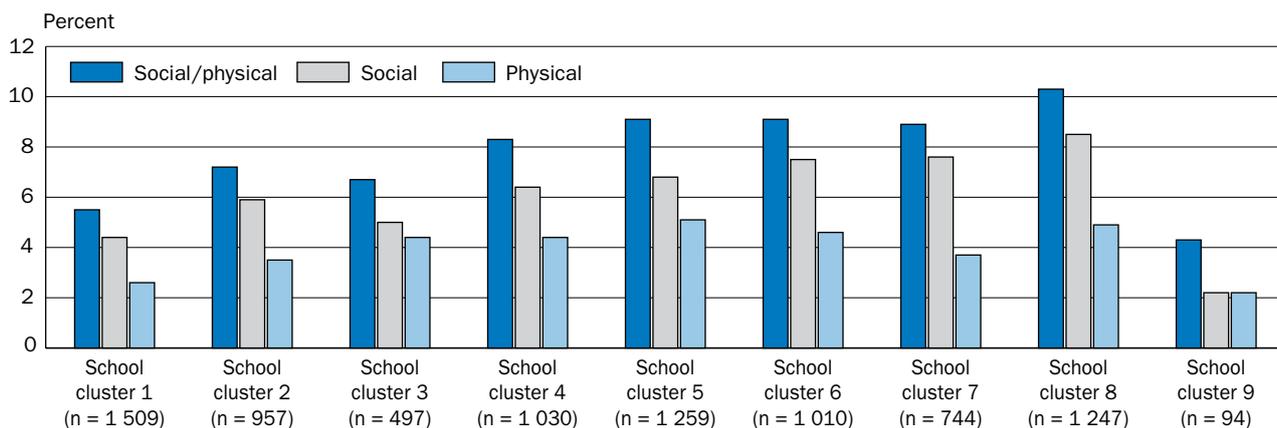
Another factor affecting the results and their reliability is the frequency of response. In the first survey, this was 76 per cent. The response frequency decreased by a few percentage points for the following two surveys to just over 74 per cent for the second and 70 per cent for the last survey. Figure 7.8 shows the response frequencies for different school clusters.

The response frequency, with a few exceptions, was about the same for most of the school clusters. School clusters 6 and 8 show a lower total response frequency than the average. School clusters 3 and 4 also had a lower response frequency than the average for the last survey.

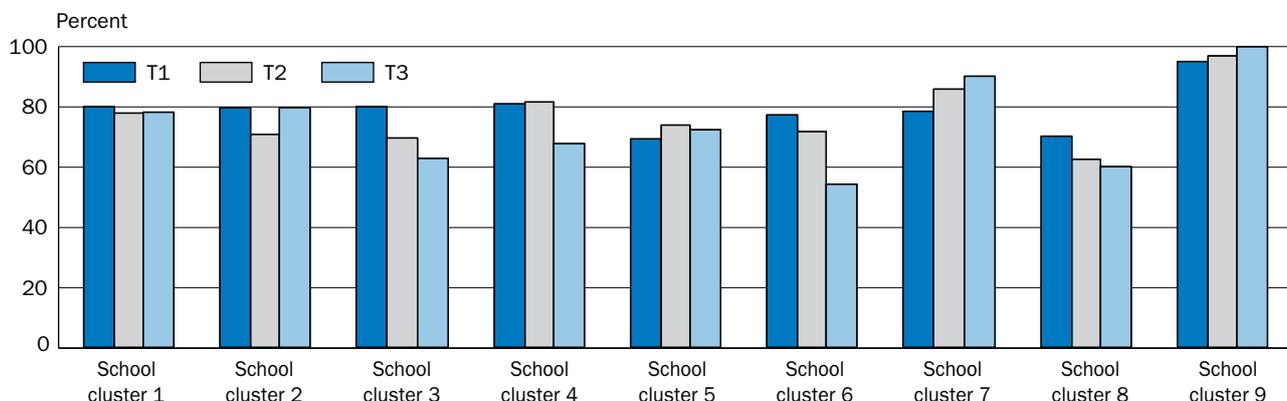
### Changes in bullying frequency in different school clusters

It should be clear that schools differ in their measures for combating bullying. Differences in conditions also lead to variations in the results of different measures. This means that schools with similar groups of measures are not automati-

**Figure 7.7** Bullying frequency in different school clusters in the first survey



**Figure 7.8** Response frequency for school clusters in all surveys



cally as effective at combating bullying, nor are different groups of measures equally effective. The following section shows the effects of school clusters on bullying.

To estimate the effects of school clusters on combating bullying, data are used at both the aggregate and individual level in the same way as when the effects of individual measures and groups of measures were calculated in Section 7.2.

In model 4, the school cluster functions as its own control, since the calculation of the effects is based on differences in the frequency of bullying in the first and last surveys (aggregate level). Positive outcomes indicate that a school cluster with a specific combination of measures reduces bullying. In model 5, the proportion of pupils who continued to be bullied, or whose situation worsened, is related to the proportion of pupils who obtained an improved situation. The last-mentioned category functions as a reference point. Positive or negative outcomes give indications of the school cluster’s ability to remedy bullying of individuals in relation to shortcomings in their capacity to remedy and prevent new incidents. As before, significant effects are reported at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels in the form of Odds ratios (OR) in the tables. The absolute reduction in risk for different measures can be seen in the tables reproduced in the Table at-

**Table 7.18** School clusters' overall effects of measures against bullying

	Type of bullying	School cluster								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Model 5: Effect on individuals	Social/Physical	0.61 <sup>1</sup>		0.33 <sup>1</sup>					0.58 <sup>1</sup>	
	Social	0.53 <sup>1</sup>		0.34 <sup>1</sup>						
	Physical									
Model 4: Reduction of bullying over time	Social/Physical (tot)	0.73 <sup>1</sup>			1.47 <sup>1</sup>				1.68 <sup>1</sup>	
	Social/Physical (g)						1.89 <sup>1</sup>	2.95 <sup>2</sup>		
	Social/Physical (b)	0.64 <sup>1</sup>				1.52 <sup>1</sup>				
	Social (tot)				1.57 <sup>1</sup>				1.67 <sup>1</sup>	
	Social (g)						2.02 <sup>1</sup>	3.16 <sup>2</sup>		
	Social (b)	0.57 <sup>1</sup>								
	Physical (total)					1.54 <sup>1</sup>				
	Physical (g)							2.51 <sup>1</sup>		
	Physical (b)					1.85 <sup>1</sup>				

<sup>1</sup> Significant at 0.05 level.

<sup>2</sup> Significant at 0.01 level.

tachment, in which we also report the confidence intervals for the Odds ratios and the relative risk reduction.<sup>83</sup>

Table 7.18 shows the overall effects of measures on bullying as well as separately on social and physical bullying. The effects on girls and boys in model 4 are also shown.

Overall, four school clusters show significant positive effects, and three show significant negative effects on different types of bullying. All the positive effects are shown at the aggregate level (model 4). The results in the successful school clusters are presented first.

*School cluster 4* shows a positive effect on bullying. In relative terms, the risk of being subjected to bullying is reduced by 30 per cent between the first and the last survey. School cluster 4 also shows a positive effect in terms of social bullying, with the risk reduced by 35 per cent. The school cluster can thus be said to be successful in terms of reducing bullying, especially social bullying of both boys and girls.

*School cluster 5* shows a different pattern. In relative terms, school cluster 5 succeeded in reducing bullying of boys by just over 30 per cent. School cluster 5 was also successful in restricting physical bullying, which was reduced by 34 per cent. This effect can be related to a reduction of just over 40 per cent in the proportion of boys who were physically bullied. School cluster 5, above all, was successful in reducing physical bullying of boys.

*School cluster 6* was successful in reducing the bullying of girls. Bullying of girls was reduced overall by 44 per cent. If we examine the results in greater detail, the analysis shows that social and physical bullying of girls was reduced by 48 and 59 per cent respectively.

The results for *school cluster 7* show similarities with the results for school cluster 4. In this school cluster, bullying was reduced by almost 40 per cent. Closer examination, however, shows that the effects are related solely to girls, for whom bullying decreased by almost 64 per cent. The school cluster was also

83 See *Evaluation of anti-bullying methods. The Methodology appendix and attachments to report 353* (National Agency for Education, 2011), pdf, Tables A.45 to A.49 in the Table attachment for a more detailed account of bullying frequencies, Odds ratios, confidence intervals and relative risk reduction.

successful in dealing with social bullying. Social bullying was reduced by 38 per cent. This effect can also be related to girls, with the risk of being subjected to social bullying being reduced by 66 per cent. School cluster 7 was thus similar to school cluster 4 in successfully reducing social bullying.

The less successful school clusters included school clusters 1, 3 and 8. What generally distinguishes school clusters 1 and 3 is that they had some of the lowest proportions of bullying in the initial survey and this proportion increased over the survey period. As regards school cluster 8, the proportion bullied was high in both the first and the last survey.

At aggregate level (model 4), the results for school cluster 1 show that the risk of being bullied increased, particularly among boys. The risk of boys being socially bullied increased by just over 40 per cent between the first and the last survey. At individual level (model 5), the analysis shows that continued bullying was almost twice as likely as an improved situation. The proportion of social bullying also increased at individual level.

*School cluster 3* shows a similar result at individual level. In school cluster 3, the risk of being socially bullied more than doubled (continued bullying or worsened situation) compared with obtaining a better situation.

*School cluster 8* also shows a similar result. In general, schools in the cluster were less successful in combating bullying at individual level. Here, the risk of being bullied (continued bullying or worsened situation) was almost twice as great as an improved situation.

*School cluster 2* does not show any significant changes. The frequency of bullying was relatively stable over the survey period.

### Changes in the scope of degrading treatment in different school clusters

As regards changes in terms of bullying and degrading treatment, the results show big similarities with those in the preceding section on bullying. As before, school clusters 4, 5 and 7 show significant positive outcomes (Table 7.19). The difference from Table 7.18 is that school cluster 8 also shows a positive outcome.

*School cluster 4* shows overall positive effects. As regards degrading treatment, the risk was reduced by 36 per cent. Schools in school cluster 4 were successful in reducing the risk of being subjected to socially and physically degrading treatment. The risk of being socially victimised was reduced by 27 per cent. The corresponding risk for physically degrading treatment was 48 per cent. School clusters 4 and 5 were also successful in reducing the proportion of perpetrators. The proportion of pupils subjecting others to degrading treatment more than halved during the survey period.

In *school cluster 5* the risk of degrading treatment was reduced by 28 per cent. The risk reduction in terms of socially degrading treatment was largely the same at almost 27 per cent. The schools in the school cluster were also successful in reducing physically degrading treatment, reducing it by almost 29 per cent. School cluster 7 also shows positive overall effects. The risk of being subjected to degrading treatment was reduced by 36 per cent. Socially and physically degrading treatment was reduced by 28 and 29 per cent respectively. *School cluster 7* also shows a positive outcome for pupils subjecting others to degrading treatment. Here, the risk reduction was just over 50 per cent.

**Table 7.19** School clusters' overall effects of measures against degrading treatment

	Type of bullying	School cluster								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Model 4:	Social/Physical (tot)				1.68 <sup>2</sup>	1.51 <sup>2</sup>			1.70 <sup>2</sup>	
Reduction of bullying/ degrading treatment over time	Social (tot)				1.44 <sup>1</sup>	1.43 <sup>2</sup>			1.46 <sup>1</sup>	
	Physical (total)				2.08 <sup>2</sup>	1.47 <sup>2</sup>			1.46 <sup>1</sup>	
	Victimised others Social/Physical				2.41 <sup>2</sup>			2.24 <sup>2</sup>	1.58 <sup>1</sup>	

<sup>1</sup> Significant at 0.05 level.

<sup>2</sup> Significant at 0.01 level.

*School cluster 8* only shows one significant positive outcome, and that is for perpetrators. The risk of pupils subjecting others to degrading treatment was reduced by just over 30 per cent.

From the results in this section, it appears that the measures that schools use differ in terms of pure content and that the outcomes between groups of schools with similar measures vary. In order to understand and explain why some groups of schools with similar working methods were more successful than others, the analysis in the following chapter will examine in greater detail how and in what way anti-bullying measures are carried out and applied in successful school clusters. This is done not only to obtain a more detailed and concrete picture of how individual methods or groups of methods are used but also to illustrate how successful anti-bullying work is carried out in practice with the help of good examples.

More specifically, it deals with the fundamental questions that have guided the evaluation and which can be summarised as follows: what works, for whom, in what respect, and under what conditions?

### Successful approaches

As is evident from this evaluation, schools use a number of different methods. Very rarely is it a question of a specific method that the whole school has chosen. The reality is a number of different anti-bullying programmes, elements of programmes, methods and individual efforts that are sometimes based on different assumptions about the school's role, the learning and the health of the children, and the causes of bullying. This means that staff at the schools are flexible in terms of how different programmes are used, at the same time as measures are combined from different programmes and the plan to combat discrimination and degrading treatment is pivotal at an overall level and combined with other measures.

Some schools have succeeded in eliminating or reducing bullying, others have not succeeded as well. The frequency of bullying increased at times in some of the schools during the evaluation. Some measures or combinations of measures also appear to be more effective than others.

In the analysis of combinations of measures, it is evident that they are not identical even though they may be empirically linked. Combinations of measures differ in terms of how they are used and implemented in concrete terms. To be able to assess the quality of combinations of measures, it is not sufficient to state that they are used in one school, but account must also be taken of how they are implemented under different conditions.

Schools also use measures to varying degrees. The thing that differentiates them is the way they combine the measures. Through an analysis of these combinations, groups of schools with similar working approaches (school clusters) focus on groups, which despite different 'nominal' programmes, show great similarities in terms of their combinations of measures. For example, the measure combination "pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work" is considered strong in one, average in another and weak in yet another school cluster. In other words, pupil participation is used by the majority of schools but to varying degrees. Like research on treatment application, it can be said that pupil participation is a 'common factor', a factor that exists in some form or other in the majority of the anti-bullying programmes. There is an ongoing discussion in research on treatment application on the extent to which positive outcomes can be attributed to their method or technical character, or if and to what degree 'common factors' can explain the outcome. In a recent review of effective treatment in psychotherapy, results indicate that much of the success of different psychotherapies can be attributed to 'common factors' (Duncan et al. 2010). A similar situation applies to this area. The thing that has an effect with regard to programme measures is a measure or combinations thereof that are common to most of the anti-bullying programmes.

Given this background, the way in which concrete anti-bullying work is carried out will be described in greater detail in order to understand and explain why some groups of schools with similar working methods are more successful than others. In this description, we will use examples and illustrations of how effective measures are used in different school contexts. The examples are obtained from schools in the successful school clusters – school clusters that show similarities as well as differences in working methods and conditions. What characterises direct and indirect anti-bullying work in practice in successful school clusters? To illustrate this, we will focus on the measure combinations that the analysis shows to have been effective.

### **Direct measure combinations**

The effective direct measure combinations are *detection and remedial measures* and *pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work*.

#### *Detection and remedial measures*

As mentioned earlier, detection and remedial measures can be said to be a generic term for individual measures that are closely linked empirically.

Detection and remedial measures cover follow-up/evaluation, a system for monitoring school breaks, dealing with bullies and dealing with victims. In general, this measure combination was more developed in school clusters 4 and 7.

The fact that the individual measures in the measure combinations are closely related is evident in the following discussion in which a head teacher at a school (school A) in school cluster 4 describes the work when the school staff become aware of a bullying incident:

The first thing we do is to *talk to the child*, to the pupil who feels he or she has been bullied, and we take notes, of course, on what the pupil says. We try to record actual words, we write down concrete examples of what has happened. Then we talk to the parents and listen to what they have to tell us, and the same thing applies there, we make a careful note of what they say. After that, we try to *establish the facts* and

check with our colleagues in the work team if anyone has seen anything. We try to gather as much concrete information as possible. This should all happen very quickly, and we identify what we could call the important 'evidence', that this is bullying, that there is a pattern, that this has happened several times, and so on. If the conclusion is that it is bullying, or close to bullying, then we act on that basis. If it represents degrading treatment or ... a conflict, then we act in a different way. If we consider that it is bullying, however, we proceed as follows. The teachers or class teachers *meet those who have carried out the bullying*, let us say there are two of them in the class, and then raise the examples they have seen. "I was the one who saw this, I saw what they did last week, and now I have heard from other teachers that this has also happened, and I see that this as a pattern where you are involved." Then we make as concrete a description as possible of what has been seen, what has been heard and ask if they recognise this, which they often do. They are often surprised that we know so much, and we can say exactly what was said and give examples of where, when and what happened. The bullies often confess immediately. Then we make an agreement that it should stop immediately, that it is unacceptable behaviour, and that we will check in a week what happens and whether they have been able to stop this behaviour. Then we meet again after a week. Often, we can praise them and make an agreement of how they can help the victim become a member of the class in a better way than before. They are entrusted with the task of helping with this [our italics].

The pupils also talk about incidents that are not really bullying but conflicts that can be solved through dialogues with school nurses, individually and together with the other party. From this description, it is apparent that what is carried out when an incident is detected covers a number of separate but linked measures. The example shows, amongst other things, that the measures for dealing with victims and with bullies are linked. The excerpt also shows that other measures are used when an incident is detected, such as case documentation.

These measures for detecting and remedying bullying can also be expressed in different ways. Another example from school cluster 4 describes a school (school G) in which anti-bullying measures have been very successful in the sense that the school hardly had any bullying during the evaluation period. The school has well-established routines on how incidents of bullying and degrading treatment should be managed. There are clear routines detailing how contact with the bully and his or her parents should be handled and followed up. Teachers, the safety team and school leaders are involved and have different roles in the process. For instance, there is a 24-hour rule that means that parents and pupils should be contacted within 24 hours of the detection of an incident, or as one of the school leaders put it:

In the first stage, it is usually the responsible teacher who is nearby who takes the matter up and starts *a dialogue with the child* and then with the parents. I believe that this is a part that actually works, that everyone takes their responsibility and that no one ignores the incident and says "I will deal with it in a few days," but when they recognise that an incident has taken place, there is immediately an *investigation* and this can vary depending on what has happened, but there is a discussion, and they follow the plan we have: *individual discussions with the child involved, and discussions with the guardian/parent and feedback, and talking with the child again, and then talking with the guardian/parent again*. It also depends, of course, on what has happened [our italics].

Another part of the detection and remedial measures involves the break monitoring system. At the school there is a well-developed break monitoring system for which the staff wear yellow jackets. The school playground has also been divided into different areas of responsibility to make it easier to cover the whole school area and, in particular, those places considered unsafe. The break monitoring system is well anchored amongst the staff and covers not only teachers but also cleaning and caretaking staff.

The term “host for breaks” is also chosen and used for the activity and interaction between pupils and teachers. The staff should not just be there but also do things together with the pupils, particularly the younger ones. This is how the school leaders describe it:

It is important that we involve all our caretaking and cleaning staff as they know our children very well, they move around the school and see a lot, and for quite a long time we have chosen to have them in this work because they are an integral part of the school, and they are members of the staff, I would say. It is also important that the hosts for school breaks are active together with the pupils during the breaks.

From the above, it can be seen that the process is well anchored amongst all staff at the school. It thus appears that the school has adopted a common approach. We will return to this aspect below.

The school leaders in school A also describe how they have tried to develop as good a system as possible for monitoring breaks. There are always two persons present. One has a predetermined route and circulates the whole time. The other stays in the same place so all the pupils know where he or she is. The pupils have also identified unsafe areas in the school playground. These routes have been decided on together with the pupils, and the break system has evolved from this. The pupil health team believes that the system has been improved by having the caretaking staff visible so that the pupils can easily see them.

School G appears to have a well-developed evaluation and follow-up system in the event that something happens, with all documentation being handled electronically. According to the safety team, this also makes it easier to transfer reports of possible incidents (about bullying etc.) if anyone stops working at the school:

We have developed our documentation system. We use IT and computers for this too. In our formal development plan, we have a folder for pupils, and this approach is a little different, though we documented it in the same way before, but then it was on paper. It was another way of doing it. Yes, and it should follow with the pupils so that, well the papers can disappear when teachers leave the school.

In school cluster 4, all schools work with follow-up/evaluation in some form. There is some variation, however, between schools concerning their systems of evaluation and follow-up. Schools A and G have a more developed system than the others. The results of the evaluations have a direct bearing on the anti-bullying work.

School A has carried out annual evaluations for a long time of both the pupils' and the staff's views of the psychosocial environment at the school according to the pupil health group. The evaluation has never demonstrated any need to intensify the anti-bullying work. Today, the school uses Olweus questionnaires to evaluate anti-bullying measures and the current situation at the school. The school management discusses and checks the outcomes together with the

pupil safety representative. All the parents, pupils and the board receive information about the outcomes.

School G also has a developed evaluation system consisting partly of internal questionnaires about satisfaction and partly an annual questionnaire for all schools in the municipality, carried out by external researchers. The results of the evaluations are discussed at the school, and they work actively on any improvements to the work. The outcome is also discussed at municipal level, where the schools identified with shortcomings are given the task of improving their work to remedy these.

In relative terms, the detection and remedial measures are also well developed in school cluster 7. Like the examples from the schools in school cluster 4, the measures are often closely related. In an interview with the anti-bullying team in school E, the following was a response to the question of how they act when a bullying incident occurs:

T: Yes, absolutely, you have to take both, because both feel bad about it. Yes, and then the parents, of course, are involved in the whole thing. Automatically.

I: But do you consider that you have a systematic approach? A routine for it?

T: Yes, I think we have. We follow [the equal treatment plan]. And it is clear that we *always begin with the victim*. And talk to him/her, and then with the person doing the bullying ... /... / ... We *follow up* the whole thing, and there are small conflicts that can easily be solved, possibly in a couple of short meetings. But if we have to take it further then we have the *follow-up with both the victim and the bully*, and together with the parents. We don't just stop there, but continue. /.../ but if there is something more permanent, then I meet them regularly, listen and check out the situation. Of course, that's what we must do.

I: Do you belong to a team here?

T: Yes, we work sometimes on our own and we work a lot together. But sometimes we help each other, and sometimes we do it ourselves. But we communicate with each other. If I have a bullying incident, then I talk with the pupil and say that we have to do this together with the counsellor. Because often with my other work responsibilities, it may not be possible for me to sit down and talk and then you have to take it to the counsellor, so we work together ... And then sometimes we are together. ... it's quite common that we do it together, that we sit down, because that's better, and sometimes we bring in one of the head teachers as well.

From the interviews, it is clear that dealing with the bully and the victim, and the follow-up often follow on in some kind of chain, and that these tasks are often handled by a team (cooperative team) if there is one at the school.

At school C, the system largely resembles that in place at school E. The head teacher describes the approach when a member of staff sees an incident:

Yes, although, actually, I think that the first thing, when you see something as an adult or teacher, and have found out that another adult has heard it, then it is that adult who takes up the incident directly and communicates with the child and says that it is not OK. And I have to do this many times, when I'm crossing the playground when I see an incident. "You don't seem to agree, what's going on?" I immediately step in and act and ask if I have understood correctly what I heard and how ... So you sort things out immediately whether it's a class teacher, head teacher, recreation instructor who is just walking through the playground. Yes, that is the first thing, we have to act ... And if that doesn't help, that's when the *friends team* comes in, and that is the next level we take it to. And the *friends team* then feels that

this has to be acted on. We have to report this. We have worked with it. We may have more talks with the pupil who has done the bullying and *follow it up* over a few weeks. After that I receive a report when I meet the friends team ... Then I get information that they have actually really worked with something that month and what progress they feel they have made.

The head teacher describes an approach that could be regarded as zero tolerance towards all forms of negative behaviour and this can be followed up in what could be regarded as a chain of measures in which a team (cooperative team) has a special task. The chain of measures involves following up the incident and evaluating what is done. At the school this takes place through close cooperation between teachers, the pupil welfare team and other staff. The teachers describe it as follows:

L1: We have this close cooperation with the pupil welfare team through pupil welfare meetings with the counsellor and the school nurse and another pupil welfare team where the teachers and special teachers monitor the pupils.

I: So there is a systematic approach and follow-up then?

L1: I have that at monthly meetings with all of them. It works like a rolling timetable.

L2: What [L1] brings up here is known as pupil council meetings. Sometimes they are about pupils who cannot manage school in pure learning terms. At such meetings, I also bring up pupils that class teachers and class supervisors feel are isolated or at risk for some reason.

I: If an incident has taken place or a measure has been started, do you have any formal follow-up of it, do you make a note, file a report or close an incident?

L1: At every meeting when the bullying representatives from some classes meet, the counsellor is also there, and it is the counsellor who functions as a kind of secretary and takes notes on which pupils have been mentioned on these occasions. Apart from these meetings, we meet the pupil welfare team with the school nurse and the counsellor every fourth week. If something exceptional crops up, then she sounds the alarm signals.

Apart from the follow-up, we also have regular evaluations that have a direct impact on the anti-bullying work. These also provide a basis for decisions on remedies. As regards the break monitoring system, it appears less developed in school cluster 7 than school cluster 4.

At school C, for instance, the break monitoring system has been strengthened, and involvement with different activities during the breaks has increased as a result of comments by the chairperson of the school council. Changes have also taken place in interviews with the safety team.

Yes, there are always two who should be there during the breaks, and there is a timetable. You see how important it really is to be there during the breaks. Before, it's true that some people didn't know who was the break host, because we didn't know who had that function. I have just one negative thing about the host system and that is I think some people stay indoors, they don't go out and that is perhaps because things happen outside too. And then I have another reason why I want them to walk around – so we can avoid all those smokers [from the neighbouring school, our note].

Some of the teachers feel that not all of them are equally involved, however, and much time is therefore wasted. The head teacher feels that teachers today take greater responsibility and involve themselves more than before however.

Despite many similarities between the schools in school clusters 4 and 7, with regard to detection and remedial measures, there are some differences. The differences essentially lie in the system and in anchoring the anti-bullying work. The pupils at one of the schools in school cluster 7 stated in the interview that the strategies are not applied equally and are thus not anchored. For instance, pupils feel that teachers do not follow the routines, which means that pupils do not know how the teachers will act when something happens. Neither do the pupils feel that the teachers or the school are particularly good at detecting and preventing bullying.

As not everyone has the same approach, the anchoring of anti-bullying work at the school is weakened and the belief in the measures taken decreases. This is also supported by the results of the pupil questionnaires in which the proportion of pupils stating that teachers treat pupils and their classmates fairly and think that teachers are good at reprimanding pupils who do nasty things at school or in the lessons is lower in schools in school cluster 7 than in school cluster 4.

#### *Pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work*

School cluster 7 is distinguished from other successful school clusters in that the measure *pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work* is well developed. The measures that take place within the framework of pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work are school rules, cooperative teams and pupils as players. The schools have clear school rules and cooperative teams, and pupils are involved as players in the anti-bullying work.

The school rules are developed in cooperation between staff and pupils. The head of school E describes the work on school rules as follows:

The rules have been revised, we did that last year, and after these new rules there should be certain consequences if they are not followed. And we did this together with representatives from the pupil council and staff here at the school, and we have also discussed the rules with the parents.

Working out the school rules involved not only the staff and pupils but also the parents. In the school, the views of pupils have been expressed through the pupil council. In many cases, the school rules are in written form, but in the interviews it also comes out that there are other school rules of a more informal nature, such as those involving the 'school ethos'. The rules that are expressed in different ways in interviews with staff, pupils and parents can be categorised into what Thornberg (2008, p. 27 ff.) calls relational rules, structural rules, protective rules, personal rules and rules of etiquette.

The relational rules stipulate how pupils should behave towards each other. These regulate acts that may have consequences for other pupils' well-being and cover prohibitions against acts that can harm others physically or mentally. Some of the relational rules could be described as pro-social in that they contain norms on acting in a way that best serves the interests of others. Other relational rules cover prohibitions against antisocial acts, namely acts that can cause others harm, such as fights, bullying and degrading treatment.

Structural rules refer to rules that aim to structure and maintain activities in the school or in the physical environment. The structural rules can thus be divided into two subcategories: activity rules and environmental rules. Activity rules aim to structure and maintain activities of different kinds. They relate to

rules that structure and maintain work in the school, in lessons, in group work and in classroom discussions, such as pupils not disturbing each other, not talking and putting up their hand when they want to say something. They are also rules that structure and maintain free activities that are not primarily initiated by teachers or other school staff, such as games during breaks. The activity rules also cover rules concerning time between lessons and other activities. Examples of these rules can be arriving on time, going in when the bell rings, not disturbing lessons of other classes, etc. These are examples of what is part of the role of being a pupil (Granström, 2003). The activity rules cover preventative rules that aim to 'steer' pupils outside lesson activities, and promote pupils' well-being and health, and their performance at school. In this respect they involve mandatory rules that pupils must go out during the breaks, that they must get fresh air, that they must do their homework, etc. Environmental rules aim to protect the indoor and outdoor environments. They may involve preventing destruction and taking care of the physical environment by not throwing litter, putting graffiti on the walls, cleaning up after an activity and putting away things used during a break.

The protective rules deal with health and safety, and cover prohibitions against exposing oneself or others to risks of different kinds, i.e. prevention of accidents.

The personal rules cover those rules aimed at self-reflection on personal behaviour and taking personal responsibility for oneself and one's acts.

Rules of etiquette refer to norms on how pupils should behave in different social situations and cover acts that are not part of the relational rules described above, for instance, not wearing hats indoors and not swearing or using inappropriate language. Irrespective of which rules exist in a school, they have to have legitimacy if they are to be followed. One way of creating legitimacy for rules is to involve the pupils. Another is to apply the rules fairly, namely in the same way for all pupils. If pupils do not consider that the rules have legitimacy or that they are applied differently, this can create problems. One pupil in school C said:

Once I arrived late and then I was told off and put in detention, and it was a long detention. But then a girl who was very clever at school arrived about 15 min late and she had the same excuse about oversleeping, but she didn't need to apologise, she could just go and sit at her desk.

Pupil participation is not only meaningful when drawing up rules but also when applying them.

There are also schools at which pupils, on certain occasions, are involved in the cooperative team. One of the representatives of the team at school E describes this as follows.

... teachers, there are three teachers and two pupils from each class ... But then we meet again, another week, meeting the classes with the pupils, and the week after we meet together with the counsellor, and some other teachers [head teacher].

At school D the pupils are involved in choosing the cooperative team (here, AGM refers to Action group against bullying):

It is mainly the pupils who propose which teachers and pupils they think they have good contact with and who they think would do a good job. And then there are us adults who also want to be involved, but they know each other better. And then the

adults are asked if they wish to be present, or the pupils, and then they can either accept or refuse. This is quite democratic of the AGM. There are ten pupils who make the choice, quite simply. Usually we have the older peer supports as they have been chosen from the classes. We have peer supports in each class here.

The opportunities for pupils to participate in the way the cooperative teams are going to work have led to their involvement. They provide additional eyes and ears, which see and hear more than adults. The staff have a positive view of this:

I have understood that we have many good eyes, and we have our peer supports and pupils from the AGM.

At school D, peer supports have existed for more than ten years, as it is considered important that pupils participate in combating bullying. It is considered self-evident at the school that the pupils should be involved in this, since they actually know more than teachers about what the problems are. These peer supports (pupils as players) are chosen by other pupils and are also part of the Action group against bullying. It seems as if there is a close relationship between the two measures, cooperative teams, and pupils as players.

The same applies at school E where the pupils are active in the equal treatment team and in providing peer support.

This model of *involving pupils in the work* is based on the basic idea that pupils see and hear much more than we do, particularly when adults are not present. *The basic idea is to involve the pupils in teamwork because they see and hear more.* Sometimes when talking to the pupils, whether it is about bullying or just some pupils being a bit silly, they can also accept a wise pupil talking to them rather than the moralising of an adult. This was really the basic idea.

At school C, pupil participation in the equal treatment planning was also strengthened. From the interviews, it is evident that it is very important that pupils of both sexes are chosen as peer supports to be part of the friends team. However, this can sometimes involve problems:

On the other hand, it is not popular to talk about wrongdoings because pupils then run the risk of being called sneaks and losing their friends [member of cooperative team].

From the interview, it is clear that peer supports who inform staff about wrongdoings can get a bad reputation and problems with their friends. Pupils' participation in direct anti-bullying work also appears to be very prominent and the measures of school rules, cooperative teams and pupils as players are all closely interlinked. Pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work is a clear expression of a democratic approach, which in turn creates good conditions and involvement in anti-bullying work. This presupposes that the right pupils are involved and do it in the right way. Otherwise, it can be abused and counter-productive.

### **Indirect measure combinations**

Of the indirect measure combinations, *relationship-enhancing measures*, *pupil participation* and *formative measures* were effective.

#### *Relationship-enhancing measures*

The measure combination relationship-enhancing measures covers relationships between pupils, and between teachers and pupils. All schools in school cluster 4

have developed conscious strategies with specific acts for creating closeness/relations between pupils as well as between teachers and pupils.

The relationship-enhancing measures between pupils are sometimes expressed through active work in which pupils in the same or different years can meet. One example highlighted by a teacher in school G is 'puzzle groups'. The term is chosen because of what it should lead to, namely that pupils should 'fit in with each other'. The idea of a puzzle is also related to the different parts of a greater whole, that is the pupils as individuals should together form a functioning whole. The teachers were very positive to the puzzle groups, as were the parents. At the school, they also worked with something they called a 'secret friend', which can be thought of as a way of strengthening the social links between pupils. One teacher says:

You pull a name from the class, someone in the class. I get Rosita as my secret friend. And I should help her to feel good in different ways without letting her know that I am her secret friend. I can do this in different ways. And that depends on who she is and what she needs. It could be me just being with her, eating or being interested, getting a glass of water sometimes or opening doors and carrying things. It can be virtually anything, then after a week you try to guess who has been your secret friend.

Another part of the relationship-enhancing measures is encouraging pupils to be positive to each other and reinforcing pupils' positive behaviour. A teacher at school B explains:

L: Try to match up different people who should be able to find each other. Everyone should be able to work with everyone else. You should be able to sit together with anyone in the classroom. You talk positively about it and try to talk positively about each other. They should not say silly things but try to 'raise' each other in everyday situations and not just in the life skills hour ... try to reinforce what is good in each one of us the whole time. Whether it is a group that has played together or not, but it is done in a positive way. They find new games and play in different ways. This means trying to get them involved.

I: Are you trying to do something to build relationships between different school years?

L: Yes, although we wish we had done more (laughs). We have pupil options. Then years 3 and 4 come together. This is one way of meeting other than in ordinary lessons.

All schools carry out activities to promote relationships between pupils, in the classes and between school years. In some schools, older pupils arrange activities for younger ones. These can be theme days, football events, or whatever.

When it comes to relationship-enhancing measures between teachers and pupils, developed strategies exist in the schools. This can be when adults are present and participate in activities and discussions together with children in order to create confidence amongst the children. This is also important in relation to problems that can arise between pupils. This can be illustrated by extracts from the interview with some of the teachers at school G:

L1: Adults present, being close to the children. ... Thinking in this way, and then I think that for me, personally, it has also become important to create relationships with the children, so that they really want to come to school. That they dare to say that someone did silly things, and it was tough. I felt this and I think this is gene-

rally something that you work with. ... / ... And we ask questions about breaks or when they come, where we can also look at problems of different kinds, so that ... How can you think about this? What solution do you have? What, how should it be done, and who does what?

L2: Talk.

L1: Yes.

L2: Yes, I think it is very important. Talking together is an important part. In the group, whatever the situation is.

L2: To reflect. That we do it together.

L2: Talk. Not giving orders and such things, but talking.

Working with relationship-enhancing measures is also important for the social climate in schools, not just between pupils but also between teachers and pupils. At school G, this has led to a 'culture of cooperation', covering not just pupils but also teachers. Theoretically, these activities can be regarded as rituals in which the social effects are feelings of togetherness and a sense of belonging (Collins, 1988). The fact that activities are important in reducing bullying in the light of the theoretical explanation is not strange, as everyone becomes part of this culture of cooperation. Compared with research on the application of treatment, this resembles treatment situations in which the process is carried out jointly. A sense of togetherness is strengthened between those who are part of the treatment (Fridell, 2001). The fact that school cluster 4 has a relatively low frequency of different types of bullying generally may be explained by the schools' use of many measures to promote social relations, which in turn enhance confidence and trust between players in the school. This is reflected not least in the pupil questionnaires in which a greater proportion of pupils than in the other school clusters have many friends in the class, feel a sense of group membership with school staff and pupils, and feel that teachers treat pupils and their classmates fairly and that the teachers are good at telling pupils off who say or do mean things in the school or in lessons. In this respect, school G is different to the other schools in school cluster 4.

### *Pupil participation*

The measure combination "pupil participation" covers the measures, school assemblies about bullying, pupils' active participation in preventative work on bullying and use of mediation. The first measure does not occur to any substantial extent in school cluster 4. The last measure only occurs as an element in two of the schools. The measure is used particularly for conflicts between pupils. A member of the cooperative team in school B says:

When there are conflicts, then they always come either to X or to me as a teacher. Sometimes it is a lot ... yes... particularly the girls, of course. With all their conflicts, something has happened, and suddenly there is someone crying and they have been stupid, so we should try to help clear up the situation. That's what we aim to do, that they should learn to resolve their conflicts, and everybody takes up things as and when they happen.

From the extract above, it is apparent that the measure is used in conflicts. From the analysis of the measures, it is also apparent that mediation was not an effective measure against bullying. One reason could be that bullying is not a conflict between two equal parties but the expression of an asymmetrical relation.

Perhaps what most of all distinguishes participation of pupils in school cluster 4 is their active participation in prevention. This can happen through pupil involvement in different activities or exercises in the class, such as puzzle groups or secret friends, as mentioned above. Often older pupils organise activities in puzzle groups for younger ones. These activities are one way of strengthening prevention through creating a sense of community, or as the safety team in school G expresses it:

T1: And then we have the puzzle groups.

I: What do you do there?

T1: Oh, in the puzzle groups we have singing, we have different activities, we work a lot with 'diamond' mats. We can work in puzzle groups outside on mathematics. Now we have Christmas activities. Technology or Swedish activities.

T2: Sometimes we make crumble pie (laughs). All sorts of things. And they come up with their own things.

T3: At our place, we have a special group, with pupils from each group following a circuit. They make up things to do where the puzzle groups have different stations. It could be playing, they play games.

I: And these are different age groups?

T2: Hm ... / ... / ... And then we have the pupils' choices.

T1: Yes, that's right.

T2: So, the whole school takes part from years 2 to 5.

T3: We also have football days together when we have different tournaments.

T1: Yes, and then all our councils. It's from these ...

T2: Yes, exactly. From year 2, yes that's right. And the younger children get information from the older ones, so they know what they would like to have. Being in these councils is very popular. At least for us.

In interviews with the safety team, it also came out that the puzzle groups have a very important task in going through and anchoring the school rules:

T: Yes, we worked on this in the puzzle groups. That's why we had them. We went through the rules, when they could speak to each other about what they mean, and what it means to be a good friend. So they went around the whole team, the big and small. Then we talked about what it was. When everyone had had their say, then they agreed and marked a note with their picture.

From the above, many of the measures used are closely associated with each other, and direct and indirect measures are often combined. It was particularly clear in the situation above that the measure helps create a common approach and understanding of what the rules are in the school.

#### *Formative measures*

The formative measures include those for disciplinary strategies, pedagogical material and parental information. Overall, school cluster 4 was prominent compared with the other successful school clusters. The formative measures are more comprehensive. However, it should be noted that one of the measures that reduced bullying was disciplinary strategies.

School cluster 4 used disciplinary strategies, and the teachers get support from or act in accordance with them when rules are broken or there is unacceptable behaviour. In school A, one member of the bullying team describes the disciplinary strategies and their application:

It didn't matter who in the school said it. Whether it was the cleaner, head teacher, canteen staff, me, the school psychologist, anyone. In some way, the pupils understood that anyone can protest if something happens. And, they can go to anyone ... An adult. If you are an adult, then you are an adult. Simple as that. And there is never any fuss, I think. If you say, "Hey you, what's going on", then, "Uh, yes, um." There is never any argument.

At school B, the pedagogues and the members of the safety team share the view that the disciplinary strategies are clear and support the staff. One of the members in the safety team describes it like this:

T: We have to work in the breaks to catch up [if somebody has been disturbing the lessons]. If you come in late a lot or repeatedly, then that person has to sit in the classroom during the break and catch up. Sometimes pupils have also had to change their class for a period. If it has not worked or during certain lessons.

I: So, do you have any type of measure?

T: Yes, yes, because it is not acceptable. No, it does not stay there, if things are repeated, then we also inform the home.

The pedagogues at school G describe the meaning of the disciplinary strategies slightly differently to the way staff at schools A and B do. They have a different view of discipline that focuses on dialogue:

I: Do you have any disciplinary measures when a child has done something wrong? A punishment system? Or, that the child has to stand in the corner.

P1: No, but we have our rules.

P2: Yes, that's right. Then we have a description of the consequences.

I: I see, what would be the consequences of arguing a lot?

P1: Well, there is a discussion with the pedagogue, and if it happens again then another discussion. And then we get in touch with the home.

P2: There is no punishment per se.

P1: And if this doesn't work, then the next step is the head teacher.

P2: So there is a slight difference, I think. There is a difference between school and leisure. They have something they have to do during school time, but outside school time it could be about others' peace and relaxation. And then it could be that now you have to sit here beside me so that I can see what you're doing, if you're going to knock down their Lego all the time or whatever you are doing.

P1: We have had pupils who have had to be with teachers or adults during the breaks when we have felt that we can't trust them then the pupils have to be with us. We have had pupils who we talk to about activities in breaks, like now you're playing basketball during this break. But this has been a kind of disciplinary measures.

P2: ... it is ... for the child's best that we do it. That's what I think. Of course, it is a disciplinary measure, but I don't regard it as a punishment. But rather that we are supporting the child. Well if it's like that outside, then worse things would happen to the child. So, really this is adult help. We provide support. This child needs support, you've got to stay close to me.

The pedagogues emphasise the importance of not regarding disciplinary strategies as a punishment but as an opportunity to help the child. One of the members of the safety team at school G also emphasises the importance that pupils understand the meaning of the rules and the disciplinary strategies applied at the school. She puts it this way:

We have brought this down to a level the children understand. We have spoken about them, and we should try to keep to this, either we support it, and then as an adult I have to agree that I will try to stick to these rules, and perhaps the result then is that somebody runs off. Then I usually bring back the rules and what's it like, yes, we agreed to these. You did this in a different way.

It is clear from the quote that the disciplinary strategies are updated regularly and used as an active measure in relation to the pupils. In this context, it should be pointed out that the strategies are applied through dialogue and not through judgement or a strict approach.

Having illustrated how effective measures and combinations are used in successful school clusters, in this next part we focus on the discussion and analyse the conditions for successfully combating bullying.

### Systematic implementation

One of the conditions that exemplifies success most clearly is *systematic implementation*. This can be expressed in different ways: through a well-conceived chain of measures followed in the event of something happening, or in the form of what could be called “the whole school approach”.

#### A well-conceived chain of measures

From the description above, it should be evident that the measures used are not regarded as separate elements. In reality, several measures and measure combinations are closely related in a kind of chain of measures. One of the things distinguishing successful school clusters is that there is systematic use of different measures, namely that they are thought through and used in combination, and that there is a clear division of roles and responsibilities. In some of the quotes used to illustrate how different measures are implemented, it is evident that the measures were part of a well-thought through chain of measures in which there is a clear structure and sequence. In many cases, this chain of measures is developed with regard to local conditions in the school and its experiences of different programmes. An extract from the interview with the health team at school A illustrates this. One of the members of the health team puts it as follows:

We have nevertheless chosen to maintain part of the peer support mechanisms that the school worked with earlier within the framework of the Friends Programme.

It is clear from the quote that the school mixes measures from different programmes and that the measures can be modified in relation to the local conditions of the school.

#### A whole school approach

Several schools in the study have a well-developed ‘whole school anti-bullying policy’ (Ttofi et al. 2008:65). This means that all staff and pupils are aware of how they should act with regard to degrading treatment and bullying, everyone is involved and the working approach is anchored with all the staff and the pupils. Although, according to the staff, some schools face a tough climate, they have nevertheless managed to reduce the proportion of pupils who are bullied. This can be explained by the involvement of the staff in the work.

Another important element is that there is a shared view among the staff on how implementation should take place. One of the head teachers at school G puts it as follows:

Yes, it is well anchored among the school staff, however, I would just like to say that the non-teaching staff, cleaners, caretakers and kitchen staff, they are not involved in discussions with the children, even though the approach is well anchored, and if they see something during the breaks, well, they know what to keep their eyes on and which members of staff they should get in touch with, and they know they should do it immediately.

In this school, cleaning, caretaking and break monitoring staff are all members of the safety team. The work is well grounded amongst all the staff, not just the teachers and people in the school's safety team but also the cleaning staff and caretakers. This shared and deliberate strategy for combating bullying and degrading treatment is also well supported by all the pupils in the school. Having a shared approach appears to be a condition of success in the school at which the proportion of pupils bullied was lowest in our study. The school's success in combating bullying is evident and not just from the pupil questionnaires. The members of the safety team also show an awareness that this is the case.

In fact, the difference, you could almost say is that it has become even calmer. We don't meet as often in the safety team as we did in the spring. Then we met every second week, and now it is just once a month. And this is because we don't feel that there is any need. If there was, then we would ... Yes, it has been calm.

Awareness of the situation coupled with the fact that the situation has actually been good at the school also serves to show that the work is well supported and connected to the actual situation existing among the pupils.

Good anchoring of anti-bullying work and a common approach is something that is clearly expressed in the interviews with the successful schools in the successful school clusters. The head teacher in school B expresses a clear policy as regards combating bullying and degrading treatment, and emphasises the importance of monitoring:

We have a zero tolerance policy of bullying. If we haven't been in touch with the parents or started taking action the same day [when something happens, our note], then we view this as a failure. We strive to make sure that it isn't just one person, the counsellor, who should deal with incidents, but that it is the responsibility of everyone ... so we have invited all of them to take part in the work and encouraged each unit to have its representatives.

The head teacher at school A believes that the condition for success is that everyone "cooperates with the concept". He also says:

If the caretaker then goes out and swears at the pupils, then the whole point is lost [head teacher]

This can be interpreted as an indication that all staff at the school are involved in combating degrading treatment and bullying. There is also a unanimity or shared view among staff about responsibility and how anti-bullying work should be carried out.

At the same time as the examples above are from successful schools, it is important to emphasise that all schools try to work on the principle of "the whole school approach", but they enjoy varying degrees of success. There are also variations within and between school clusters. Despite attempts to involve the whole school, it can be less successful as a result of declining enthusiasm. One example from a head teacher in school cluster 4, with negative development in

terms of increased frequency of bullying, illustrates this. At the school, a weakening of “the whole school approach” can be seen. The school head says that this is evident in the lack of motivation amongst pupils and teachers working with the approach, as it was regarded as tedious and artificial:

During the first two years, all classes in the school had a lesson once a week in LQ. The older pupils felt that it was boring and their motivation declined. The lesson lost its purpose. The teachers felt the lessons were artificial, perhaps they were right in the middle of a science theme, and then had to interrupt this, “Yes, and now we will go over to Lions Quest,” and it felt as though there was no real motivation.

Despite minor deviations, it is clear that “the whole school approach” is more prominent and more anchored in successful schools and successful school clusters. If all the staff take part in this approach, it appears to have an impact on the way the children behave towards each other in different situations. This in its turn can have an effect on or be affected by the school climate.

### School climate

A positive school climate is another important prerequisite for successful prevention, and success in prevention can also contribute to a positive school climate. The school climate is influenced by several factors related to the situation inside and outside the school. This may relate to organisational realities, social relationships, involvement, attitudes, norms and values.

In some of the interviews, social relations were emphasised as an important instrument for the climate in the school.

The head teacher at school A says that there is an informal and relaxed atmosphere in the school. He also says, “It is easy here for adults and pupils to get on with each other.” The pupil health group describes the head teacher as “good, open, tolerant, interested in the views of others and flexible”. The group also describes it as a middle-class area where the inhabitants have good incomes and well-brought up children with parents who are involved. The analyses have shown that socio-economic status is a context condition that is important. The pupils also describe the climate at the school as good. One factor they mention is that the school is small and everyone knows everyone [the school has about 270 pupils, our note]. The pupils also talk about the importance that they “should be kind to each other at school”. They believe that this is what differentiates the school from other schools where pupils “can behave as they want” [girl, lower secondary school].

A similar example can be described as the culture of equality at school G. The staff point out that there is a sense of community and recognition of the equal value of everyone. During the interviews, the pupils also show that they have been socialised into this culture of equality. During interviews with the pupils, the following came up:

I: If a new pupil comes into your class and asks how you behave towards each other in your class, what would you say, how would you answer?

E1: That everyone should be treated the same, that we are all of equal value.

E2: Yes, you should act towards others as you do towards your friends and so on.

E3: Yes, hm. We would take as much care of that person as of all others.

It is also clear from an interview with the head teacher that the children have really accepted this culture of equality:

There is what we would call a creative spirit amongst the children. You notice from the children that they are used to being involved and saying what they think. They are used to it, they are not put off, it is obvious for them that they should be active, of course, with variations for different children, that is what they feel.

For this good school climate and spirit to be maintained, the organisation must function. Yet another extract from one of the interviews at school G illustrates this. The safety team puts it as follows:

T: I think the school works well and is big enough [about 200 pupils, our note].

T: Good management.

T: Yes, I agree.

T: Good work colleagues.

T: Yes. Many are very involved. Put their hearts into it.

T: Yes. We also have good parents. Working together to achieve the best.

T: In some way this rubs off on newcomers, that there is already a way of working. You get into it quite quickly.

One possible explanation for the school climate being seen so positive at the most successful schools is that most of the successful school clusters have several activities geared to promoting social relations and what could be described as a culture of cooperation. From the descriptions above, it should be evident that most of the successful schools also have well-developed relationship-enhancing measures in which the pupils are active. Studies also show that when pupils are more involved in school activities and can influence their own situation, it has a positive effect on the way they view the school and, as a result, improves the school climate (cf. Ahlström, 2009). Shared attitudes, norms, values and participation are often given as contributory factors to creating a good school climate.

There is thus a relationship between school climate and pupils' results. A positive school climate is distinguished by high quality of relationships and the way communication takes place. If the pupils feel they are validated and satisfied with themselves, then they also perform better (Walker, 2004).

It is thus not possible to disregard the importance of a positive school climate and tolerant attitudes. Several studies indicate factors that support positive development and counteract asocial behaviour. In these studies, differences between pupils' performance, the proportion of truancy and a tendency to continue studies can be observed. The differences cannot be related to pupils' starting points but can be attributed to a positive school climate (see, e.g., MGiota, 2002; Sellström and Bremberg, 2006).

Similar studies have been carried out in a Swedish context, and the same positive effects of school climate can be identified (Sivertun and Helldin, 2006). It is thus clear that the child's school environment and school organisation are important factors in restricting negative behaviour. Other studies have shown that heterogeneous groups are connected with a sense of community and thus a better social climate (Westling Allodi, 2005). Other studies by teachers working in schools at which the size of pupil groups vary widely also confirm the relationship between heterogeneity and a positive school climate. It is thus clear that if a school can accept and value variation in terms of experience and

performance, this contributes to strengthening democratic approaches, which in turn further improves the climate. It has also been shown that pupils' results have not become worse in these environments. A good school climate is a prerequisite for strengthening good social relations and behaviour, and counteracting their opposites.

#### What works for which pupils and under what conditions?

Even though the programmes that the study evaluates differ in their scope and content, on the theoretical level they share some common features. Overall, the programmes can be said to be general in the sense that they are either aimed at *preventing, detecting and/or remedying bullying or other negative behaviour for all pupils, irrespective of type and irrespective of the contextual conditions*. Table 7.20 summarises the reasoning on a general level (see National Agency for Education 2009 for a more complete review of the different programmes).

The results and analyses, however, show that measures and measure combinations function differently under different contextual conditions. For example, the effects of the overall measures on schools are very different if we compare groups of schools with similar working approaches, but there are also differences within these groups.

Table 7.21 describes the contextual conditions that the analysis examines below (context); the measure combinations that, under ideal conditions (in a quasi-experimental situation), have proved effective (mechanism); and in what respects they have been effective (empirical outcome).

In light of this, the study focuses on answering the question, "What works, for which pupils, in what respects and under what conditions?" Table 7.22 attempts to provide an answer to this question and, put very simply, the answer can be summarised as "that depends". This requires further qualification.

Taking Table 7.22 as a starting point, more developed anti-bullying work with direct measures in terms of well-developed *detection and remedial measures*, indirect measures in terms of well-developed *relationship-enhancing measures, formative measures* and *pupil participation in indirect anti-bullying work* can all be said to function generally providing the approach is well anchored, i.e. that there are very clear, shared attitudes, norms and values; the school climate is positive, i.e. typified by clear involvement, good cooperation and a high degree of participation; and that good organisational conditions exist, i.e. organisational stability.

Average (neither more nor less) developed anti-bullying work that does not include special lessons can also be said to have an impact on bullying of boys and, in particular, physical bullying, and on all forms of degrading treatment, provided the approach is well anchored; the school climate is positive, i.e. typified by involvement, cooperation and participation; and that organisational conditions are good in terms of organisational stability.

Similarly, more developed work against bullying that emphasises direct measures in the form of *documentation* and *staff training*, detection and remedial measures, and indirect measures in the form of *special lessons*, at the same time as the direct measure combination *pupil participation* in direct anti-bullying work, and the indirect measure combination *relationship-enhancing measures* are lacking or have been toned down, have an impact on bullying of girls provided that the approach is well anchored, i.e. contains clear attitudes, norms and val-

**Table 7.20** Underlying program theory

Context	+	Mechanism	=	Empirical outcomes
Irrespective of contextual conditions		1. Preventative measures		1. Prevent negative behaviour and the occurrence of new bullying incidents
		2. Detection measures		2. Early detection of bullying or acts that can lead to bullying
		3. Remedial measures		3. Remedy existing bullying

**Table 7.21** Contextual conditions, effective components and combinations of measures, together with empirical outcomes

Context	+	Mechanism	=	Empirical outcomes
<i>Competence of staff, and pupils' sociocultural and socio-economic conditions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Teacher/pupil ratio</li> <li>– Teaching qualification at higher education level</li> <li>– Special teacher</li> <li>– Mother tongue tuition</li> <li>– Parents' level of education</li> </ul>		1. <i>Detection and remedial measures</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Follow-up/evaluation</li> <li>– Break monitoring system</li> <li>– Dealing with bullies</li> <li>– Dealing with victims</li> </ul>		1. Reduced bullying of girls 2. Reduced effect on perpetrators of bullying/degrading treatment 3. Positive effect on bullying/degrading treatment
<i>Approaches:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Attitudes, norms and values</li> <li>– Anchoring</li> </ul>		2. <i>Relationship-enhancing measures</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Relationship-enhancing measures pupil–pupil</li> </ul>		1. The reduction in physical bullying generally and of individuals who have been bullied over shorter or longer periods, particularly boys 2. Reduction in bullying/degrading treatment
<i>School climate or school culture:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Social relations</li> <li>– Participation</li> <li>– Organisational realities</li> <li>– Staff</li> <li>– Finance</li> <li>– Time</li> </ul>		3. <i>Pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– School rules</li> <li>– Cooperative teams</li> </ul>		1. Positive effects on bullying 2. Positive effects on social bullying of girls 3. Positive effects on physical bullying of boys 4. Positive effect on bullying/degrading treatment
		4. <i>Pupils active in prevention</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Pupils' active participation in prevention of bullying</li> </ul>		1. Positive effect on social bullying of girls 2. Positive effect on bullying/degrading treatment
		5. <i>Formative measures</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Disciplinary strategies</li> </ul>		1. Reduction in bullying of boys

ues; the school climate is good, i.e. typified by involvement but a lower level of participation; and, at the same time, the organisational conditions are worse.

Finally, more developed work against bullying that emphasises direct measures in terms of *pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work, detection and remedial measures* and indirect measures in the form of special lessons, at the same time as the direct measure combination *documentation* and *staff training* and the indirect measure combination *relation-enhancing measures* are lacking or toned down, can be said to have an impact on bullying of girls and, in particular, social bullying, and all forms of degrading treatment, provided the approach is well anchored, i.e. contains clear attitudes, norms and values; and that the school climate is good, i.e. typified by involvement but with a lower degree of participation; and, at the same time, it is combined with good organisational conditions.

Different working methods thus have an impact on bullying and degrading treatment under different conditions. The most fundamental conditions for achieving success in combating bullying and degrading treatment, in some respects, appear to be that the work is carried out systematically, that it is well

anchored throughout school and that the school climate and school culture are typified by cooperation and involvement.

**Table 7.22** What functions, for whom, in what respects, and under what conditions

Context	+	Mechanism	=	Empirical outcomes
<p><b>School cluster 4:</b>  <i>Staff competence:</i>            – Worse than national average  <i>Pupils' sociocultural and socio-economic conditions:</i>            – Worse than national average  <i>Approaches:</i>            – Very clear shared attitudes, norms and values            – Very good anchoring  <i>School climate or school culture:</i>            – Very good social relations            – High degree of participation            – Good organisational conditions</p>	+	<p><i>More developed work with emphasis on:</i>            – Direct measures in the form of well-developed detection and remedial measures            – Indirect measures in the form of well-developed relationship-enhancing measures, formative measures and pupil participation in indirect anti-bullying work</p>	=	<p>1. Reduction in bullying <i>generally</i>            2. Reduction in social bullying <i>generally</i>            3. Reduction in degrading treatment <i>generally</i>            4. Reduction in socially degrading treatment <i>generally</i>            5. Reduction in physically degrading treatment <i>generally</i>            6. Reduction in the proportion of perpetrators <i>generally</i></p>
<p><b>School cluster 5:</b>  <i>Staff competence:</i>            – Equivalent to national average  <i>Pupils' sociocultural and socio-economic conditions:</i>            – Worse than national average  <i>Approaches:</i>            – Clear attitudes, norms and values            – Well anchored  <i>School climate or school culture:</i>            – Good social relations            – High degree of participation            – Good organisational conditions</p>	+	<p><i>Neither more nor less developed work:</i>            – With absence of special lessons</p>	=	<p>1. Reduction in bullying of <i>boys</i>            2. Reduction in physical bullying of <i>boys</i>            3. Reduction in degrading treatment <i>generally</i>            4. Reduction in socially degrading treatment <i>generally</i>            5. Reduction in physically degrading treatment <i>generally</i></p>
<p><b>School cluster 6:</b>  <i>Staff competence:</i>            – Better than the national average  <i>Pupils' sociocultural and socio-economic conditions:</i>            – Worse than national average  <i>Approaches:</i>            – Clear attitudes, norms and values            – Very good anchoring  <i>School climate or school culture:</i>            – Good social relations            – Lower degree participation            – Worse organisational conditions</p>	+	<p><i>More developed work with emphasis on:</i>            – Direct measures in the form of documentation and staff training and also detection and remedial measures            – Indirect measures in the form of special lessons  <i>Absent or playing down of:</i>            – The direct group of measures <i>pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work</i>            – The indirect group of measures <i>relationship-enhancing measures</i></p>	=	<p>1. Reduction in bullying of <i>girls</i>            2. Reduction in social bullying of <i>girls</i>            3. Reduction in physical bullying of <i>girls</i></p>
<p><b>School cluster 7:</b>  <i>Staff competence:</i>            – Equivalent to national average  <i>Pupils' sociocultural and socio-economic conditions:</i>            – Better than the national average  <i>Approaches:</i>            – Clear attitudes, norms and values            – Well anchored  <i>School climate or school culture:</i>            – Good social relations            – Lower degree participation            – Good organisational conditions</p>	+	<p><i>More developed work with emphasis on:</i>            – Direct measures in the form of <i>pupil participation in anti-bullying work and also detection and remedial measures</i>            – Indirect measures in the form of special lessons  <i>Absent or playing down of:</i>            – The direct group of measures <i>documentation and staff training</i>            – The indirect group of measures <i>relationship-enhancing measures</i></p>	=	<p>1. Reduction in bullying of <i>girls</i>            2. Reduction in social bullying of <i>girls</i>            3. Reduction in degrading treatment <i>generally</i>            4. Reduction in socially degrading treatment <i>generally</i>            5. Reduction in physically degrading treatment <i>generally</i>            6. Reduction in the proportion of perpetrators <i>generally</i></p>

8.

Overview  
of results

## 8. Overview of results

This chapter summarises the results of the evaluation. First, the frequency of bullying, the effects of different measures and the design of successful approaches are described. This is followed by an analysis of the programmes based on school experiences, the costs of working with the programmes and the measures prescribed by the programmes in relation to the measures the evaluation has found to be effective, ineffective or counter-productive.

### 8.1 Prevalence of bullying and degrading treatment

The instructions for the evaluation describe bullying as “a repeated negative act involving an individual or individuals deliberately and intentionally trying to cause somebody harm or distress.”<sup>84</sup> It is thus the repetition of malicious acts that constitute the core of bullying.

This evaluation covers six types of negative acts in an aggregate operationalisation of the concepts of bullying:

- pushed/held
- threatened with blows
- hit/kicked
- mocked/called nasty things
- victim of rumours
- ostracised/excluded

The first three are physical and the last three are a social form of victimisation. In the evaluation, it is the pupils’ own assessments of whether negative acts have been carried out with the intention of harming or intimidating them or for other reasons that determines whether they are classified as bullied. Other reasons are “It was only in fun”, “because I was in disagreement/arguing with some pupils” and “don’t know”. The pupils classified as being subjected to degrading treatment are those who state that on some occasion they have been subjected to malicious acts. If we look at the proportion of pupils bullied together with those subjected to degrading treatment (i.e. including those categorised as bullied, referred to here as “degraded”), the proportion was slightly more than 19 per cent in the first survey. The relative frequency was somewhat higher for girls (just over 20 per cent) than for boys (approximately 18 per cent). In the last survey, the proportion of pupils subjected to degrading treatment was 16 per cent for boys and for girls. Boys were more often subjected to physical degradation than girls, whilst girls were more often subjected to social degradation. This result applies to pupils who said that in the last few months they had been subjected to degrading treatment on the odd or repeated occasions.

#### Frequency of bullying over time

Like the majority of other international studies on bullying, the results of this evaluation are based on data from groups of pupils who responded to question-

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<sup>84</sup> The definition comes from the National Agency for Education’s general guidelines and comments on promoting equal treatment and preventing discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment (National Agency for Education, 2006).

naires on different occasions. This means that the pupils who responded on the first occasion differed from those on the last occasion. During the evaluation, some pupils started in year 9 whilst others started in year 4. As the evaluation group also had access to responses from the same individuals on different questionnaires, we can state that the current approach to measuring bullying frequency runs the risk of overestimating the proportion of pupils bullied over time. The material shows that the frequency of bullying during the survey period (just over a year) was stable at around 7-8 per cent. The conclusion cannot be drawn from this that the same pupils were bullied over the whole period. Data on individuals show the following: (i) the proportion of individuals bullied during the whole measuring period was 1.5 per cent; (ii) pupils whose circumstances changed for the worse (did not report bullying on the first occasion but did on the second) was approximately 5 per cent; (iii) pupils whose circumstances improved (reported bullying on the first but not the second occasion) likewise amounted to approximately 5 per cent. The results show that bullying is a changing phenomenon. However, this does not lessen the pressure on those bullied over a long period.

The proportion of degraded pupils was basically twice as high as the proportion bullied in all the surveys. In the first questionnaire, bullying frequency was approximately 8 per cent among the boys and the girls. From an international perspective, this is a relatively low figure (Smith et al., 1999; Wolke et al., 2001; Due et al., 2005). The fact that girls were bullied as often as boys may indicate a change in trend. Earlier studies have showed that boys were bullied more often than girls (see previous references and Due et al., 2007).

Girls were subjected to more social degradation than boys, while boys were subjected to more physical degradation than girls, both in terms of degrading treatment and bullying. On the last survey occasion, however, the proportion of boys subjected to social bullying was slightly higher. The bullying frequency totalled just over 7 per cent – a reduction of almost 1 percentage point compared with the first measurement.

### Cyber bullying

In this evaluation, the proportion of pupils subjected to cyber bullying was 1 per cent in the first and the last surveys. This is a substantially lower proportion than reported in the media and other studies (Kowalski and Limber, 2007; Mishna, Saini and Solomon, 2009; Riebel, Jäger and Fischer, 2009).

### Who does the bullying and where

According to the bullied pupils, the perpetrators were usually “several in my class”. For the most part, bullying took place in school playgrounds, in and around the toilets, in corridors or in the classroom. A relatively high proportion of the bullied pupils, between 18 and 38 per cent, reported that they had been subjected to negative acts in the classroom even though a teacher had been present. The bullied pupils also gave the reasons why they thought this had happened. The most common responses were: (i) “others think I am too small/fat”, (ii) “others are jealous”, (iii), “don’t know” and (iiii) “others are stronger than me”.

When it comes to forms of discrimination, girls gave gender as the reason more often than boys, while boys who had been bullied gave ethnicity as the reason more often than girls. Pupils much more seldom gave discrimination

than other grounds as the reason they were bullied. Since the same person could give a number of reasons, the percentage figures total more than one hundred.

Reasons given:

- other reasons (90 per cent), of which the most frequent are mentioned above
- gender (25 per cent)
- disability (23 per cent)
- ethnicity (21 per cent)
- transgender identity/sexual orientation (21 per cent)
- religion or other belief system (10 per cent)

### Pupils' reactions to negative acts

When it comes to emotional responses to negative acts, shame-related feelings (feeling worthless) were more common among bullied pupils (39 per cent) than among pupils who were not bullied but who were nevertheless subjected to negative acts temporarily or without any clear malicious intent. Among the “degraded” pupils who had at some time been subjected to negative acts, the intention of which was to cause them harm or discomfort, 21 per cent reacted with feelings of shame. In the category “victimised with unclear intent”, namely pupils who were on at least some occasions in the week subjected to negative acts without having any clear idea whether these had been seriously intended, the corresponding proportion was 31 per cent. This indicates that self-esteem, above all, is undermined by continuously being subjected to negative acts as opposed to being subjected to degrading treatment on single occasions.

### Bullying in relation to pupils' social relations and sense of coherence

A factor that can undermine the self-confidence of bullied pupils is that they have fewer good friends (fewer chose the response four or more) than school friends who were not bullied. Of those who stated that they had not been bullied, more than half said that they had confidence in the teachers (all or most of the teachers), while barely a quarter of the bullied pupils felt the same confidence. Being subjected to bullying and, at the same time, lacking confidence in adults at the school creates insecurity and an unsafe feeling among those bullied. Put another way, pupils subjected to repeated bullying less often than other pupils felt that: (i) the school situation was predictable or understandable, (ii) they had access to resources that they could call on to manage a troubling situation, for instance, support from teachers whom they trusted, and could assume they would receive support from, and (iii) the school was rewarding and meaningful and thus worth putting energy and involvement into.

## **8.2 Effects of measures against bullying and degrading treatment**

As mentioned above, we have used data of different kinds to estimate the frequency of bullying: not only data from groups of pupils who answered the questionnaire on different occasions, but also data from individuals who answered the questionnaire on all occasions. For the sake of simplicity, we will refer to the former type of data as group data and the second as individual data. The effects of measures on bullying can be measured in terms of both group and individual data. Table 8.1 shows which measures are effective in reducing bullying as well

**Table 8.1** Effective, non-effective and counter-productive components

	Individual data	Group data 1
<b>Effective components</b>		
Cooperative teams	Boys	All pupils
Dealing with bullies a/b	Boys b	Girls a
Dealing with victims a/b	Boys b	Girls a
Pupils active in prevention	All pupils	Girls
Follow-up/evaluation	All pupils	Girls
Relationship-enhancing measures pupil-pupil	Boys	Boys
Case documentation	Boys	
Staff training	Boys	
Disciplinary strategies		Boys
Break monitoring system		Girls
School assemblies about bullying		Girls
School rules		Boys
<b>Non-effective components</b>		
Relationship-enhancing measures teacher-pupil		
Training material		
Parent information/training		
<b>Counter-productive components</b>		
Pupils as players		Boys
Mediation		Girls
Special lessons		Girls

Dealing with bullies and victims has been analysed in two ways. In the first case a) means a strong component that schools have routines for remedying, following up and processing/supporting whilst a weak component means that schools have only remedial and follow-up routines or no routines at all. In the second case b) means a strong component that schools have routines for remedying, following up, processing/supporting whilst a weak component means that schools have only remedial measures or no measures at all.

1 Regarding the data from groups of pupils answering the questionnaire in different surveys (group data), two calculation models have been used. The model (model 1) calculates effects on the basis of changes in the Odds ratios between different surveys. Model 2 shows the effects in the last survey irrespective of whether the components showed effects in the first survey. The fact that some components had obvious effects prior to the evaluation being started is not inconceivable given that schools in Sweden for several years have been obliged to actively combat and counteract degrading treatment.

as measures that are ineffective and counter-productive. The Table also shows the effects for boys, girls, and both girls and boys. The empty cells in the table mean the absence of an effect.

The measures in Table 8.1 are arranged by outcome with bullying frequency calculated for individual data items. The fact that measures exist is not in itself sufficient. They must be applied in the way described below to have an effect.

#### Effective measures:

- *Cooperative teams* – i.e. anti-bullying teams, safety groups or similar with a broad mix of teachers and staff with special skills, such as school nurses, counsellors or teachers for children with special needs.
- *Dealing with bullies and dealing with victims* – a) there are procedures for remedying and following up bullies and victims, and b) procedures for processing and supporting those involved.
- *Pupils participating actively in preventing bullying* – pupils have the task, not just on single occasions, of running activities aimed at creating a good atmosphere with the support and cooperation of adults at the school. Examples of these activities are pupils working in the school cafeteria or with relationship-enhancing measures within the framework of the class (pupils functioning as peer supports is not included in this measure).

- *Follow-up/evaluation* – carried out regularly of the pupils' situation with regard to bullying and degrading treatment and used as a basis for developing anti-bullying measures.
- *Relationship-enhancement between pupils* – a deliberate strategy implemented through activities to create a sense of closeness and community.
- *Case documentation* – based on developed procedures.
- *Staff training* – the majority of staff receive training to enhance their understanding of bullying and degrading treatment.
- *Disciplinary strategies* – strategies that teachers find supportive and follow, for instance, sanctions or consequences applied as a result of unacceptable behaviour.
- *A system for monitoring school breaks* – well-developed, timetabled and based on identifying areas that are perceived as dangerous and where there are special staff responsible for being with the pupils and organising special activities for them.
- *School assemblies* – information about bullying and degrading treatment to the pupils at regular meetings.
- *School rules* – developed in cooperation between staff and pupils.

#### **Ineffective measures:**

- *Training materials* – used systematically.
- *Parent information/training* – training offered to parents.
- *Relationship-enhancing measures between teachers and pupils*.

#### **Counter-productive measures:**

- *Pupils as players* – pupils trained internally or externally to function as observers or rapporteurs, e.g. as peer supports.
- *Special lessons* – timetabled and for all classes.
- *Mediation* – used as a procedure when conflicts between pupils occur.

Most of the effective measures had gender-specific effects. If we look at individual data, two measures were effective for all pupils. They were *pupils active in prevention* and *follow-up/evaluation of the pupils' situation*. Having pupils who are active in prevention is effective when pupils, with the support and cooperation of adults in the school, are responsible for different activities, such as activities in the school canteen. Follow-up and evaluation of the pupils' situation have less effect on bullying and degrading treatment when the school regularly uses these as a basis for decisions to modify their work against bullying and degrading treatment. Other measures at individual level, namely *cooperative teams*, *dealing with bullies*, *dealing with victims*, *relationship-enhancing measures between pupils*, *case documentation* and *staff training* were only effective for boys.

In terms of group data, one measure was effective for all pupils. The rest were effective for boys or for girls. The most effective measure for both girls and boys was *cooperative teams*, which reduce bullying if they are made up of staff with special competence – such as social pedagogues or special pedagogues, nurses and counsellors – together with regular teachers. Effective measures for girls were *dealing with bullies*, *dealing with victims*, *active participation of pupils in prevention*, *follow-up/evaluation*, *break monitoring systems* and *school assemblies about bullying*. Effective measures for boys were *relationship-enhancing measures between pupils*, *disciplinary strategies* and *school rules*.

It is worth noting that *dealing with bullies* and *dealing with victims* have different effects on girls and boys depending on how the measure has been categorised when calculating the outcomes. If schools provided pupils who were involved in bullying with the support and opportunity to work through the situation, then the measure was effective for girls. For boys, such support measures were less important. It was sufficient for them that the schools had remedial and follow-up measures for bullying to decrease.

When it comes to social or physical bullying, the pattern was somewhat different to that for bullying as a whole. As regards *cooperative teams*, *dealing with bullies*, *dealing with victims* and *case documentation*, the effects on physical bullying were identical to the results from the individual data in Table 8.1 (the measures *cooperative teams*, *dealing with bullies* and *dealing with victims* also had an effect on the social bullying of boys). *Relationship-enhancing measures between pupils* also reduced the physical bullying of boys in the individual and the group data. When examining different forms of bullying, the individual data showed that staff training only had an effect on the social bullying of boys, and that follow-up and evaluation of the pupils' situation only had an effect on the social bullying of girls.

If we look at the group data (changes in effects over time), *dealing with bullies* and *dealing with victims*, and *school assemblies about bullying* were effective against social bullying of girls. Having pupils active in prevention was effective against the physical bullying of girls whilst *follow-up/evaluation* was effective both against social and physical bullying of girls. The only measure to have an effect on social bullying of boys was *disciplinary strategies*.

At the bottom of Table 8.1, three counter-productive measures are shown: *mediation* and *special lessons*, which had a counter-productive effect on the bullying of girls, and *pupils as players*, which was counter-productive for boys.

One possible explanation for the *mediation* measure being counter-productive is that it was applied in situations in which it was not intended to be applied, namely in bullying situations. Mediation can be described as a strategy for resolving conflicts that is intended to be used when there is a conflict between two equal parties. If this strategy is also applied to bullying – which is not to be regarded as a conflict between equal parties but as an assault on an individual in a weaker position in relation to the perpetrator – the method may be more likely to aggravate than resolve the situation.

The fact that special lessons were counter-productive might have been due to the fact that they were too often used unthinkingly for all groups of pupils, irrespective of whether there was a need. To be used, they should be adapted to needs, gender and age.

The technical reason that *pupils as players* – in the sense of observers, rapporteurs – was counter-productive is that the measure showed a significant effect in the baseline measurement but not in the last survey. We cannot give an exact answer as to why this is the case. It may indicate that pupils as players can function well or badly depending on: (i) who carries it out, (ii) how the task was (mis)used and, not least, (iii) what other measures were linked to this particular measure.

The combinations of measures that schools are able to mobilise in preventing bullying and degrading treatment are in their turn dependent on contextual conditions to function without friction. This takes us to the question of combinations of measures (here also referred to as component clusters).

### Effects of combinations of measures (component clusters)

Combinations of measures are made up of individual measures combined and chosen on the basis of conditions faced by the participating schools. At 25 of the 39 schools, *relationship-enhancing measures between pupils* and *relationship-enhancing measures between teachers and pupils* are applied in similar ways – if the first measure occurs to a great extent, then the second measure also does, and if the first is used to a low or average extent, the same pattern is found for the second measure. The similarities concerning how the measures are used empirically form the basis for determining different combinations of measures. Table 8.2 shows which combinations of measures reduced bullying.

Like individual measures, most of the combined measures had gender-specific effects. As regards combinations of measures that could be said to be directly linked to the schools' anti-bullying work, the detection and remedying measures reduced bullying of girls. More specifically, this meant that schools succeeded in reducing bullying of girls if they carried out regular follow-ups with a direct bearing on the anti-bullying work; had a well-developed, timetabled system for monitoring school breaks based on identified 'dangerous places'; provided pupils with activities during breaks; and had remedial, follow-up and processing/supportive measures for pupils involved in bullying. This also held true for social and physical bullying of girls.

The measure combination pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work reduced the bullying of both boys and girls. Participation, which is partly based on pupils' involvement in deciding which school rules should be applied and, where appropriate, have influence on how the cooperative teams work, had a gender-differentiated effect in terms of different kinds of bullying. This combination was effective for boys in terms of physical bullying and for girls for social bullying. It is worth noting that one of the measures in this category is *pupils as players*, which was counter-productive for boys; see above. In order not to risk pupil participation being applied incorrectly, there is no reason the measure cannot be excluded – the measure combination still has effects (cf. McIntyre, Gresham, DiGennaro and Reed, 2007, who refer to the importance of differ-

**Table 8.2** Effective measure combinations (component clusters)

	Individual data	Group data <sup>1</sup>
Related to anti-bullying work		
<b>Direct</b>		
Detection/remedial measures		Girls
Pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work		All pupils
<b>Indirect</b>		
Relationship-enhancing measures	Boys	Boys
Pupil participation in indirect anti-bullying work		Girls
Formative measures		Boys

*Detection/remedial measures:* follow-up/evaluation, break monitoring system, dealing with bullies, dealing with victims

*Pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work:* school rules, pupils as players, cooperative teams

*Relationship-enhancing measures:* relationship-enhancing measures teacher–pupil, relationship-enhancing measures pupil–pupil

*Pupil participation in indirect anti-bullying work:* pupils active in prevention, mediation, assemblies for pupils

*Formative measures:* disciplinary strategies, training material, parent information/training

<sup>1</sup> Two calculation models have been used for the group data in the tables. Model 1 estimates effects on the basis of changes in Odds ratios between different surveys. Model 2 calculates the effects in the last survey irrespective of whether groups of measures (component clusters) produced effects in the first survey. Detection/remedial and formative measures were effective according to model 1; pupil participation in direct and indirect anti-bullying work was effective according to model 2; relationship-enhancing measures were effective according to both models 1 and 2.

entiating between measures that lie behind desirable changes in behaviour and those that do not and can thus be excluded).

If we look at combinations of measures that are indirectly linked to the schools' measures against bullying and degrading treatment, only one had an effect on girls: pupil participation in indirect anti-bullying work. Two of the measures included in this combination have already been touched on above. These are *pupils active in prevention* and school *assemblies about bullying*. Both showed a reduction in the bullying of girls: the first reduced physical bullying and the latter social bullying of girls. As in the previous combination of measures, it includes one measure that was previously shown to be counter-productive for bullying of girls, namely *mediation*. When situations arise in which it is difficult to decide if mediation is appropriate, it is better to err on the side of caution and exclude mediation from the repertoire of measures.

Relationship-enhancing measures had an effect on bullying of boys. When different forms of bullying were examined, relationship-enhancing measures were shown to reduce social bullying of boys in the individual and group data. With regard to physical bullying of boys, relationship-enhancing measures only showed an effect in the group data. One possible explanation for this is that the combination functions less well in preventing bullying of pupils who have been physically bullied for a long period (the individual data come from pupils who responded to the second survey, and these included pupils who had been victimised through the duration of the survey period).

Formative measures also reduced bullying of boys. This combination includes *disciplinary strategies*, which earlier showed effects on social bullying of boys. The combination also includes *training material* and *parent information/training* – which in themselves did not show any effects. In combination with disciplinary strategies, however, bullying of boys decreased over time. It is worth noting that formative measures also showed a counterproductive effect on physical bullying of girls.

### Effects of measures and combinations of measures on degrading treatment

Measures that were effective in reducing degrading treatment over time, in descending order, were *disciplinary strategies*, *dealing with bullies*, *dealing with victims*, *pupils active in prevention*, *cooperative teams*, *relationship-promoting measures between pupils* and *break monitoring systems*. The relationship-enhancing measure also had an effect on reducing degrading treatment. The measures and combinations of measures that had an effect on degrading treatment in the last survey were the same, apart from *dealing with bullies* and *dealing with victims*. However, the measure *school rules* and the combinations detecting/ remedying measures and *pupils' direct participation in anti-bullying* were effective against degrading treatment.

The results show that no single measure was effective in reducing the proportion of perpetrators over time. On the other hand, the combination identifying/ remedial measures (a combination of the following measures: *follow-up/evaluation*, *break monitoring system*, *dealing with bullies* and *dealing with victims*) had an effect on the proportion of perpetrators (Model 2). The measures *pupils as players* and *mediation*, however, were counter-productive. *Follow-up/evaluation*, *pupils active in prevention* and *staff training*, like the combination identification/

remedial measures, showed positive effects for the proportion of perpetrators. In contrast, *mediation* and *parent information/training* were counter-productive.

### Changes in the scope of bullying and degrading treatment in different school clusters

The 39 schools studied show big similarities with the national average, with comparative figures for the proportion of teachers with higher education pedagogical qualifications, teachers with higher education qualifications in special education, teachers per hundred pupils, female teachers, pupils entitled to mother tongue tuition, and parents with the highest levels of education.

To facilitate comparisons between schools with regard to different approaches to anti-bullying, schools were grouped in relation to the similarity of their ways of using the seven measure combinations – the effects of five of these were described above. The grouping resulted in nine groups of schools (school clusters) with similar approaches to bullying and degrading treatment (in practice, this amounted to eight groups of schools, since one school was in its own cluster as it deviated from the others in some respects). If the school cluster is looked at in light of the above-mentioned comparative figures, there were relatively large variations between some groups of schools. The proportion of teachers with higher education pedagogical qualifications, for instance, was 79 per cent in school cluster 3, compared with 93 per cent in school cluster 2. In school cluster 8, the proportion of parents with post-upper secondary education was 35 per cent, compared with 59 per cent in school cluster 7. If factors such as staff resources and financial resources, anchoring of anti-bullying work among staff and organisational stability (based on data from the staff questionnaire) are compared, it is evident that the conditions for successful anti-bullying were less favourable in school clusters 3 and 8, and more favourable in school cluster 4.

Work on combating bullying and degrading treatment has been assessed as more developed in school clusters 4, 6 and 7 and less developed in school clusters 1, 3 and 8. The descriptions refer to whether measure combinations in the school cluster were greater or less than the average values for the different measure combinations. For instance, four of the seven combinations were applied to a higher degree in school cluster 4, while four of the seven combinations were used to a low degree in school cluster 8.<sup>85</sup>

School clusters with a more developed way of working were effective in reducing bullying in some respects; at the same time as school clusters with less developed anti-bullying work were counter-productive in some respects. A school cluster in which anti-bullying was assessed as neither more nor less developed was effective in some respects (school cluster 5). Results based on group data show the following effects on bullying:<sup>86</sup>

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85 In school cluster 4, three of the four measure combinations with indirect links to anti-bullying were applied extensively: relationship-enhancing measures, formative measures and pupil participation in indirect anti-bullying work, as well as a direct measure combination – identifying/remedial measures. In school cluster 8, all measure combinations directly linked to anti-bullying were applied to a low extent: these were pupil participation in direct anti-bullying work, documentation/staff training, and detection/remedial measures, as well as one indirect measure combination – pupil participation in indirect anti-bullying work. For a more detailed description of different school clusters, see the chapter on methods.

86 When calculating the effects that reduce bullying in groups of schools with similar approaches, group and individual data were used. Calculations of effects were based on group data and start from differences in the frequency of bullying in the first and second survey. Calculations of the effects were based on individual data based on comparisons of the proportion of pupils in different school clusters who obtained an *improved situation* and the proportion of pupils who *continued to be bullied* or who obtained a *worse situation*.

- In school cluster 4, bullying decreased, particularly social bullying of boys and girls.
- In school cluster 5, bullying decreased especially physical bullying of boys.
- In school cluster 6, bullying of girls decreased.
- In school cluster 7, bullying decreased, especially social bullying of girls.
- In school cluster 1, counter-productive effects on bullying and social bullying of boys were shown.

Calculations based on individual data show a result with no school cluster being successful. For three school clusters, 1, 2 and 3, however, the results were counter-productive. School clusters 4, 5 and 7 were effective in reducing both socially and physically degrading treatment. School clusters 4 and 7 were also effective in reducing the proportion of pupils who subjected others to degrading treatment. The latter also holds true for school cluster 8.

School clusters 4 and 7 were more successful at anti-bullying than other school clusters. The proportions bullied, subjected to degrading treatment and perpetrators, decreased in these groups of schools. What distinguishes these and other successful school clusters? And what functions, for whom, in what respects and under what conditions?

### Successful approaches

The design and content of anti-bullying measures in school clusters reveals similarities and differences. When examining the quantitative material in relation to qualitative aspects, it is the extent to which anti-bullying measures were systematic and anchored in the schools that primarily differentiated the school clusters. The systematic approach of the measures was clearer and the application of measures more uniform and thought through in school cluster 4 than in the other school clusters. The use of different measures was more systematic in this cluster. As well as being thorough and used in combination, there was also a clear distribution of roles and responsibility. This combination of measures was, in many cases, developed in relation to conditions existing in the schools, and the schools' experiences of working with different programmes. In other school clusters, pupils experienced that strategies were not applied in the same manner, that routines were not followed, and that they were not anchored amongst the staff. The fact that the staff did not follow a joint approach weakened the anchoring of anti-bullying measures at the schools, and confidence in the measures decreased.

It is clear from the results that *"the whole school approach"* is more prominent and more anchored in successful school clusters (especially school cluster 4). If a whole school approach is used, it appears to have few effects on the pupils' sense of participation and the way children behave towards each other in different situations. This in turn can have an effect on or be affected by the school climate.

Another important difference is the means by which school clusters work with different relationship-enhancing measures or measures that contribute to good relationships. Working with relationship-enhancing measures is important for the social climate. At a number of schools in cluster 4, there was a clear culture of co-operation, covering not only pupils but also teachers. A sense of social community had been created at these schools, coloured by confidence and a sense of belonging. This also provided a good basis for a joint approach to anti-bullying work.

Studies also show that when pupils participate in school activities and are able to influence their own freedom of action, the result is positive effects on

pupils' views of the school and, as a result, an improvement in the school climate (cf. Ahlström 2009). Shared attitudes, norms, values and participation are often given as contributory factors in creating a good school climate.

In other words, a good school climate is a contributory factor to successful work, at the same time as successful work can contribute to a good school climate. The school climate is influenced by several factors related to the situation, inside and outside the school. This may relate to organisational realities, social relationships, involvement, attitudes, norms and values. An analysis of all the material, qualitative and quantitative, also shows that contextual conditions with different combinations of measures are important for achieving success in combating bullying. The results show that:

- More developed anti-bullying work that emphasises direct measures in terms of well-developed detection and remedial measures, indirect measures in terms of well-developed relationship-enhancing measures, formative measures and pupil participation in indirect anti-bullying work can function generally, providing that the approach is well anchored, the school climate is positive and the organisational conditions are good.
- Anti-bullying work that is 'average', and which does not contain special lessons, can function against bullying of boys, particularly physical bullying, and all forms of degrading treatment, providing the approach is anchored, the school climate is positive and the organisational conditions are good.
- More developed forms of anti-bullying work emphasising direct measures in the form of documentation and staff training, measures to identify and remedy bullying, and indirect measures in the form of special lessons but for which the direct measure combination of pupil participation in the direct work on anti-bullying and the indirect measure combination of relationship-enhancing measures are lacking or have been toned down function against bullying of girls, providing that the approach is well anchored and the school climate is good, even though the organisational conditions may be worse.
- More developed anti-bullying work emphasising direct measures in the form of pupil participation in the direct anti-bullying work, measures for identifying and remedying bullying, and indirect measures in terms of special lessons but for which the direct measure combination of documentation and staff training and the indirect measure combination of relationship-enhancing measures are lacking or have been toned down can function against bullying of girls, particularly social bullying, and all forms of degrading treatment, providing that it is well anchored, and that the school climate and organisational conditions are good.

Different ways of working may also have an effect on bullying and degrading treatment under different conditions. However, the most basic conditions appear to be that the work is carried out systematically, that it is anchored in the whole school and that the school climate and school culture are typified by co-operation and involvement.

### **8.3 Work with and costs of programmes against bullying and degrading treatment**

An idea early in the project, when it became clear that it was not possible to directly evaluate the effects of the programmes, was that by identifying effective

measures, it would be possible to identify effective programmes. Programmes containing more effective measures than others and fewer ineffective and counter-productive measures than others could then be regarded as more effective.

The idea of identifying effective programmes from their measures was difficult to carry out for a number of different reasons. First of all, it is complex to determine which measures are effective, as this depends on which categories of victimised pupils we are referring to, what forms of victimisation are relevant, and under what conditions the measures are applied, i.e. the overall context. The second reason is that the effects we observe are generally small. Thirdly, it is not usually the existence of a specific measure per se at a school that has proved to be effective but rather the developed or systematic way in which the school is working with the measure, i.e. the measure is 'strong' and has an 'H' character (see Attachment 5 in the Methodology appendix, Scheme for assessing components). Linking effective measures to the use of a particular programme would, strictly speaking, require the measure to be used in the specific way that we have classified as 'strong' and advocated by the programme. We have not had access to such detailed information for all programmes and all measures. The fourth reason is that it is somewhat problematic to separate individual measures since they probably achieve these outcomes in interaction with each other and other contextual factors.

Despite this necessary reservation, the approach nevertheless provides some information on the extent to which different types of measures (effective, ineffective and counter-productive) occur in the programmes (cf. Chapter 5, Experiences of programme implementation). Here, we take our starting point in the results of effective measures from Table 8.1, i.e. bullying at the individual and group level. Following this, we focus on what the identified result pattern looks like in relation to the calculations on programme costs. The section concludes with a review of each programme in which the experiences of working with these programmes are related to their effective, ineffective and counter-productive measures and their costs.

A description of the design of the programme is given in Chapter 5, *Experiences of programme implementation*.

### Effective, ineffective and counter-productive measures in programmes

Of the 12 effective measures in Table 8.1, the Olweus Programme appears to have the highest proportion of these measures (10 of 12). School Mediation (6) and the Farsta Method (5) have a higher proportion of effective measures than the average value (4.5). SET has the lowest proportion of effective measures (2), Lions Quest, School Comet and Second Step, each has three effective measures, whilst Friends has four.

All the programmes have one or two of the three measures described as ineffective in Table 8.1. The Farsta Method, Lions Quest and School Mediation have one of these measures, whilst the others have two.

The three counter-productive measures are absent in two of the programmes: the Farsta Method and School Comet. The Olweus Programme and School Mediation contain two of the counter-productive measures; the rest each have one.

### Programmes and their costs

The cost profile of each of the programmes is based on the direct costs in terms of working hours in general and lesson hours. To obtain a picture of what the

**Table 8.3** Program costs estimated per pupil and year

Calculated over 3 years for a standard school with 300 pupils						
Programme	Direct costs	Working hours/ resource use	Lesson hours	Total staff hours (working hours + lesson hours)	Work + cost of lessons at SEK 220 per hour	Estimated annual cost per pupil
The Farsta Method	SEK 5 000	340	No	340	74 800	SEK 89
Friends	SEK 75 000	655	336	991	218 020	SEK 326
School Comet	SEK 60 000	867	No	867	190 740	SEK 279
Lions Quest	SEK 39 750	+600	1 680	2 280	501 600	SEK 602
Olweus	SEK +34 200	3 008	2 520	5 528	1 216 160	SEK 1 389
SET	SEK +68 000	+1 320	3 360	4 680	1 029 600	SEK 1 220
School Mediation	SEK +32 625	+900	No	900	198 000	SEK 256
Second Step	SEK +36 500	+1 735	1 680	3 415	751 300	SEK 875

The sign + means that an average value of maximum and minimum values has been used.

programmes may cost in practice, calculations have been carried out on the basis of a hypothetical situation in which the programme is used over a period of three years in a school with 300 pupils. An hourly cost of SEK 220 is estimated based on the average salary cost of a stand-in teacher during 2010.

SET has high costs, in terms of direct costs, and costs for working hours and lesson hours. The Olweus Programme and Second Step have high costs for working hours and lesson hours, whilst School Comet has high direct costs and costs for general working hours. Friends has high direct costs and School Mediation has relatively high cost for general working hours. Lions Quest and the Farsta Method differ in not having high costs in any respect.

Overall, from the hypothetical example, the Olweus Programme and SET are the most costly programmes. They are estimated to cost between SEK 1,200 and SEK 1,400 per pupil. Lions Quest and Second Step are within the range SEK 600–900 per pupil. School Mediation, School Comet and Friends cost about SEK 200–400 per pupil and the Farsta Method about SEK 90 per pupil.

If we link the costs to different measures in the programmes (effective, ineffective and counter-productive), SET is one of the most costly programmes and, at the same time, one of the least effective programmes at reducing bullying at individual and group level. The Olweus Programme has high costs and the highest proportion of effective measures, but it also has counterproductive measures and other measures for which we have not been able to demonstrate any effects. The Farsta Method has by far the lowest costs and the pattern of measures shows a higher proportion of effective measures than the average, a lower proportion of ineffective measures, and no measures that are counter-productive.

### Programmes, effective measures, costs and other experiences of programme implementation

So, what can be said about each of the programmes? The clearest patterns obtained from user experiences of implementing the programmes are presented below.

#### The Farsta Method

From the interviews, it is clear that it is seen as positive that the Farsta Method has a special group responsible for dealing firmly with situations that arise. The

persons who work in these groups and hold interviews with those involved in bullying feel that they have clear instructions for these interviews.

The difficulties experienced include that the setting up of a team with special responsibility can lead to knowledge not being disseminated to the rest of the school. From the interviews, respondents are unclear as to when parents should be contacted. The method is not considered as effective for repeated bullying. The power balance between adults and pupils in the remedial interviews in which a number of adults selectively and by surprise confront a pupil with information about his or her bullying of others can at best be regarded as ethically doubtful. As the Farsta Method is primarily remedial, it needs to be supplemented with measures for prevention and detection.

The Farsta Method has the lowest costs, and the pattern of measures shows a higher proportion of effective measures, a lower proportion of ineffective measures than the average and no counter-productive measures.

### **Friends**

Involving pupils in actively forming positive peer relationships and discouraging negative ones is viewed by those working with Friends as highly positive. Pupils can experience the responsibility as stimulating, and peer supports can be important to the development of events at the school and also serve as role models.

A crucial factor is deciding which pupils become peer supports and how they are appointed. The election process itself runs the risk of undermining the integrity of pupils. If pupils with weak or negative peer involvement are chosen, it can be counter-productive. There is also a risk that peer supports are either given or take on too much responsibility. Information obtained from implementing Friends can risk being restricted to the responsible adult groups. As the programme primarily detects and remedies bullying, the schools supplement their anti-bullying work with other remedial measures.

The direct cost of Friends is relatively high, but the cost of the other resources and lessons is lower. Overall, this means that Friends is estimated to have the fourth lowest costs of the programmes. Friends has a lower proportion of effective measures than the average. It has two of the three ineffective measures and one of the three measures shown to have counter-productive results.

### **Lions Quest**

Much of the implementation of Lions Quest centres on lessons based on the material 'Together'. Several of those interviewed with experience of working with the material feel that the exercises are concrete and good and that this increases the chances of pupils getting to know each other, which reinforces unity in the school.

Staff with experience of working with the programme express concern over the time that special lessons take from other teaching. There is also a risk that work on foundation values is confined to these lessons instead of permeating all teaching. A key question is how the lessons are carried out. They can function well, but there is a risk that pupils will experience them as silly, tedious and contrived, leading to lessons being unruly and counter-productive. The programme is, above all, preventative and is thus supplemented by other types of measures for identifying and remedying bullying.

Lions Quest, despite having neither high direct costs nor costs for lessons or other resources, has a relatively high cost per pupil and year. The costs are the

fourth highest. The programme has a lower proportion of effective measures than the average, one of the three ineffective measures and one of the three counter-productive measures.

### **The Olweus Programme**

The Olweus Programme is fairly comprehensive and work takes place in parallel on prevention, detection and remedial measures. By means of comprehensive training and emphasis on the responsibility by everyone, several of those interviewed consider that working with the programme leads to the acquisition of extensive knowledge about bullying at the school.

The programme can be regarded as demanding much time and energy, a fact that some respondents pointed out is taken from the children and other teaching. In the implementation phase, there is a risk of a 'gap' occurring in the transfer of information from an earlier team to a new team. Pupils may also find it difficult to know where they should turn for assistance. The programme creates knowledge and initiates activities that require work to be maintained. Programme fatigue occurs at schools. Introduction training for new employees is regarded as essential.

The Olweus Programme is the most costly of the programmes. This is due to the working hours for its introduction and the regular lessons. The programme has more effective measures than any other programme but also two of the three ineffective measures and two of the three counter-productive measures.

### **SET**

Through SET and its life skill lessons, pupils have the opportunity to develop their relationships and their socio-emotional competence. A number of respondents working with the programme regard the concept as clear and easy to follow. There are also staff who feel that they have been able to develop their own abilities to support pupils as a result of using the programme.

SET receives the same type of criticism from those working with the programme as other programmes that use special lessons. It is not clear from where time for the lessons can be taken. Some experience difficulties in carrying out the interviews, which means that they may not be carried out. Some persons also thought that it was doubtful whether interviews of this kind could be timetabled.

They were seen as artificial. Some also responded that older pupils may regard the material as childish and lose interest, with the result that the lessons become negative. SET is, above all, a preventative programme, which leads to schools supplementing it with other identification and remedial measures.

SET is the second costliest programme and, at the same time, has the lowest proportion of effective measures. The programme has two of the three ineffective measures and one of the three counter-productive measures.

### **School Comet**

As a result of working with School Comet, several of the interviewed teachers felt that they had developed better skills for emphasising positive behaviour of pupils and managing to ignore negative aspects. They were able to be more precise when giving praise by giving their reasons for the praise. As a result, school staff felt that the working environment gradually became more positive.

At schools where all the staff used School Comet, the training was regarded as comprehensive and demanding in terms of time and resources, particularly

in the initial stages. There are also some who considered that explaining the methodology to parents who viewed its approach as some kind of conditioning could be difficult. School Comet is essentially preventative. Schools supplement it with other detection and remedial activities.

School Comet is the third least costly programme. Although the programme has high direct costs and high resource usage, there are no ongoing regular costs for lessons. The programme has a lower proportion of effective measures than the average. The programme has two of the three ineffective measures but none of the counter-productive measures.

### **School Mediation**

Several of those who work with School Mediation believe strongly in the basic idea of the programme that pupils develop strategies for resolving conflicts and thereby develop a better climate at the school. At one school the view of the training was so positive that the school wanted all pupils to receive it.

Several of the schools participating as School Mediation Schools did not succeed in implementing long-term work with the programme, the reason given being a shortage of resources. The work of coordination takes time and energy. As some people in the programme have a more active function than others, there is a risk that knowledge will not be disseminated through the whole school. The idea is that pupil activities should apply to mediation in the event of conflicts, not bullying, which is regarded as a consequence of unresolved conflicts. However, in practice it may be difficult to maintain such a distinction. The programme has been introduced as a means of combating bullying and degrading treatment. Like the other programmes in which pupils play an important function, it is decisive who are given the tasks and what the atmosphere is like among the pupils right from the beginning. There is a risk that pupils will be given a role that requires excessive responsibility on their part. The fact that the pupils are bound by 'professional secrecy' is described as too demanding. School Mediation is primarily a preventative programme even though its mediation elements can easily be interpreted as remedial. This means that the programme is supplemented by other elements for identifying and remedying negative acts.

The costs of the general working hours for School Mediation are among the highest, whilst the direct costs are lower. No lessons are used, which makes School Mediation the programme with the second lowest costs. School Mediation has a higher proportion of effective measures than the average. It has one of the three ineffective measures and two of the counter-productive measures.

### **Second Step**

Second Step is one of the programmes that works with special material and lessons to develop the pupils' socio-emotional skills. The programme thus has the same advantages and disadvantages as other programmes with this approach. One of its strengths is that the material is essentially considered good by those working with the programme, and it can thus give stability to the teaching and security to the school staff.

One of its disadvantages is that the programme takes time from other teaching and that members of staff differ in how suited they feel they are to working with the programme. The clear process outlined in the materials and lessons can also be regarded as artificial. Some exercises run the risk of increasing bully-

ing of children who are already being bullied. Older children, in particular, can regard the material as monotonous and boring. Criticism was also reported by interviewees that the material in Second Step mostly contains pictures of fair-haired children. As the programme is preventative, it is supplemented by detection and remedial measures by the schools using it.

The costs of using Second Step are the third highest, but it is not the direct costs that are high but the general use of resources and cost of lessons. The programme has a lower proportion of effective measures than the average, two of the three ineffective measures and one of the three counter-productive measures.

### Reflections on working with the programmes

The costs of working with the programmes are important to schools even if they vary greatly between the programmes. The programmes have general ideas about how work at the schools should be carried out and, to a minimal degree, take little account of the schools' unique characters and conditions. It is unusual that programmes contain preventative, detection and remedial measures. In most cases, the programmes need to be supplemented by other work, but how this should be done is often unclear. Special difficulties are associated with the pupils' activity in anti-bullying work and with designing special lessons.

It is reasonable to assume that the programmes provide schools with support in their efforts to combat bullying and degrading treatment. At the same time, it can be said that all schools have free access to such support 'programmes' in the guidelines issued by the National Agency for Education's general guidelines on 'Promoting equal treatment and preventing discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment'. This 'programme' would show a more effective pattern of measures than the eight programmes evaluated here. At the same time, the value of external support – in terms of staff with time, resources and authority – should not be underestimated; a school receives this when it purchases a programme. It may be that using a programme to some extent reflects shortcomings in energy and time for handling these questions by the school management. The fact that the school itself has the best knowledge of its own specific conditions can easily take second place.

From the results obtained, it is worth noting that training measures in terms of special lessons may be counter-productive in combating bullying. This is an issue that requires further attention and investigation. Perhaps relationship-enhancing work is difficult to work with. As described above, it can easily be regarded as artificial. At the same time, in its everyday reality, the school has many opportunities to focus on these issues. This applies to events taking place during breaks and patterns occurring during regular subject teaching. The socialisation mandate is not separate from the knowledge mandate but rather a part of it. Work on foundation values is constantly ongoing and non-divisible.

9.

More effective work to  
combat bullying and  
degrading treatment

## 9. More effective work to combat bullying and degrading treatment

This final chapter opens with a discussion on the difficulties involved in combating bullying. The discussion is based on this evaluation and previous research. The chapter closes with the recommendations of the project group.

### 9.1 Pedagogical reflections on impediments to measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment

From an international perspective, Swedish schools have a low proportion of pupils who are bullied. The current evaluation demonstrates that although many schools and municipalities devote great energy and invest much effort and resources into improving the situation for all pupils, it nevertheless seems difficult to completely eliminate bullying and degrading treatment. Aspirations to bring about change can nevertheless encounter resistance of different kinds.

#### Norms

At school, as in society as a whole, people often behave in a spontaneous manner without thinking and reflecting. This is largely determined by ingrained patterns and habits (Frånberg, G-M, 2010). These, in turn, are part of our culture and possibly our genetic make-up. That is why we do not reflect much on why we behave and think in a particular way in a certain situation. Since most everyday acts occur spontaneously, it also means that we reproduce, i.e. repeat, the structures and cultural patterns by which we are strongly shaped.

Two recent surveys of discrimination and equality of treatment carried out by the National Agency for Education show that one of the primary causes of harassment is restrictive norms, such as heterosexuality and *Swedishness*, and that both adults and children play a part in the creation of norms (National Agency for Education, 2009).

If strategies for change in a school context were to be based on a norm-critical approach, this would mean that we would have to reverse our way of thinking instead of following the conventional thought patterns to which we are accustomed (Bromseth and Darj, 2010). It would also mean that norms restricting pupils' opportunities to influence their school situation would become clearer and could be challenged.

Many anti-bullying programmes studied in the current evaluation are based on value exercises and discussions on creating understanding and tolerance for those who are different in some sense. From a norm-critical point of view, however, we should in fact examine the norms that determine why somebody is regarded as different. Groups that share a specific norm seem to be entitled to express their opinions of those who are excluded. The consequences of restrictive norms include discrimination and feelings of exclusion.

#### Using ready-made programmes

In this study, we have examined the effects of programme measures that have been designed in a different context, and even borrowed from other cultures,

than the one in which the programmes were intended to be used. The programme concept may have been formed on the basis of experiences, theoretical discussions or empirical findings from schools whose contexts are completely different to those in which the programmes will be implemented. Ready-made and relatively simple solutions to a complex problem are expected to work without any preparation on the part of teachers other than short training courses to present the methods and practical approaches used in a particular programme.

Pre-planned exercises are conducted in the classroom in accordance with manuals, pictures and other descriptions in the training material, independent of the situation in a particular class. However, pupils have experienced difficulty in identifying with the pre-planned situations, and this makes it hard for them to assimilate and apply the desired forms of behaviour in new contexts. Part of the reason for this is that the process does not engage them sufficiently, as the focus is on feelings and events that they may not even have experienced themselves.

The materials used in many schools include toolboxes, manuals, pictures and value exercises. Special lessons, for instance, life skills (SET) and Olweus lessons are timetabled. This means that time must be taken from other subjects, as life skills is not a subject in the current timetable for schools. Other materials that are used are *'Together'* (Lions Quest), Second Step and School Comet. A further problem that this evaluation has identified is that the behaviour that is 'trained' only seems to apply during these lessons. Often, other rules and 'manuals' apply during breaks, in the corridor and in the school canteen. How can this problem be tackled? One possible approach is to start from the specific needs of schools.

American research has also highlighted the problem of introducing ready-made programmes. According to the research, if anti-bullying programmes are to be relevant for different schools, they must meet the schools' specific needs (see, for example, Limber et al., 2004). Several problems have been noted with implementing the programmes as intended. These concern resistance from staff and parents, a desire for shorter, simpler solutions and a time limit for implementation. The challenge has thus been to transfer the programmes to the cultural norms and behavioural and psychosocial needs of the school that is on the point of choosing a specific programme.

A relevant reflection we should make is whether a ready-made programme answers the specific needs of the school considering its adoption. A well-anchored plan for combating degrading treatment and discrimination should be based on a survey of the school's activities and the shortcomings and problems that can be identified there. Proposals for measures to address these shortcomings should be clearly formulated and described as targets capable of evaluation. The aim is to formulate situation-specific methods that address the problem issues and change the school's activities in the desired direction. Whether this is achievable using ready-made programmes is questionable.

Another problem that may be related to some of the programmes evaluated here concerns their basic assumptions. In some programmes, all behaviour should be accompanied by pre-determined consequences. These consequences should affect whether the behaviour will be repeated again. They can either be pleasant and desired, or unpleasant and undesired. This increases or decreases the possibility of the same behaviour being repeated in similar situations. Positive reinforcement increases the occurrences of the target behaviour (Skinner, 1974). In an educational context, positive reinforcement may consist of

improved grades or receiving attention and praise from the teacher. Negative consequences in some of the programmes evaluated in this study may consist of being ignored, confinement to a cold room, or cancellation of a study visit. Positive consequences may entail extra time at the computer, more beans in the jar or receiving positive attention.

Negative behaviour should be extinguished by punishment, time-out or simply by ignoring it: punishment occurs when an undesired response follows undesired behaviour, time-out occurs when positive reinforcement is temporarily removed, and being ignored occurs when behaviour is not reinforced through positive or negative attention.

The issue is not only whether these methods are effective, but also whether they are suitable for use as a pedagogical method. What are the effects of ignoring and punishing children's self-esteem and self-image? What kind of school culture is desirable for the advancement of learning, social skills and positive behaviour?

### School culture: Discipline or security

The school can be seen as a social and cultural meeting place that is affected by and reflects the climate of society. The fact that the school is part of a global context also impacts its everyday work. In a research review, the National Agency for Education stresses that it is important that the school create an environment in which all children are included as far as possible, and that the teaching is adapted to the pupils' abilities and needs. The learning environments that most successfully counteract the negative effects of, for instance, socioeconomic background, are not schools at which strict discipline is exercised, but environments in which pupils feel valued, affirmed and encouraged (Rutter and Maughan, 2002). Several studies conducted in the 2000s show that the relationship between teachers and pupils affects pupils' self-perception, psychosocial health and school performance (Henricsson and Rydell, 2004; Undheim and Sund, 2005). With regard to peer relationships, several studies point out the importance of pupils having a number of good friends (Paul and Cillessen, 2005; Ueno, 2005).

This evaluation has shown that good social relations and an affirmative and positive school climate have a positive impact on the opportunities to reduce bullying. The pupils' sense of meaningfulness and belief in their own ability is then also affected positively, and the school environment is perceived as being safe. Many pupils then also feel confidence in the school's staff.

Like any other culture, the school culture can be defined in a number of different ways. In research into school culture, three main tracks can be distinguished:

- School culture as expressed through school climate, which permeates research into the effectiveness of schools.
- School culture as teacher culture, which permeates research into teachers' work culture.
- School culture as both school climate and teacher culture, which permeates research that attempts to create a holistic understanding of the concept of school culture. In this line of research, school culture is equated with organisational culture (Persson, 2003).

Ahlström has studied bullying from an organisational perspective. Instead of looking at bullies and victims, as is often done in research on bullying, he has

studied what it is in an organisation's culture, structure and leadership that influences the frequency of bullying (Ahlström, 2009).

Ahlström found that in schools where the level of bullying is low, head teachers nonetheless maintained that they had problems with bullying at the school. The school is working intensively on the issue but has not been able to completely remedy it. In schools with extensive bullying, the head teacher either trivialises the issue by saying things like "It's no worse here than anywhere else" or simply denies that the school has problems with bullying. According to Ahlström (2009), choosing to ignore the problems is not a successful way of dealing with bullying and degrading treatment.

### Participation and discipline

Discipline is a concept that is reminiscent of a hierarchical and authoritarian view of human beings, which in a school context is associated with obedient and uncritical pupils who do not dare to question. The essence of what is called immanent pedagogy is that it is both unconscious and invisible because it represents the supposedly normal (Ödman, 2006). Immanent pedagogy has always existed in schools, but its content has changed over time. Landahl (2006) argues that teachers in the 1950s felt they had too few instruments for disciplining pupils, although they could use corporal punishment and award grades for orderliness and conduct. Since there is always some scope for pupils to disrupt and challenge the system, the disciplinary instruments were always inadequate. When teachers lost two important instruments for disciplining pupils, their arsenal of sanctions was seriously depleted, thereby changing the relationship between teacher and pupil.

Pupils and parents should be involved in and be able to actively influence the school's measures for combating discrimination and degrading treatment. School rules for restraining antisocial behaviour should also be formulated and anchored among children and parents. Involving pupils in the process is believed to increase their readiness to maintain order. Ahlström (2009) and others noted that at schools where the pupils experienced a high level of involvement, they developed more academically, i.e. they attained better grades, and socially, so that bullying was less widespread. At schools where pupils experienced a low level of involvement, bullying was more widespread, social development was poorer and pupils had lower grades.

The current evaluation has shown that disciplinary strategies are not used consistently by school staff, and this has contributed to pupils not really knowing when and how teachers will react negatively to disruptions. It has also been shown that disciplinary strategies only have an effect on bullying of boys.

### Gender perspective

This evaluation shows that measures for combating bullying and degrading behaviour affect boys and girls differently. Some measures are more effective at combating bullying of boys, whilst others are more effective at combating bullying of girls. The measures implemented are thus not gender sensitive. On the contrary, they are blind to gender differences.

In light of current research into bullying behaviour and aggression, a number of American studies have questioned the use of ready-made anti-bullying programmes (Safran, 2008).

Initial Swedish research into bullying during the 1970s focused on the characteristics of the perpetrator and the victim. The findings were based on research into aggression by boys. This biased research from a gender perspective has come to strongly shape our understanding of the causes of bullying and measures for combating it. Findings that have defined the causes of bullying as characteristics have then been applied to girls and boys: pupils.

Another kind of gender blindness is related to the perception teachers and other adults have of girls as winners in today's education system (Nielsen, 2010). This in turn has meant that girls are not perceived as being a problem because this view tends to make girls who fail at school or who have other problems invisible. In many pedagogical studies of children and young people with problems at school, the gender perspective is noticeably absent. Informants are referred to as children, pupils or teenagers.

An important conclusion that can be drawn in the current study is that anti-bullying measures must be tailored to the different types of bullying of boys and girls and that the measures applied must be gender sensitive.

### Professionalism and training

It seems self-evident that teachers should have a sound knowledge of bullying, discrimination and degrading treatment and be highly skilled in the field. The National Agency for Education, in parallel with this study, has carried out a training project that has proved highly successful. The aim of the project was to reduce the frequency of bullying and discrimination in school by providing school staff with skills and specific tools for improving equal treatment. The external evaluation of the project showed that improvements in practical work on anti-bullying have been noted as a direct result of the skills enhancement (Ramböll Management, 2010). The external study identified three factors that have been important for the positive results achieved. Firstly, there was a great need for increased awareness of equal treatment issues in schools. Secondly, the courses have provided the whole school with tools to develop the equal treatment process. Thirdly, the courses have been of high quality thereby increasing the interest by staff and giving them a greater understanding of working actively for equal treatment and of combating degrading treatment. Overall, the course has contributed to enhancing the skills of school staff and thus their professionalism.

The Swedish School Inspectorate's quality audit *Skolors arbete vid trakasserier och kränkande behandling (Schools' measure for combating harassment and degrading treatment)* (2009) demonstrated the problems of pupils being involved in preventing degrading treatment. At several schools there were also teachers who were not familiar with the legislation. Even key officials and head teachers shared this ignorance. In order to combat harassment and degrading treatment, it is essential that everyone in the school is aware of the current legislation, especially as it makes it clear that zero-tolerance applies in this area.

From the work by the BEO (Office of the Children and School Pupils Ombudsman) with complaints about degrading treatment, it appears that adults at the school often put the blame for degrading treatment and harassment on the personal qualities of the bullied child or pupil.

Our culture views training and skills enhancement as a path to success in different fields. Training initiatives can influence people in a particular direction.

They can also contribute to changing our ways of thinking and how we understand the reality in which we find ourselves. With regard to training and skills enhancement in the field of bullying, we can assume that the basis for successful change is to realise that we are dealing with a unique area of knowledge. It is a question of something more than changing attitudes (see, for example, Hedlin, 2006). The everyday knowledge teachers have of bullying is not sufficient. Deep and broad theoretical knowledge is also necessary to be able to implement effective anti-bullying measures in the best interests of the pupils.

Training should challenge prejudices and incompetence thereby preparing the ground for new knowledge. It is not sufficient to add new knowledge to old knowledge if this is to be permanent. To be able to change old standpoints and (mis)conceptions, these must be challenged and restructured so that new knowledge of reality can be created (Ahlberg, 2004; Arevik and Hartzell, 2007).

Skills-enhancement courses for school staff in the field of bullying should also provide practical tools for the process of change and provide opportunities for staff to apply the theoretical knowledge they acquire.

In the current evaluation, head teachers, teachers and anti-bullying teams have argued that they must be 'updated' and constantly renew their skills so they can conduct quality anti-bullying work. Having the knowledge and advanced skills to be able to combat bullying, harassment and discrimination, is an obvious part of the professionalism of school staff.

## 9.2 Recommendations

Swedish schools have a formal obligation to prevent, detect and remedy bullying and degrading treatment. The project team therefore challenges the use of conventional programme evaluation strategies as a benchmark for assessing programme appropriateness and effectiveness.

Evaluating schools' measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment is complicated. Many factors other than just the measures to be evaluated affect the process. Evaluation of bullying prevention, detection and remedial programmes must take into account the comprehensive programme culture and formal programme development conducted at Swedish schools. Optimal evaluation strategies must thus cover extensive qualitative data on schools' actual measures.

In Swedish schools, where there is a low frequency of bullying, a special pupil ombudsman and statutory requirements for systematic measures to combat degrading treatment, the use of anti-bullying programmes created in other cultures and contexts, including those for which there is evidence of effectiveness, should be questioned.

Survey questionnaires are often used to monitor bullying of pupils. Pupils are asked, at best on the basis of a definition, if they are victims of bullying, but without asking the pupils themselves to explain what they understand by bullying. The questionnaire design developed within the framework of this evaluation was to ask the pupils what they have been subjected to, how frequently it happened, and what they thought it was due to. When interpreting the responses, a model was developed for what could be regarded as bullying, degrading treatment or just messing around etc. It should be possible to use this questionnaire for conducting surveys in Swedish schools.

Several measures used in the schools for combating bullying and degrading treatment, in relation to all the measures studied, were ineffective under certain contextual conditions. Certain measures were directly counter-effective and counter-productive. As the occurrences of degrading treatment and actual bullying show different behaviour patterns, and probably in part have different causes, they require the use of different approaches for prevention, detection and remedy. Schools should base their measures on an analysis of their own problems and circumstances, and on an analysis of the problem where degrading treatment, conflicts and different kinds of bullying are distinguished and treated appropriately.

Anti-bullying measures must be gender-adapted because girls and boys are bullied in different ways. Consideration must be taken of the fact that bullying can be both physical and social. Measures must be designed so that they take account of 'high risk' places and include the possibility that bullying may continue in a class even under the direct supervision of teachers.

A small proportion of pupils are subjected to regular and sustained bullying over a whole school year or longer, and this requires special and specific measures. Schools must implement targeted measures that increase their chances of detecting and remedying the bullying to which these pupils are subjected.

Measures for preventing, detecting and remedying bullying must be based on research into what is effective, for whom it is effective, and the circumstances under which it is effective. Well-anchored, systematic plans should be based on the effective measures identified in this evaluation. Anti-bullying measures based on mediation and the use of pupils as players, in the sense of observers and rapporteurs, and special lessons timetabled for all classes should be avoided. Comprehensive and systematic implementation of measures, a healthy school climate and pupil participation are crucial to success. The nuanced picture that emerges in this evaluation of the prevalence of bullying means that schools must, in their measures for preventing, detecting and remedying bullying, avoid the risk of equating different bullying patterns and also be especially aware that some individuals can be constantly at risk over a long period.

No specific single programme can be recommended in its entirety for compulsory schools in Sweden. The programmes can be used as inspiration and a source of specific measures, but because some of their measures are counter-effective and others counter-productive, they should not be implemented in their entirety. The support 'programme' described in the National Agency for Education's general guidelines on promoting equal treatment and preventing discrimination, harassment and degrading treatment provides a good starting point for planning the school's anti-bullying measures.

Guidelines to schools on drawing up plans for preventing, detecting and remedying bullying should take into account the findings presented in this evaluation.

The introduction of methods or approaches for combating bullying and degrading treatment must be based on well-conducted surveys and experiences relevant to the particular school, and on systematic monitoring and evaluation of the school's measures for combating bullying and degrading treatment.

New approaches must be anchored amongst all staff and pupils in the school. All measures for combating bullying and discrimination must be clarified for all the parties involved. Inadequate involvement leads to resistance among staff.

10.

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## 10. References

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Bullying is a serious problem. This study shows that 7–8 % of pupils are subjected to bullying, and 1.5 %, which corresponds to 13,000 pupils in Sweden, are subjected to long-term bullying for a year or more. In contrast to earlier studies, the current study shows that girls are subjected as much as boys to bullying. It also shows a substantial difference between specific measures that reduce the bullying of girls, and those that reduce the bullying of boys. This evaluation provides knowledge about methods and approaches to bullying and degrading treatment that work, and identifies those that do not. Some measures proved to be counter-productive and actually increased bullying.

In total approximately 10 000 pupils in school years 4–9 from 39 schools took part in the study. The eight programmes evaluated were the Farsta Method, Friends, Lions Quest, the Olweus Programme, SET, School Comet, School Mediation and Step by Step. The study is based on survey questionnaires and interviews. It took three years and is the result of a collaborative effort of seven researchers. The study is unique in that it covers a number of programmes simultaneously, large quantities of both qualitative and quantitative data in interaction, and individual data based on a longitudinal design.

The study analyses programmes by examining the effects of the different measures recommended by the programme authors, as well as the views and experiences gained by schools from working with the programmes. However, the National Agency for Education, based on the results of the current study, is not able to recommend any programme in its entirety as all the programmes contain parts that are problematic in some respects. On the other hand, the programmes can be said to provide inspiration and function as a source of individual measures.