The National Anti-Bullying Poetry Competition

The Winners

Used in the right way, words can be very powerful
Used in the right way, words can be very powerful. The National Anti-Bullying Poetry Competition launched during Anti-Bullying week in November 2004 shows this very well.

The contest was open to all learners, and to members of staff. We asked participants to use their imagination and creativity to highlight one or more of the issues around bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying. Prizes were awarded in categories for learners from primary schools, secondary schools, and special schools and we also had a category for staff.

A panel of judges, including representatives from the Department for Education and Skills, the Anti Bullying Alliance and Panasonic were on hand to shortlist from the nearly 6,000 entries we received, and from that shortlist our celebrity judges went on to select our overall category winners.

All the shortlisted poems are featured in this book alongside handwritten comments from the children themselves. We congratulate the children and young people who have expressed themselves so eloquently on this subject. We hope that you enjoy these poems and think that they very much live up to our aim and show that used in the right way, words can be very powerful indeed.
Foreword

As a child, I was bullied for being different, for showing my feelings all too easily. Poetry was a way out, an escape, a way of expressing what was going on. What these young people have written is brave and bold. It is the most powerful way of standing up for yourself and being counted. It says – ‘Listen to me. I am here. I am worth something. I am more than just a victim.’ Too often in my years of working as a writer in schools have I heard the dreadful stories of everyday cruelty and the sense that we should all just accept bullying as part of life. But I don’t agree with that sentiment and words can be one of the instruments of personal revolution. So, read this book and know that these poems come from the heart and that behind each set of verses is a real person who, by the act of writing, becomes the victor.

Andrew Fusek Peters

July 2005
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Overall Primary Winner and South East Primary Winner
Brooke Millar, age 10

The Bully

My bully is scary,
My bully's in a gang,
They all beat me up,
My brother's in it too.
He helps me,
He tells mum lies,
I don't know what to do.
I love my brother dearly,
I love my brother nice,
But when he hits me hard I take back that thought.
I have tried everything,
I really have.
But when I tell mum, it just makes her sad.
She doesn't believe me,
She only believes him,
I don't matter,
It's all about him, him, him.

Michael Rosen judged the primary category
The poem I liked the best that had the most emotion and the most feeling in was The Bully. I also think it's brilliant and painful that it's 'my' bully. It completely inverts the idea of something belonging to you being something you like and want to keep...brilliant.
Why Am I a Bully?

Why am I a bully?
Why do I make kids cry?
When I get found out today,
My parents asked me why?

Do I think it is clever
Making others feel so sad?
Would I pick on others
Who were tall or tough or bad?

‘So you think you’re really hard’
My parent frowned and said
I stood there stuffing awkwardly
I rumbled and lowered my head.

I’d seen it on the telly
I’d listened to teachers and stars
But I hadn’t listened hard enough
And now it had gone too far.

The kids that I had picked on
Had spoken out that day
They wouldn’t give in any more
They said they wouldn’t play.

As I left across the yard
The kids all stopped and stared
My parents either side of me
Hardly spoke a word.

I turned and backed
And heard the sounds of laughter, joy and play
I knew that if I changed my ways
I might join in with them one day.

by Bethany Shaw

I hope my poem makes somebody think about how they treat others.
Thanks To My Friend

I was bullied and broken,
Because of my name,
But what’s in a name?
It’s a crying shame.

They hated me, because I was fat,
I never hit back.
What’s the shame in that?

I thought I might die,
But because of my friend,
I told them to stop.
And did not suffer alone.
For my friend had been beaten.
I did not cry alone.

So thanks to each other,
We now stand as one.
And as you all know,
Two heads are better than one.
Thanks to my friend.

By Gabriel Sullivan

Don't be weak to a bully
Stand up and be strong.
London Primary Winner
Saima Chowdhury, age 10

Recipe for No Bullying Surprise

A handful of support,
A teaspoon of courage,
A sprinkle of confidence,
And a pinch of love.

A spoon full of believe,
A pinch of trust,
A cup full of friend,
A teaspoon of good feeling,
A sprinkle of glory and
A piece of joy.

A slice of happiness,
A bunch of kindness,
A cluster of help,
A cup full of hope,
A mug of sweetness,
A sprinkle of honour,
A pour of freedom then,
mix it with a cuddle.

Then put it in the oven of justice
and wait for 10 minutes,
Take it out and enjoy your No Bully Surprise.

Hint: always cook with a friend!
by famous cook
Saima Chowdhury
Bullies are not nice, they are bad. They can make you feel very sad. Some say wrong words or push and kick and you end up crying or being sick.

So let's stop it now, because bullies aren't cool. And let's all live in a happy school.

By Zoe Snell, aged 5.

If you get bullied tell someone.

Love Zoe x
Bullies, bullies come in all different shapes and sizes, they always come out with nasty surprises. Bullies, bullies think they are strong, but we all know they are wrong. Bullies make people feel lonely and sad, they don’t even stop and think that they have done something bad. Let’s all get together once and for all and tell them they shouldn’t do bad things to people big or small. Bullies, bullies think they are clever, but we can all say to them whatever.

Stand up and speak up. Be proud of who you are.
Don't Bully

It's very easy to see,
When people are scared and sad,
The bullies make me mad.

If this happens to you,
You know what to do,
Don't get angry and fight,
But tell them why you cry.

Always tell your Mum and Dad
When things are getting really bad,
Let's get this sorted from the start.
Everyone can play their part.

Remember to help friends in need
And please remember this little poem.
Don't put up with violence
And never suffer in silence.

by James Rayner
Bullying

Calling names can be the start before too long you’ll feel apart

As the bully takes over your friends depart this is what will break your heart

If they could stand by your side this could maybe turn the tide

Your friends are scared too be with you as they maybe bullied too

Standing your ground is the only way to make this terror go away!

by Micha White
Age 10 years

Don’t be a victim of bullies, stand up and be strong

Micha White
If I WAS A BULLY

If I was a bully, what would it be like,
Swiping a ball, stealing a bike.

If I was a bully, it wouldn’t be fair,
Stamping on toes, pulling your hair.

If I was a bully, I’d soil in a canoe,
And make someone paddle, someone like you.

If I was a bully, it wouldn’t be true,
I’m glad I’m not a bully, just like you.

By Sophia Anderton 4S

Bullying is nasty
Bullying isn’t nice
Before you start to bully
You should think twice
Keep safe
Love from Sophia X X
Feelings and Bullying

They weren’t bigger than me,
They weren’t smarter than me,
But somehow that’s how they made me feel.

They didn’t hit me or kick me,
They didn’t punch or spit at me,
But somehow it would have been easier if they did.

It was just the nasty comments,
And the way they made me feel,
I wish I’d told the teacher,
It wouldn’t have been such a big deal!

Lydia Scott
North West Primary Runner-up
Thomas Graham, age 9

Just watching telly

As I was watching telly, just the other day, I saw something which upset me, and it just won’t go away.

My favourite sport is football; I’m a forward not a back.

I saw someone being insulted, just because their skin was black.

I felt so sad to see this happen in my favourite game; he was only playing football and I thought it was a shame.

I just hope the player is ok so he can play again; and the nasty things those people said didn’t come him too much pain.

by Thomas Yr 8

Bullies are the losers

Thomas Graham
Bullying

It all started when I was young,
The bully came and stuck out his tongue,
First I thought it was just for fun,
Then I realised it wasn’t a joke,
The bully started bullying from that day on.

I just wished I could run away,
I had friends but he took them away,
I had told my friends all my secrets,
Now they might tell the bully.

I was sad I was lonely,
I knew I had to tell someone,
So I told the teacher and she understood,
She gave me some advice,
Now I’m not coming home covered in mud.

If you’re being bullied then tell someone,
It will really help,
And remember you’re never alone.

By Ayesha Patel

Don’t be afraid
Bullies are cowards!

A. Patel
London Primary Runner-up
Monu Sachdeva, age 8

Fading Away

They had been
my friends before.
Suddenly they
acted like
they hadn’t been.
They started to
threaten me.
I felt like
I was
fading away
from
everything
and
everyone.

Monu Sachdeva, aged 8

"Never give up, the bullies can’t beat you if you
tell the teacher."
Andrew Fusek Peters judged the Special category

The winner for me is True Life about a boy who got asthma: Why do I like this poem? I think because it’s emotionally honest and true. In reading it, I was moved and it felt real. Does it work as a real poem? Well, I think so, perhaps more than my ‘cleverly’ constructed poems – as it does what it says. After reading a poem like this, anyone with a tiny smidgen of sensitivity will have some sympathy for what the writer is going through. Personally, my heart goes out to the writer. I also like the fact that it doesn’t provide some pat answer to the problem but just states the facts as they are.

True Life about
a boy who got asthma

I live in town,
where everyone hates me.
Bullies have always bullied me.
Most of my life
They call me names,
And treat me as an outcast.
I don’t like it,
I ask them to stop it
But they still carry on.

I have only got one friend.
When I made new friends,
The bullies say all nasty, heinous things about me.
To my new friends.
Then I lose my new friends.
And now they bully me as well.

Sometimes bullies want to be friends.
I say all right.
But 10 minutes later,
They punch me.
And run away.

I cannot even walk to the shops.
Without bullies following me.
Bullies chase me every time.
When they see me.
I try to get to run and hide.
And now I have got asthma.

All the stress that I have been getting.
Is building up.
Then one day at school.
I get hit on one of my friends.
I kick and punch them.
Then I get told off.
And I am really sorry.

I do not like living in my room.
I wish the bullies stopped bullying me.
And other people.
Estelle judged the Secondary category

I choose Dear Diary as my winner as the diary style gives a very personal insight into the progress of the bullying and a sense that we, as readers, are being confided in. The short, punchy rhymes, and the use of repetition make the poem very memorable and catchy. I found the positive ending where the writer finds the strength to deal with the bullying very inspiring. Well done!
West Midlands Secondary Winner
Lyam Parker, age 13

Do I have to go to school Mum? Do I really have to go?
I've got a bunny now,
I think I'm going to throw.

They push and threaten me,
It hurts, outside and in,
There's no one stronger than me,
I guess I'll never win.

I couldn't sleep last night,
I was worried about what they'd say,
I have to try and ignore them,
I'll tell someone one day.

Lyam Parker, age 13

Stand up to bullies
and don't let them win.
North West Secondary Winner
Hannah Fielding, age 11

I HATE ME BECAUSE OF YOU

i hate me because of you
you call me names
and make false claims
i hate me because of you.

i hate me because of you
you push me around
i don’t make a sound
i hate me because of you.

i hate me because of you
i stay in at break
and wait and wait
i hate me because of you.

it’s all your fault
that i hate me
you make me see
just how terrible bullying can be.

Hannah Fielding 7E2

I know from personal experience that when people say ‘ignore it’ or ‘don’t let it get you down’ it doesn’t make you feel better. It makes you feel angry. Angry because they don’t know it’s like. I fought against my bully with confidence in myself and help from fellow classmates. To this day I get taunted by the same person but when I started highschool I started a new life with a new me. Living it, you should try and do the same. If you like you, who cares what they think?!
Dear Mum,

I don't want to tell you this news. I really find it hard. I wish it wasn't happening. I wish it wasn't true.

Mum, I'm getting bullied. What is wrong with me? Is it that they are jealous? Or do they just hate me?

I cry myself to sleep at night. I sometimes hate myself too. Sometimes I pretend I'm 11. Just to slip off school.

I really really love you mum. But I wish I wasn't born. I don't want to put you through the pain. But when you read this I'll be gone.

Bye Mum!

I hope you take notice of this poem. Of what is happening at school and at home. People get bullied everyday. It could lead to sorrow and pain.
East Midlands Secondary Winner
Jodie Totman, age 11

My point of view
16/10/05

It’s the morning again, I’m trying to fake a sicky. But then I have to tell mom that the reason is really Vicky.

Walking to school, my legs are shaking, I can see her across the road as if she’s waiting.

As I pass her by, trying not to look, she comes face to face and takes my book.

She runs off and throws it in a puddle, she thinks she can get me into trouble.

Why do I have to face this daily, it’s really cruel.

All I want to do is go to school.

Written by Jodie Totman of 7.9.
95 words.

Don’t let the bullies win!

Jodie Totman
Yorkshire and Humberside Secondary Winner
Hannah Moore, age 13

Waiting

I’m waiting.
Only ten minutes of lunchtime left.
I’m hiding behind the bin again,
The stench is overpowering.
My stomach longs for food,
My legs ache from crouching,
But fear keeps me still.

How long will this last?
How many lunchtimes will I spend in fear?
Is it really worth living?
If you’re always waiting,
For the next punch and mocking jeer?

Hannah Moore

Don’t keep it a secret, speak out!
Hannah Moore
South East Secondary Winner
Julia Lang, age 13

Julia Lang 96

Bullying Poem

I will break your bones,
Spit out words,
And hurt you,
Because I come from a broken home,

I will let my anger out at you.

I will break your things,
Take your things,
Destroy them,
Because my things have been destroyed

I will let out my frustration on you.

Rip down your pride,
With poison words,
Because so many words of hate have been spat at me.

They say bullies come are cowards,
Come from broken homes, have problems.

Well maybe they’re right
Maybe that’s me.

I will make you feel how I feel at home...

Alone.

It’s not from personal experience, but it’s about thinking of the whole issue.
Julia Lang.
London Secondary Winner
George Haylett, age 12

Refugee scum

He scuttles into the class, shaking, sad,
Frightened eye-wide, desperate for a friend.
But none are here, now things are looking bad.
This untold fear and hate it has no end.
They called him “refugee scum” to his face;
They pushed him, shoved him, threw him to the ground.
They swore about his family and his race.
And still no one cared, no one was around.
If they had seen the place from where he came,
Land mines maiming helpless children that played.
Death camps, torture, screaming, agony, pain,
They would not laugh and jeer to him this day.
Back then the bullies had guns in their hands
And here in school its threats and elastic bands.

Make every day count
George ***
Beat the Bully

Everyday you call me names,
You don’t include me in your games.
I don’t think this is fair.
So I have learned not to care.
I am still learning to ignore this,
I have to admit it isn’t easy.
I sometimes want to scream and shout.
Other times I don’t want to go out.
I am now on the recovery road.
As I have learned to crack your code,
You hate it when I ignore you.
So guess what? I have beaten you.

By Alice Halls.
West Midlands Secondary Runner-up

Louise Anne Jackson, age 12

Beating the Bullies

By Louise Jackson

My heart pounding,
My lip twitching.
Should I walk away?
Should I turn back?
I knew they’d be waiting for me.
My footsteps were getting slower.
My heartbeat was getting faster.
My body was shaking.
My eyes filling with tears.
The alley seemed dark and never ending.
Knowing they’d be waiting at the end,
I hear them laughing.
Followed by a long trailing echo.
I bite my lip so hard I can taste blood.
A tear silently flows down my face.
The bullies seem to sense my fear.
Their laughter grows harder.
Now I could see them,
With their evil grins and burning eyes.
There was no other way to go.
I couldn’t turn back.
They started calling to me.
Not only me but my family.
But I’d had enough.
My fingers clenched.
I started to walk faster.
I walked straight passed them.
Not even giving them a glance.

I had stood up for myself,
I had beaten the bullies.

Stand up to bullies!

Louise Jackson
North West Secondary Runner-up
Dale Emmett, age 14

Nobody Knows the Pain that’s Caused

Bullying comes in lots of forms,
It makes children wish they had never been born.
It happens by cowards, who call them names,
But for the bullied, life is not the same.

They don’t tell their teachers because they won’t be a ‘grass’,
They just shy away hoping the moment will pass.
Life is not the same, it is not much fun,
Some of them pray the good times will come.

Nobody knows the pain that is caused,
A bullied person’s life is set on pause.
They need to do anything to keep the peace,
Their thoughts and emotions are not released.

Bullies feel a sense of power,
And make their targets do nothing but cower.
They are the people with problems inside,
But by doing this how can they feel any pride?

The only way out is to shout out loud,
To stop the bullies and make themselves proud.
So less all fight against the bullying in school,
And make the cowards look the only fools.

Dale Emmett
Aged 14

Treat people the way you want to be treated.
North West Secondary Runner-up

M. Chell

TICK TOCK

It’s a grey day.
The clouds are looming overhead.
The lightning waiting to strike.
The bomb starts to tick in my head
Tick tock
Tick tock
Won’t stop
It’s going to explode today
Queer tick
Poof tock
Faggot tick
Goy boy tock

The butterflies start to fly in my tummy
They want to get out and fly away.
All these emotions deep down inside me
Are bottled up waiting to burst out.
Tick tock
Fear comes.
I wander round, dodging the eyes that see through me,
My head down, trying to hide.
When will they get me?
It’s my turn soon.

This poem was written from my personal experience of homophobic bullying.
Bully has got to stop so we need to do something about it now.
Thank you for reading my poem.

M. Chell
London Secondary Runner-up
Fred Oppong, age 13

Quiet

Quiet when I wake up
Quiet when without a sound
Quiet when I’m on the bus because I know he’ll be around
Quiet when my money’s in his hand
Quiet with pain my leg unable to stand
Quiet after school
Quiet at the slide
Quiet when he passes by.
Quiet when my mum asks what’s wrong
Quiet when in my bed thinking about it all night long
Quiet when

Bullied

By Fred Oppong 5C

Bullies can be beaten
Bullies can and will be beaten but it best is best for those being bullied not to take it alone. Instead they should seek others help, this will help the victim mentally and show them they are not alone. These people will act as a voice for them against their hateful ordeal.
North East Secondary Runner-up
Simon Shevlin, age 12

Anti-Bullying Poem

Stop bullies before they stop you,
that is all you have to do.

Often bullies pick on people they hate,
leave tell someone before it's too late.

Bullies abuse and hurt people for no reason,
understand that bullying takes all forms
of pain and teasing,

Letting them hurt you makes you a fool.

Let's be sure we tell someone at school,
you should be safe anywhere, so let's
make that a fact.

If you tell no one, you will be lucky
if you're still intact.

No person has the right to lord it over another
Go, make sure you tell, then you
will never suffer.

"I hope this poem gives you a clue
about what you may have to do.
Stop bullying now.
This poem will tell you how"
Yorkshire and Humberside Secondary Runner-up
Rachel Smethurst, age 11

Do you dread going to school?
Is it because you are not cool?
Have you got a bad case of the blues?
Maybe you’ve been bullied in the school loo?
You should tell your form tutor
So she can help you in the future.
If the bullies give you hell,
Don’t hide away in a shell.
Tell tell tell tell tell tell!!!!

by Rachel Smethurst
7 AMT

Never give up!
R. Smethurst
Overall Staff Winner
Catherine Graham

Break this Chain
(A Performance Poem)

Let's both look in the mirror,
Describe what we can see,
You see actors and sidekicks;
Me? I just see me.
Let's break this chain
Let's talk this through,
You've chosen me
I did nothing to you.
Your eyes tell me
I'm not to blame,
You're playing your
'Let's take it out
on someone' game.
Did someone tell you
you're all bad?
Teacher? or Friend?
Man? Your Dad?
You want me to feel
the fear just fade
You want me to take your pain
Want me to crack,
like shivering glass,
Stop, Break this chain.
Wont keep this 'our little secret'
Wont take this on my own
Don't have to suffer your silence
I'm strong, I'm not alone.
Let's take a look in that mirror
Describe what we don't see
I don't see some serial victim
You don't see the possibility
that I'm not like snow come springtime
or the night that dreads the dawn
Stop out of that shackled reflection
You're proud, complete
You're strong,
So Stop Break this chain
I said Stop Break this chain
Go on and Stop, Break this chain.

Meera Syal judged the Teachers category
BREAK THIS CHAIN I loved because it was a piece to be performed with energy and great positivity and I like
the fact it focused not on being a victim but how you can turn it around through finding your own strength.
This is a great message to give out and it reminded me of the verve and kick of Benjamin Zephania’s performance
poetry. Many congratulations to all the finalists because every single entry was heartfelt and thought provoking.
Building Blocks

I have been built out of bullies,
With insults they molded me.
For a while I walled up my fears,
And hid myself in poetry.

The house of books where
I wandered,
In rooms of brain-bright thought,
Sheltered me brick by tender brick
And the hateful words they taught,

I caught and made my own
confident concrete tower,
To look down on the bullies,
For the pen is a mighty power.

They laughed at the sensitive boy,
And his guttering, spluttering tears,
But bottled up bullies get old
and cold,
As they blunder the lonely years.

Oh bully boys that built me,
Don’t you know that
girls find appealing
Not louts who love to get plastered,
But boys filled up with feeling.

Yes, I was the prat that was
good for a laugh,
The skinny old git, the swot
Now I’m living my life
with a beautiful wife,
Free from the bully dry rot.

So thank you, bullies that built me,
With all your crumbling hate,
Out of this mess, came a success,
And a man who has mastered
his fate.

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For further information about Andrew’s work, and for additional anti-bullying resources, please visit www.tallpoet.com
With thanks to the following schools...

Warden House Primary School
St Gregory’s Primary School
St Mary’s R.C. Primary School
Nelson Primary School
Ravenhurst Primary School
Blakesley Hall Primary School
Katherines Primary School
Harrow Gate Primary School
Wellington Primary School
Market Harborough C.E. Primary School
Out Rawcliffe C.E. Primary School
Battyeford Primary School
The Mount Primary School
Parkwood Hall School
Longfleet Combined School
Etone Community School and Technology College
Levenshulme Language College
Hylton Red House Comprehensive
Sir Jonathan North Community College
King James’s School
Cox Green School
Langley Park School for Boys
St Helena Secondary School
Redhill Secondary School
St Bede’s R.C. High School
St Ignatius College
Don Valley High School
Moorside Community Primary School

...and all the other schools, children and young people who took the time to enter.
Useful Websites

For further information on bullying and how to deal with bullying, you may find the following websites useful.

**Anti-Bullying Alliance**
A useful website for all, providing information of over 60 organisations who are dedicated to help create a safer environment for children and young people to live, grow and learn.

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org)

This booklet is available for download on the following websites:

**The Department for Education and Skills**
An informative website providing teachers, parents and children with advice on bullying. [www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying)

**ParentsCentre**
Helping you to help your child in dealing with bullying.

[www.parentscentre.gov.uk/bullying](http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/bullying)

**Need 2 Know**
Need2know is a portal for young people aged 13–19. Here, you can find out useful information on how to deal with bullying, and tips on how to write your own poem. [www.need2know.co.uk](http://www.need2know.co.uk)

**TeacherNet**
An informative website for teachers at all levels, providing up to date information on a range of issues and includes essential and practical information on how to deal with bullying at school.

[www.teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk)