

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Bullying in schools is one of the dark, hidden areas of social interaction, which has thrived on a bed of secrecy and which, until recently, has been neglected in professional investigations. The extent of the problem and the long-term trauma and damage caused both to the victims and bullies have been underestimated. In studying a behaviour, which is often covert and secret, it is necessary to turn to sources such as literature to gain an understanding of the range and depth of feelings involved, and to gain a quality of insight often unattainable from those involved in bullying.

The dissertation was undertaken to explore the incidence and nature of bullying in the primary school-prompted by the writer's observation of aggressive behaviour among pupils at this level, over the past thirteen years of teaching children. The study sets out to identify the causes and consequences of bullying and seeks to examine these factors in the context of the writer's own school. It aims to devise effective strategies to eliminate bullying and prevent it from taking place in the first case.

Chapter 1 introduces the topic by looking at various definitions of bullying behaviour. It undertakes a brief study of the incidence of bullying in a number of countries.

Chapter 2 concentrates on the causes and consequences of bullying. This chapter highlights the serious implications which bullying can have for both the victim and the bully.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the traits of bullies and victims. Age and gender differences are also explored.

Chapter 4 summarises the results of the school-based survey which consisted of questionnaires and interviews. A case study of the writer's own school is presented.

Chapter 5 summarises the study and presents conclusions and recommendations for a whole-school policy to prevent bullying and limit its incidence.