

<b>Institution:</b>	<b>GOLDSMITHS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b>	<b>04 PSYCHOLOGY, PSYCHIATRY &amp; NEUROSCIENCE</b>
<b>Title of case study:</b>	<b>Anti-bullying work in schools</b>
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)	

Professor Peter Smith's extensive programme of research into bullying and the prevention of bullying has translated into research reports and summaries for the Department for Education, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), and the National Children's Bureau. These have been disseminated as expert resources to scores of relevant organisations and public bodies. The EHRC report was used in Parliament to argue for an amendment to the Education Bill.

Smith chaired a Europe-wide funded project on cyberbullying, the findings and recommendations of which have been presented to policymakers and educational practitioners internationally. He was on the Advisory Board of the Anti-Bullying Alliance, working to help reduce bullying in UK schools.

<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)
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Peter Smith was appointed to a chair in Goldsmiths Department of Psychology in 1995, and has continued to be active within the department since his retirement last year; he is now Emeritus Professor. His research has for many years investigated bullying in schools and the development and evaluation of 'anti-bullying' approaches. In 1998 he established the Unit for School and Family Studies at Goldsmiths to serve as a focus for this research.

Bullying affects a significant minority of school pupils, and over the last 20 years has become recognised as a major social problem. Smith's programme of research has contributed substantially to characterizing and understanding its origins, and to developing ways of reducing it. It was initiated in the early 1990s when he was invited by the Department of Education [DfE] to tender for a major school-based intervention and did so successfully. The ensuing project (1991-94) resulted in two edited books and a Pack, *Don't Suffer in Silence* (1994; updated 2000, 2002), which was available free to all schools and latterly through the internet. The research findings outlined in these outputs demonstrated that schools could take action to substantially reduce bullying; some reported that interventions led to reductions of up to 50%, and Smith showed that success was directly linked to institutional recognition of the problem and to the level of senior management commitment <sup>[1, 2]</sup>.

Smith's work on bullying continued to attract interest when he challenged a prevailing stereotype that bullies were aggressive individuals lacking social skills. His alternative, and now widely accepted view, was that many children who bully others are in fact socially sophisticated in what they are doing, albeit in antisocial ways. He gained empirical support for this thesis through a series of studies with colleagues and research students; one of the publications describing this work, first-authored by one of his doctoral students (Jon Sutton, then based at Goldsmiths), won a prestigious award from the British Psychological Society for the best publication in this area <sup>[3]</sup>.

Smith was subsequently invited by the Department for Education and Employment [DfEE] to co-apply with them for EU funding to host a European Conference on Initiatives to Combat School Bullying, at the Barbican Centre, London. This took place in 1998 with participation from most European countries; the keynotes appeared in a [special issue](#) of the journal *Aggressive Behavior*, co-edited by Smith. Soon after this, in 1999, and influenced by Smith's research, the government imposed on schools the requirement to have an anti-bullying policy.

Subsequent investigations by Smith demonstrated that such policies vary greatly in quality and coverage thus, for example, many lacked mention of homophobic bullying and cyberbullying <sup>[4]</sup>. In 2004 he was invited by the Department for Education and Skills [DfES] to evaluate the efficacy of work carried out by *Childline in Partnership with Schools* (CHIPS, run by Childline) to introduce peer support in schools as an anti-bullying mechanism. This entailed his team visiting 19 schools, interviewing staff, and conducting discussions and surveys with children and staff. The findings were articulated in a DfES Research Report <sup>[5]</sup>, and showed that whilst certain forms of peer support were very effective others were stigmatising.

From 2006 to April 2008, Smith was on the Advisory Board of the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), an association of 130 organisations founded by the National Children's Bureau (NCB) and the NSPCC which works across the UK to reduce school bullying. Smith's involvement included preparation of resources packs for school leaders and students for the 2008 Anti-Bullying week, and in November 2006 he was called to give evidence to a Government Education & Skills [Select Committee on Bullying](#). In 2008 he was again funded by the DCSF to evaluate the application and effectiveness of anti-bullying work in schools. This 2-year study, described in the *British Journal of Educational Psychology* <sup>[6]</sup>, showed that while approximately two-thirds of schools were using some form of 'restorative' approach in dealing with bullying incidents, only those that implemented such approaches thoroughly (about half of the total sample) reported genuinely satisfactory results. In 2010-2011 Smith was invited by the Equality & Human Rights Commission [EHRC] to produce a [Research Report](#) on identity-based bullying. This research showed the prevalence of this kind of bullying, and surveyed preventative and responsive measures to it in Great Britain.

More recently, the phenomenon of *cyberbullying* (the use of electronic communication to bully a person, for instance by sending intimidating or threatening messages) has become a major issue. Through his involvement with the ABA, Smith obtained funding for research on cyberbullying which resulted in the first set of advice for schools ([DfES report, 2006](#)), and an academic article <sup>[2]</sup> which is now one of the most highly cited in the area. He then chaired a Europe-wide [COST Action on Cyberbullying](#) (2008-2012) with participants from 30 countries. This collaboration produced a book (2013) co-edited by Smith, and a common set of guidelines for dealing with cyberbullying.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

**The international quality of this research** is evidenced through the publication of key findings in prominent and rigorously peer-reviewed journals; reference 2 has been cited nearly 600 times.

1. Smith, P. K., Pepler, D. K., & Rigby, K. (Eds). (2004). *Bullying in Schools: How Successful can Interventions be?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 9780521528030.
2. Smith, P. K., Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., Fisher, S., Russell, S., & Tippett, N. (2008). Cyberbullying: its nature and impact in secondary school pupils. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry*, 49, 376-385. [DOI: 10.1111/j.1469-7610.2007.01846.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2007.01846.x) [PMC: 599 citations].
3. Sutton, J., Smith, P. K., & Swettenham, J. (1999). Bullying and theory of mind: A critique of the 'social skills deficit' view of anti-social behaviour. *Social Development*, 8:117-127. [DOI: 10.1111/1467-9507.00083](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9507.00083).
4. Smith, P. K., Kupferberg, A., Mora-Merchan, J. A., Samara, M., Bosley, S., & Osborn, R. (2012). A content analysis of school anti-bullying policies: A follow-up after six years. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 28, 47-70. [DOI: 10.1080/02667363.2011.639344](https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2011.639344).
5. Houlston, C., Smith, P. K., & Jessel, J. (2009). Investigating the extent and use of peer support initiatives in English schools. *Educational Psychology*, 29, 325-344. [DOI: 10.1080/01443410902926751](https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410902926751).
6. Thompson, F. & Smith, P. K. (2012). Anti-bullying strategies in schools – What is done and what works. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, Monograph Series II, 9, 154-173.
7. Smith P. K. & Steffgen, G. (Eds). (2013). [Cyberbullying through the New Media: Findings from an international network](#). Routledge. ISBN 978-1-84872-254-5 and 978-1-84872-253-8.

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Smith's research reports, along with three successive *Highlight* reports he has been commissioned to write for the National Children's Bureau [NCB], have been disseminated widely as expert resources for organisations and public bodies that have an interest in education and child well-being.

Smith's co-authored DfE Research Report on anti-bullying interventions in schools <sup>[1]</sup> is on the DFE website, and on the NSPCC's list of resources recommended for anyone working in schools <sup>[2]</sup>. It is

**Impact case study (REF3b): GOLDSMITHS – Anti-bullying work in schools**

also in the publications list of the *I Am Not Scared* project, a European Commission project intended to identify the best European strategies to prevent and tackle the bullying phenomenon. Hundreds of organisations and communities have engaged with the report as a resource for working with children, and it has featured in the newsletters and websites of organisations across the country such as local Anti-Bullying steering groups, Regional Education Partnerships, Regional Equality and Diversity Partnerships, the PSHE Association, and the Restorative Justice council.<sup>[3]</sup>

The research report for the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)<sup>[4]</sup> was launched in April 2011, and gained a high profile among educational and child-related organisations. The launch was opened by the then Minister for Schools, Nick Gibb, and attended by the EHRC's deputy chair Baroness Margaret Prosser, and Richard Piggan from Beatbullying (the UK's leading bullying prevention charity)<sup>[5]</sup>. *Wiredgov*, the UK's top government and public sector news alerting service, featured the report on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011.<sup>[6]</sup> The Parliamentary Grand Committee used the research report in its discussion of Amendment 63A of the Education Bill about identity-based bullying; in particular Lord Collins argued that the government could do more to tackle this in and out of schools, acknowledging Smith's EHRC report as one of two main sources of information.<sup>[7]</sup>

Smith's 2010 *Highlight* report<sup>[8]</sup>, the third he was commissioned to write for the NCB, surveyed recent developments in the state of bullying, cyberbullying, and anti-bullying strategies in UK schools. NCB Highlights are highly regarded research summaries and expert guides, and around 12,000 printed copies are issued free to all NCB membership organisations and local authorities, as well as to the Association of Educational Psychologists which passes on around 3000 copies to its members.

Finally, the Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) Action on Cyberbullying<sup>[9]</sup>, of which Smith was Chair, aimed to raise awareness of the proliferation and potential harm involved in cyberbullying. This has been achieved through conferences and workshop which have disseminated research information to highly influential politicians and policymakers. Thus for example, attendees at conferences held in Paris and Vienna in 2012<sup>[10]</sup> included the Austrian Federal Minister for Education, representatives from the Austrian Federal Education Ministry and other Federal Ministries, from local governments, and the union of teachers, parents, and students. A set of Guidelines for preventing cyber-bullying in the school environment is available on the website in several languages, with a preface co-written by Smith.<sup>[9]</sup>

The societal significance of these impacts is attested to by the fact that the work undertaken by Smith and Goldsmiths' Unit for School and Family Studies featured prominently in a 2009 brochure produced by Research Councils UK to exemplify how academic research has informed policy-making.<sup>[11]</sup>

<b>5. Sources to corroborate the impact</b> (indicative maximum of 10 references)
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1. Department for Education Research [Report](#) (DFE-RR098, April 2011): 'The use and effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies in schools'.
2. NSPCC Reading list for the topic '[Child Protection in Schools](#)'.
3. Examples/links to indicate the wide dissemination of the DfE report: [The PSHE Association](#) (23/05/11); [Restorative Justice Council – News](#) (4/10/11).
4. Equality and Human Rights Commission [Research Report 64](#) (2011): 'Prevention and response to identity-based bullying among local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales' by Neil Tippett, Catherine Houlston, and Peter Smith.
5. '[Identity-Based Bullying debate](#)': News on the EHRC website of the launch of the Commission's new report on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011.
6. [WiredGov News Alert Service](#): Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) 02/03/11 - 'Widespread bullying in schools is not being tackled, new report shows'.
7. Lords Publications: Lords Hansard in the Houses of Parliament; [Minutes of the Grand Committee meeting](#), Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2011, Education Bill.
8. Highlights Publication for the National Children's Bureau: Smith, PK (2010) [Bullying. Highlight, No 261](#). London: National Children's Bureau.

9. [COST Action ISO801](#): 'Cyberbullying: coping with negative and enhancing positive uses of new technologies, in relationships in educational settings'. [Fact sheet](#) and progress report, also [Guidelines](#).
10. Programmes and participants in COST conferences: [Paris](#) (June 2012) and [Vienna](#) (October 2012).
11. RCUK brochure (2011) ['IMPACTS: Success in Shaping Public Policy and Services'](#).