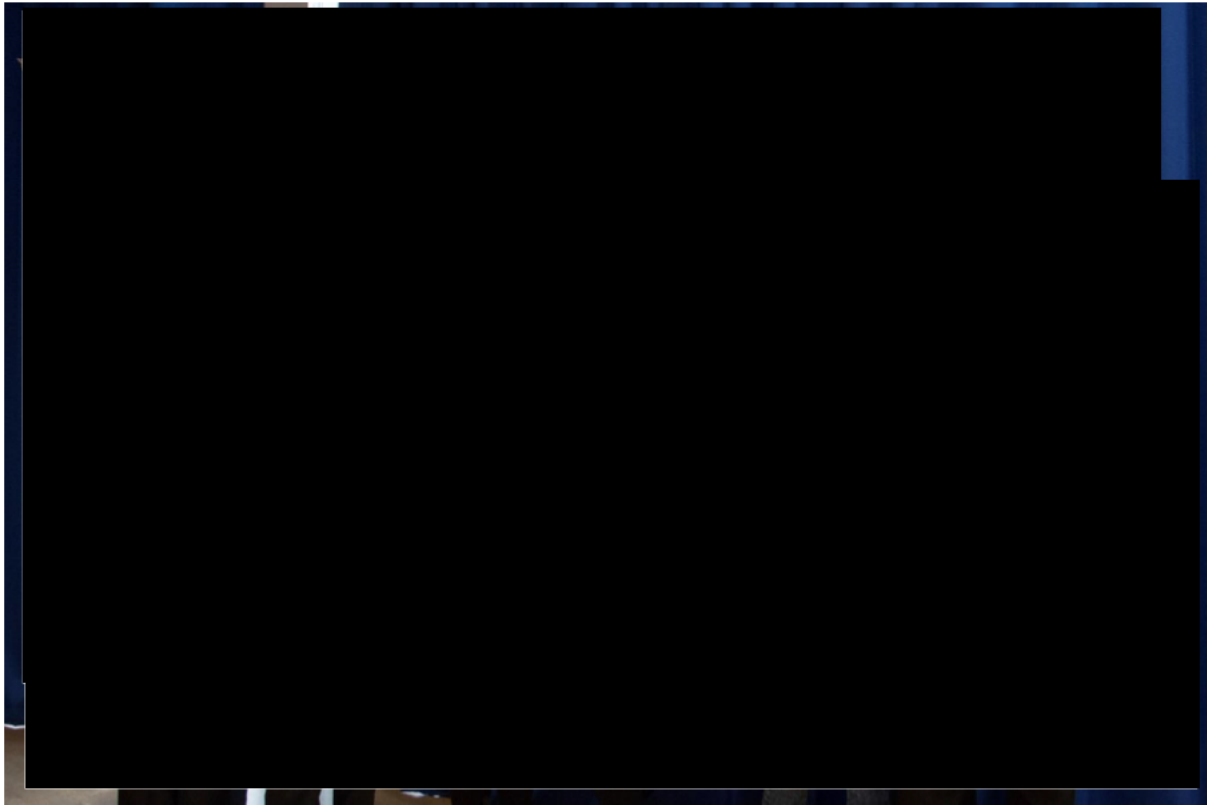




## CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S ANTI BULLYING CONFERENCE 2016: EVENT REPORT



Students from Samuel Rhodes Secondary School with the Mayor of Islington

### Introduction:

*"In schools, the students have the power to change the way that the school does certain things which can better suit everyone. This means no one would feel discriminated [against] or as if they are treated differently to others".* Islington student

On the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016 the London Borough of Islington's Anti-Bullying Steering Group hosted its anti-bullying conference for Islington schools at Highbury Grove Secondary School. The national anti-bullying theme for 2016 was **"Power for Good"**. The event was co-chaired by the Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Heather Vacciana and Sara Pelham, a member of Highbury Grove's Paperclip Group and Islington's Shadow Anti-Bullying Steering Group<sup>1</sup>. The conference opened with examples of how each and every individual, group and organisation can affect positive change. Sara used the example of the Paperclip Group a pupil led equalities group established by students at Highbury Grove School to raise awareness of equality and diversity issues at the school. Since its establishment the group have delivered special assemblies, particularly around LGBT issues, and worked with school staff on the implementation of a gender neutral toilet. This theme was continued by Gemma Curtis, Education Manager, Diversity Role Models, who gave the keynote speech at the conference. Gemma inspired everyone present on the

rewards of working collectively (e.g. on an individual school basis; as a collective of schools and as a borough) to end discrimination and to create a society based on the principles of human rights, which celebrates and encourage difference. The Power for Good theme was further explored through the roundtable debates, which covered issues such as religious/cultural bullying, racist bullying, sexist/gender bullying, online safety, LGBT bullying as well as the impact of bullying on the mental health and wellbeing of those affected. The roundtable discussions also reflected on the contribution made, in so many varied ways, of individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds that have enriched our schools and wider community. Students shared wonderful examples of school strategies that they felt worked to reduce bullying and made recommendations that schools could adopt to further reduce bullying and create a more cohesive environment for all students.

There was excellent attendance by schools, with over 147 students and staff at the conference (as listed below):

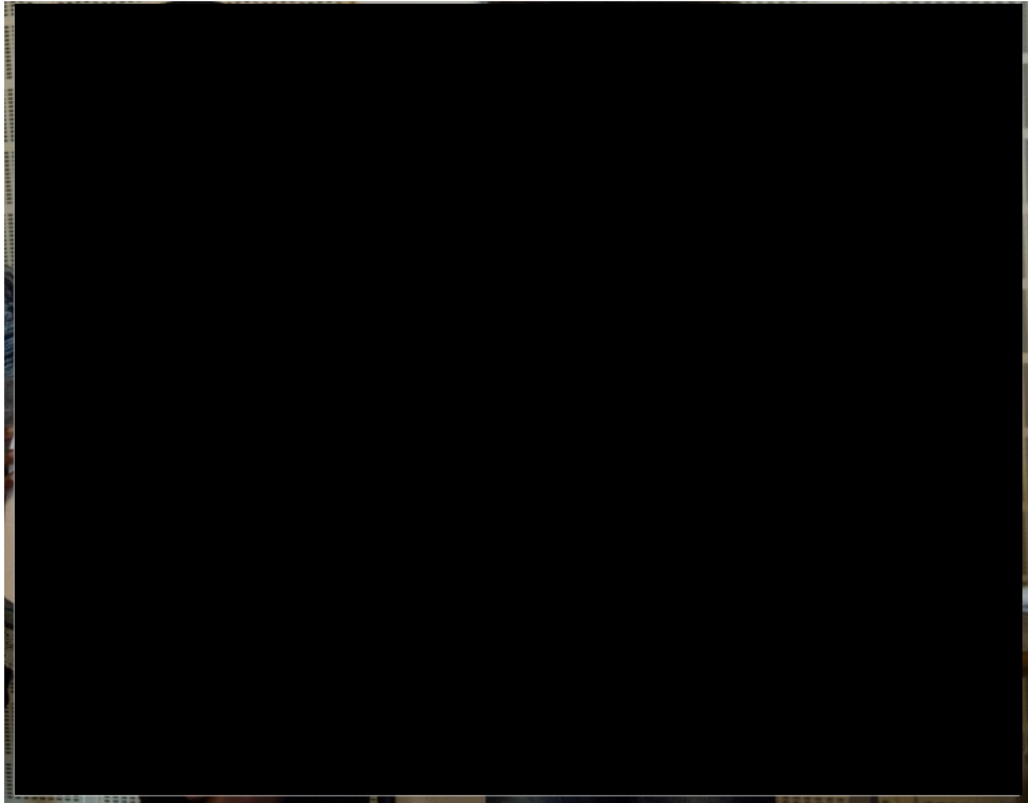
**Primary Schools:**

- **Prior Weston**
- **Hugh Myddleton**
- **Ashmount**
- **Hargrave Park**
- **Pooles Park**
- **Samuel Rhodes**
- **Highbury Quadrant**
- **St Mary Magdalene Academy**
- **William Tyndale**

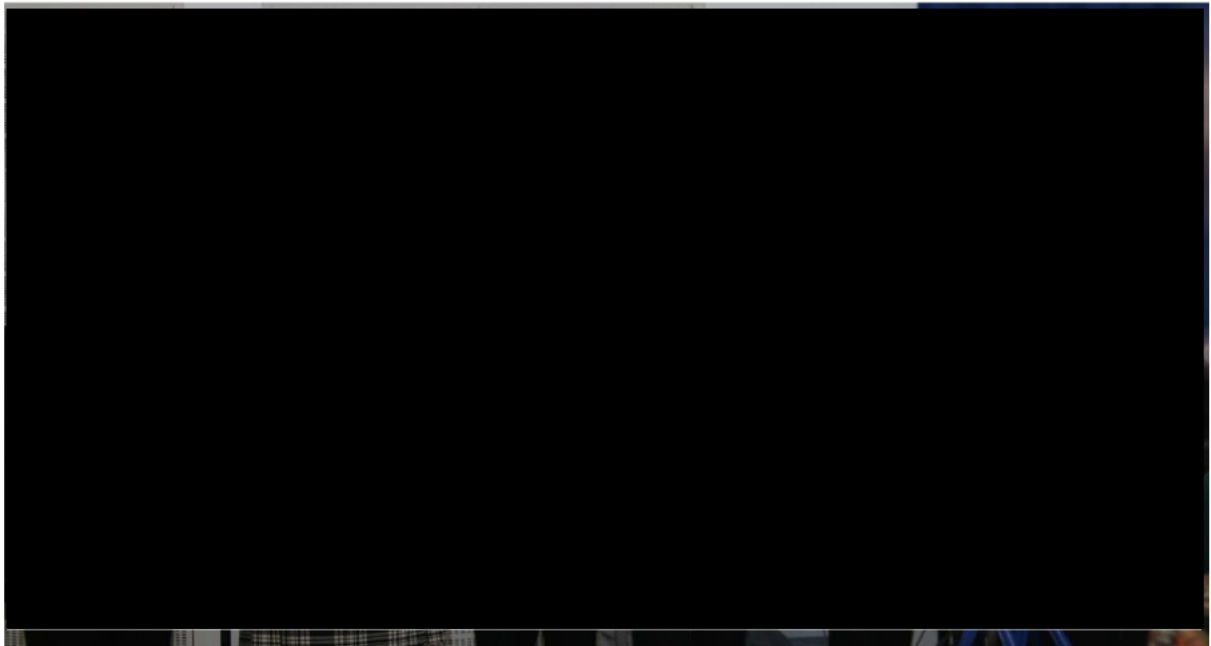
**Secondary schools:**

- **Elizabeth Garrett Anderson**
- **Highbury Fields**
- **Highbury Grove**
- **Holloway**
- **Arts & Media School Islington**
- **Samuel Rhodes**
- **St Mary Magdalene Academy**

The conference was supported by professionals working within the borough as well as by specialist external organisations. These included Diversity role Models, TENDER and Race on the Agenda (ROTA). Students from all participating schools delivered a creative performance, the best of which received first, second and third prizes. However no young person went away empty handed, as all students received a signed certificate acknowledging their contribution to this important event.



**“Performance led”: presentations by William Tyndale Primary school and Holloway Secondary school students**



All students gave outstanding performances with the use of drama, poetry, music and artwork to express their feelings about the devastating impact that bullying can often have on

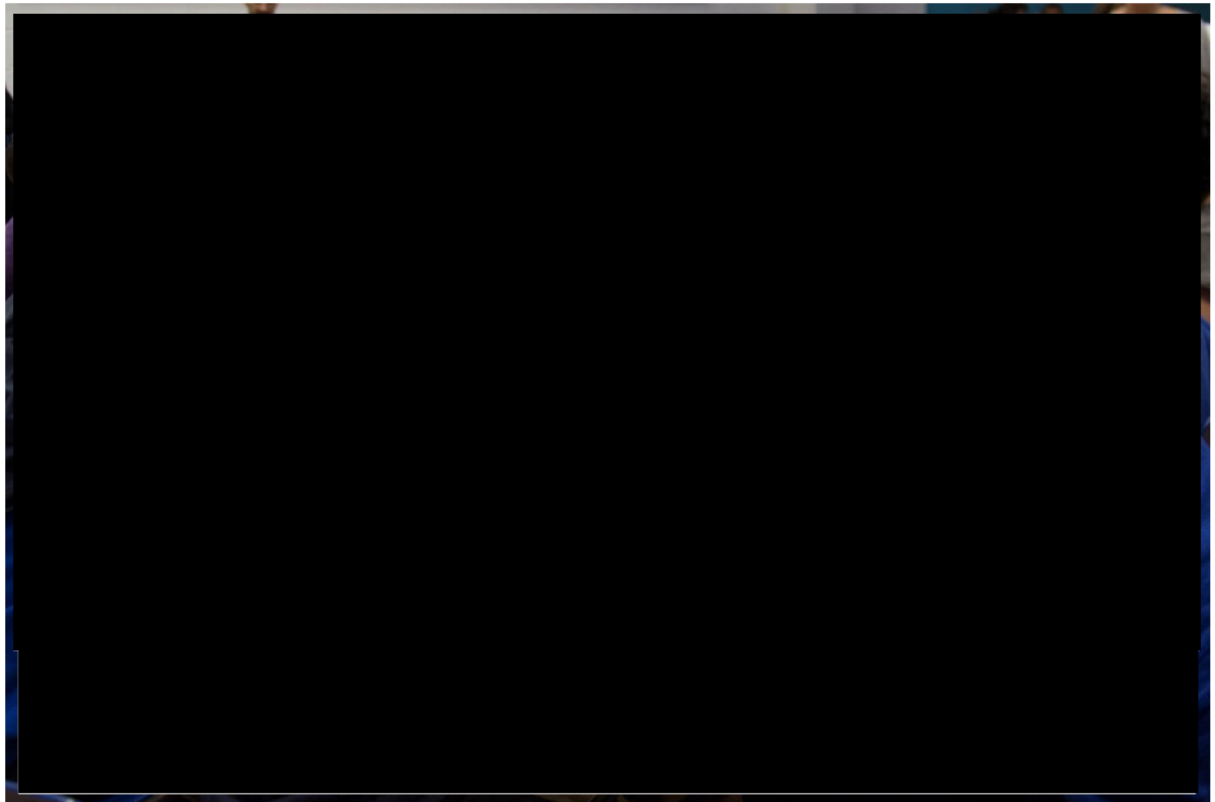
the victim. They were also very inspirational performances, as the concept of 'Power for Good' was woven into the narrative, enabling the audience to understand how we can work together to stop bullying. As always, the performances were of such a high standard that the judges found it difficult to reach a decision on the prize winners, but after a great deal of deliberation the judges made their choices, and the names of the winning schools are listed below:

## Primary school winners:

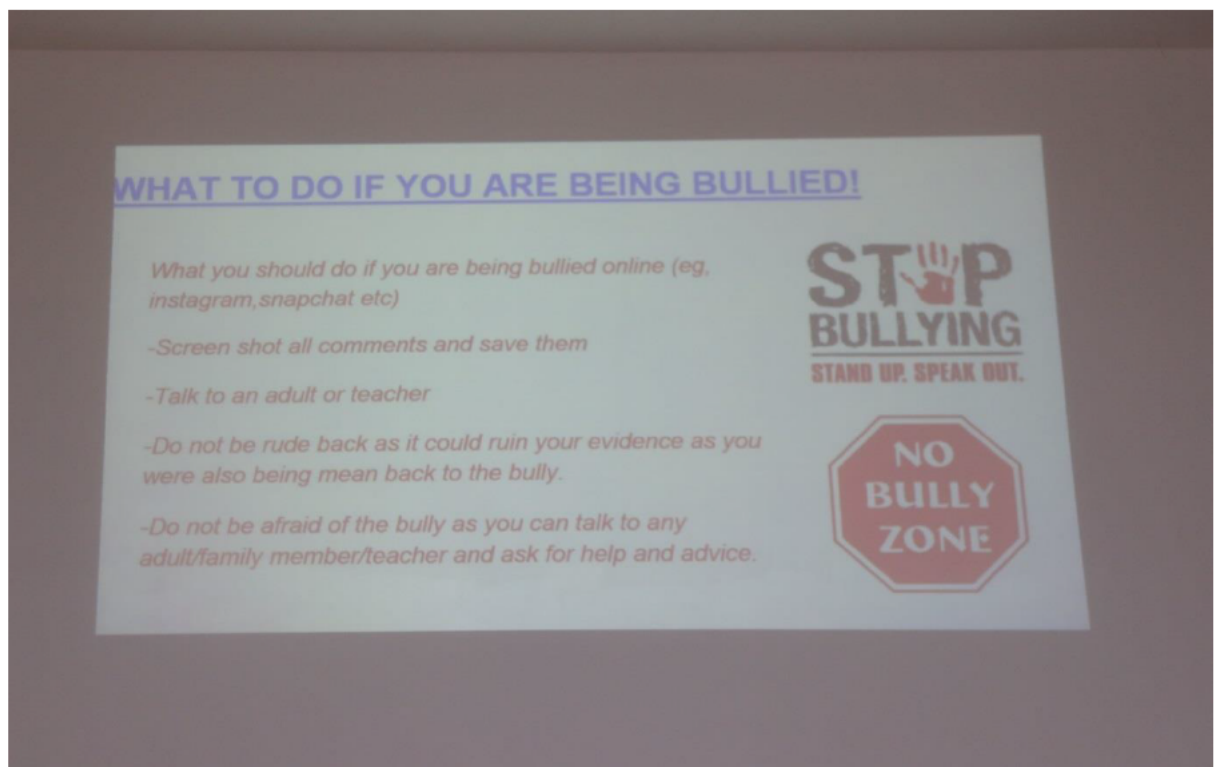
- ✚ The first prize went to **St Mary Magdalene Academy** for their very perfectly delivered performance.
- ✚ **William Tyndale** won the second prize for their posters, wonderful singing, originality of the song and enthusiastic delivery
- ✚ **Highbury Quadrant** came third for their creative use of poetry and role play.

## Secondary school winners:

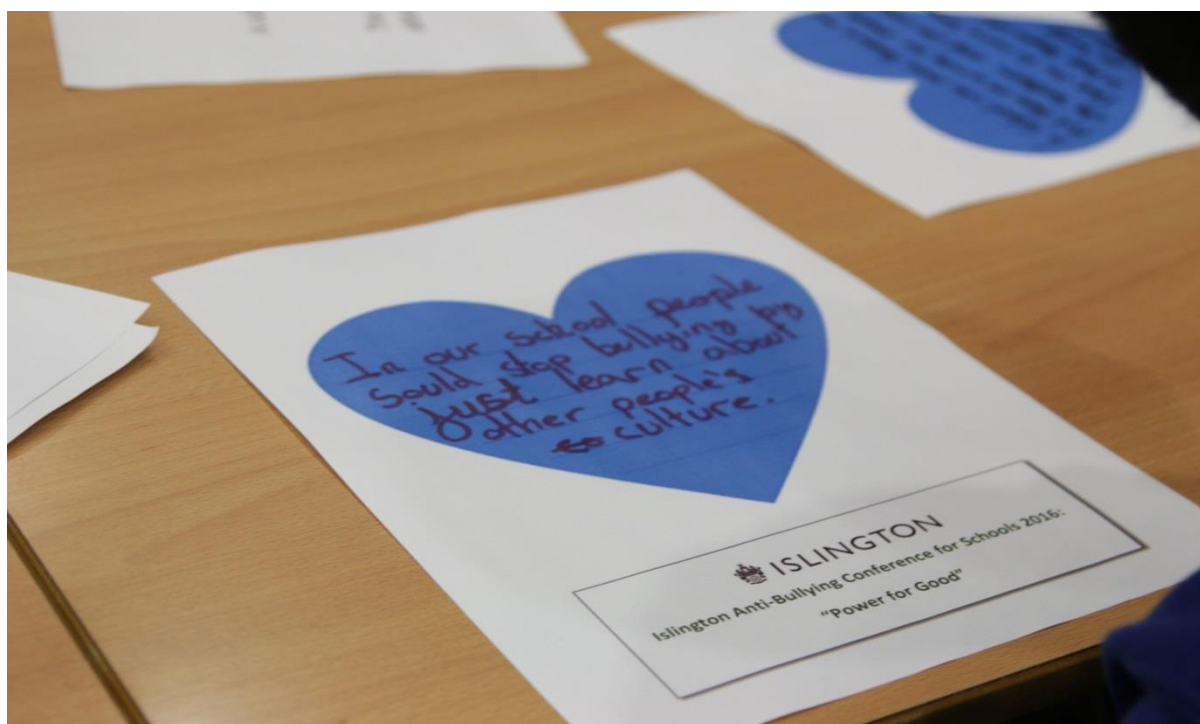
- ✚ **Arts & Media School Islington** came first with an eye-catching visual display and a unique, imaginative use of a story board (speech bubbles) which had a comic book effect; fantastic!
- ✚ **Samuel Rhodes** came second with a very powerful drama of a young woman being bullied and how it impacted upon her. The drama also gave examples of how to stand up to bullying behaviour.
- ✚ **St Mary Magdalene Academy** came third with the use of a video drama depicting the bullying of a student at school and how other students used their 'power for good' to intervene.



Top: Primary pupil roundtable sessions; bottom: image from student presentation



## Heart of the matter: Comments from one of the student roundtable discussions



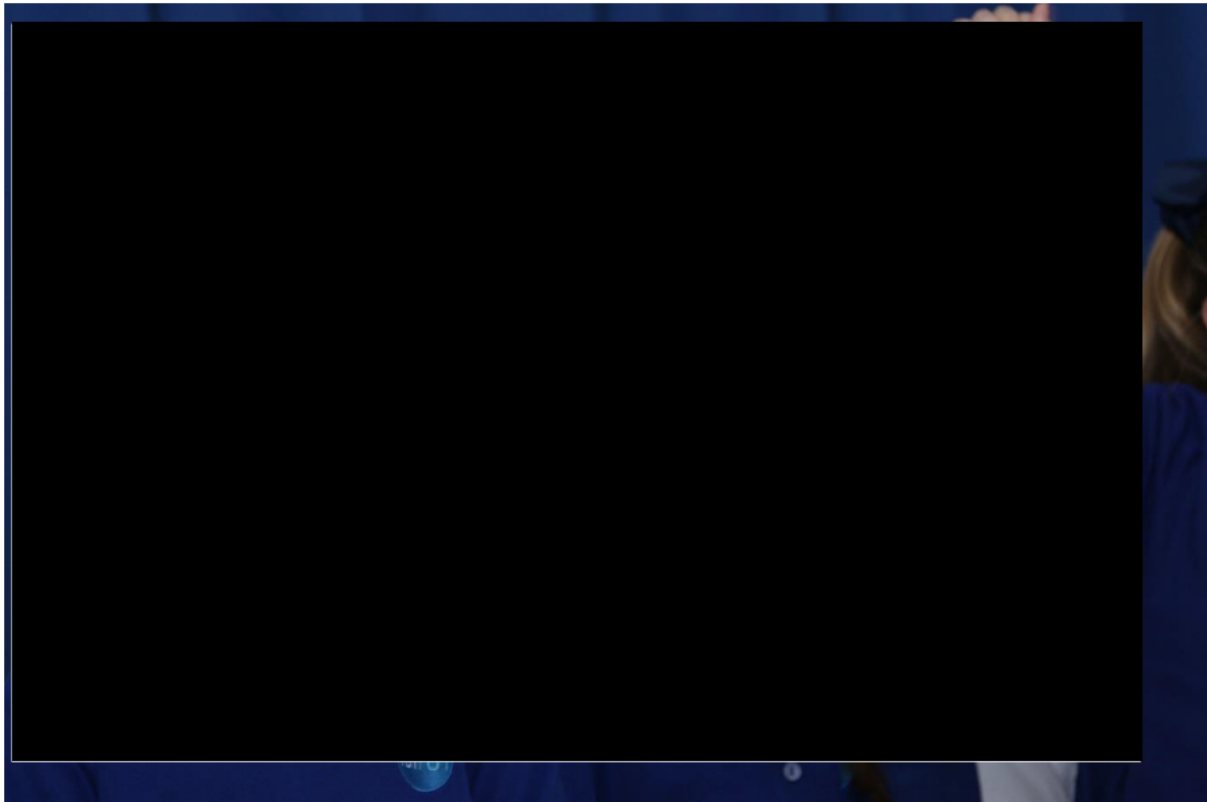
### WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO:

Student feedback on how to reduce bullying in schools:

- More anti-bullying awareness lessons
- School advisors
- More lessons on LGBT issues, islamophobia, racism and sexism
- The establishment of Paperclip groups in every school
- Quicker response from staff when a bullying incident occurs
- Older students to be 'buddies' to the younger students
- Talking therapies – individual or groups
- reflection or 'chill' room
- Dance / art therapy classes or groups
- Create a more inclusive ethos e.g. more diverse posters and visual displays
- Establish gender neutral toilets
- More open discussions about what it feels like to be bullied
- More lunch time activities

A secondary school student's feedback as to whether they felt listened to at the conference: ***"Yes, I feel as if it was a safe community that everyone had a right to say what they want."***





**AMAZING!! 1<sup>st</sup> prize winners: Primary students from St Mary Magdalene Academy celebrating their victory. Background: Heather Vacciana, Anti-Bullying Coordinator & Domestic Violence Prevention Officer with Cllr Joe Calorui, Executive Member for Children, Young People & Families.**

## Conclusion:

***"Thank you for having this event, it was very informative and enjoyable".*** Secondary school student

This borough-wide conference was well received by students and staff, with meaningful presentations that captured the 2016 "Power for Good" theme. Thanks to all the adults – from the anti-bullying steering group, school staff supporting their pupils to attend, charities that gave up their time to facilitate the roundtable discussions, professionals from the local authority and Highbury Grove staff - for making the 2016 conference a success. Thanks also to the students themselves for their creative performances and roundtable recommendations that schools can implement to help reduce bullying and to create a more inclusive school environment so that all children and young people are ***"...able to act like myself without feeling judged"***.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Paperclip Group for their hard work at the conference; for their ground-breaking work around the equalities agenda and pupil voice, all of which have served to affect real change within their school; and for inspiring other young people in Islington schools to champion change using their power for good.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Highbury Grove Paperclip group with the aim of setting up a similar group in your school, please contact Heather Vacciana, Anti-

Bully Coordinator. Please also make contact if you would like to access free domestic violence prevention or anti-bullying staff training, pupil lessons or parent workshops.

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<sup>i</sup> The Paperclip Group / Shadow Anti-Bullying Steering Group are a group of young people that established a group to address all forms of discrimination and equality issues at Highbury Grove School. The group, which has a particular emphasis on LGBT issues, became affiliated to the Islington Anti-Bullying Steering group in 2016 and provides input by informing the work of the Islington Anti-Bullying Steering group.