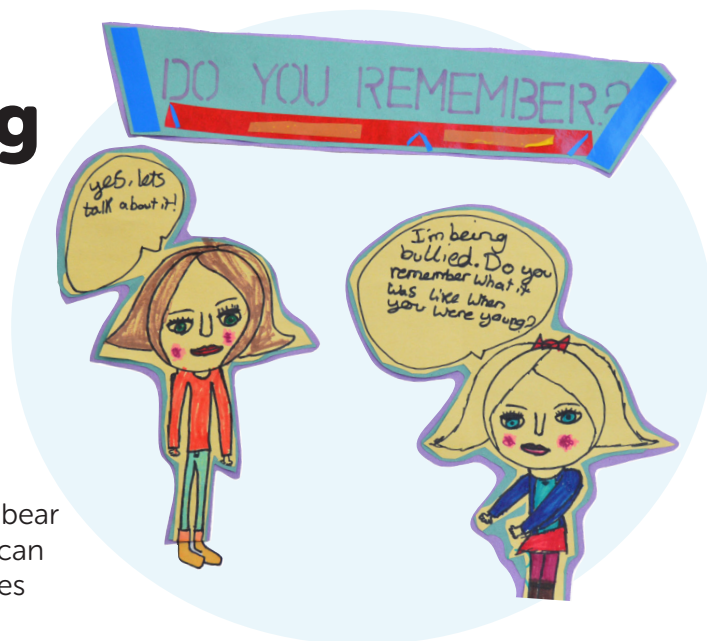


Children's Parliament Investigates Bullying

**Mid-point Review
June 2016**

Children's Parliament is a national organisation that works with children and adults so that together we can help make sure that every child is healthy, happy and safe. Children and adults are supported to learn about children's human rights and the core idea of human dignity. Working with children on difficult or challenging issues means bringing their lived experience or insight to bear on what we as adults, or as adults and children together, can do. We work with the child's curiosity, we frame challenges as investigations and as opportunities to explore without judgement or blame.



Do you Remember? by Saira, JGPS

Between January and June 2016 Children's Parliament worked in 4 school communities on Phase 1 of a new programme called Children's Parliament Investigates Bullying. Phase 2 will begin in August with 4 new schools.

This report outlines the key themes, questions and messages arising from the work undertaken between January and June 2016 in our 4 partner schools. Our thanks to Phase 1 colleagues in Hermitage Park, James Gillespie's, St. Peter's and Wardie Primary Schools who helped us deliver whole class workshops and supported the facilitation of a programme for each of the small teams of investigators (6 children in each school) over the period.

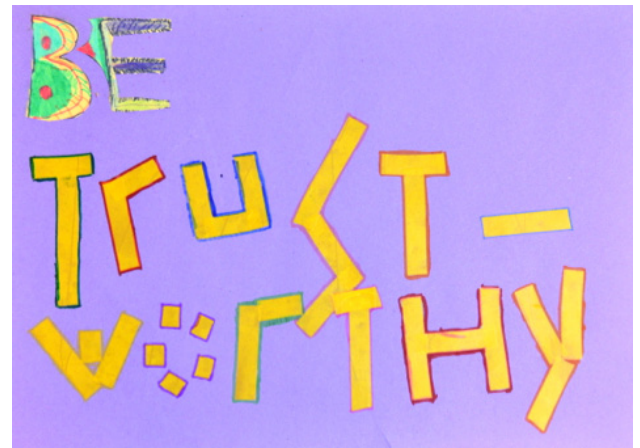
Key themes: **Human Dignity, Well-being, Trust, Empathy, Bystanders, Relationships, Safety.**

- Children understand and embrace the concept of Human Dignity. Our investigators articulated in pictures and words the feelings both positive and negative they attribute to when their human dignity is respected or conversely, abused. The children intuitively make the connection between bullying behaviours and abuses of children's human dignity.
- Our investigators describe how bullying erodes their confidence, makes them feel sad, scared and abandoned. They tell us that these feelings impact on their ability to seek and accept help and support. The children describe how these feelings are heightened and internalised if their concerns are trivialised or dismissed. They ask of adults: Who can we talk to? What will happen if we do? At this mid-point in the programme Children's Parliament would suggest that we as adults need to consider what children's previous experience of having raised issues has been. Confidence which may already be fragile can be further eroded if we do not listen to or take children's concerns seriously.
- Children place great emphasis on trust and relationships when raising concerns. Relationships are vital to children in this regard. Our investigators identified family and friends "those that they know and trust" as the people they would talk to if being bullied. Teachers and learning assistants were also identified by the children but again this was largely dependent on the relationship they had with individuals.
- Our investigators both display empathy (when discussing those that bully) and ask for empathy from adults. They ask that adults reflect on and remember how they felt as children if they were bullied or took part in bullying others, while at the same time acknowledging that children who bully others also need understanding, help and support.

**KEEP
IT
ANONYMOUS**

Keep it anonymous by Finlay, St. Peter's

- The children explored the concept of the “bystander” in relation to bullying. Significantly the children ask, *What happens if I tell?* Children expressed confusion about what would happen to them if they raised concerns or intervened on behalf of another child being bullied. In terms of adults, they do not trust or have confidence that adults who are bystanders will intervene on their behalf. Children fear retribution from those bullying them if they speak out. They also fear retribution or ridicule from the adults they seek support from. For these reasons some of our investigators feel that they should be able to raise concerns anonymously.

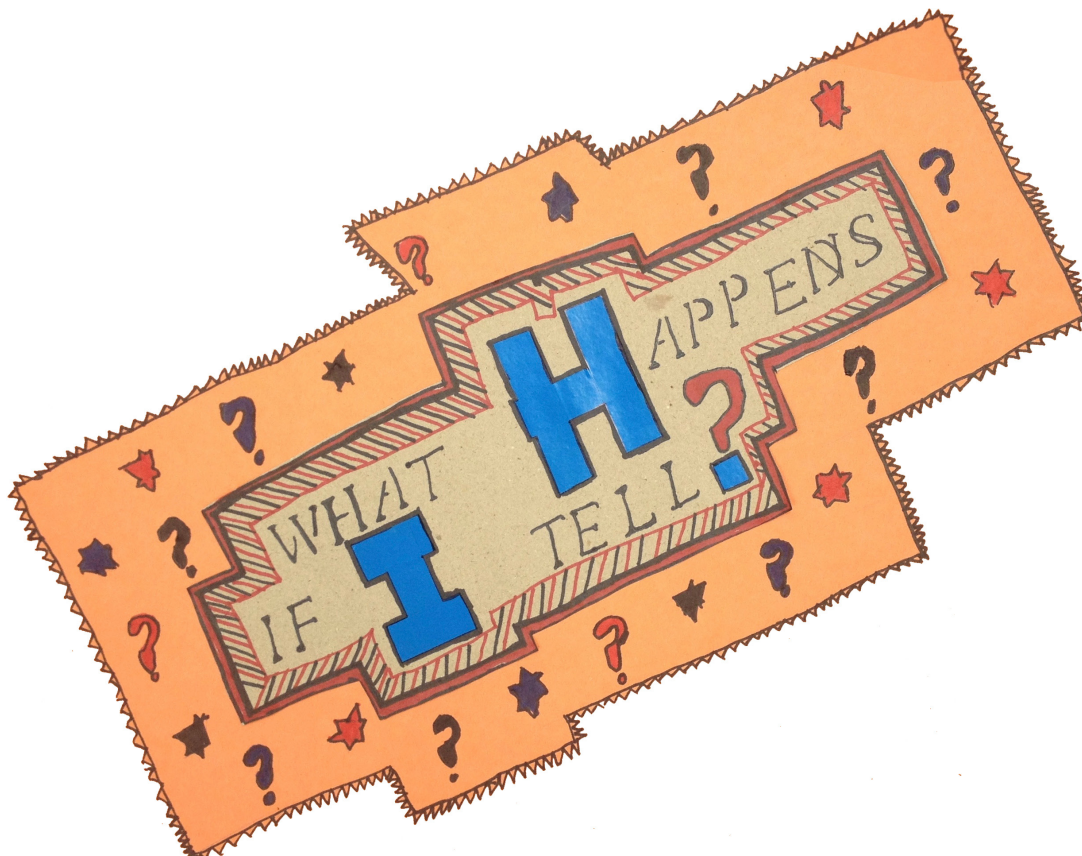


Be Trustworthy by Kian, Hermitage Park PS

At the mid-point of our Children’s Parliament Investigates Bullying project it is clear that the children who have engaged have shared strong messages for adults about how they perceive and have experienced bullying at home, in their communities and in school. They ask of us:

- **Respect and promote our human dignity in your responses to bullying behaviour whether we are bullied or a perpetrator.**
- **Bullying makes us feel scared, abandoned and sad. Please don’t dismiss us or tell us to be strong or not to be silly when we raise concerns. We need to trust you and you need to trust us.**
- **Get to know us. We need adults that are kind, sensitive and who listen to us, take us seriously then do something to make our situation better. Don’t be bystanders.**
- **Remember how you felt as a child if you were bullied. Walk in our shoes.**
- **What will happen to me if I tell? We need to feel safe and supported if we are worried and want to tell someone. It might help if children can report things anonymously.**

We look forward to working with the schools and children in Phase 2 (Granton PS, St. John’s RC PS, Abbeyhill PS and Flora Stevenson PS) as we further develop our understanding of bullying as perceived and experienced by children today. On completion of Phase 2 Children’s Parliament will publish all the materials we have used in our work with children. Children’s Parliament will also report to all partners on how we might use children’s insight to improve both prevention and early intervention on the issues of concern.



What happens if I tell? by Ross, Wardie PS

Project funded by:




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