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1 # Understanding the influence of online misogyny in schools from

2 # the perspective of teachers

3

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8

9

Abstract

Young people are increasingly exposed to toxic online misogyny through social media. However, to date, it is not clear how exposure to online misogyny might be influencing the behaviour and experiences of adolescents and children. As a first step towards answering this question, we gathered data on how such influences are perceived by surveying 200 teachers, 100 of whom were based in secondary schools (working with children aged 11 and above) and 100 of whom were based in primary schools (working with children aged 4 – 11). 76% of secondary school teachers and 60% of primary school teachers reported that they were extremely concerned about the influence of online misogyny in their schools. When asked to describe an example of the ways in which online misogyny was influencing the behaviour and experiences of male pupils in their schools, teachers referenced cases in which male pupils praised misogynistic influencers, made misogynistic comments and engaged in discriminatory behaviour towards female peers and staff. When asked to describe an example of the ways in which online misogyny was influencing the behaviour and experiences of female pupils in their schools, teachers referenced cases in which female pupils were the victims of misogynistic behaviour and their well-being was adversely affected. 90% of secondary school teachers and 68% of primary school teachers felt that their school would benefit from dedicated teaching materials to address the impact of online misogynists within their schools. Implications of these data for interventions to combat the rise of online misogyny are discussed.

Understanding the influence of online misogyny in schools from the perspective of

teachers

Extreme misogyny is increasingly finding an audience on social media in the 'manosphere', a broad community of individuals which has emerged over the last 15 years. The manosphere incorporates a variety of groups including self-styled pick-up artists, incels (short for involuntary celibates), MGTOW (short for "men going their own way") and proponents of the red and black pill. Pick-up artists purport to teach men how to seduce women, often advocating the use of deceptive and even coercive tactics (Bates, 2021). Incels claim to be doomed to a life of singledom often expressing extreme resentment at the women who they imagine deny them sex (Ging, 2017; Manne, 2018). MGTOW claim that women, particularly White Western women, are so influenced by feminist ideologies that they should be avoided completely in favour of a life of solitude or a partner from a country with more conservative gender attitudes (Krendel, 2020). Advocates of red and black pill ideologies draw on scenes from the Matrix film franchise in order to explain their relationship to contemporary society. In the Matrix, the protagonist is offered a choice between different coloured pills in order to understand reality or remain in the dark. These groups claim to have taken a pill which has allowed them to see the truth about gender politics, that society is fundamentally biased in favour of women (Ging, 2017). While red pill and black pill ideologies are closely related, the black pill is typically understood as a more extreme and nihilistic perspective on gender politics (Ging, 2017).

What unites these different groups within the manosphere is a fundamental belief that women are inferior to men and ought to be subordinated to them. Women are often derogated as innately illogical, selfish, greedy and scheming. These attributions are used to justify harassment, coercive control, and discriminatory behaviour (Ging, 2017; Krendel, 2020). For example, self-styled 'life coach' Andrew Tate regularly suggests that women belong in the kitchen and owe their male partners service and gratitude (Das, 2022). Other misogynistic

55 influencers, such as Pearl Davis, campaign to restrict voting rights to men (Morris, 2023). Some

56 influencers within the manosphere explicitly advocate violence against women and appear to

57 have inspired real world attacks against them (Manne, 2018). These communities are

58 increasingly politicised and often advocate for far-right politicians (Ribeiro et al., 2020).

59 Until recently, this international movement has been a hidden problem. Although some

60 influencers have gained widespread notoriety, many others do not engage with mainstream

61 news channels. As a result, the scale of the manosphere may be underestimated by many adults

62 unless they have regular contact with teenagers and young people. Teenagers and young people

63 are regularly exposed to this content through social media and video sharing platforms

64 including Reddit, TikTok and YouTube. While there is relatively little academic research on

65 the extent of exposure, a poll commissioned by the charity Hope not Hate in 2023 found that

66 80% of 16- and 17-year-old British boys had consumed content created by Andrew Tate. In

67 contrast, only 60% of boys in the same age group had heard of the British Prime Minister. A

68 recent poll by YouGov revealed that 27% of young men in the UK (aged between 18 and 29)

69 hold a positive view of Andrew Tate, and 24% agree with his views about women (Smith,

70 2023). A related poll conducted by Internet Matters (2023) suggested that 56% of fathers under

71 the age of 35 approve of Andrew Tate.

72 The dynamics of social media create a context in which misogynistic views are able to

73 flourish. Influencers compete for hits and shares within a limited marketplace of attention.

74 Within this marketplace, controversial and extreme opinions are particularly likely to receive

75 attention, leading to a radicalisation of viewpoints. Algorithms designed to offer users more of

76 the content that they like, combined with systems for blocking unfavourable comments, create

77 echo chambers in which individuals are presented with an increasingly homogenous and

78 polarised world view (van Bavel et al., 2021).

79   To date, there is little evidence relating to how online influencers are affecting the

80   behaviour and experiences of children. As a first step towards answering this question, we

81   conducted a survey with 200 school teachers working in British schools. We surveyed 100

82   secondary school teachers (working with children aged 11+) and 100 primary school teachers

83   (working with children aged 4 – 11). We asked participants a series of questions about online

84   misogyny in their schools. We asked them to rate how concerned they were about this problem

85   and to describe the last time they 1) witnessed online misogyny influencing the behaviour or

86   experiences of male pupils in their schools 2) witnessed online misogyny influencing the

87   behaviour of or experiences female pupils in their schools 3) were personally affected by the

88   influence of online misogyny over their pupils. We also asked them what their school was

89   currently doing to tackle the influence of online misogyny and what they thought could be done

90   to tackle this problem within schools. Finally, we asked them to what extent they felt their

91   school would benefit from dedicated teaching materials to tackle the influence of online

92   misogyny over their pupils.

93

94   **Method**

95   **Open Science and ethical review**

96   This study was pre-registered. The pre-registration details can be found here

97   https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=W45_DTB. The survey, coding scheme, anonymised

98   summary data, and second coding are available on OSF: https://osf.io/6udpt/. The study

99   received ethical clearance from the Department of Psychology at the University of York

100   (approval number 2281).

101

102

103

Participants

Participants were recruited through the online testing platform Prolific and were pre-screened to ensure that they were working as teachers in British schools. The survey itself was built with Qualtrics. All participants provided their written informed consent.

100 participants (61 female, 38 male, 1 non-binary, mean age 39.7, age range = 22-64) worked at British secondary schools (accepting children aged 11 - 16 or 11 - 18). Of these teachers, 86 reported that they worked in state-sponsored schools and 14 reported that they worked in fee paying schools. 94 of these participants worked in schools with a mixed gender intake accepting male and female pupils, 2 worked in single-sex boys schools and 4 worked in single-sex girls schools. Participants reported that they taught a range of subjects including mathematics, science, English, computing, sport, history, geography and PSHE (personal, social, health, and economic education).

100 participants (80 female, 20 male, mean age = 38.5, age range = 21-62) worked at British primary schools (reporting that they taught children aged 4 - 11 years). Of these teachers, 91 reported that they worked in state-sponsored schools, 8 reported that they worked in fee paying schools and 1 did not specify. 99 of these teachers worked in schools with a mixed intake accepting male and female pupils, and 1 worked in a boys' school.

A further 29 participants were tested but excluded because they worked in schools that taught primary and secondary school aged pupils (12). We excluded these participants because we could not be sure whether the examples they raised were drawn from primary-aged children or secondary-aged children. We also excluded teachers who reported that they worked in early years settings with children under the age of 4 (4) or because they worked in a further or higher education setting with children older than 16 (12). 1 participant was excluded because they did not specify what type of school they worked in.

128   Participants were reimbursed £2 for taking part. Participation took, on average, 8

129   minutes and 16 seconds (SD = 7 minutes and 36 seconds). Secondary school teachers typically

130   took somewhat longer to complete the survey. On average, secondary school teachers took 10

131   mins 0 seconds over their answers (SD = 9 mins 28 seconds) and primary school teachers took

132   6 mins 33 seconds (SD = 4 mins 30 seconds) over their answers. Data collection took place

133   between 3rd November 2023 and 8th November 2023.

134

135   **Design**

136   **Understanding the influence of misogyny in schools**

137   Our principal goal was to understand the extent to which teachers felt that online misogyny

138   was influencing pupils in their schools. In order to address this question, we asked teachers one

139   overarching question and three more specific questions. As an overarching question, we asked

140   them the extent to which they agreed with the following statement: "I am extremely concerned

141   about the influence of online misogyny on pupils in my school". Answers were collected on a

142   four-point likert scale: 1 (not at all) 2 (a little bit) 3 (moderately) 4 (strongly).

143   In order to understand the ways in which online misogyny might be affecting male pupils,

144   we asked teachers "Can you tell us about the last time that you observed online misogyny

145   affecting the behaviour or experiences of a male pupil in your school?". In order to understand

146   the ways in which online misogyny might be affecting female pupils we asked "Can you tell

147   us about the last time that you observed online misogyny affecting the behaviour or experiences

148   of a female pupil in your school?". Finally, in order to understand the extent to which teachers

149   might be affected by the influence of online misogyny over their pupils, we asked "Can you

150   tell us about the last time that you were personally affected by the influence of online misogyny

151   on your pupils?".

152

Understanding current practice and what strategies might be effective in addressing misogyny in schools

As a first step towards understanding current practice in how schools address any issues raised by online misogyny we asked teachers "What, if anything, is your school currently doing to tackle the influence of online misogynists?". In asking this question, we sought to understand whether there are gaps in the current provision that might usefully to be addressed in future research and practice.

In order to capture elements of best practice and consider possible avenues for future intervention, we also asked teachers "What sort of strategies do you think might be helpful in addressing the influence of online misogynists in schools?"

Finally, we asked teachers the extent to which they agreed with the following statement "My school would benefit from receiving dedicated teaching materials to tackle the influence of online misogyny". Responses to this question were requested on a four-point likert scale: 1 (not at all) 2 (a little bit) 3 (moderately) 4 (strongly). We asked this question in order to understand whether there is an appetite for school-based interventions focused specifically on tackling online misogyny.

Procedure

Participants were asked a small number of preliminary questions relating to themselves and the type of school they worked in. Following this, they were asked the questions outlined above in a fixed order. Finally, participants were asked if they would be interested in participating in further research on online misogyny and whether there was anything else they would like to share with us on this topic. Participants were thanked for their participation, debriefed, and redirected to Prolific for payment.

Coding

The coding scheme was developed by the first author who read participants responses multiple times in order to derive relevant themes. Coding categories were not mutually exclusive and teachers' responses could be coded into multiple categories. In order to examine the reliability of the coding we asked a second rater to independently code 25% of these responses. Agreement between the two coders ranged from .71 to .8 for the different questions. The average Kappa = .75. We adopted an iterative approach to developing a maximally reliable coding scheme. We clarified the coding scheme, increasing its specificity, and asked a third rater to code 25% of the data. Agreement between two coders using this improved coding scheme ranged between .815 and .898. The average Kappa = .862.

For the question "Can you tell us about the last time that you observed online misogyny affecting the behaviour or experiences of a male pupil in your school?", the first rater coded responses into 6 categories. This rater assigned 59 codes in total. The two raters agreed in 91.4% of cases, Cohen's Kappa =.891. For the question "Can you tell us about the last time that you observed online misogyny affecting the behaviour or experiences of a female pupil in your school?", the first rater coded responses into 5 categories and assigned 56 codes in total. The two raters agreed in 89% of cases, Cohen's Kappa =.845. For the question "Can you tell us about the last time that you were personally affected by the influence of online misogyny on your pupils?", the first rater coded responses into 5 categories and assigned 58 codes in total. The two raters agreed in 89.7% of cases, Cohen's Kappa = .863. For the question relating to what schools are currently doing to combat the influence of online misogyny, the first rater coded responses into 11 categories and assigned 68 codes in total. The two raters agreed in 89.7% of cases, Cohen's Kappa = .898. Finally, for the question relating to what schools ought to do to combat the influence of online misogyny, the first rater coded responses into 13 categories and assigned 61 codes in total. The two raters agreed in 83.6% of cases, Cohen's

203 Kappa = .815. The total number of codes varied between questions because any given answer

204 from a participant could reference more than one idea or suggestion and so be assigned more

205 than one code. The results reported below are based on the coding by the first rater.

206

207 **Results**

208 **Understanding the extent to which online misogyny is a problem in schools**

209

210 **To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "I am extremely concerned**

211 **about the influence of online misogyny on pupils in my school"**

212 76% of secondary teachers moderately or strongly agreed that the influence of online misogyny

213 over their pupils was extremely concerning (see Figure 1). These results broadly accord with

214 previous data suggesting that a considerable percentage of British teenagers are exposed to

215 misogyny (Hope not Hate, 2023) and go beyond them by suggesting that this exposure may be

216 negatively impacting pupils in schools. Strikingly, 60% of primary teachers also moderately or

217 strongly agreed that the influence of online misogyny over their pupils was extremely

218 concerning (see Figure 1). These results suggest that dialogues surrounding the influence of

219 online misogyny need to incorporate discussions about primary-aged children as well as

220 adolescents.
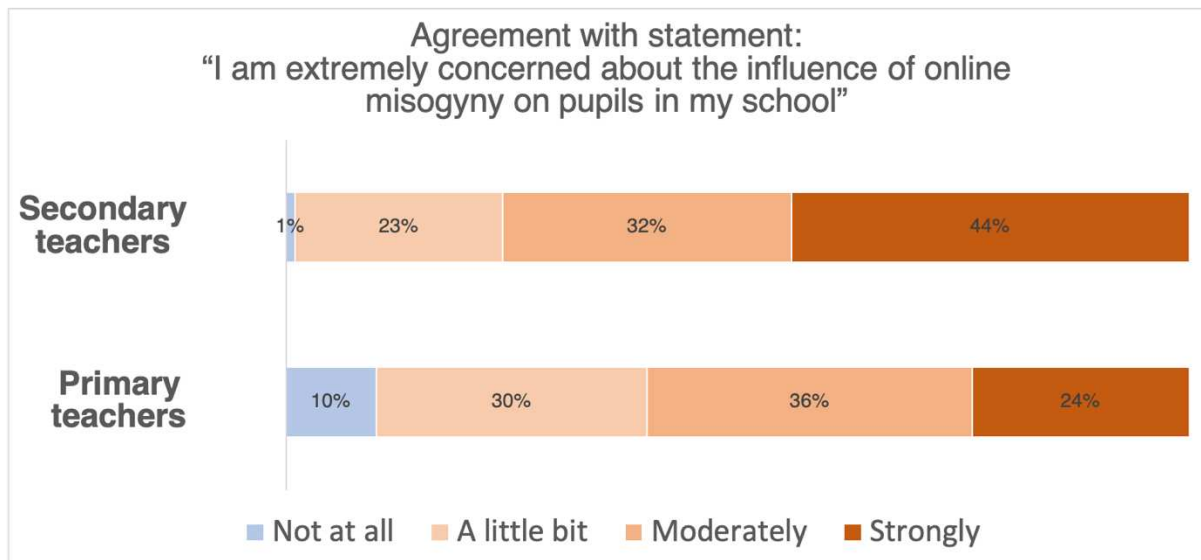
Figure 1. The extent to which secondary school teachers (above) and primary school teachers (below) teachers agreed with the statement "I am extremely concerned about the influence of online misogyny on pupils in my school".

In order to understand whether online misogyny is a greater concern among secondary school teachers than it is among primary school teachers, we converted participants' agreement with the statement into numerical estimates (not at all: 1, a little bit: 2, moderately: 3, strongly: 4). We then subjected these scores to a between subjects t test. This analysis suggests that secondary school teachers are significantly more concerned than are primary school teachers ($t(198) =3.60, p<.001$).

Can you tell us about the last time that you observed online misogyny affecting the behaviour or experiences of a male pupil in your school?

When asked to describe a recent situation in which they observed online misogyny influencing the behaviour or experiences of male pupils in their school, teachers tended to reference instances in which male pupils made misogynistic comments and engaged in discriminatory behaviour.

11

239

Secondary school teachers

As 4 teachers reported that they worked in single sex girls' schools, the following percentages are based on 96 responses and rounded to the closest percentage point. 38% of secondary school teachers referenced male pupils making misogynistic comments, 14% referenced male pupils engaging in discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour and 14% of teachers referenced male pupils disrespecting female members of staff relative to male members of staff. 26% of teachers referenced male pupils discussing misogynistic influencers like Andrew Tate or misogynistic movements from the internet such as incels. Example responses from teachers elaborating on the ways in which online misogyny appears to be influencing the behaviour and experiences of their male pupils are presented in Table 1.

Only 11% of teachers reported that they had not witnessed online misogyny influencing the behaviour or experiences of their male pupils. 16% of teachers gave responses that were too vague to classify for example 'I am aware of this' or 'I handled a case involving two male pupils'.

Primary school teachers

23% of primary school teachers referenced their male pupils making misogynistic comments. 12% of primary school teachers referenced their male pupils engaging in discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour and 8% referenced male pupils disrespecting female members of staff relative to male members of staff. 17% of primary school teachers referenced male pupils discussing misogynistic online influencers. Example responses outlining specific examples from each category can be seen in Table 1.

262   37% of primary school teachers reported that they had not observed any influence of

263   online misogyny over the behaviour or experiences of their male pupils. 13% of primary school

264   teachers gave responses that were too vague to place into these categories.

School type	Coding category	Example responses
Secondary	Derogatory comments	In the past year, I have observed a pupil discussing how it would not be rape if nobody found out. It is believed this stemmed from online experiences.
		A male student making comments about suitable jobs for girls and boys in an employability session. He had seen a video of andrew tate talking about what was 'high value' and took the view that men should be in positions of power, describing how girls would not be good leaders.*
		The last time, a student made derogatory comments towards another student who was female, when she challenged him he told her that women would soon not be allowed outside and that we'd be back "where we belong", he made several references to women being "too big for their boots" and how we make things up. When I asked where he got these opinions he told me he liked to watch Andrew Tate.*
	Discriminatory behaviour	Several male pupils with girlfriends who are abusive towards them in every aspect: physically, emotionally.
		A male pupil was reported to the school for messaging female pupils in an extremely inappropriate sexualised manner using some of the discourse often associated with the likes of Andrew Tate*.
		They try to physically intimidate females with their presence. They are well versed in the online world having access to Youtube and other online content.
	Disrespecting female staff	One pupil sent a number of sexist and harassing messages to a young female member of staff. During the aftermath it became clear that he was strongly influenced by Tate et al. *
		There have been several instances of male pupils not respecting female members of staff, not reacting well to instruction by female members of staff or being heard to make derogatory statements about the looks of female members of staff.
		Very recently - Male pupil, who was open about having accessed Andrew Tate's material, made unacceptable, sexist comments about a female teacher when she gave him a consequence.*
	Discussing misogynistic influencers	Yes, certain pupils were ingesting online content from so called "Incels" and in the Incel movement. As a result, various derogatory jokes were made for those males that are not so well off or come from poorer families.
		A group of KS4 boys were gathering in the corridor shouting 'free Andrew Tate.'
		Recently I heard hero worship Andrew Tate and think his ways were gospel. They talk about sharing his videos.
Primary	Derogatory comments	A male pupil told me it was 'ok to hurt women because Andrew Tate does it'*
		I once saw a boy say to a girl that she belonged in the kitchen and he was a very young age. It was a little bit shocking.
		A student once reiterated something he learned from online misogynists such as Andrew Tate. They were role-playing different careers and he had a genuine belief that the girls were not allowed to play with them because they shouldn't have careers as females.*
	Discriminatory behaviour	I have noticed children talking about people such as andrew tate in the playground. They are then not as friendly with the girls in their class.*

	Boys touching girls non consensually and not understanding why they couldn't.
	A few months ago I had a group of male students referring to themselves at the Top Gs and excluding female students from activities*
Disrespecting female staff	Children mention Andrew tate a lot and laugh about degrading women. A boy has said he doesn't respect female teachers*
	Certain males will not listen to female teachers and says 'I don't need to listen to you'.
	Bad attitude towards female members of staff but not towards male staff
Discussing misogynistic influencers	Students were asked to think about a role model in their life, more than one boy wrote Andrew Tate. One boy specifically began to discuss how cool Andrew Tate is and why he is so inspiring.
	There are regular mentions of figures such as Andrew Tate, and mimicking language and behaviour that students have seen online from influencers such as him.

Table 1. Responses given by secondary school teachers and primary school teachers when asked to describe the last time they witnessed online misogyny influencing the behaviour or experiences of male pupils in their school. Responses marked with a * were coded into more than one category. In all tables, spelling, punctuation and grammar are retained from the original responses.

Can you tell us about the last time that you observed online misogyny affecting the behaviour or experiences of a female pupil in your school?

When asked to describe a recent situation in which they observed online misogyny influencing the behaviour or experiences of female pupils in their school, teachers tended to reference ways in which girls were the victims, rather than perpetrators, of discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour.

Secondary school teachers

Two participants worked in single sex boys' schools, so the following percentages are based on 98 responses. As above, reported percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

44% of secondary school teachers referenced female pupils being the victims of misogynistic

282 comments, discriminatory, or inappropriate behaviour directed at them by other pupils. 30%

283 explicitly referenced the negative impact of other pupils' behaviour on their well-being, self-

284 esteem and engagement. Only 1 teacher referenced a female pupil talking about a misogynistic

285 influencer (Andrew Tate) in a positive way. See Table 2 for example responses illustrating the

286 ways in which teachers feel that online misogyny is influencing their female pupils.

287   Only 30% of teachers could not describe an incident in which online misogyny had

288 impacted female pupils. 11% of teachers gave responses that were too vague to classify into

289 these categories, for example responding 'every day' or 'all the time' without specifying the

290 nature of the impact further.

291

292 **Primary school teachers**

293 As 1 participant worked in single sex boys' schools, the following percentages are based on 99

294 responses and reported percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. 40% of primary

295 school teachers referenced female pupils being the victims of misogynistic comments,

296 discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour directed at them by other pupils and 16% explicitly

297 referenced the negative impact of other pupils' behaviour on female pupils' well-being, self-

298 esteem and engagement. One primary school teachers referenced female pupils discussing

299 misogynistic influencers but it was not clear whether or not this was in a positive way. See

300 Table 2 for example responses.

301   Close to half of primary school teachers (49%) could not describe a recent incident in

302 which online misogyny had impacted female pupils. 6% of teachers gave responses that were

303 too vague to classify into these categories.

School type	Coding category		Example responses
Secondary	Victims of inappropriate behaviour		There have been a few instances of female pupils being called unkind names based on their looks/appearance which seem to have been related to online misogyny. For example, comments such as "you'd not

		make much money on Only Fans" or "I wouldn't even rape you" and the like which are overly sexual and highly demeaning.
		The incel movement resulted in various pupils criticising female pupils who had partners before in a very insulting manner.
		Girls spoke to me about the problem of `upskirting' on the stairs
		Recently, this girl (one of my pupils) was attacked by several boys, who told her that her looks were awful and that she also looked dense.
	Negative impact on well-being	Female students are humiliated and angry by it. They are frustrated and lose their temper sometimes
		Upsetting the female pupil, resenting school, not wanting to attend
		A female pupil very upset by an online video she had been sent by another male pupil, which was extremely misogynistic*
Primary	Victims of inappropriate behaviour	A student once reiterated something he learned from online misogynists such as Andrew Tate. They were role-playing different careers and he had told a female pupil to "go back to the kitchen" because "women aren't allowed to have jobs".
		Girls are often subjected to unpleasant behaviour from groups of boys who are copying what they have seen online.
		A number of pupils have had issues with online misogyny, including predatory behaviour towards some of the girls in my class.
	Negative impact on well-being	The majority of the girls in my class have been worried about coming to school due to what the boys may say or do to them.
		I had a female pupil complain last week of an online porn group that a group of boys were adding her into and telling her it was how she should be. The effects were negative for her.*
		Boys in my class used to regularly quote Andrew Tate and reference his videos, to the disgust of many of the girls.

304

305 **Table 2.** Example responses given by secondary school teachers and primary school teachers

306 when asked to describe the last time they witnessed online misogyny influencing the behaviour

307 or experiences of female pupils in their school. Responses marked with a * were coded into

308 more than one category.

309

310 **Can you tell us about the last time that you were personally affected by the influence of**

311 **online misogyny on your pupils?**

312 Teachers varied in how they interpreted this question. Whereas some teachers referenced times

313 where they had witnessed and/or challenged inappropriate comments and behaviour from their

314 pupils, other teachers described the influence on their own well-being, time, and capacity to

315 teach. Echoing responses from previous questions, some teachers referenced being

316 disrespected by their pupils and receiving sexist abuse from pupils.

317

318 **Secondary school**

319 48% of secondary school teachers referenced occasions on which they had witnessed and/or

320 challenged misogynistic comments or behaviour among their pupils, 22% referenced the

321 impact that addressing online misogyny had over their well-being, time or capacity to teach.

322 19% of secondary school teachers referenced being disrespected by their pupils. All but two of

323 the teachers who mentioned being disrespected by their pupils identified as female. See Table

324 3 for example responses illustrating the ways in which teachers feel they are personally affected

325 by the influence of online misogyny over their pupils.

326 Only 25% of secondary school teachers reported that the influence of online misogyny

327 over their pupils did not affect them personally. 6% gave responses that were too vague to

328 classify for example saying things like "during discussion in class" or "last week" without

329 specifying further.

330

331 **Primary school**

332 24% of primary school teachers referenced occasions on which they had witnessed and/or

333 challenged misogynistic comments or behaviour among their pupils and 10% referenced the

334 impact that addressing online misogyny had over their well-being, time or capacity to teach.

335 8% of primary school teachers referenced being disrespected by their pupils. All of the primary

336 school teachers who mentioned being disrespected by their pupils identified as female.   See

337 Table 3 for example responses.

338   An overall majority of primary school teachers (61%) reported that the influence of

339   online misogyny over their pupils did not affect them personally. 4% of primary school

340   teachers gave responses that were too vague to classify.

341

School type	Coding category	Example responses
Secondary	Witnessing and challenging inappropriate behaviour	On a weekly basis I am called to try and sort out that type of situation. They happen out of schools but the consequences reach the classroom. Most common is girls being sexualized and called sluts or other derogatory terms. im just left gobsmacked by the attitude, they also dont believe that what they say or how they act is problematic, which is the problem!
	Negative impact on well-being	I am always affected by any issue which I deal with when unacceptable comments which have been made, usually after watching misogynistic material online. It causes great upset to the victim and it is frustrating to see previously pleasant male pupil's being brainwashed. As a gay person I am very aware of the language used - the word "GAY" is often used to denote negative qualities. I also feel sometimes an underlying threat that if I discipline a boy at the school he could turn around and claim I had touched him inappropriately etc etc It can be quite demoralising to see the behaviour of some students that can get so affected by what they watch online, even if you spoken to them about what they're watching, and the implications of this.
	Being disrespected by pupils	Students have made comments that my role as a teacher was not important as I was a women, and that I should be at home instead. I have had pupils tell me that they do not respect me as I am a woman and do not need to listen to things I say. Yes, my male students have no respect for female teachers. They would not respond to any of my requests and only quieted down when a male teacher was present. They are well aware of famous male figures online with misogynistic views and I feel that they try to emulate their behaviours at school A couple of boys have laughed at me when I have given instructions and ignored me followed by comments such as "Why don't you shut up and make me a sandwich".
Primary	Witnessing and challenging inappropriate behaviour	Students regularly come to me and complain about the way they are spoken about by others in the school setting. For example, one student was labelled a 'whore' on a whatsapp group. The girls were very upset after reading comments from boys that were degrading and belittling them
	Negative impact on well-being	All of this effects us as teachers. We take on these troubles and try and protect other people's children from it. It affects me daily as I am having to deal with incidents most days that are a result of this behaviour. Just in dealing with the fallout between pupils and spending a lot of time on it rather than teaching.

| Being disrespected by pupils | I would say the child that actively ignores female teachers is extremely hard. There is no respect to his female peers either. |
| | Some boys have less respect for female teachers and can need to see you asserting authority and creating a boundary. This is quite common. |

342 **Table 3.** Example responses given by secondary school teachers and primary school teachers

343 when asked to describe the last time they were personally affected by the influence of online

344 misogyny over their pupils.

345

346 **What can and should be done to tackle the influence of online misogyny in schools?**

347

348 **What, if anything, is your school currently doing to tackle the influence of online**

349 **misogyny on pupils?**

350 **Secondary school teachers**

351 A minority of teachers reported that their school was directly tackling the influence of online

352 misogyny over their pupils. 30% of teachers reported that their school sought to teach their

353 pupils about stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination more broadly or about misogyny

354 specifically. Among those teachers who referenced teaching their pupils about misogyny,

355 several mentioned specific content related to misogynistic influencers like Andrew Tate. It thus

356 appears that, despite serious concerns about the ways in which online misogyny is influencing

357 the behaviour and experiences of secondary school pupils, dedicated classes seeking to help

358 children critically reflect on misogynistic content are relatively rare.

359 Other teachers reported that their school engaged their pupils with conceptually related

360 topics that could plausibly help mitigate the influence of misogynistic influencers. 11% of

361 teachers referenced classes designed to teach pupils values such as respect, empathy, and

362 fairness. 4% of teachers reported that their school sought to highlight positive male and/or

363 female role models for their pupils. 15% of teachers referenced classes designed to teach pupils

364 how to stay safe online including classes about misinformation.

Rather than referencing the content of classes and conversations with pupils, other teachers referenced discipline. 15% of teachers described the ways in which their school addressed the behaviour of pupils who used misogynistic language or acted in a misogynistic way. Whereas some teachers reported that their school focused on strict discipline and a 'zero-tolerance' policy, other teachers referenced the concept of 'restorative justice' and engaging in dialogue with students who expressed problematic views.

A small minority of teachers (8%) referenced that staff had received training related to online misogyny. This training included team discussions, workshops on online misogyny, and the distribution of information about online influencers such as Andrew Tate to staff.

8% of teachers reported that their school sought to communicate with parents about online misogyny. Some teachers reported that their schools communicated with all parents about this issue, for example in the form of regular bulletins. Other teachers reported that their school communicated with parents when their children engaged in problematic behaviour. 4% of teachers reported that their school limited access to the internet in school in part to limit engagement with online misogyny.

11% of teachers reported that they were not aware of any action their school was taking to combat the influence of online misogyny on their pupils.

Finally, 18% of teachers gave responses that were too vague to classify into any of these coding categories. For example, simply saying "in assemblies" or "running lessons to highlight these issues" without specifying further.

Primary school teachers

A minority of primary school teachers, 14%, reported that their school taught their pupils about discrimination and/or sought to tackle the influence of online misogyny specifically.

389   Some teachers referenced teaching related topics that could plausibly be a protective

390   influence against online misogyny in a broad sense. 23% of teachers referenced that their

391   school sought to teach their pupils positive values such as empathy, fairness and respect. 4%

392   of teachers referenced that their school sought to highlight positive role models. Whereas some

393   teachers emphasised the importance of male role models, others emphasised the importance of

394   female role models. The most common response among primary school teachers related to

395   teaching pupils how to stay safe online, which was mentioned by 40% of participants.

396   Rather than focusing exclusively on the content of classes and conversations with

397   pupils, some teachers referenced discipline. 9% of primary school teachers referenced tackling

398   the behaviour of pupils who made misogynistic comments or acted in a misogynistic way, 4%

399   referenced limiting pupils' access to the internet as a way of tackling online misogyny and 3%

400   referenced communicating with parents as a way of tackling online misogyny.

401   18% of primary school teachers were not aware of any action their school was taking

402   to tackle the influence of online misogyny on their pupils. Finally, 11% of responses were too

403   vague to classify into a coding category.

404

405   **What sort of strategies do you think might be helpful in addressing the influence of online**

406   **misogynists in schools?**

407   Teachers offered a range of suggestions for how the influence of online misogyny could be

408   tackled in schools. Answers to this question were typically brief, rarely going into detail about

409   specific content that could be taught in classes or specific policies that would be beneficial.

410

411   **Secondary school teachers**

412   Among secondary school teachers, 29% referenced the importance of teaching children about

413   discrimination and/or the dangers of online misogyny directly, 12% emphasised the importance

of teaching pupils positive values such as fairness and respect. 13% suggested it would be valuable to highlight positive male and/or female role models, 5% referenced the importance of teaching children how to stay safe online, and 5% referenced the value of emphasising the negative consequences of misogyny for victims.

11% of secondary school teachers focused on the importance of discipline, 3% referenced supporting students so they felt comfortable disclosing problems and 3% referenced limiting pupils' access to the internet. 6% referenced the importance of communicating with parents and 6% referenced the need for staff training. 8% emphasised the need for governmental action.

28% gave responses that were too vague to classify into these categories and 1% of participants did not make any suggestions.

Primary school teachers

Among primary school teachers, 22% referenced the importance of teaching pupils about discrimination and/or online misogyny specifically. 19% highlighted the importance of teaching positive values such as fairness, 10% emphasised the importance of highlighting the negative consequences of misogyny for victims, 10% highlighted the importance of emphasising male and/or female role models and 13% emphasised the importance of teaching children how to stay safe on line.

5% wrote about the importance of discipline and 4% wrote about the importance of supporting students. 9% wrote about the need for communication with parents, 5% suggested that staff training could be beneficial and 1% referenced the importance of governmental action.

22% of primary school teachers gave suggestions to vague to classify and 1% did not make any suggestion.

Would schools benefit from further resources to help tackle the influence of online misogyny over their pupils?

The overwhelming majority of secondary school teachers (90%) expressed moderate or strong agreement with the statement "My school would benefit from receiving dedicated teaching materials to tackle the influence of online misogyny" (see Figure 2). An overall majority of primary school teachers (68%) also expressed moderate or strong agreement with this statement. A small minority, 5% of secondary school teachers and 6% of primary school teachers, did not agree at all with this statement.

Taken together, our data suggest that online misogyny is associated with substantial problems in schools and that teachers would appreciate assistance in addressing the issues it raises.
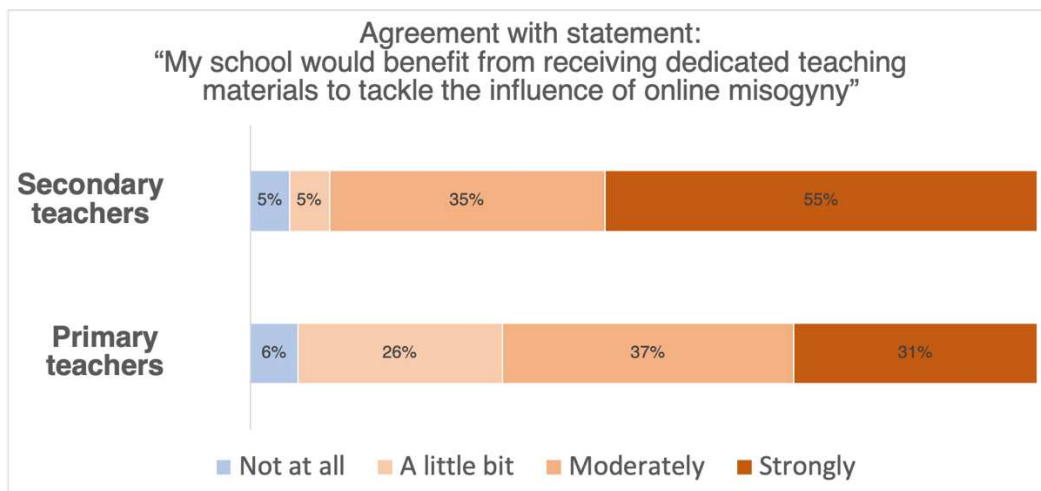
Figure 2. The extent to which secondary school teachers (above) and primary school teachers (below) agree with the statement "My school would benefit from receiving dedicated teaching materials to tackle the influence of online misogyny".

Discussion

There is increasing concern about young people's exposure to the manosphere (Ging, 2017; Manne, 2018; Stahl et al., 2022). Polling data reveals that a substantial proportion of teenage boys have consumed content created by misogynistic influencers (Hope not Hate, 2023). However, to date it is unclear how interaction with this toxic online environment might be influencing the behaviour and experiences of young people. As a first step towards answering this question, we conducted a survey with teachers.

Contribution to knowledge

76% of secondary school teachers reported that they were extremely concerned about the influence of online misogynists over their pupils. When asked to give an example of how they felt online misogynists were influencing the behaviour and experiencing of pupils in their school, secondary school teachers referenced male pupils making misogynistic comments and engaging in discriminatory behaviour towards female staff and students. One teacher reported an incident in which a male pupil said "It wouldn't be rape if nobody found out". Another teacher reported an incident in which a male pupil said that "women are too big for their boots" and that soon "women wouldn't be allowed outside". Other teachers reported cases in which male pupils were abusive towards female partners or sought to physically intimidate them. Some teachers expanded on the negative impact this had on girls' well-being, self-esteem and/or school engagement. This aligns with previous research suggesting that experiencing sexism has negative implications for women and girls' well-being and mental health (Hackett, Steptoe, & Jackson, 2019).

The majority of public discourse and academic debate, as well as polling data, has focused on the ways in which online misogyny might be influencing the behaviour and experiences of young adults and adolescents (Smith, 2023; Stahl et al., 2022). This focus is

483   understandable as children younger than 12 or 13 are not supposed to have social media

484   accounts (Ibbetson, 2020). Furthermore, influencers themselves appear to target adolescents.

485   Iggy Semmelweis, a crucial organiser behind Andrew Tate's online platform The Real World,

486   posted that the main demographic for their social media machine was 12- to 18-year-old boys

487   (Shuttleworth, 2023). Nevertheless, it is important to consider the possibility that children

488   younger than 11 may also be influenced by online misogynists. Many children younger than

489   12 have access to social media and video sharing platforms either directly or through

490   interaction with older siblings, peers, or adults (Ibbetson, 2020).

491   Our data suggest that online misogyny may be generating social problems among

492   primary school-aged children as well as adolescents. 60% of the primary school teachers we

493   sampled reported that they were extremely concerned about the influence of online misogyny

494   over their pupils. While primary school teachers report being less concerned than do secondary

495   school teachers, these results remain striking.

496   When asked how they felt online misogynists were influencing the behaviour and

497   experiences of their pupils, primary school teachers also wrote about their male pupils making

498   misogynistic comments and engaging in discriminatory behaviour towards female pupils and

499   staff. For example, one primary school teacher reported an incident in which a male pupil said

500   that it is "ok to hurt women because Andrew Tate does it'", while another reported a male

501   primary school pupil telling a female pupil that "she belonged in the kitchen". Another teacher

502   reported that their male pupils "touch girls non-consensually" and "do not understand why this

503   is inappropriate". Some primary school teachers also expanded upon the impact this had on

504   female pupils. For example, one teacher wrote that "the majority of the girls in my class have

505   been worried about coming to school due to what the boys may say or do to them". These

506   results suggest that future intervention efforts need to consider action among primary school-

507   aged children as well as secondary school-aged children.

508   In addition to asking about how online misogyny was influencing the behaviour and

509   experiences of pupils, we also asked teachers what, if anything, their schools were currently

510   doing to combat the influence of online misogyny and what they thought their schools ought

511   to do. Approaches varied widely across schools. Among the secondary school teachers we

512   surveyed, 30% reported that their school explicitly taught its pupils about online misogyny or

513   discrimination more broadly. Among primary school teachers we surveyed, 14% reported that

514   their school explicitly taught its pupils about online misogyny or discrimination. Other teachers

515   reported that their school taught related content that could plausibly help pupils to critically

516   engage with the manosphere, for example offering classes on online safety or teaching positive

517   values such as empathy, respect and kindness. It would be valuable for future to research to

518   systematically investigate the prevalence of sexist behaviours among school pupils and how it

519   varies with the particular approach to teaching discrimination adopted by schools.

520   The teachers we surveyed suggested a range of possible approaches to tackling online

521   misogyny. These included talking directly to children about misogyny and discrimination as

522   well as focusing on related topics such as online safety and empathy. Other teachers referenced

523   further strategies that could be incorporated into whole school approaches including limiting

524   pupils' access to smart phones/the internet, communicating with parents and creating an

525   atmosphere in which children feel comfortable disclosing experiences of discrimination. While

526   teachers' responses to this question rarely contained extensive details, they may nevertheless

527   help inform the development of interventions that can be empirically tested in future research.

528   Research on anti-bias education suggests that it is crucial to discuss discrimination and

529   its negative consequences with children (Perry, Skinner-Dorkenoo, Abaied, & Water, 2022).

530   Multiple interventions to tackle sexism in schools have been developed by researchers

531   including programmes designed to ensure female representation across the curriculum and

532   encourage girls into STEM subjects (Cheryan, Master, & Meltzoff, 2015; Fenn, 2022). It may

533   be valuable to supplement the most effective among these approaches with a more specific

534   focus on the discriminatory messaging of the manosphere. Indeed, 90% of secondary school

535   teachers and 68% of primary school teachers reported that they felt their school would benefit

536   from dedicated teaching materials on online misogyny.

537   Taken together, these data may help us to understand female experiences in school.

538   There is growing recognition that poor behaviour in schools is disproportionately affecting

539   female pupils and female teachers. Studies from regulatory bodies, charitable organisations,

540   and academics suggest that sexist harassment of girls is on the rise and is becoming normalised

541   among school-aged boys (Ofsted, 2021). In a 2021 Ofsted review of sexual abuse and

542   harassment in schools and colleges in the UK, 92% of girls reported that they or their peers had

543   been victims of sexist name-calling on a frequent basis. Nearly 90% reported that they had

544   received unsolicited and unwanted explicit sexual images (Ofsted, 2021).

545

546   **Study limitations**

547   It is important to acknowledge, however, that our data do not allow for strong causal

548   inference. We asked teachers to tell us about the ways in which they felt online misogynists

549   were influencing the behaviour and experiences of their pupils. However, the causal

550   relationships between viewing online misogyny and holding misogynistic attitudes often

551   remains opaque. Any given example of sexist behaviour, for example disrespecting a female

552   teacher, may be the product of multiple influences including conversations with parents and

553   peers. However, it is noteworthy that some teachers reported that pupils directly discuss

554   misogynistic influencers and use the names of these influencers to justify harassment or

555   derogation of women. For example, one teacher reported that they had "heard hero worship of

556   Andrew Tate" and another reported that "there are regular mentions of figures such as Andrew

557   Tate, and mimicking language and behaviour that students have seen online from influencers

558 such as him". Other pupils directly refer to social media sites and video sharing platforms

559 when engaging in discriminatory and/or disrespectful behaviour. For example, one teacher

560 described boys telling girls "You wouldn't make much money on Only Fans". These responses

561 strongly suggest that online misogyny is one important factor to consider when researching the

562 causal origin of sexist beliefs and behaviours.

563 　　　　When seeking to conceptualise the causal relationship between viewing online

564 misogyny and engaging in sexist behaviour, there are multiple possible pathways. One

565 possibility is that the more online misogyny male pupils view, the more misogynistic their

566 attitudes and behaviour become. This account accords with social learning views of prejudice

567 more broadly (Over & McCall, 2018) and with literature from computer science suggesting

568 that individual engagement with the manosphere appears to become more extreme over time

569 (Ribeiro et al., 2020; Ribeiro et al, 2021). Another possibility is that individuals already

570 inclined towards misogynistic viewpoints are drawn to the manosphere. Rather than leading to

571 an increase in misogynistic attitudes, misogynistic influencers may offer young people a new

572 means by which to express their discriminatory views. These proposed processes are not

573 mutually exclusive and could, in principle, occur in parallel. Future longitudinal research,

574 measuring changes in pupils' sexist behaviours and engagement with online misogyny over

575 time, could help shed light on the complex causal relationships in this domain. Both possible

576 causal relationships are a cause of concern – whether online misogyny is causing increases in

577 sexism or licensing its expression, it is a problematic social trend.

578 　　　　It is important to acknowledge other limitations of our research. As we surveyed

579 teachers rather than children themselves, our findings do not allow us to speak to the question

580 of prevalence. We cannot conclude from our data how many children are engaging with

581 misogynistic influencers nor can we ascertain how frequently they are doing so. Furthermore,

582 we cannot infer the age at which, on average, misogynistic influencers first exert an influence

583 over the behaviour and experiences of children, or whether engagement is changing over time.

584 While polling data has provided some insights into exposure across age, it is crucial to develop

585 more sophisticated methods that allow us to directly assess what content young people are

586 interacting with online over time.

587

588 **Future research**

589   In the responses teachers gave to our questions, they tended to focus on the ways in

590 which male pupils who engage with online misogyny perpetrate harm against others. However,

591 it will also be important for future research to consider the ways in which online misogyny may

592 harm boys themselves. One rarely mentioned but important theme from the qualitative data we

593 collected is the ways in which online misogyny might increase discrimination against members

594 of the LGBT+ community, including against gay men and boys. For example, one male teacher

595 reported that "as a gay person I am very aware of the language used - the word "GAY" is often

596 used to denote negative qualities. I also feel sometimes an underlying threat that if I discipline

597 a boy at the school he could turn around and claim I had touched him inappropriately". The

598 impact of the manosphere on LGBT+ pupils and staff is a crucially important topic for future

599 research.

600   Another important direction for future research is the extent to which online misogyny

601 may be influencing educational attainment in boys. Our data suggest that male pupils who

602 engage with misogyny sometimes question the authority of female teachers. More broadly,

603 misogynistic influencers often seek to undermine support for traditional systems of authority

604 and academic achievement, instead advocating get rich quick schemes sometimes involving

605 sex trafficking, gambling and cryptocurrency (Das, 2022). Previous research has demonstrated

606 that girls outperform boys academically throughout the school years (Carroll, 2023). It is

607 important for future research to assess whether engagement with the manosphere is

608 exacerbating this trend over time.

609 Perhaps the most important direction for future research is to understand how to tackle

610 the influence of online misogyny over children and young people. Clearly this social problem

611 requires intervention at multiple levels. One aspect of this coordinated approach is lessons

612 designed to help children critically engage with misogynistic information they hear online or

613 from their peers. Broader forms of social change, including changes to how social media

614 companies operate, are also crucial. In principle, social media companies and video sharing

615 platforms have policies to discourage extremist content on their sites. For example, individual

616 influencers can be demonetized or even banned (Johannson et al., 2023). While misogynistic

617 influencers are sometimes censured in this way, enormous quantities of hateful content remains

618 available online and the reach of this content is often increased through recommender

619 algorithms (Baker, Ging, & Brant Andreassen, 2024). Stricter regulation is crucial.

620

621 **Conclusion**

622 Taken together, our data offer important insights into the ways in which engagement

623 with the manosphere appears to be influencing the behaviour and experiences of children in

624 schools. Teachers report that male pupils discuss misogynistic influencers with some

625 regularly and that misogynistic influencers appear to motivate discriminatory behaviour

626 towards female peers and female teachers. It is clear from this work, and from the broader

627 literature, that the influence of the manosphere over young people needs to be a crucial

628 priority for policy makers, educators and academics.

629

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