

Further information and resources

Recommended reading and links for greater depth

Evidence behind the Lifting Limits approach

The Gender Agenda was an initiative of the Department for Children, Families and Schools in 2008-2009. Its purpose was to investigate, identify and disseminate practical ideas for improving the learning, motivation, involvement and attainment of underperforming groups of boys and girls. A particular focus of the project was what works to improve boys' achievement in literacy. A key finding was that:

'the 'gender gap in achievement' can be removed by challenging notions of gender itself.'



The Gender Agenda

http://universityofhullscitts.org.uk/scitts/site/pt/downloads/gender_agenda.pdf

Gender Issues in school – what works to improve achievement of boys and girls

<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/9094/1/00601-2009BKT-EN.pdf>

It's Just Everywhere: A study on sexism in Schools – and how we tackle it 2017, a report by the National Education Union and UK Feminista into sexism in both primary and secondary schools.

“It's just everywhere”, commented a girl participating in the study, yet all too often the institutional response to sexism in schools is silence.’

A key recommendation for schools: Adopt a 'whole school approach' to tackling sexism.



<https://neu.org.uk/advice/its-just-everywhere-sexism-schools>

Drawing the Future, published in 2018 by the charity Education and Employers, asked 20,000 children aged 7-11 (in the UK and internationally) to draw a picture of the job they want to do when they grew up. The report found that gender stereotyping exists from at least the age of 7, with children's aspirations shaped by gender-specific ideas about certain jobs, and emphasised the importance of early intervention to raise children's aspirations and broaden their horizons.

'from a young age children often stereotype jobs according to gender and their career choices are based on these assumptions with the majority of boys wanting to be sportsmen and girls wanting to be teachers.'

Professor Becky Francis, Director of the UCL Institute of Education, highlighted the important role education has to play:

'the report highlights the role of education, and of teachers, in challenging stereotypes and widening horizons. This is important, because at present research shows that rather than consistently challenging gender stereotypes, in some schools these are unthinkingly exacerbated'



<https://www.educationandemployers.org/drawing-the-future-report-published/>

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in Schools 2016, a report of the Women and Equalities parliamentary committee. A key finding was that:

'a stronger belief in gender stereotypes is correlated with being both a victim, and a perpetrator of, sexual violence'



<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmwomeq/91/91.pdf>

ASPIRES, a longitudinal study by King's College London which reported in 2013, examined how young people's science aspirations develop between the ages of 10-14, with a particular focus on the science aspirations of girls and under-represented ethnic and socio-economic groups. Key findings include:

'the (white) male, middle-class image of science careers remains a problem'

'efforts to broaden students' aspirations, particularly in relation to STEM, need to begin at primary school'

'a more fruitful and long-lasting approach [than many current gender-based STEM interventions which focus on providing role models] would be to support teachers and students to understand and challenge ('deconstruct') gender stereotypes and messages'



<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/ecs/research/aspires/aspires-final-report-december-2013.pdf>

The Institute of Physics has conducted research into gender balance over many years, in order to understand and address the under-representation of girls in physics post-16. The Improving Gender Balance project, reporting in 2017, concluded:

'to make a significant difference to students' perceptions, work needs to be done across the whole school to challenge gender stereotypes'

The Institute of Physics' excellent gender balance research:

http://www.iop.org/education/teacher/support/girls_physics/reports-and-research/page_63816.html

Additional resources

Breaking the Mould was a project run by the NUT (now the NEU) in five primary schools to consider how 'traditional' gender stereotypes could be challenged in nursery and primary classrooms. In the words of a pupil:

'stereotypes stop you doing stuff'



<https://www.teachers.org.uk/equality/equality-matters/breaking-mould>

For anyone who has ever thought – or sought to counter the argument – that girls/women and boys/men are just naturally different, two must-reads:

Cordelia Fine explains in this short and straightforward article how different gendered experiences affect the brain – the concept of 'brain plasticity'

<https://theconversation.com/new-insights-into-gendered-brain-wiring-or-a-perfect-case-study-in-neurosexism-21083>



In her book, **Inferior**, Angela Saini sets out to examine the science behind sex difference theories. Saini finds:

'no biological commandment that says women are natural homemakers and unnatural hunters, or that hands-on fathers are breaking some eternal code of the sexes.'

No Outsiders teaches children to recognise and celebrate difference and diversity. There are some helpful resources on the website <http://www.equalitiesprimary.com/home.html>

Video links

Tony Porter TED talk (for adults)

In this powerful talk, Tony Porter makes a call to men everywhere: Don't "act like a man." Telling powerful stories from his own life, he shows how this mentality, drummed into so many men and boys, can lead men to disrespect, mistreat and abuse women and each other. His solution: Break free of the "man box." Watch his talk:

https://www.ted.com/talks/tony_porter_a_call

Dove Campaign for Real Beauty (for adults and children)

A powerful 1 minute clip to show children how even after her make-up and hair are done, a model's image is manipulated digitally before being used in an ad

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYhCn0jf46U>

'Half the Sky' TED talk (for adults)

Sheryl WuDunn investigates the oppression of women globally

Link to video

https://www.ted.com/talks/sheryl_wudunn_our_century_s_greatest_injustice

Gender inequality explained in sweets (for adults and children)

'she was just as good as me so we should get the same reward'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snUE2jmnFA>