

Ofsted review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges



Methodology: visits

The findings from our visits are not representative of all schools or colleges across England.

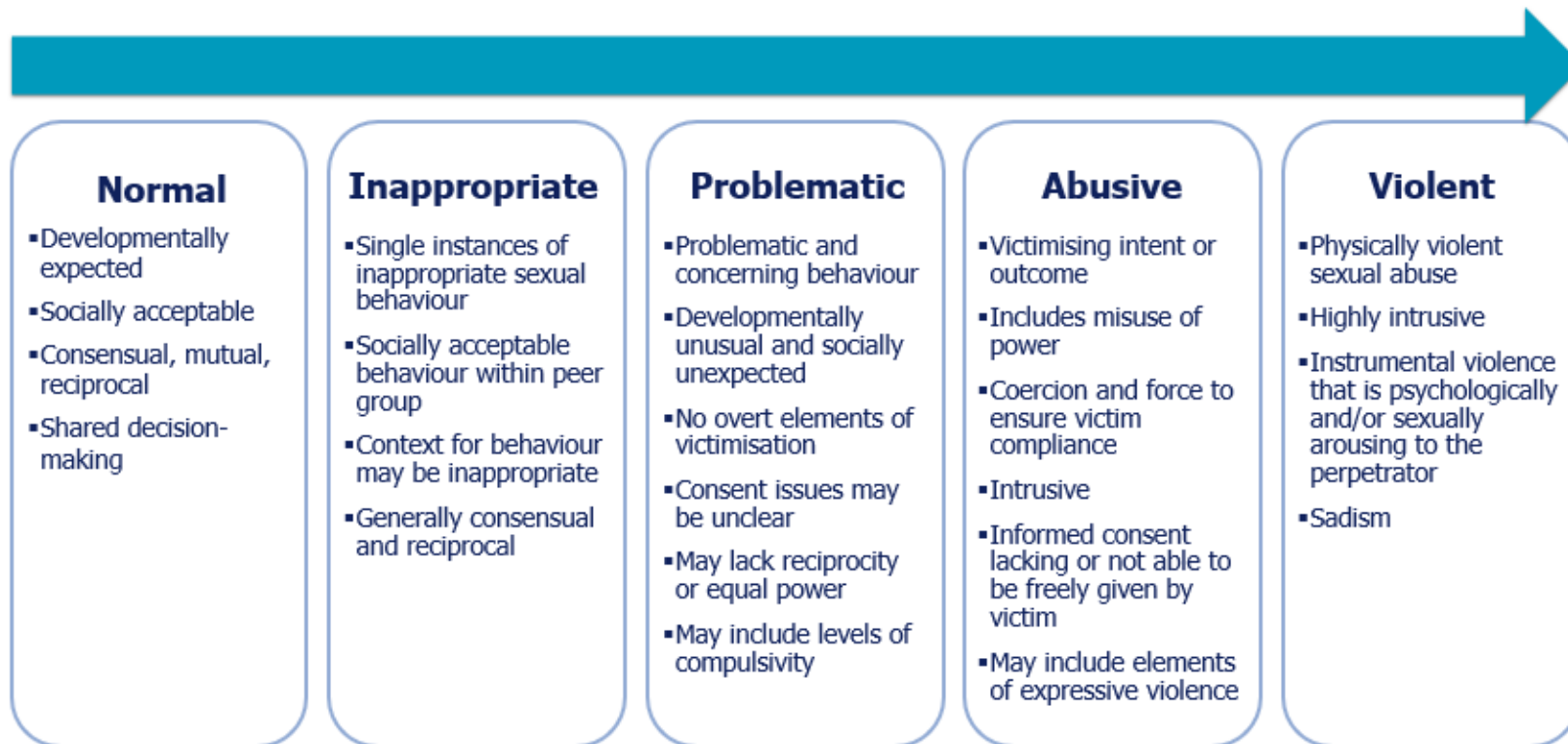
- **32 visits completed:** state-funded schools, ISI-inspected independent schools, Ofsted-inspected independent schools and FE colleges.
- The criteria for selection included:
 - Schools where concerns had been reported, either through complaints made to Ofsted, regional intelligence or Everyone's Invited
 - Different phrases and type: 2 primaries, 2 colleges, all-throughs; maintained, academies, independent and faith schools were included
 - Recency of inspection
 - Geographical spread
- Visits took place over two days led by HMI. Inspectors from ISI shadowed some visits.
- All inspectors involved attended two days' training refresh which included how to talk with children and young people about sexual abuse and how to deal with disclosures.
- Visits used a range of methods to collect information from school leaders, governors and other staff with a focus on safeguarding and the adequacy of school RSE (relationships and sex education)/RSHE/PSHE (personal, social, health and economic) curriculum and teaching.
- A duty desk staffed by education and social care HMI provided support for inspectors when the visits took place.

Methodology: other information/evidence

- Analysis of 801 questionnaires about pupils views about frequency and level of sexual abuse and whether it is reported completed by years 9, 10, 13
 - 12 focus group discussions with local safeguarding partnerships
 - Analysis of 2000+ Everyone's Invited testimonials, with detailed textual analysis of a 10% sample
 - 2 parent focus group discussions, one Ofsted, one ISI and a focus group discussion with groups that support victims and survivors
- Review of Ofsted and ISI training, Ofsted and ISI inspection evidence bases and how Ofsted and ISI handle complaints about schools and colleges referring to sexual abuse
 - Meetings with reference group sub-groups including representatives from police, health, ADCS, teacher unions, independent schools, academics and victims groups
 - Literature review
 - Post visit survey

Language and framing

Definition: Sexual behaviours across a continuum



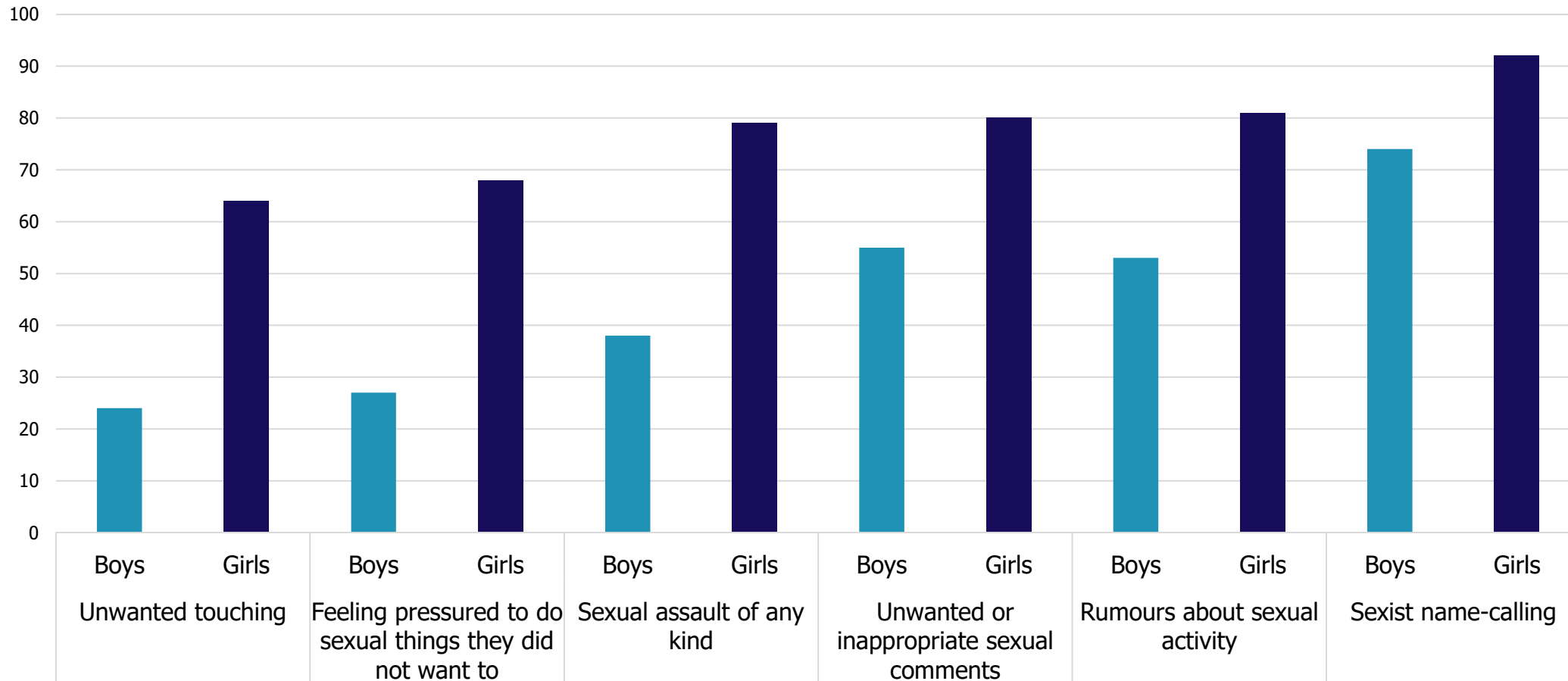
Source: Hackett, S, 'Children, young people and sexual violence' in 'Children behaving badly? Exploring peer violence between children and young people', 2010.

The report

The report sets out findings in six sections:

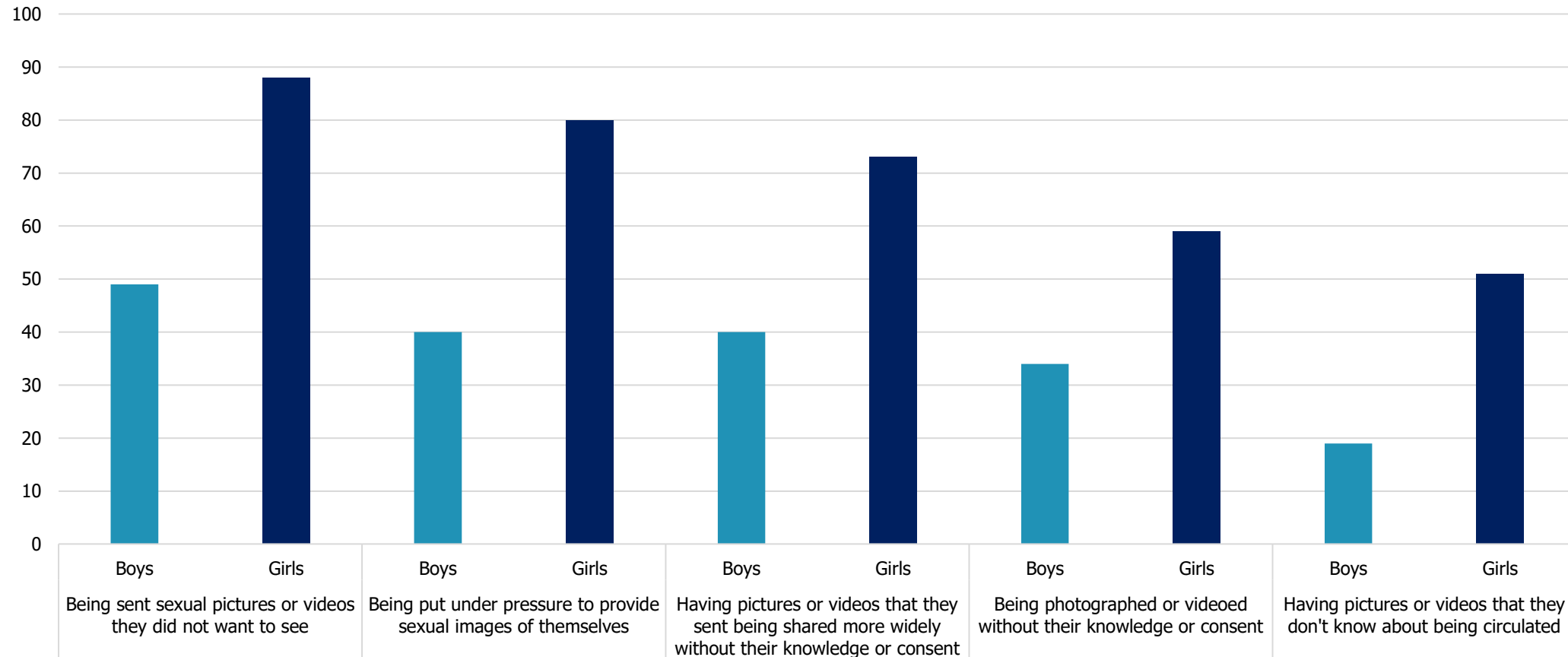
1. What did we find out about the scale and nature of sexual abuse in schools and colleges?
2. How does the current system of safeguarding listen to the voices of children and young people?
3. To what extent do schools and colleges know about sexual abuse? When they do know, how do they respond?
4. How are schools successfully delivering the new RSHE curriculum and how can they be supported further?
5. How well are multi-agency safeguarding arrangements working?
6. Is the existing safeguarding framework and guidance for inspectors strong enough to properly assess how schools and colleges safeguard and promote the welfare of children?

These things happen 'a lot' or 'sometimes' between people my age (%)



Note to graph: Around 790 pupils answered the question for each type of harmful sexual behaviour. The number varies slightly by question because a few children and young people skipped some questions.

These things happen 'a lot' or 'sometimes' between people my age (%)



Note to graph: The number of both boys and girls who answered the question for each type of harmful sexual behaviour is around 790, and slightly different for each. This is because a few children and young people skipped some questions.

Victims' voice and reporting

The review found:

- Children and young people told us they were unlikely to talk about sexual abuse, especially things they consider to be commonplace
- Professionals are largely underestimating the scale of the problem. In many schools, sexual harassment is largely unrecognised or unchallenged by school staff
- Schools and colleges are dealing with incidents as required. However, a wider cultural shift is required to tackle sexual harassment and online abuse
- Schools and colleges cannot do it all. Several of our recommendations address issues in wider society, such as online abuse, that need to be tackled more broadly.

‘Boys talk about whose “nudes” they have and share them among themselves – it’s like a collection game’.

‘Sometimes if you report something in school everybody quickly knows about it. A teacher takes you out of a lesson. Everyone is like, “What was that about?” when you come back into the classroom’.

RSHE curriculum

The review found:

- In some schools leaders had prioritised the development of their relationships and sex education curriculum, however implementation was poor because of teacher subject knowledge and minimal time for RSHE.
- Pupils we spoke to were seldom positive about the relationships and sex education they had received.
- Teaching about consent and social media/online (sharing of sexual images) is not sufficiently covered.
- Many leaders confirmed that staff were generally not very confident to teach the curriculum in areas related to sexual harassment and violence.
- More training is needed on how schools deliver the new RSHE curriculum.

‘It shouldn’t be our responsibility to educate boys’

‘It’s like a task that teachers have to do, they don’t take it seriously, so it’s not a good environment to learn about it. How can any of us take it seriously if they don’t? You can tell they don’t want to do the PowerPoint. It’s always stuff we’ve done before anyway.’

Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

The review found:

- Not all LSPs have oversight of issues of sexual harassment and violence in schools and colleges in their local area.
- Some LSPs reported that although current guidance sets out that LSPs schools and colleges should work together the guidance is too vague as to how this should be achieved and does not provide sufficient accountability for schools, colleges and LSPs.
- Partners told us that it can be hard to engage all schools, such as sometimes more difficult to engage with independent who do always complete Section 11 audits. Schools and colleges had mixed views.
- For the schools and colleges who have a pupil intake from across multiple local areas, it can be difficult to build relationships and understand the different pathways and thresholds across many different LSPs.
- Some definitions in government guidance aren't relevant to children and young people's experiences and it leaves schools without clarity in certain situations

Frameworks and guidance

The review found:

- Ofsted Inspectors have a good knowledge of government safeguarding guidance and use this knowledge to determine the questions they will ask on inspection.
- Ofsted inspections require schools to provide information about sexual violence and harassment. 6% provided evidence, 46% a nil responses and 48% no records. Records of follow up could be better.
- ISI inspectors have a good knowledge of government guidance and careful pre-planning but could consider the RSE curriculum further and evaluate a wider range of evidence on inspection
- The complaints that Ofsted and ISI receive about schools have historically been handled differently and we have recommended that the DfE leads a review of the process
- ISI and Ofsted's training is largely effective but improvements can be made

Whole school approaches: some emerging good practice



- We saw some effective practice where schools and colleges were proactively analysing trends in the data to spot emerging patterns that might need an early response, either with individuals or across year groups. Staff had faith in the systems and logged even small concerns.
- Some schools and colleges are using focus groups of pupils to gain their views or anonymous reporting systems at school level. This has also helped pupils raise areas where they feel peers could be better educated.
- Some children and young people were put off by having a DSL who was also linked to behaviour, so some schools and colleges have a variety of deputy DSLs who aren't all on the senior leadership team, so there are a variety of adults pupils can speak to. DSLs also have support structures around them.
- Some schools and colleges have lead governors who have a background in safeguarding or additional training and who are able to challenge and support leaders. It is also vital to work closely with parents
- Some schools and colleges have created a 'What happens next?' guide to help anyone who is thinking of reporting understand what might happen next.

Recommendations 1/4

School and college leaders should:

- Create a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated, and where they identify issues and intervene early to better protect children and young people.
- In order to do this, they should assume that sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are happening in their setting, even when there are no specific reports, and put in place a whole-school approach to address them.

Recommendations 2/5

This whole school and college approach should include:

- A carefully sequenced RSHE curriculum, based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance, that specifically includes sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online.
- High-quality training for teachers delivering RSHE
- Routine record-keeping and analysis of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, to identify patterns and intervene early to prevent abuse
- A behavioural approach, including sanctions when appropriate, to reinforce a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated
- Working closely with LSPs in the area where the school or college is located so they are aware of the range of support available to children and young people who are victims or who perpetrate harmful sexual behaviour
- Support for designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), such as protected time in timetables to engage with LSPs
- Training to ensure that all staff (and governors, where relevant) are able to:
 - Better understand the definitions of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online sexual abuse
 - Identify early signs of peer-on-peer sexual abuse
 - Consistently uphold standards in their responses to sexual harassment and online sexual abuse

Recommendations 3/4

The government should:

- Take into account the findings of this review as it develops the Online Safety Bill, so it can strengthen safeguarding controls for children and young people to protect them from viewing online explicit material and engaging in harmful sexual behaviour using social media platforms
- Establish better coordinated arrangements between the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Ofsted and ISI for how to deal with complaints that inspectorates receive about schools
- Strengthen the 'Working together to safeguard children' guidance to make the involvement of all state and independent schools and colleges with LSPs more explicit, including their engagement in multi-agency safeguarding audits
- Produce clearer guidance for schools and colleges to help them make decisions when there are long-term investigations of harmful sexual behaviour, or when a criminal investigation does not lead to a prosecution or conviction

Recommendations 4/4

The government should:

- Review and update the definitions of sexual abuse, including peer-on-peer, to better reflect the experiences of children and young people
- Develop an online hub where all safeguarding guidance is in one place, with any updates clearly visible and ideally made in good time in the school year to aid planning
- In partnership with others:
 - Develop a guide that helps children and young people know what might happen next when they talk to an adult in school or college about sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online sexual abuse
 - Develop national training for DSLs
 - Develop resources to help schools and colleges shape their RSHE curriculum
 - Launch a communications campaign about sexual harassment and online sexual abuse, which should include advice for parents and carers

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