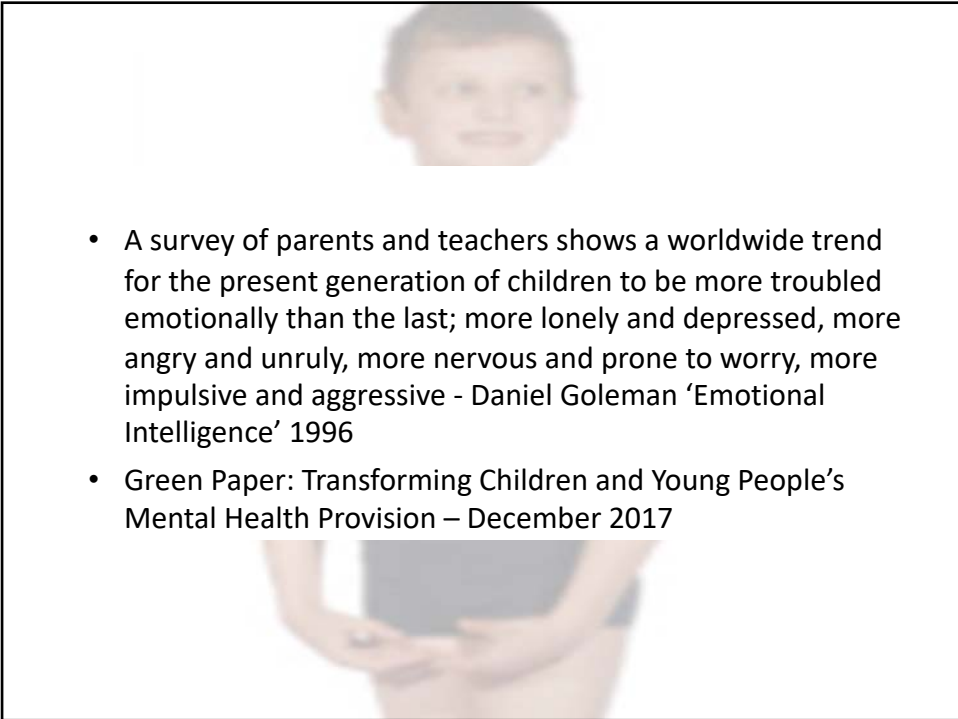
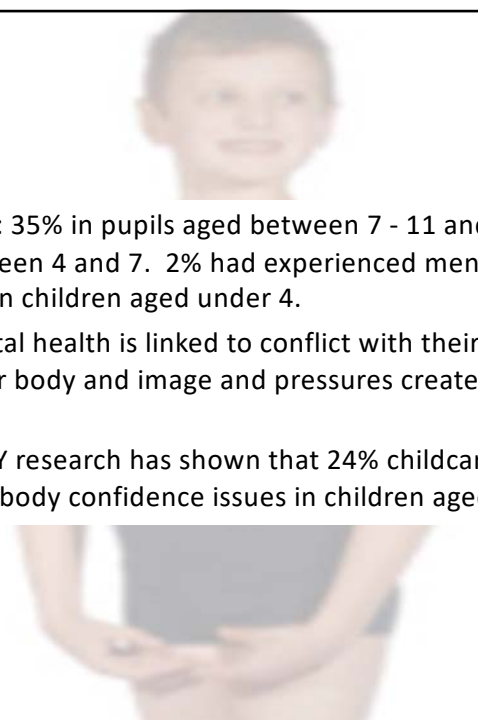
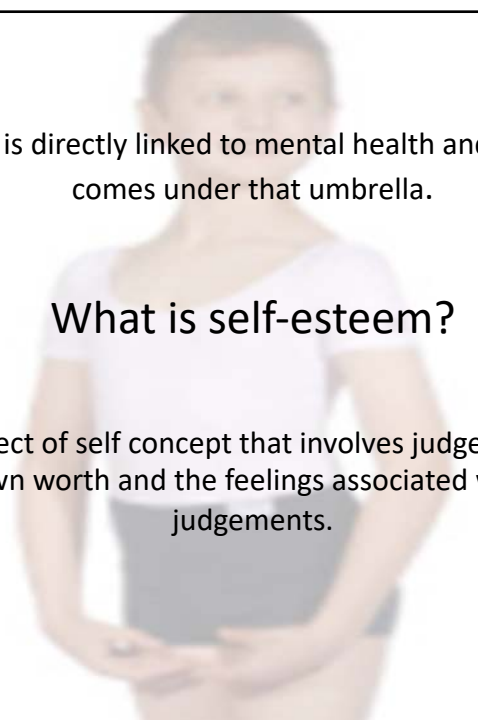


Mental Health, Self Esteem and Gender Deconstruction

Glyn Hawke & Vanessa Cleak

- 
- A survey of parents and teachers shows a worldwide trend for the present generation of children to be more troubled emotionally than the last; more lonely and depressed, more angry and unruly, more nervous and prone to worry, more impulsive and aggressive - Daniel Goleman 'Emotional Intelligence' 1996
 - Green Paper: Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision – December 2017

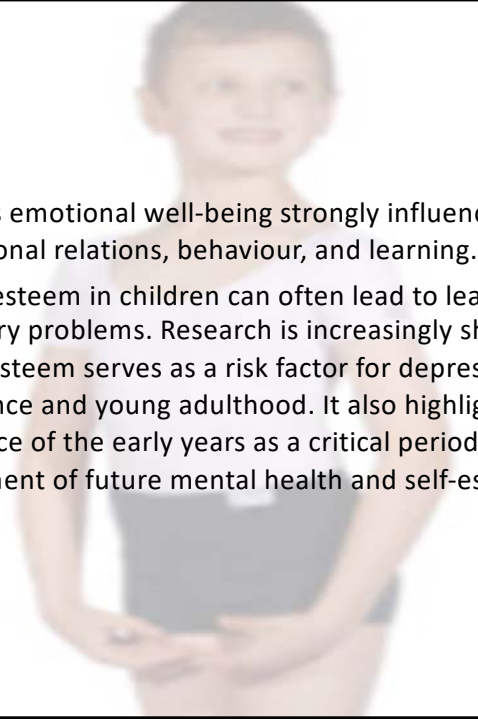
- 
- In primary: 35% in pupils aged between 7 - 11 and 18% in pupils aged between 4 and 7. 2% had experienced mental health problems in children aged under 4.
 - Their mental health is linked to conflict with their friends, fears about their body and image and pressures created by social media.
 - New PACEY research has shown that 24% childcare professionals have seen body confidence issues in children aged 3-5 years old.



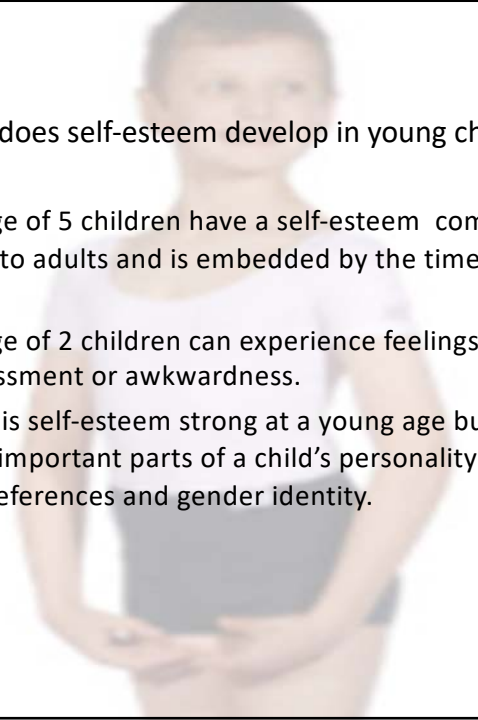
Well-being is directly linked to mental health and self-esteem comes under that umbrella.


What is self-esteem?

It is an aspect of self concept that involves judgements about one's own worth and the feelings associated with those judgements.

- 
- Children's emotional well-being strongly influences their interpersonal relations, behaviour, and learning.
 - Low self-esteem in children can often lead to learning and disciplinary problems. Research is increasingly showing that low self-esteem serves as a risk factor for depression in adolescence and young adulthood. It also highlights the importance of the early years as a critical period for the development of future mental health and self-esteem.

How does self-esteem develop in young children?

- 
- By the age of 5 children have a self-esteem comparable in strength to adults and is embedded by the time a child starts nursery.
 - By the age of 2 children can experience feelings of embarrassment or awkwardness.
 - Not only is self-esteem strong at a young age but it also links to other important parts of a child's personality such as in-group preferences and gender identity.



Reflections on gender in primary schools and how to become an intentional practitioner



Discussion

Activity

Read the various articles on the table. Discuss on your table. Reflect on:

Which ones did you agree with and why?

What 'truths' do they tell us?

What is the scientific evidence behind the claims?

Who are the authors?

What do they tell us about gender?

Gender in schools

- ‘...school arenas are (also) spaces in which young people produce their own gender identities which are negotiated not least through education, popular culture and peer relations’ (Nayak et al, 2008: 97)

What are some of the issues

- What does gender actually mean?
- Biological discourses versus social construction
- What power dynamics emerge in the gender binary?
- Resistance to broadening gender discourses
- Growing terminology – inclusion can mean leaving somebody out



What does 'gender' actually mean?



Terminology

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don't. Gender isn't binary. It's not 'either/or'. In many cases it's both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that.

- <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2012/03/the-genderbread-person-v2-0/#sthash.YZWUBFNw.dpbs>

Terminology

The Genderbread Person

by www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com

Identity
Gender identity is how you, in your head, think about yourself. It's the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormonal levels) and how you interpret what that means.

Orientation
Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles) through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.

Expression

Sex
Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes. Female = vagina, ovaries, XX chromosomes; male = penis, testes, XY chromosomes; intersex = a combination of the two.

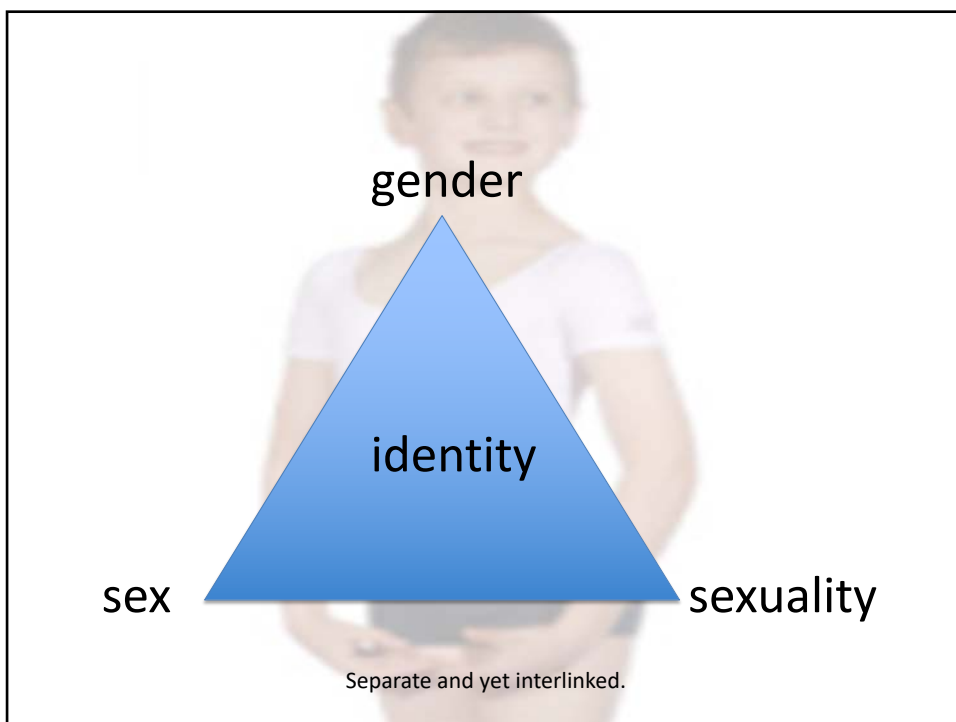
Gender Identity
Woman Genderqueer Man

Gender Expression
Feminine Androgynous Masculine

Biological Sex
Female Intersex Male

Sexual Orientation
Heterosexual Bisexual Homosexual
Sexual orientation is who you are physically, spiritually, and emotionally attracted to, based on their assigned gender in relation to your own.

read more



Biological versus construction

Conflations of gender and sex



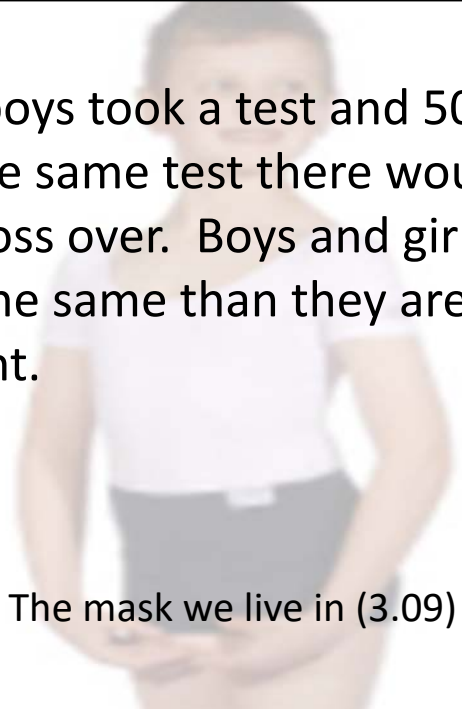
<http://www.newsweek.com/why-parents-may-cause-gender-differences-kids-79501> -
(Pink Brain, Blue Brain – Elliot, neuroscientist – Rosalind Franklin University)

- Dozens of such disguised-gender experiments have shown that adults perceive baby boys and girls differently, seeing identical behavior through a gender-tinted lens
- Moms of girls underestimated what their daughters could do by nine degrees, even though there are no differences in the motor skills of infant boys and girls
- **How we perceive children—sociable or remote, physically bold or reticent—shapes how we treat them and therefore what experiences we give them.** Since life leaves footprints on the very structure and function of the brain, these various experiences produce sex differences in adult behavior and brains—the result not of innate and inborn nature but of nurture.
- For her new book, *Pink Brain, Blue Brain: How Small Differences Grow Into Troublesome Gaps—And What We Can Do About It*, Eliot immersed herself in hundreds of scientific papers (her bibliography runs 46 pages). Marching through the claims like Sherman through Georgia, she explains that assertions of innate sex differences in the brain are either "blatantly false," "cherry-picked from single studies," or "extrapolated from rodent research" without being confirmed in people.
- For instance, the idea that the band of fibers connecting the right and left brain is larger in women, supposedly supporting their more "holistic" thinking, is based on a single 1982 study of only 14 brains. Fifty other studies, taken together, found no such sex difference—not in adults, not in newborns.
- Other baseless claims: that women are hard-wired to read faces and tone of voice, to defuse conflict, and to form deep friendships; and that "girls' brains are wired for communication and boys' for aggression." Eliot's inescapable conclusion: there is "little solid evidence of sex differences in children's brains."
- <http://www.newsweek.com/why-parents-may-cause-gender-differences-kids-79501>

- **Yet there are differences** in adults' brains, and here Eliot is at her most original and persuasive: explaining how they arise from tiny sex differences in infancy. For instance, **baby boys are more irritable than girls**. That makes parents likely to interact less with their "nonsocial" sons, which could cause the sexes' developmental pathways to diverge. **By 4 months of age, boys and girls differ in how much eye contact they make, and differences in sociability, emotional expressivity, and verbal ability—all of which depend on interactions with parents—grow throughout childhood. The message that sons are wired to be nonverbal and emotionally distant thus becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. The sexes "start out a little bit different" in fussiness, says Eliot, and parents "react differently to them," producing the differences seen in adults.**
- Those differences also arise from gender conformity.
- Children settle into sex-based play preferences only around age 1, which is when they grasp which sex they are, identify strongly with it, and conform to how they see other, usually older, boys or girls behaving.
- "Preschoolers are already aware of what's acceptable to their peers and what's not," writes Eliot. Those play preferences then snowball, producing brains with different talents.
- (BBC documentary)

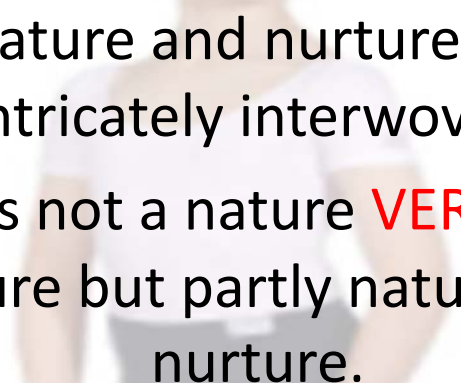
Neurosexism and Neurononsense

- Cordelia Fine, Gina Rippon and Val Gillies
- 'Neurosexism is the practice of claiming that there are fixed differences between female and male brains' (Rippon, 2016)
- Gillies et al (2017) argue that the language of neuroscience is particularly popular in the EYFS
- 'We now know that the concept of a male and female brain is flawed and that the go-to list for sex based psychological differences isn't up to scratch. We need to stop focussing on the binary category of biological sex as their source' (Rippon, 2016)



If 500 boys took a test and 500 girls took the same test there would be a 90% cross over. Boys and girls are more the same than they are different.

The mask we live in (3.09)

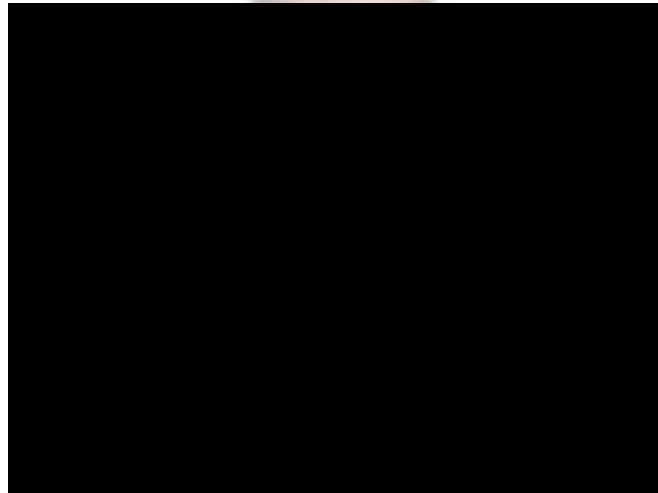
- 
- Nature and nurture are intricately interwoven.
 - It's not a nature **VERSUS** nurture but partly nature **AND** nurture.

- (No more boys and girls – BBC)



Does it matter?

- What is the impact of believing in the hard-wiring of gender in the brain?
- What are the implications for us as practitioners?
- Are we aware of how we interact with boys and girls?
- How do we talk about boys and girls – what kind of language do we use?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc45-ptHMxoe>

The Mask We Live In

<https://vimeo.com/28066212>

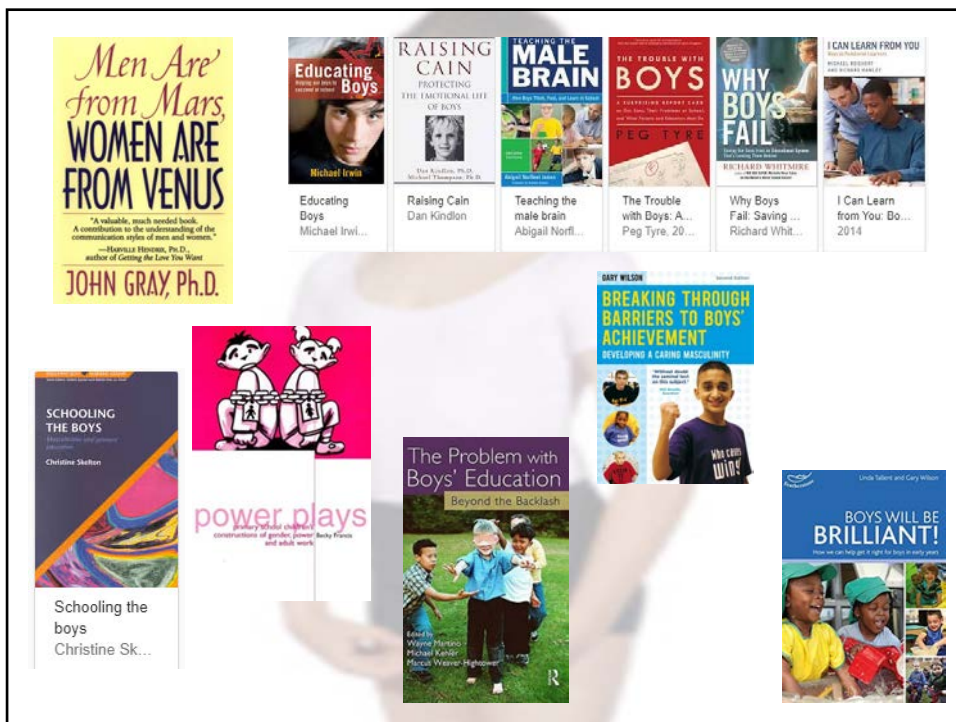
- Miss Representation





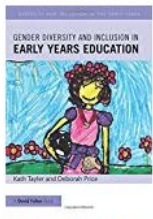

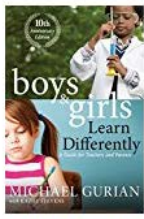
Homophobic hate crime – increased by 147% after Brexit – Guardian, 8/10/16
Homophobic hate crime – increased by over 80% across 4 years – Ind. 06/09/17
Hate crime in London – increased by up to 216% - 07/03/17

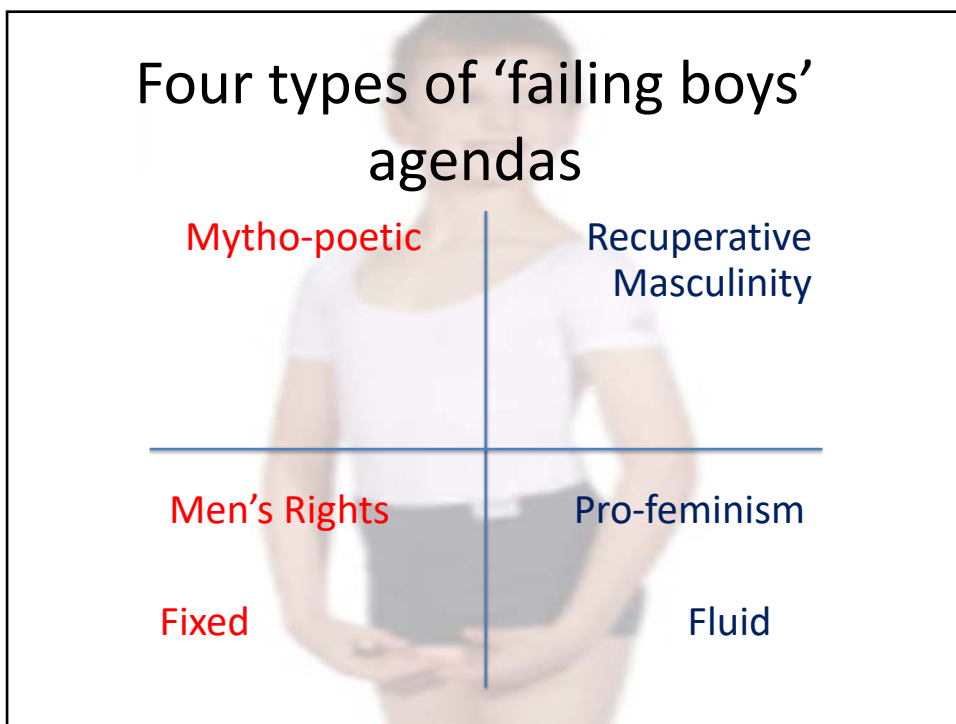


How is this relevant to primary schools?





| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
|  <p>Parenting Beyond Pink and Blue: How to Raise... › Christia Spears Brown ★★★★☆ 3</p> |  <p>Gender Diversity and Inclusion in Early... Kath Tayler ★★★★★ 1</p> |  <p>Gender equity in the early years Browne ★★★★★ 1</p> |  <p>Boys and Girls Learn Differently: A Guide... › Michael Gurian ★★★★☆ 4</p> |
|--|---|--|--|



Historical femiphobia/homophobia

- Boys being taught predominantly by women would 'tend towards effeminacy and eventually breed a generation more fit to be apparelled in petticoats than pants' (Abbott, cited in Martino, 2008)
- Dominating women, mothers and female teachers in particular, have the ability to emasculate men and 'threaten normal masculine growth' (Sexton, 1969)
- Recent studies into the experiences of male teachers in primary schools show that 'gender patrolling' and 'surveillance' still takes place to varying degrees (Sargent, 2000; Mills, 2004; Skelton, 1994; King, 2004; Jones, 2007; Skelton, 2001; Martino, 2008; Martino, 2006).

Voices of reason

- Chris Woodhead, previous Chief Inspector of Schools:
- 'What we need are teachers in primary schools who can teach, which means, keeping order. I can remember some women teachers who are remarkably good at keeping order....and there are plenty of men who aren't' (BBC, 2002 – Jones, 2006)
- Doug McAvery, General Sec of NUT,
- 'Of course we need a better balance of men and women, but what schools need are the best teachers, regardless of gender' (Guardian, 2002)



The Secret Life of 5 years olds

Category Maintenance

- Children already 'patrol' each others gender identity and behaviour and engage in construction of gender identities through 'oppositional' discourses and power positions (Davies, 1989; Francis, 1998)
- 'Shaming' and microaggressions (Sue, 2010; Nadal, 2008, 2016) – how are they used by children and adults in schools?



Boys as girls and vice versa



What does it mean to let 'boys be boys' and 'girls be girls'? Is it neutral?



Read the articles on the table and discuss.

What do you notice?

Parents remove son from school in pupil gender row

© 11 September 2017



The parents of a six-year-old boy have removed him from his primary school in a row over whether another pupil should be allowed to wear a dress.

Nigel and Sally Rowe said their son was confused as to why the child at the Church of England School on the Isle of Wight dressed as both a boy and a girl.

Who's mental health was being affected by this debate?

Children

Boys should be free to wear tutus and tiaras, says Church of England

Guidance for schools urges teachers to let children 'play with the many cloaks of identity' rather than conform to stereotypes


● [Share your experiences and solutions to gender-based bullying](#)

Isabel Bennett
Mon 13 Nov 2017 01.08 GMT

f t e ...

● This article is 3 months old

11,451



▲ Children should be able to dress up as they please without comment or expectation, says the church.
Photograph: Tim Pannell/Fuse/Getty Images

Boys should be free to choose to wear a tutu, tiara or heels, and girls to wear toolbelts and superhero capes, the Church of England has said in new guidance issued to its schools.

Just let children be children be children

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/tamara-spurway/let-children-just-be-chil_b_17974082.html



Common myths of boys and girls learning in the EYFS (Warin, 2017)

- We need to gender match children to teachers (Cushman, 2009)
- We need more male role models for boys – but who? (Martino, 2014; Mills, 2009)
- Gendered toy preferences are hard wired (Hines and Wang Wang, 2017) – painting toys
- It's Ok to let boys be boys and girls be girls (Fine, 2017) – toys and play lead to gender inequality
- We should always prioritise the child's own preference (Davies, 1987)

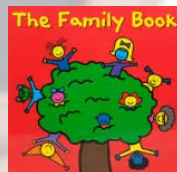
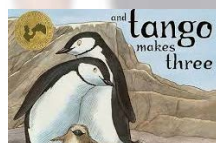
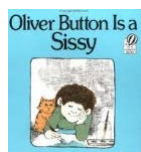
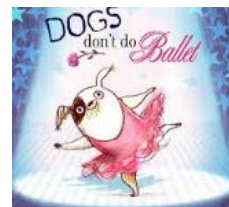
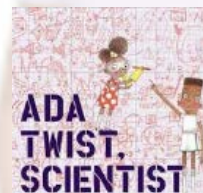
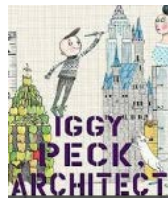
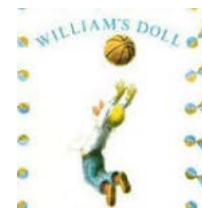
4 principles from Norway's Gender Equality Plan (2014)

- Add, but not deprive
- Meet children at their own levels – no shaming
- Focus on the positive and make it stronger – recognise and praise when children cross boundaries
- Use play to foster boys skills for nurturing

Reflections - who are we?

- Not saying that girly girls or boys boys are wrong!!!!
- Opening up new possibilities and making sure we don't homogenise groups but look at the complexities of individual children
- How do we group/target – need or group?
- Data breakdown
- What do we think of when we hear 'black boys' or 'white working class'?
- Why don't we don't group along other binaries?

What can we do?



Where to start

Equality Act - 2010

SRE (RSE) curriculum – 2000 (2019)

School policies (equality, bullying)

Ofsted inspection handbook – 2016

Don't suffer in silence – DfES – 1994

Ofsted – Not yet good enough – 2012

Children and social work act – 2017

Preventing and tackling bullying – 2017

- Critically reflect on who is saying what and why....
- Become an intentional practitioner

'Real world' gender inequality



'One of the greatest athletes of all time'

More information....

