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# Learning Together Primary Schools pilot randomized controlled trial

**Submission date**
02/11/2023

**Recruitment status**
No longer recruiting

**Registration date**
03/11/2023

**Overall study status**
Completed

**Last Edited**
06/01/2026

**Condition category**
Other

[X] Prospectively registered
[X] Protocol
[_] Statistical analysis plan
[_] Results
[_] Individual participant data
[X] Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Bullying is really common, particularly in primary schools and among poorer children. It is experienced by 1 in 4 children. It harms young people's mental and physical health. 'Restorative practice' is a way for schools to deal with bullying. Rather than just punishing bullies, teachers use restorative practice to work out what happened and prevent it from happening again. Bullies are made to understand the harm they caused and change their behaviour. 'Learning Together' is a programme that currently delivers restorative practice in secondary schools. It also involved students making decisions about how their schools are run. We evaluated Learning Together in English secondary schools. We found it reduced bullying and improved students' mental health. We now want to adapt it for primary schools. This is important because primary schools lack effective methods to prevent bullying. Earlier intervention in primary schools is likely to work better.

Who can participate?
Students aged 7-11 years in primary schools in south-east England

What does the study involve?
We will first work with the staff and students from two primary schools to adapt Learning Together. We will also involve some other children in this work. We will use information from a survey of schools and a review of existing research to inform this work. As part of this, we will decide whether Learning Together in primary schools needs to include lessons on how students can manage their emotions and friendships. Then we will try out the adapted version of Learning Together in other schools. To do this, we will recruit six primary schools. We will ask students and teachers in these schools to fill in questionnaires at the start about bullying and mental wellbeing. Then we will randomly pick four schools to receive Learning Together and two to act as comparisons. The Learning Together schools will get a report on their students' needs - how much bullying there is and how is the students' mental well-being. These schools will then set up an 'action group' made up of some staff and students. This group will review the needs report and decide how to deliver restorative practice in their school. A charity called 'Place2Be' will help schools run these groups. All the staff in these four schools will also be trained in the basics of restorative practice. Four or five staff per school will be trained in more depth to lead restorative practice in their schools. If we decide that Learning Together for primary schools

should also include lessons, schools will do these. We will do observations and interviews in these four schools to see how it is going. After 1 year, we will ask students and teachers in all six schools to fill in questionnaires again. This is a way of seeing whether there is now less bullying and better mental health in the schools that have delivered the intervention. In this study, we are checking that these methods are doable. Based on all this research, we will figure out if it would be possible and useful to do a larger study. This larger study would see if Learning Together works in reducing bullying and improving students' mental health. We will share our findings with scientists, schools, young people, policy-makers and the public.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
Potential benefits include reduced bullying and improved mental health. Potential risks are inconvenience and upset as a result of data collection.

Where is the study run from?
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
June 2020 to September 2025

Who is funding the study?
National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Prof. Chris Bonell, chris.bonell@lshtm.ac.uk

# Contact information

### Type(s)
Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

### Contact name
Prof Chris Bonell

### Contact details
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
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# Additional identifiers

### Protocol serial number
1

# Study information

### Scientific Title

Adaptation and pilot randomized controlled trial of Learning Together Primary Schools, a whole-school restorative practice intervention to reduce bullying and promote mental health

## Study objectives
1. Is it possible to adapt Learning Together for primary schools?
2. Is progression to a Phase III randomized controlled trial (RCT) justified in terms of pre-specified criteria?
3. Are outcome and covariate measures well completed and reliable?
4. Which methods to survey teachers are most feasible?
5. With what rates are schools recruited and retained?
6. What do qualitative data suggest about how context influences implementation and about refinements to the theory of change?
7. Are any potential harms suggested and how might these be mitigated?
8. What is treatment as usual in control schools and is there any evidence of contamination between arms?
9. Are methods for economic evaluation feasible?

## Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

## Ethics approval(s)
Approved 13/02/2024, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine research ethics committee (Keppel St, London, WC1E 7HT, United Kingdom; +44 (0)20 7636 8636; ethics@lshtm.ac.uk), ref: 29958

## Primary study design
Interventional

## Study design
Pilot randomized controlled trial

## Study type(s)
Prevention

## Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Prevention of bullying among primary school students

## Interventions
The intervention comprises schools instituting action groups comprising staff and students (externally facilitated by staff from the Place2Be charity) which review a report on student needs (informed by student baseline survey) to plan local provision, plus teacher-delivered restorative practice sessions to address conflict and other behavioural incidents among students aiming to restore relationships (with external training provided by the L30 relational systems company).

Control schools continue with existing provision focused on bullying prevention.

## Intervention Type
Behavioural

## Primary outcome(s)

1. Student-level self-reported bullying victimisation in the past 2 months measured using the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire at 12 months post-baseline
2. Student-level self-reported bullying perpetration in the past 2 months measured using the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire at 12 months post-baseline

Updated 16/02/2024 to change timepoint from 17 months post-baseline to 12 months post-baseline.

### Key secondary outcome(s)

Current secondary outcome measures as of 01/05/2024:
1. Student-level teacher-reported social and emotional problems measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire total difficulties score at 12 months post-baseline
2. Student-level self-reported cyber-bullying victimisation measured using the DAPHNE measure at 12 months post-baseline
3. Student-level self-reported wellbeing at school measured using the Adapted How I Feel About My School questionnaire at 12 months post-baseline
4. Student-level student attendance/attainment measured using routine data at 12 months post-baseline
5. Teacher-level self-reported perceived behaviour of students in their class measured using the Pupil Behaviour Questionnaire at 12 months post-baseline
6. Teacher-level self-reported self-efficacy measured using the Teacher Sense of Efficacy scale at 12 months post-baseline
7. Teacher-level self-reported burnout measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory at 12 months post-baseline

Previous secondary outcome measures:
1. Student-level teacher-reported social and emotional problems measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire total difficulties score at 12 months post-baseline
2. Student-level self-reported cyber-bullying victimisation measured using the European Cyberbullying Intervention Project Questionnaire at 12 months post-baseline
3. Student-level self-reported wellbeing at school measured using the Adapted How I Feel About My School questionnaire at 12 months post-baseline
4. Student-level student attendance/attainment measured using routine data at 12 months post-baseline
5. Teacher-level self-reported perceived behaviour of students in their class measured using the Pupil Behaviour Questionnaire at 12 months post-baseline
6. Teacher-level self-reported self-efficacy measured using the Teacher Sense of Efficacy scale at 12 months post-baseline
7. Teacher-level self-reported burnout measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory at 12 months post-baseline

Updated 16/02/2024 to change timepoint from 17 months post-baseline to 12 months post-baseline.

### Completion date

30/09/2025

## Eligibility

### Key inclusion criteria

Current inclusion criteria as of 16/02/2024:
Students in years 3-6 (aged 7-11 years) as well as their teachers at baseline and follow-up during the trial. No students deemed competent to complete data collection will be excluded from research recruitment unless they do not assent to the research or parents withdraw them from the research. Those who have mild learning disabilities or limited English will be supported to complete the questionnaire by researchers.

Previous inclusion criteria:
Students in years 2-6 (aged 6-11 years) as well as their teachers at baseline and follow-up during the trial. No students deemed competent to complete data collection will be excluded from research recruitment unless they do not assent to the research or parents withdraw them from the research. Those who have mild learning disabilities or limited English will be supported to complete the questionnaire by researchers.

### Participant type(s)
Learner/student

### Healthy volunteers allowed
No

### Age group
Child

### Lower age limit
7 Years

### Upper age limit
11 Years

### Sex
All

### Total final enrolment
1059

### Key exclusion criteria
1. Students who do not assent to the research or whose parents withdraw them from the research
2. Those who have more than mild learning disabilities or very limited English who cannot be supported to complete the questionnaire by researchers

### Date of first enrolment
01/05/2024

### Date of final enrolment
31/07/2024

## Locations

### Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

England

**Study participating centre**
**London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine**
Keppel Street
London
England
WC1E 7HT

# Sponsor information

**Organisation**
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

**ROR**
https://ror.org/00a0jsq62

# Funder(s)

**Funder type**
Government

**Funder Name**
National Institute for Health and Care Research

**Alternative Name(s)**
National Institute for Health Research, NIHR Research, NIHRresearch, NIHR - National Institute for Health Research, NIHR (The National Institute for Health and Care Research), NIHR

**Funding Body Type**
Government organisation

**Funding Body Subtype**
National government

**Location**
United Kingdom

# Results and Publications

## Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The datasets generated during the current study will be available upon request from Chris Bonell (chris.bonell@lshtm.ac.uk)

## IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request

## Study outputs

| Output type | Details | Date created | Date added | Peer reviewed? | Patient-facing? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Other publications | Public engagement, evidence review and survey | 03/09/2025 | 06/01/2026 | Yes | No |
| Protocol file | version 1.0 | 16/10/2023 | 03/11/2023 | No | No |
| Protocol file | version 1.1 | 06/02/2024 | 16/02/2024 | No | No |
| Protocol file | version 1.2 | 01/05/2024 | 30/05/2024 | No | No |
| Protocol file | version 1.3 | 17/05/2024 | 30/05/2024 | No | No |
| Protocol file | version 1.4 | 19/06/2024 | 09/07/2024 | No | No |
| Protocol file | version 1.5 | | 08/11/2024 | No | No |
| Protocol file | version 1.6 | | 17/01/2025 | No | No |
| Study website | | 11/11/2025 | 11/11/2025 | No | Yes |