Opening doors: Guide to Good Practice and Conference

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Opening Doors project

- Joint funding between IOP and the Government Equalities Office
- Aim to identify barriers to, and good practice in, overcoming gender stereotypes
- Two networks of 5 schools in each
Opening Doors: how it worked

- **Network meetings**
  - Sharing good practice
  - Discussions on unconscious bias etc.

- **Site visits to each school**
  - Panel comprising teachers from other schools, a gender “expert” and IOP staff
  - After the visits, host schools received confidential reports on issues, recommendations and good practice observed

- **Good Practice Guide is based on these reports**
Site Visits

- School leadership team
- Teachers with special responsibilities
  - Careers advisor, pastoral support, PSHE etc.
- Departmental heads
- Classroom teachers
- Lunch with segregated male and female students
- Brief feedback to SLT
Opening Doors
*A guide to good practice in countering gender stereotyping in schools*

• Issues, good practice case studies and recommendations from our site visits to network schools.
Opening Doors - An interdisciplinary conference on gender in education
20\textsuperscript{th} October 10am – 4pm  8 Northumberland Avenue, London

In partnership with

- Reviews of education and gender research from three disciplines: Professor Louise Archer (King’s College London), Dr Stephanie Burnett Heyes (University of Birmingham), Dr Gijsbert Stoet (University of Glasgow)
# Essential features of good practice in countering gender stereotyping in schools

Based on the discussions and observations that took place within the site visits and subsequent recommendations given to schools, the following are the essential features of a school that is actively addressing gender equity. The next section explores these, and other, aspects of good practice in more detail.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Senior gender champion</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong> Senior Leadership Teams identify one of their number as a gender champion whose role includes bringing together the whole school in a coherent campaign to challenge gender stereotypes. Governors are involved in the campaign in order to reinforce the message that this activity is a priority.</td>
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<th>Training</th>
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<td><strong>2</strong> Staff attend gender awareness and unconscious bias training, whether as part of their induction to the school or their ongoing professional development.</td>
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<th>Sexist language</th>
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<td><strong>3</strong> Sexist language is treated as just as unacceptable as racist and homophobic language. Teachers receive training on unconscious bias and equality and diversity awareness.</td>
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<th>Use of progression data</th>
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<td><strong>4</strong> Gender-disaggregated data on both achievement and progression are collected for all subjects and discussed formally at whole-school level, using benchmark data for comparison. Where there are issues to be addressed, actions are generated, including targets where appropriate.</td>
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<th>Initiatives</th>
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<td><strong>5</strong> Initiatives are introduced and developed on the basis of what works and in a way that shows how they address a problem identified in the school data. Carefully planned external visits encourage students to challenge stereotypical views as do role models who commit to developing sustainable relationships.</td>
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<th>Subject equity</th>
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<td><strong>6</strong> There is a strict policy that all subjects are presented equally to students in terms of their relative difficulty and teachers refrain from making any remarks about how difficult they find particular subjects. The emphasis is on working to the best of one's ability rather than seeking to find subjects where one has innate talents.</td>
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<th>Careers guidance</th>
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<td><strong>7</strong> Careers guidance starts an early stage. It focuses on the next educational phase, emphasises keeping options open and actively challenges gender stereotypes.</td>
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<th>Student ownership</th>
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<td><strong>8</strong> Students are at the heart of any campaign to counter gender stereotyping. They are made aware of the issues and be encouraged to think of ways of combating them.</td>
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<th>Personal, social, health and economic education</th>
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<td><strong>9</strong> Regularly timetabled PSHE sessions are regarded as a high-value activity that can have a positive impact on students’ lives, teachers delivering content are provided with resources and activities. Sessions on equality and diversity form the basis of a wider school campaign and discussions on these themes continue through other topics.</td>
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Thank you
Highlights of good practice
Management, structure and environment

- Member of SLT acts as gender champion
- Teachers of all subjects are aware of classroom management techniques
- The school environment is used to counter gender stereotyping
- Timetable blocks do not reinforce stereotypes
Policy and training

- All teachers are trained in diversity issues, including unconscious bias

- A clear policy on diversity and inclusion, which has been put together by staff and students and is widely known across the school
Language and Communications

- Sexist language is considered by staff and students as being as unacceptable as racist and homophobic language.

- All school publications are gender neutral in their content and presentation.

- Staff have been trained to be careful in their use of language, particularly in informal conversations.
Monitoring and support

- Disaggregated data on achievement and progression is collected, discussed and acted upon at a whole-school level, using benchmark data.

- Diversity is embedded in all school activities. The school applies a diversity impact analysis of any school activity.

- Pastoral support operates in tandem with a strong PSHE programme and is not be seen exclusively as a way of dealing with personal issues.

- Girls develop their self-confidence and resilience and boys understand the link between hard work and high levels of achievement.
School initiatives

- Initiatives are related to issues identified from data analysis and are developed on the basis of evidence

- Initiatives form a coherent programme of activity across the whole school; they are evaluated and the outcomes shared across the school

- Role models and external visits are continuing, not one-off, projects
Academic Matters

- School has a strict policy that all subjects should be presented equally to students in terms of their relative difficulty
  - In grade requirements for progression
  - Being careful in making informal comments

- Schools have a culture in which all subjects are potentially accessible to all students

- There is an emphasis on working hard to make the best of one’s ability not seeking subjects where one has innate talent.
Careers advice and parental engagement

- Careers advice starts early, is proactive and tailored to the individual, and focuses on the next educational phase and keeping options open.
- Teachers are aware of both academic and vocational routes.
- Student destinations are monitored and analysed in terms of data and national benchmarks.
- Parents are engaged at an early stage and stereotypical views challenged.
Student experience

- Students are at the heart of the campaign to counter gender stereotyping.

- Students act as ambassadors, working with pupils lower down the school and with local primary schools to raise awareness of, and to counter, gender bias.