

Could 90% of head teachers be wrong?

Head teacher Jo Sawyer planned to introduce uniform when she became Head of Park Grove Primary Academy, but the children changed her mind. This inspired me to interview head teachers with differing view-points on school uniform.

At first, Mrs Sawyer told students that they could only have their way on uniform if there were “absolutely no reports of bullying or unkindness about clothing whatsoever”. To her surprise there were none, none at all. This might surprise head teachers, who think uniform helps stop bullying.

“I think the key benefits of having uniform are improved behaviour, attendance and positive attitudes, plus fewer morning arguments and better safety,” says Andy Herbert a York head teacher who decided to introduce uniform to his previous school.

The fact that 90% of UK schools have a uniform suggests most head teachers agree with Mr Herbert.

According to The Schoolwear Association uniform is good for a sense of belonging, equality and academic concentration in school. Yet students at Park Grove are proof that wearing your own clothes doesn’t affect these.

“What I like about leading a school without uniform is the way everybody looks individual and comfortable, and it makes our school unique!” said Helen Steel, current head of Park Grove Primary Academy. Maybe, the answer is dress-code guidelines, as a compromise on uniform.

“I think age is a key consideration when deciding uniform policy, because as you get older the clothes you wear can be an important way of expressing your own personality and style,” says Bootham School’s head, Chris Jeffrey, who has uniform for younger students but only guidelines for the older children.

Having personally seen the issue from both sides, (I’ve been to two great schools, one with and one without uniform) I think head teachers might reconsider their view on uniform.

Source of information from The Schoolwear Association: <https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/school-uniform-is-important>