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Pupil participation: a best practice guide

December 2016

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Introduction

The report is written in response to a request for advice from the Welsh Government in the Minster's annual remit letter to Estyn 2016-2017. The report explores four characteristics of schools with strong pupil participation and identifies the contribution pupil participation can make to school improvement as well as the benefits to pupils themselves. The report includes case studies of best practice and is based on the evidence in Appendix 1.

The report is intended for the Welsh Government, governors, headteachers, senior leaders and staff in schools, local authorities and the regional consortia. It may also be of interest to those working with faith schools through diocesan authorities. It is intended to support schools in improving the extent and impact of pupil participation in their own school.

For the purposes of this report, participation is defined as pupils having their voice heard when decisions are being made that affect their education and their lives more generally, and being actively involved in that decision-making.

Background

In 2004, the Welsh Government's Participation Project ran a competition to produce a national definition of participation that would be easy to understand for adults and young people (Welsh Government, 2011). The definition that is widely used is:

"Participation means that it is my right to be involved in making decisions, planning and reviewing any action that might affect me. Having a voice, having a choice"

The basis for pupil participation is found in article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC: UNICEF UK, 1990). In article 12 of the UNCRC, it sets out the rights of children and young people to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account on any matter that affects them.

"*Every child has the right to say what they think in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously"* (UNICEF UK, 1990, p. 5).

Wales is the first country in the United Kingdom to embed the principles of the UNCRC into legislation. The Welsh Government adopted the UNCRC as the basis for policy-making for children and young people in Wales in 2004 (Welsh Assembly Government, 2004). Through the introduction of legislation with the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011, all Welsh Ministers must have due regard to the rights and obligations within the UNCRC in their day-to-day work.

In January 2004, the Welsh Government published 'Children and young people: Rights to Action' (Welsh Assembly Government, 2004b). In this report, the Welsh Government defines children and young people as 'rights bearers':

"Children and young people should be seen as young citizens, with rights and opinions to be taken into account now. They are not a species apart, to be alternately demonised and sentimentalised, nor trainee adults who do not yet have a full place in society". (Welsh Assembly Government, 2004, p. 4)

All maintained schools in Wales (other than a maintained nursery school and maintained infant school) are required to have a school council (National Assembly for Wales, 2005). The purpose of a school council is to make sure that pupil voice is well represented as a school develops and implements new policies and identifies priorities for improvement. School councils provide pupils with opportunities to discuss matters relating to their school, and to make representations to the governing body and the headteacher. A school council can also propose and take forward initiatives and projects on behalf of their peers, and be involved in strategic planning and processes such as the school development plan, governing body meetings and staff appointments. The school council must be elected democratically and meet at least six times a year.

In 2007, the Welsh Government launched the National Children and Young People Participation Standards for Wales (Appendix 2: Welsh Assembly Government, 2007). The seven standards are intended to promote the participation of children and young people in making decisions that will directly affect them. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 guidance 'Shared Purpose: Shared Future' makes specific references to the National Participation Standards for Children and Young People, whilst Annex B of the guidance for Public Service Boards sets out the expectation of adopting the National Participation Standards in working with partners, to enable children and young people to have a voice. Local authorities have been under a duty to enable the participation of children and young people since the Children and Families (Wales) Measure was passed in 2010 and statutory guidance has been in place since 2012. The National Standards for Participation have recently been refreshed in 2016 and are a guide on the best and most meaningful ways of listening and responding to the voices of children and young people, in line with Article 12 of the UNCRC.

Between 2007 and 2009, Estyn published a series of reports on children and young people's participation:

- Participation in primary schools (Estyn, 2007)
- Participation and school councils in secondary schools (Estyn, 2008)
- Inspecting participation and the National Participation Standards (Estyn, 2009)

In 2015, the Welsh Government published 'Successful Futures' (Donaldson, 2015). The report identifies four key purposes for the curriculum. The curriculum should help all children and young people to become:

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world, ready to be citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

Meaningful and purposeful pupil participation is intended to be a strong feature of the new curriculum.

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 requires local authorities to promote and facilitate participation by children and young people in decisions that might affect them (Welsh Government, 2010). It requires local authorities to:

"make such arrangements as they consider suitable to promote and facilitate participation by children in decisions of the authority which might affect them, and to publish and keep up to date information about its arrangements." (Welsh Government, 2010, p.9)

Local authorities fulfil these responsibilities through a named youth participation officer and one or more youth forums that represent the voice of young people at a local level.

Main findings

1 Pupil participation is strong in schools that have the following characteristics:

- Pupil participation and building positive relationships are an integral part of the school's **vision and ethos**. Leaders and managers have a clear strategy for promoting participation and for fostering good relationships. They support and encourage open and honest participation. Leaders create an ethos where pupils respect the rights of others and understand the importance of diversity and equality.

- There are clear **roles and structures** in place across the school to capture the views of all pupils on a wide range of issues relating to school improvement. Staff take the views of pupils seriously and act on them. Pupils, staff and governors understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to participation. Leaders can demonstrate the impact of participation on school improvement planning.

- Pupils have a breadth of **opportunities to participate** within and beyond the school to contribute to debate and influence decisions across a wide range of issues that affect them. These opportunities encourage pupils to develop the skills needed to become active citizens.

- Pupils and staff access good quality **training and continuous professional development** that is well targeted to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to have pupils' voice heard in discussions and in decision-making.

2 Where pupil participation is strong, pupils make a valuable contribution to school improvement by influencing decisions on wellbeing, learning experiences, and the quality of teaching, and by helping to identify the school's future priorities. Many schools report that pupil participation contributes to an improved school environment and ethos, and to better relationships between all in the school community.

3 There are also benefits for pupils in greater participation, including improved health and wellbeing, improved engagement and behaviour, and improvements in learning, achievements and school performance. Through their greater involvement in decision-making, pupils develop valuable personal and social skills, such as listening, communication, negotiation, prioritising, and working with others. They also gain a better understanding of the rights of other members of the school community and of the consequences of actions that affect others. Pupils are better prepared to become ethical, informed and active citizens of Wales and of the world, and attitudes towards active citizenship become more positive.

4 Nearly all schools inspected between September 2013 and July 2016 comply fully with the School Council Regulations. In almost all schools, the school council makes a worthwhile contribution towards improving the school learning environment. In these schools, pupils' views are taken into account and influence decisions on school life.

5 Estyn gathers pupils' views through a questionnaire issued before inspecting all schools, pupil referral units and non-maintained settings. Most learners feel that staff respect them and help them to understand and respect others. Most learners are encouraged to do things for themselves and to take responsibility. Many learners also feel that staff treat them fairly and with respect and that their school listens to their views and makes changes they suggest. A summary of the questionnaire findings is in Appendix 1.

Characteristics of schools with strong pupil participation

Vision and ethos

6 In highly effective schools, leaders and managers have a clear vision and whole-school strategy for promoting pupil participation across the school. They recognise that meaningful pupil participation is central to all aspects of school improvement. In these schools, pupil participation is well embedded and is an integral part of the life of the school. Leaders create an ethos where pupils and staff respect the needs and rights of others and develop an understanding of the impact of their actions when making decisions. In these schools, there is a clear commitment to inclusion and embracing diversity and equality.

7 A few schools surveyed are recognised as 'rights respecting schools'. The Rights Respecting Schools Award focuses on children's rights in schools and takes a whole-school approach to child rights education. This includes learning about rights and learning from rights. These schools comment that learning about rights and working towards the award enable pupils to make informed decisions and to grow into confident, active and empowered citizens.

8 At Hafod Primary School, the school has developed an inclusive ethos where pupils' rights are respected. Leaders, staff and pupils understand that their rights are only realised if everyone learns to respect each other and understand that 'their rights are everybody's rights'. Hafod Primary School's approach to respecting rights has been judged as excellent in its most recent inspection. The school regularly shares its practice with other schools locally and presents at regional and national school improvement conferences.

Case study 1: Hafod Primary School

An inclusive ethos and culture promotes effective pupil participation in decision-making and means that pupils' views influence the strategic direction of the school. On the school's website, there is a wide range of information including a helpful video made by pupils about participation work within the school:
http://www.hafodprimary.co.uk/

Context

Hafod Primary School serves a former industrial area close to Swansea city centre. The school is located in a Communities First area, and most pupils live within the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. There are 233 pupils on roll, aged between 3 and 11 years. Around 30% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This figure is higher than the national average of 19%.

Just over two-fifths of the pupils speak English as an additional language. There are 15 different languages spoken by pupils, the most common of which is Sylheti. A very few pupils speak some Welsh at home.

Culture and ethos

Leaders at all levels at Hafod Primary School promote an inclusive and caring ethos where everyone is valued. The way in which the school develops pupils' understanding of their rights and responsibilities permeates every aspect of school life. As a result, pupils share their understanding about rights and responsibilities with their families in the local community and with schools across Swansea.

There is a very strong emphasis on celebrating difference and diversity through the curriculum, assemblies and the very colourful displays, which celebrate and enhance pupils' learning. All pupils have equal access to the life and work of the school and leaders achieve this through clear policies, which show how the school engages pupils and the local community. Teachers and support staff promote the respect of each individual particularly well.

Action

The school has an innovative range of pupil voice groups such as the 'caring crew', the 'health and safety squad', the rights respecting group and the pupil participation group. Each committee has its own job descriptions and application forms.

All pupils experience regular opportunities to influence decision-making at the school. For example, every Thursday, representatives from the various pupil voice groups take suggestion boxes around the school ready for their meetings on the Friday. Group members then feed back to the rest of the school in the 'golden assembly' on Friday afternoons.

Every pupil in Year 6 is directly involved in a pupil participation group. As active members of the groups, older pupils contribute very effectively to decision-making and help to set the strategic direction of the school.

As a result, nearly all pupils are confident that the school listens to their views. These opportunities develop pupils' self-confidence, self-esteem and speaking and listening skills.

Pupils take an active part in the school's monitoring cycle and support the senior management team in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

Members of the pupil participation group conduct joint lesson observations with staff and interview pupils. They identity strengths and areas for development and discuss these confidently with staff during feedback.

These pupils share the outcomes from the lesson observations with other pupils and governors. For example, during a cycle of lesson observations, pupils highlighted the need to develop opportunities for pupils to work more independently. Pupils write their own improvement plan in response to

development areas that they identify and the governing body regularly monitors this. Pupils also evaluate the school development plan, contribute to policy development and produce a pupil prospectus for prospective new pupils.

Members of the pupil voice groups attend the first part of the termly governing body meeting and give presentations on their reviews. As a result, governing body members are well informed of pupils' views on the quality of their learning experiences at Hafod Primary School.

Outcomes

The school's values and rights-based approach to education has enabled it to provide a socially inclusive and rewarding school experience. The impact on individual pupils is that many pupils are highly motivated and take a greater responsibility for their own behaviour and learning.

Nearly all pupils value themselves, others and their environment. They have a thorough knowledge and understanding of their own rights and a respect for the rights of others.

Over time, nearly all pupils develop a greater sense of belonging to their school. As a result, whole-school attendance has improved and there have been no permanent or fixed-term exclusions for over three years. Almost all pupils enjoy their learning and sustain their concentration in lessons particularly well. Many pupils in key stage 2 speak confidently, for example when representing their peers on one of the pupil voice groups.

As a result of the focus on pupils' rights and wellbeing, behaviour around school and in lessons is excellent. Pupils' attendance has improved significantly from low baselines, and has been in the top 25% for the past three years, when compared with that of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals.

Leaders have successfully reduced levels of persistent absenteeism, which are now very low. The local authority has shared this work with other schools, as an example of best practice.

The focus has also had a valuable impact on pupil outcomes. In key stage 2, at the expected level 4, pupils' performance in all subjects shows an improving trend. Pupils' performance in 2014 placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools for the core subject indicator, English, mathematics and science. In the Foundation Phase, pupils eligible for free school meals perform less well than their peers, but, by the end of key stage 2, these pupils perform as well as, and often better than, their peers.

9 In nearly all the schools surveyed, staff make sure that pupils' views contribute to the development of school policies. For example, at Llanmiloe Community Primary School, pupils contribute extensively to the development of the behaviour and anti-bullying policies. Through meaningful consultation and discussions, the school

council makes sure that all pupils are clear about the definition of bullying and holds workshops at school assemblies. The policy contains guidance in child-friendly language on how to recognise bullying behaviour, whom to report problems to, and the best way to create a school free from bullying.

10 Members of the school council discuss the anti-bullying policy with governors. Staff and pupils are confident that there has been a positive impact on the safety and happiness of pupils. Over the past two years, there have been no incidents of bullying or related behaviours. You can read the full case study on our website: https://www.estyn.gov.wales/best-practice/involving-pupils-school-policies

11 In many of the schools surveyed, pupils are actively involved in making decisions across a broad range of issues such as their learning experiences, teaching, and identifying priorities for improvement. Pupils work with teachers to plan their curriculum and evaluate lessons alongside senior leaders. This helps school leaders to make sure that pupils' learning experiences are meaningful and relevant.

12 Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi has successfully demonstrated its inclusive ethos and the value it places on pupil voice through the activities of the school council and a range of effective focus groups. The school council and focus groups work closely with the headteacher and the senior leadership team to improve the quality of provision and wellbeing at the school. The school's policies on attendance, anti-bullying and behaviour are shared with other schools across the region. Wellbeing is judged as excellent in the school's most recent inspection. The impact of pupil participation is judged as sector-leading practice.

Case study 2: Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi

Pupils have a positive impact on improving the quality of marking and assessment in their school.

Context

Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi is a naturally bilingual school for pupils aged between 11 and 18 years, maintained by Ceredigion local authority. The school is situated in the coastal town of Cardigan and admits pupils from a wide rural catchment area. There are 586 pupils on roll and 97 students in the sixth form.

Almost 20% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is slightly higher than the national average of 17.1%. Around 13% of the school's pupils live in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. The school has a special education unit called Canolfan Seren Teifi.

Forty per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs (SEN) register, and 1.6% of pupils have a statement of SEN. These figures are considerably higher than the national averages. Thirty-two per cent of pupils come from homes in which Welsh is the main language. However, 51% of pupils speak Welsh as a first language or to an equivalent standard. A very few pupils speak English as an additional language.

Culture and ethos

The headteacher communicates a clear and well-understood vision about improving the school to staff, pupils, governors and parents. The school is an inclusive community, and has a very supportive and caring ethos. It has a strong culture of celebrating diversity. All pupils, whatever their needs and backgrounds, are encouraged to succeed in line with the school's mission statement, 'Every pupil will succeed'.

Action

The school council makes a significant contribution to school improvement at Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi. The headteacher and senior leaders also work with focus groups on specific issues that arise, such as the quality of the school environment, standards of wellbeing, the consistency of marking and assessment and target-setting.

Members of the school council carry out work to raise awareness of all types of bullying and to promote a "zero tolerance" policy. Pupils lead whole school assemblies, work with senior staff to develop the anti-bullying policy and protocols, and develop anti-bullying information leaflets for pupils and parents. This has a significant impact on improving the pupils' understanding of different types of bullying and the procedures used for dealing with it.

The school council recently undertook a teaching and learning review of marking and assessment. They collected pupils' views on the effectiveness of the marking and assessment policy. They presented their conclusions and recommendations for improvements to the senior leadership team at the end of the review. The senior leadership team accepted the recommendations, fed back to faculty leaders and included pupils in reviewing the monitoring cycle and school development plan. As a result, marking and assessment are more consistent across the school and pupils have a very thorough understanding of the assessment policy.

In addition to the in-depth review, pupils complete a whole-school survey on teaching and learning twice a year. The outcomes of the survey are analysed by senior leaders and faculty leaders and used to inform the faculty reviews, faculty self-evaluation and improvement plans. Senior leaders use the outcomes of the surveys to identify strengths within and across faculties. They share examples of good practice highlighted by pupils across faculties.

The school council conducts online surveys to gather pupil opinions, comments and feedback. For example, it developed the 'quality teacher code' by collecting pupils' views on teaching strategies and approaches. As a result, the school refined its teaching and learning model, making sure that lessons are planned to include stimulating starter activities, a brisk pace and a wide range of meaningful tasks. Pupils and staff have recently developed this work to include a 'quality pupil code'.

The school council works effectively with the governing body. The associate pupil governors attend the termly governing body meeting and every agenda includes an item dedicated to the school council. They take an active part in the recruitment of new staff. They are involved in lesson observations when appointing new staff, conduct their own interview panel and feed back to the appointing panel of governors and senior leaders.

Outcomes

The school's focus on improving pupils' wellbeing has had a significant impact on improving attendance, behaviour and outcomes across the school.

Through the school council, pupils have had a significant influence on issues such as improving the quality of marking and feedback, refining anti-bullying policies, reducing instances of bullying and improving the quality of the school uniform. Almost all pupils contribute to decisions about the school's environment and facilities, for example the development of the new gymnasium and the extensive programme of clubs and activities. Pupils' participation in decision-making is a strong feature of the school.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and nearly all have positive attitudes towards their learning. There have been no fixed term exclusions during the last 18 months and there has not been a permanent exclusion for three years. These figures compare well with local and national averages and demonstrate a significant improvement over the past three years.

Pupils' attendance is outstanding. Attendance rates over the last four years have placed the school in the top 25% of similar schools based on eligibility for free school meals and above modelled outcomes. The attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals has increased year on year and is consistently well above that of the same group of pupils in similar schools and nationally.

13 In nearly all of the schools surveyed, pupil participation has improved relationships within the school and helped pupils to develop the skills and the knowledge needed to become active citizens. Staff and pupils have adopted a positive attitude towards pupil participation and understand the benefits it brings to pupils and to the school. In these schools, there is an ethos of mutual respect and trust.

14 Where meaningful participation develops good working relationships between staff and pupils, pupils gain opportunities to develop essential life skills such as problem-solving, negotiation and decision-making. By developing their skills and knowledge of democracy, pupils develop a greater understanding of the impact of their actions when making choices on behalf of others.

15 In many of the schools surveyed, increased opportunities for participation improve pupil to pupil relationships. In highly effective schools, adults role model positive relationships and pupils are respected at all times. There is a clear expectation that pupils must respect and support others in turn.

16 Many pupils in these schools experience an increased engagement with their school community and, as a result, their school attendance, behaviour, achievement and attainment improve. Engaging pupils in meaningful discussions also develops their self-confidence and self-esteem. It strengthens their belief in their ability to create and influence change. By contributing to decision-making and improvements within their school community, pupils develop a better understanding and a positive attitude towards active citizenship.

17 At Ysgol Penmaes special school, pupils, staff, senior leaders and governors work together to identify the school's strengths and identify areas for improvement. All pupils are closely involved in the school's self-evaluation processes. Through this work, all pupils develop a better understanding of the school's priorities and develop a strong ownership of the school improvement agenda. This builds positive relationships across the school community. During the last inspection, the work of the school council was judged to be sector leading.

Case study 3: Ysgol Penmaes

Pupils contribute enthusiastically to developing the strategic direction of the school.

Context

Ysgol Penmaes is a day special school that provides education for 110 pupils aged from 2 to 19 years. The school is situated in Brecon and maintained by Powys local authority.

The school caters for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties. These include severe learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and profound and multiple learning difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. No pupil has been disapplied from the National Curriculum.

Very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and very few pupils speak Welsh as their first language at home. Approximately 31% of pupils receive free school meals and 10% are looked after by the local authority.

Culture and ethos

The school's mission statement is 'Together Everyone Achieves More'. It promotes the mission well and this sets the standards for inclusivity at Ysgol Penmaes. There is a highly supportive and positive ethos throughout the school with a strong focus on equality and diversity. The school is effective in removing barriers to learning and participation.

Action

Ysgol Penmaes focuses on developing varied participation opportunities for the whole-school community and recognises that this has a positive impact

on relationships throughout the school. They have developed structures and support to allow all pupils to contribute to the school improvement journey.

At Ysgol Penmaes, there are many different ways for pupils to communicate their views and participate in decision-making. Where communication is an identified difficulty for individuals or groups of pupils, the school develops strategies to make sure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to participate and influence decisions. As a result, staff develop a better understanding of their pupils' needs and interests. Pupils feel confident that staff listen to them and their views are valued.

There is an effective school council. Members of the school council are elected by their peers and undertake their roles enthusiastically. The school council has a budget to buy resources during the year. This develops pupils' understanding of the need to prioritise and budget as part of their role as council members. The school council discusses a wide range of issues such as the school environment, the quality of the school canteen, learning experiences and self-evaluation. As part of its work, it has produced a very useful and accessible prospectus for prospective pupils.

The senior leaders introduced a self-evaluation day for pupils, staff and governors to make sure that all pupils contribute to the school's strategic direction. During the self-evaluation day, staff and school leaders work with pupils to gain their views on all aspects of the school such as learning and teaching, the quality of care, school buildings and quality of the outdoor learning environment. The school has introduced a range of strategies to make sure that all pupils contribute actively to the process. Pupils who are more able evaluate the quality of provision at the school confidently by using symbols and signs. Others work alongside staff to share their views.

Members of the governing body attend the self-evaluation day and gain an extensive understanding of the pupils' views on provision and areas for development. The headteacher collates the information and it informs the school development plan. For example, pupils identified that they enjoyed the opportunity to learn in the outdoors and wanted more opportunities to do so on a regular basis. As a result, the school invested in a selection of outdoor equipment and improved the outdoor learning environment for pupils to enjoy their lessons there, where appropriate.

The self-evaluation day makes sure that all pupils, staff and governors have an opportunity to work together to identify the school's strengths, areas that require improvement and priorities for the school development plan.

Outcomes

At Ysgol Penmaes, relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils and pupils are strong. There is a clear sense of mutual trust and empathy for every member of the school community. Most pupils develop a thorough understanding of their peers' needs and choices. This is reflected

in the decisions that pupils make as part of the school council and participation groups.

Nearly all pupils feel that the school listens to them and that their views and opinions are valued. They have a positive attitude towards their learning and the school. As a result, it has a positive impact on standards across the school. The behaviour of nearly all pupils, in lessons and during the school day, is exemplary. There have been no permanent exclusions from the school for a number of years and the number of fixed term exclusions is extremely low. As a result, with very few exceptions, pupils, over time, make good progress.

Pupils gain a wide range of recognised accreditation at the end of key stage 4. All pupils enrolled on the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme achieved the bronze and silver level and nearly all achieved the gold award. This is a significant achievement.

The number of leavers not engaged in education, employment or training has been consistently low for a number of years.

The school engages pupils regularly in debate about their own learning. This develops pupils' listening and communication skills successfully. Pupils also improve their understanding of the impact of their decisions on others in the school community. For example, members of the school council identified the need to improve communication further between themselves and the wider pupil population and put an action plan in place to address this issue. School leaders, governors and members of the school council monitor the plan regularly.

Roles and structures

18 Nearly all schools inspected between September 2013 and July 2016 fully comply with the school council regulations. In almost all schools, the school council makes a worthwhile contribution towards improving the school learning environment. In these schools, pupils' views are taken into account regularly and influence decisions such as changes to the school uniform and improvements to school facilities, such as the canteen and toilets.

19 Where pupil participation is most effective, schools have comprehensive structures in place to make sure that they capture the opinion and views of the whole school community. In these schools, pupils, staff, senior leaders and governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities in ensuring that participation opportunities are meaningful and purposeful for all. In these schools, there are democratic systems to elect members of the school council, they meet at least six times a year and many schools have named associate pupil governors.

20 In the majority of schools surveyed, there are effective strategies to make sure that all pupils have the opportunity to have their voice heard and participate in decision-making about matters that are important for them. For example, pupils with additional learning needs and vulnerable groups have appropriate support and equal opportunities to contribute.

21 The highly-effective structures make sure that pupils' opinions are encouraged, listened to, respected and valued. In these schools, there is a senior member of staff with clear responsibility for co-ordinating participation opportunities. The staff take this responsibility seriously and provide strong leadership and co-ordination. As a result, pupils receive timely and appropriate feedback on their suggestions and recommendations. Pupils develop a growing understanding of and respect for whole-school policies, as they have been a central part of the decision-making.

22 These senior leaders make sure that there are enough curriculum time and resources made available for pupils to participate effectively. In these schools, the school council and focus groups meet formally during curriculum time and avoid lunch and break times.

23 The governing body has an important role in supporting schools to develop pupil participation. In many of the schools surveyed, there is a close link between the governing body and the pupil voice groups. In the most effective schools surveyed, the governing body meets regularly with members of the school council to evaluate the quality of provision and identify priorities for improvement. In these schools, pupils also make regular presentations to the governing body and feed back on their work, such as lesson observations and questionnaires. As a result, governors have an excellent understanding of provision and areas of improvement that are important to the pupils.

24 In a very few schools, the governing body identifies a designated governor for pupil participation. They attend school council meetings as required and make sure that pupil voice is included in every governing body meeting. This key role helps to maintain effective links between the governing body and the pupil voice groups.

25 In a minority of secondary schools surveyed, the role of the associate pupil governors is well established. School councils in secondary schools usually nominate two pupils from Year 11 to Year 13 from among their membership to sit on the governing body. Associate pupil governors provide the pupil perspective to decisions made about school life and school improvement.

26 At Pontarddulais Comprehensive School, the role of the associate pupil governors is a strong feature. The two elected associate pupil governors represent the views of the pupils on the governing body. They attend full governing body and subcommittee meetings regularly. The associate pupil governors meet with the leadership team to discuss pupil outcomes annually. They also work alongside the leadership team to identify priority areas and contribute to the school development plan. As a result, pupil voice is central in all decisions made by the leadership team and the governing body. Pupils directly influence changes in the school. The governing body has a clear understanding of pupils' views and the work of the school. In March 2016, the school was judged excellent in all inspection quality indicators, key questions and overall judgments. You can read the full inspection report on our website: https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Pontarddulais%20Comprehensive%20School.pdf

27 At Cefn Hengoed Community School, almost all pupils play a full part in the school community and participate in decision-making. Pupils engage in discussions that

influence their learning pathway, key stage 4 options and schemes of work. In October 2015, the school was judged excellent in all inspection quality indicators, key questions and overall judgments.

Case study 4: Cefn Hengoed Community School

Pupils influence what they learn by working with staff to improve the curriculum.

Context

Cefn Hengoed Community School is an 11 to 16 secondary school on the eastside of Swansea with 644 pupils on roll. Around 40% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, well above the national average of 17.1%.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is around 39%, higher than the national average of 25%. About 5% of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, double the national average for Wales as a whole. The school has a local authority specialist teaching facility for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and these pupils are included on the school roll.

Culture and ethos

The headteacher demonstrates a powerful commitment to developing the school as an outstanding learning community and her leadership drives its success. Their strong committed leadership has resulted in sustained improvements in pupils' performance and wellbeing.

The school has an exceptionally caring and inclusive ethos based on mutual respect and strong relationships between pupils, staff and the community. The school motto, 'If you believe it you can achieve', is woven into all aspects of the school's work, and is reflected in the high expectations and caring attitude demonstrated by staff. The high level of trust and respect between staff and pupils promotes pupils' learning and their social development, and is a positive feature of school life. The role of pupils in influencing decision-making is well embedded across the school and is a priority shared by leaders, staff and pupils.

Action

The school has developed a wide range of strategies to involve pupils in decision-making that directly impacts their learning experiences and wellbeing.

The school has appointed a member of staff responsible for co-ordinating pupil voice across the school. The member of staff is responsible for making sure that there is effective communication between the participation groups, the senior leadership team and the governing body.

A strong feature at the school is the introduction of ‘pupil curriculum leaders’. Pupil curriculum leaders meet with teachers to evaluate programmes of study, and make decisions about their learning and the choice of strategies and enrichment activities that underpin success.

Pupil voice is central to the work of the humanities faculty at the school. The faculty has pupil curriculum leaders who have been successfully appointed following a thorough interview process. The pupil curriculum leaders meet with faculty staff every half term to feed back on issues relating to curriculum, teaching and learning. They also contribute to developing schemes of work and influence topics of study within the faculty. For example, the faculty introduced an independent project unit following feedback from the pupil curriculum leaders.

The faculty has shared this practice across the school and with other local schools through whole-school in-service training. The faculty also offers training for faculty staff and pupils before they undertake their role as curriculum leaders.

In the physical education department, pupil curriculum leaders are appointed from team captains, individuals appointed by the pupils and ‘endeavour pupils’ (those showing exceptional commitment in the subject). Curriculum leaders influence curriculum options and extra-curricular opportunities in the subject. For example, the department has extended its dance provision following feedback from pupils.

Pupils from Cefn Hengoed Community School regularly contribute to local authority consultation forums to inform budget priorities and curriculum options for 14 to 19-year-olds.

Outcomes

Nearly all pupils feel that the school listens to them. Almost all pupils have an exceptional sense of belonging to the school community and a high level of awareness of their own wellbeing and the impact of their behaviour on others. Pupils value the opportunities to influence choice and provision and actively engage in the wide range of participation opportunities on offer at the school.

As a result, there has been a very positive impact on standards across the school. Over the last three years, there has been a strong trend of improvement in attendance and a general reduction in the rate of fixed-term exclusions.

Improved attendance, behaviour and engagement in learning have contributed significantly to the strong trend of improvement in all performance indicators at key stage 3 and key stage 4 over the last three years.

Since introducing the pupil curriculum leaders, many faculties, for example

in humanities and physical education, have experienced an increase in the number of pupils opting for GCSE courses at the end of key stage 3.

For the last three years, no pupil left the school without a recognised qualification. At the end of Year 11, most pupils remain in full-time education.

Opportunities to participate

28 A report by Welsh Government 'Pupil Participation – a good practice guide' (2011) states that for pupil participation to be meaningful and effective it should happen in a variety of ways and at different levels at school. For example:

- as part of teaching and learning
- by involving pupils in school self-evaluation and assessment
- using the National Children and Young People's Participation Standards for Wales
- through consultation mechanisms such as questionnaires, surveys, circle-time, focus groups, and suggestion boxes
- through participatory and representative groups such as the school council, eco committee, healthy schools and peer mentors
- by pupil involvement with the governing body, and in staff appointments
- by pupil involvement in planning, reviewing and implementing policies and procedures, including the school improvement plan
- by pupil involvement in budgeting and decisions on how money is allocated and spent
- having structures in place so that all pupils can be involved in decision-making, including those with additional learning needs

29 Effective schools have an ethos where pupil participation is valued highly in all areas of work. Participation in schools can take many forms including informal discussions, pupil evaluations, suggestion boxes, pupil surveys, focus groups and the school council. In these schools, leaders make sure that pupils receive timely and appropriate feedback on their views and suggestions. As a result, pupils know that their views are valued and acted upon.

30 In the majority of schools surveyed, pupils regularly contribute to youth forums and local authority consultations on council priorities. While contributing to wider community forums, many pupils develop a greater sense of social responsibility and a heightened sense of awareness of local and global issues. As a result, pupils develop a good understanding of the needs and rights of others within their local community. Pupils gain valuable insights into school and community life and their own needs and circumstances. Pupil feedback is a useful 'health check' for policies and practice. Where pupils face specific challenges or personal difficulties, they are better placed to identify solutions if given the opportunity and support to do so.

31 Senior pupils from Treorchy Comprehensive School attend local authority consultation events to discuss proposed service changes and consult on council budget priorities. As a result, the local authority has recently established a Youth Forum for Rhondda Cynon Taf. The aim of the Youth Forum is to develop Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's engagement and to encourage the involvement and participation of young people in the engagement process.

32 The Active Involvement Team (AIT) in Cardiff County Council was commissioned to engage pupils from a range of schools in Cardiff to contribute to the development of the Educational Vision 2020 (Cardiff County Council, 2016). Using a wide range of interactive sessions AIT worked with 236 pupils from five primary and secondary schools across the city. Workshops were run in a classroom, school hall or the youth service bus. The workshops asked the pupils' views on their education experiences in Cardiff. During the day, pupils discussed their views on what Cardiff schools should look like in 2020. They also discussed what makes a good teacher and what puts pressure on children and young people in Cardiff. The findings were fed back to the Director of Education and were used to develop a pupil charter that is included in the council's strategic vision.

33 At Wolfscastle Community Primary School, members of the school council are working closely with families, schools in the local cluster, and the local authority to share successful strategies that involve maintaining good attendance. This close working has led to:

- better relationships with parents and the wider community
- valuing of excellent attendance by parents and the community
- improvements in attendance in other local cluster schools
- better understanding among pupils of issues relating to them in the school and the wider community

34 In the recent inspection, wellbeing was judged as excellent at Wolfscastle Community Primary School. In the case study below, we have drawn out the elements of practice relating to effective participation. You can read the full case study on our website: https://www.estyn.gov.wales/best-practice/engaging-pupils-and-parents-improve-pupil-attendance

Case study 5: Wolfscastle Community Primary School

Engaging with pupils and parents to improve pupil attendance.

Context

Wolfscastle Community Primary School serves the rural village of Wolfscastle and the surrounding area. It is maintained by Pembrokeshire local authority. At present, there are 42 pupils on roll, which includes seven part-time nursery age pupils. Over the last three years, about 9% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals, which is considerably lower than the average for Wales. Forty-three per cent of pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. About 21% of pupils are on the additional learning needs register.

Culture and ethos

The school is a welcoming community that encourages high moral standards and good behaviour among pupils. Staff foster a caring ethos that means that pupils have equal access to all aspects of school life. Staff

promote care and respect between pupils and adults and between pupils and their peers effectively. The school mission statement is '*to enable each child to develop as a whole person in mind, spirit and body, and for all persons involved in the school to be part of a happy, healthy, safe and caring community'*. It is well understood by all at the school.

Action

The school council works enthusiastically with the headteacher and the governing body to improve wellbeing across the school. A key priority for the school council has been to develop pupils' understanding of the importance of attending school. It has focused on encouraging responsibility for good attendance among pupils.

Attendance is a regular item on the school council agenda. The headteacher works with the school council to analyse school attendance data and identify trends in absenteeism. The school council used questionnaires with all pupils to discover their viewpoints in relation to attendance. Members of the school council monitor their peers' attitude towards their personal attendance in the form of a questionnaire twice a year. As a result, the school has introduced a wide range of strategies to improve and sustain good attendance at the school. For example, they celebrate pupils' successes on a termly basis by using reward systems. This has a positive effect on pupils' wellbeing, behaviour and attitude to learning.

As a result of analysing the outcomes of questionnaires and the annual survey, the school council suggested changes and adapted the attendance policy several times during the last year. It is also actively involved in developing the annual attendance action plan. Involving pupils makes sure that they have ownership of the policy and areas for improvement in the school. In order to gain parents' interest and support, the school council has produced a helpful information sheet about the importance of good attendance.

The school council makes regular presentations to the governing body highlighting the importance of good attendance. These presentations make sure that attendance remains a priority for the school.

Outcomes

Pupils' attendance levels are excellent. The school's attendance percentage has placed it consistently in the top 25% in comparison with similar schools based on free-school-meal benchmarks. Pupils have a full understanding of the importance of attending school. The school council has produced a pamphlet to encourage and maintain high attendance and has shared it with other schools in the catchment area. This has a positive effect on attendance at Wolfscastle School along with attendance at other schools.

Improving and sustaining attendance has contributed significantly to most pupils making good progress in their learning during their period at the school.

35 At Ysgol Gynradd Llanllechid, pupils and staff work together to identify key areas for improvement. An exceptional feature of the school council's work is its direct relationship with parents to keep them informed of their work and to gain their support. Members of the school council regularly update parents on its work through newsletters. In the most recent inspection, wellbeing was judged as excellent. The contribution of pupil voice groups to the life and work of the school was identified as a particular strength at the school.

Case study 6: Ysgol Gynradd Llanllechid

Pupils work with staff, parents and governors to evaluate the quality of provision at the school.

Context

Ysgol Gynradd Llanllechid is situated on the outskirts of the village of Rachub near the town of Bethesda. It is maintained by Gwynedd local authority. There are 261 pupils aged between 3 and 11 years on roll, including 31 part-time nursery age pupils.

Welsh is the main medium of the life and work of the school. Many pupils come from Welsh-speaking homes. About 11% are eligible for free school meals. The school has identified 19% of pupils as having additional learning needs, including a very few who have a statement of special educational needs. Very few pupils come from an ethnic minority background.

Culture and ethos

There is an inclusive, supportive and friendly ethos at Ysgol Llanllechid, in which pupils receive equal opportunities to take part in all its activities. Emphasis is placed on showing respect and courtesy to all, which leads to a safe environment that fosters care for others and tolerance. The pupils' voice is central to all learning experiences across the school.

Action

Pupil participation and the school council are co-ordinated by a member of the senior leadership team. The school council meets weekly to share ideas and discuss areas for improvement in the school.

The school actively involves pupils in all areas of school improvement and engages them regularly in evaluating the quality of provision across the school. For example, pupils have been involved in working with the physical education co-ordinator to evaluate the quality of physical education lessons. They held discussions with the co-ordinator, observed

lessons and fed back to the co-ordinator, teachers and pupils. Pupils identified excellent practice in physical education lessons and a few areas for improvement. As a result of the recommendations made by pupils, the school reviewed its policy and expectations on uniform during physical education lessons.

Members of the council have undertaken a successful campaign to improve their fellow pupils' reading routines across the school. The school council developed a questionnaire to find out more about pupils' reading habits. It analysed the outcomes carefully and identified strengths and areas to improve in pupils' reading. It fed back its findings to pupils in a whole-school assembly. It also fed back and made recommendations for improvements to the senior leadership team and the governors during a termly meeting. Senior leaders acted upon the findings, for example to develop closer links with the local library to support the reading of a few pupils across the school.

The school council also fed back its findings to parents and carers by letter to engage parents in supporting the campaign to improve reading routines across the school. Nearly all pupils understand the importance of reading regularly and many have joined the local library with support from their parents.

At Ysgol Gynradd Llanllechid, pupils contribute to the self-evaluation process by evaluating lessons and curricular areas, and helping to create policies.

Outcomes

Nearly all pupils feel that the school listens to them. Pupils respond confidently to the opportunities that they have to influence and make decisions.

Members of the school council also co-operate with staff, parents, their peers and the local community. As members of the school council, they gain personal, social and organisational skills. They also develop their personal and social skills by discussing issues of importance to them with a range of stakeholders.

Wellbeing at the school is judged as excellent and most pupils make good progress in their learning during their time at the school. They develop their independent thinking and learning skills successfully.

Training and development

36 A strong feature of the schools surveyed is their commitment to ongoing training for pupils, staff and governors. In these schools, all staff share a common understanding of the benefits of pupil participation. Pupils receive comprehensive training, giving them the skills and confidence to participate effectively. This training and encouragement support pupils to become actively involved in participation and decision-making. Although identified staff have a key role in promoting and supporting pupil participation, these schools understand that it is everyone's responsibility.

37 At Heronsbridge Special School, senior leaders recognised the need to develop pupils' skills and introduce a range of innovative strategies to make sure that participation is for all members of the school community. In June 2014, the school was judged as excellent in their inspection for current performance and prospects for improvements.

Case study 7: Heronsbridge Special School

Pupils influence what they learn by working with staff to adapt programmes of study.

Context

Heronsbridge is a local authority residential special school, maintained by Bridgend local authority. The school provides education for pupils aged 3 to 19 years. Currently there are 237 pupils on roll. Nearly all attend on a day basis.

Many of the pupils have statements of special educational needs. Pupils at the school have a range of difficulties, including profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders.

A very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Very few pupils speak Welsh as their first language at home. Currently, just over 5% pupils are looked after by the local authority. Around 40% of pupils receive free school meals. This is slightly lower than the all Wales average of 43% for maintained special schools.

Culture and ethos

The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear vision for the school that is fully understood and shared by all staff and governors. They articulate their high expectations and sustain a positive culture within the school. The school's motto is 'Together we can' and its values are independence, wellbeing, opportunity and sustainability. These inform and guide the activities of the school.

There is a supportive and positive ethos throughout the school with a strong focus on equality and diversity. The school ensures that there is equality of access to the curriculum.

Action

Pupil participation is co-ordinated by a senior member of staff responsible for wellbeing across the school. The co-ordination role means that there are effective lines of communication between the senior leadership team, governing body and the pupils. Pupils receive timely and sensitive feedback by the nominated member of staff on their suggestions and recommendations.

The school has prioritised training and support for pupils to make sure that participation opportunities are relevant for the needs and abilities of the school community. For example, a local drama company has been working with the pupils to develop their skills and understanding of participation in a sensitive and needs appropriate manner. This has developed pupils' personal and social skills and contributed to making participation more meaningful for many pupils.

Nearly all pupils evaluate their learning experiences at the end of the unit of work. The school has developed a range of effective strategies to overcome barriers to communication and make sure that all pupils have an opportunity to evaluate their own learning. These include the use of:

- gestures where pupils give a preference
- pictures or photographs that pupils can communicate through drawing their responses or pointing to the pictures
- communication systems such as the picture exchange communication systems
- written accounts

Pupils rate the work unit with support from staff using a well-understood traffic light system. A few pupils complete questionnaires tailored to their needs and many contribute by picture responses and oral questioning. Younger pupils evaluate their work and topics effectively using 'smiley faces'. Teachers collate the pupils' evaluations of their personal learning experiences at the end of term. They are analysed carefully and used to inform teachers' planning. Senior leaders refine the curriculum offer appropriately in response to the views of pupils.

Outcomes

Skilfully-organised pupil participation opportunities contribute to developing pupils' self-confidence and social skills. Over time, many pupils develop their independence and take increasing responsibility for themselves and their learning in line with their needs and ability.

Nearly all pupils are confident in communicating their needs clearly, either verbally, by signing or using a picture exchange communication system.

The curriculum plans, which pupils influence regularly, build systematically on pupils' knowledge, understanding, skills and interest. Nearly all pupils engage well in their lessons, and their behaviour in class and during unstructured times of the day is excellent.

As a result, nearly all older pupils gain a range of appropriate qualifications in accredited courses that are matched well to their abilities, needs and interests.

Appendix 1: Evidence base

The findings of the survey are based on the analysis of findings from inspections and follow up telephone interviews where good practice in pupil participation has been identified. The report considers the effectiveness of participation strategies in engaging pupils in meaningful debate and encouraging them to play an active role in decisions that affect their learning and wellbeing.

Between September 2013 and August 2016 there have been 634 primary inspections, 106 secondary inspections and 19 special school inspections. Wellbeing has been judged as excellent in 7% of these primary schools, 13% of the secondary schools and 16% of special schools. In many of these schools, attendance, behaviour, engagement in learning and life skills are strong features. In nearly all these schools, there are suitable participatory structures in place to make sure pupils have the opportunity to influence decisions that affect their learning and wellbeing.

The findings and recommendations in this report draw on analysis of 15 primary school inspections, five secondary school inspections and four special school inspections. Nine schools were followed up by a telephone interview. The sample draws on practices from all four regional consortia and takes account of socio-economic background, size of school and linguistic contexts. The report also takes into consideration guidance and good practice publications by the Welsh Government and The Children's Commissioner for Wales.

List of school inspections surveyed

Glasllwch CP school, Newport	Llanmiloe CP School, Carmarthen
St Gwladys Bargoed School, Caerphilly	Cefn Hengoed Community School, Swansea *
Hafod Primary School, Swansea *	Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi, Ceredigion *
Cwmfelinfach Primary School Caerphilly	Treorchy Comprehensive School, Rhondda Cynon Taf
Llangewydd Junior School, Bridgend	Pontarddulais Comprehensive School, Swansea
Severn Primary School, Cardiff	Ysgol Bryn Elian, Conwy
Llysfaen Primary School, Cardiff	Ysgol Penmaes, Powys *
Ysgol Melyd, Sir Ddinbych	Heronsbridge School, Bridgend *
Rhiw Dafydd Primary, Caerphilly	The Court Special School, Cardiff
Wolfscastle Community Primary School, Pembrokeshire *	St Christopher's School, Wrexham
Ysgol Gynradd Llanllechid, Gwynedd *	
Ysgol Gynradd Cae Top, Gwynedd	
Woodlands Community Primary School, Torfaen *	
Victoria Primary School, Vale of Glamorgan *	*followed up by a telephone interview

Estyn also uses a pupil questionnaire prior to each inspection. The secondary school learner questionnaire asks a number of relevant questions relating to understanding pupils' rights and pupil participation. Over 51,000 pupils have completed the questionnaire since it was introduced in September 2010. The overall outcomes for questions relating to children's rights and participation are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Responses to the secondary school learner questionnaire, 2010-2011 to 2015-2016*

	% of responses			
Question	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
Staff treat all pupils fairly and with respect.	29%	50%	17%	4%
The school listens to our views and makes changes we suggest.	17%	53%	25%	5%
I am encouraged to do things for myself and to take on responsibility.	35%	59%	5%	1%
The staff respect me and my background.	38%	53%	7%	2%
The school helps me to understand and respect people from other backgrounds.	37%	55%	7%	1%

*Includes all responses to the secondary learner questionnaire from secondary, maintained special and mainstream independent sectors

Appendix 2: National children and young people participation standards

Safonnau Cyfranogiad Cenedlaethol Cymru dros Plant a Phobl ifanc:

Children and Young People's National Participation Standards

"Mae gan blant hawl i ddweud beth maen nhw'n meddwl ddylai ddigwydd, pan fydd oedolion yn gwneud penderfyniadau sy'n effeithio arnyn nhw, ac i gael sylw i'w barn"

Erthygl 12: Confensiwn y Cenhedloedd Unedig ar Hawliau'r Plentyn

"Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account"

Article 12: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Mae hyn yn golygu:	Byddwn ni:		This means:	We will:
• Mae gennych chi'r hawl i wybodaeth sy'n hawdd ei deall ac sy'n gadael i chi wneud penderfyniad gwybodus.	• Yn darparu gwybodaeth o safon dda, yn glir ac yn hawdd mynd ati. • Yn rhoi gwybod i chi am bwy sy'n mynd i wrando a gadael i chi wybod pa wahaniaeth gallai'ch cyfranogiad chi ei wneud.	1 Gwybodaeth Information	• You have the right to information that is easy to understand and allows you to make an informed decision.	• Provide information that is good quality, clear and accessible. • Inform you about who's going to listen and let you know what difference your involvement could make.
• Mae gennych chi'r hawl i ddewis cymryd rhan a gweithio ar bethau sy'n bwysig i chi.	• Yn rhoi digon o gefnogaeth ac amser i chi ddewis a ydych chi eisiau cymryd rhan.	2 Chi biau'r dewis It's your choice	• You have the right to choose to be involved and work on things that are important to you.	• Give you enough support and time to choose if you want to get involved.
• Mae plant a phobl ifanc i gyd yn wahanol ac mae ganddyn nhw'r hawl i gael eu trin yn deg.	• Yn herio gwahaniaethu. • Yn cynnig amrediad o gyfleoedd a chefnogaeth i fodloni anghenion plant a phobl ifanc.	3 Dim gwahaniaethu No discrimination	• Children and young people are all different and have the right to be treated fairly.	• Challenge discrimination. • Provide a range of opportunities and support to meet the needs of children and young people.
• Mae gennych chi'r hawl i leisio barn. Mae'ch safbwyntiau chi'n bwysig a byddan nhw'n cael eu parchu.	• Yn gwrando ar eich barn, profiad a syniadau ac yn eich cymryd chi o ddifri. • Yn gweithio gyda chi ar bethau rydych chi'n dweud eu bod nhw'n bwysig. • Yn gwerthfawrogi beth sydd gennych chi i'w gynnig.	4 Parch Respect	• You have the right to have a say. Your opinions are important and will be respected.	• Listen to your views, experiences and ideas and take you seriously. • Work with you on things you say are important. • Value what you have to offer.
• Mae gennych chi'r hawl i ddysgu a bod y gorau gallwch chi fod. • Bydd gennych chi gyfleoedd i weithio gyda phobl eraill a gwneud gwahaniaeth. • Rydyn ni eisiau i chi gymryd rhan mewn profiadau positif.	• Yn gweithio gyda chi mewn ffordd ddiogel, hwyl a phleserus. • Yn manteisio i'r eitha ar beth rydych chi'n ei wybod ac yn gwneud pethau sy'n magu'ch hyder a'ch sgiliau chi.	5 Bod ar eich ennill You get something of it	• You have the right to learn and be the best you can be. • You will have opportunities to work with others and make a difference. • We want you to be involved in positive experiences.	• Work with you in safe, fun and enjoyable ways. • Make the most of what you know and do things that build your confidence and skills.
• Mae gennych chi'r hawl i wybod pa wahaniaethau rydych chi wedi eu gwneud a gwybod bod rhywun wedi gwrando ar eich syniadau chi.	• Bob amser yn sicrhau eich bod chi'n cael adborth o fewn amser sydd wedi'i gytuno. • Yn dweud wrthych chi sut mae'ch syniadau wedi cael eu defnyddio a pham. • Yn dweud wrthych chi beth sy'n digwydd nesaf.	6 Adborth Feedback	• You have the right to know what differences you have made and how your ideas have been listened to.	• Always ensure you have feedback in an agreed time. • Tell you how your ideas have been used and why. • Tell you what happens next.
• Dylai'r bobl sy'n gwneud penderfyniadau sy'n effeithio ar blant a phobl ifanc roi hawliau plant yng nghanol popeth maen nhw'n ei wneud.	• Yn gweithio gyda chi ac yn dysgu sut i wneud pethau'n well a gwneud newidiadau i sut rydyn ni'n gweithio. • Yn gwneud yn siŵr bod eich barn yn gwneud gwahaniaeth i'r ffordd rydyn ni'n gwneud cynlluniau a phenderfyniadau.	7 Gweithio'n well drosoch chi Working better for you	• Those who make decisions that affect children and young people should put children's rights at the centre of everything they do.	• Work with you and learn how we can do things better • Ensure your views make a difference to the way we make plans and decisions.

Mae'r Safonau'n cefnogi 3D CCUHP – Diogelu, Darpariaeth a Dweud eich Dweud
The Standards support the 3Ps of the UNCRC – Protection, Provision & Participation

Cymru Ifanc
Young Wales

Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Government

Safonau Cyfranogiad Cenedlaethol - National Participation Standards

Appendix 3: Involving pupils in practice checklists

Involving pupils in practice checklists:

Do staff and pupils engage in dialogue about teaching and learning?

- Do staff make use of a wide range of informal opportunities to enter into a dialogue with pupils about their learning?
- Is time set aside for staff and pupils to negotiate targets for learning; review progress; agree revised targets?
- Are pupils with statements of special educational needs actively and meaningfully involved in the Annual Review process?
- Do staff constantly seek to expand pupils' opportunities to express their views, needs, interests, choices, preferences and decision through the use of conventional, augmentative and alternative modes of communication?
- Do staff make every effort to develop ways in which pupils with special educational needs can be actively involved as participants in formal meetings, such as those held as part of the process of Annual review and Annual Reporting?
- Are targets for improving pupils' own learning and performance included in IEPs and other individual plans where appropriate?
- Do staff receive training in active listening, counselling, conducting tutorials, or mentoring skills?

Do staff actively promote pupils' capacity to think?

- Are there lessons dedicated to the direct teaching of thinking skills, study skills and skills for learning?
- Do staff review schemes of work for all subjects in order to identify opportunities for developing key skills and thinking skills?
- Are key skills, for example problem-solving skills and skills for learning, actively promoted in a range of contexts across the curriculum?
- Are pupils encouraged to create formal and informal 'buddying', peer tutoring, circles of friends and mentoring relationships focused on personal and social skills, positive behaviour, survival strategies and teaching and learning?

Do pupils put forward their own ideas?

- Do representatives from the student council play an active role in the selection of staff?
- Do pupils act as agents of control in decision-making processes at school development level?
- Are pupils involved in developing:
  - codes of conduct for classroom behaviour and discipline?
  - whole-school approaches to policy and practice in behaviour management?
  - policy in relation to bullying mentoring relationships between individual pupils with difficult behaviours?
- Do pupils participate in the process of institutional development at a whole school level, for example by participating in school council meetings?

Do staff attend to pupil views and perspectives?

- Are pupil perspectives discussed as a regular item on the agenda for staff meetings, senior management team meetings and governing body meetings?
- Do staff encourage, facilitate and make constructive responses to ideas and initiatives that are put forward by pupils?
- Do staff engage pupils in constructive debate about ideas and initiatives put forward by other pupils?
- Do staff take account of parent/carer interpretations of pupils' views and perspectives?
- Do staff take account of other agencies' interpretations of pupils' views and perspectives, for example health, social services, the voluntary sector?

Do governors attend to pupil views and perspectives?

- Does the governing body seek to elect or co-opt representation from individuals with learning and/or other disabilities in the local community?
- Do members of the governing body respond positively to invitations to attend and participate in school council meetings?
- Are there 'link' governors who have a brief to listen regularly to the views of pupils either formally or informally?
- Does the governing body receive and respond constructively to reports from the school council and/or reports about the work of the school council?

Do senior managers attend to pupil views and perspectives?

- Does the school articulate clearly its values about pupil involvement?
- Do senior managers regularly review the relationship between stated policy and practice?
- Do senior managers ensure that lines of communication in the school community remain open?
- Do senior managers demonstrate a commitment to hearing the views of all members of the school community, including the perspectives of pupils?
- Do senior managers provide a model of respecting and responding to the views of other members of the school community?
- Are pupils' views fed back to senior managers and governors through a range of approaches to the exchange of information between staff, for example regular meetings with mid-day supervisory assistants, learning support assistants, staff personal and professional development meetings etc.?

Do school systems and procedures take account of pupil perspectives?

- Does the school have pupil support, guidance, suggestions and complaints and procedures which are readily available, understood and used when necessary, by pupils?
- Does the school use a range of approaches for gathering pupils' views and perceptions, for example by questionnaire, interviews, or circle time reports?
- Is data gathered through pupil questionnaires, interviews and used in the development of curriculum content (what pupils are taught), effective pedagogy

(how pupils are taught), improved school environment, enhanced resources and improved climate for learning?

- Are pupils' comments and judgements about their school experiences listened to, valued and, where appropriate, acted upon?
- Are pupils' views channelled into the school development process via circle time, personal and social education lessons, tutorials, individual review or action planning meetings?
- Does the school development plan to contain targets which reflect priorities identified by pupils and students?
- Are staff encouraged to be reflective practitioners, re-evaluating their work in the light of pupil perspectives and entering into critical friendships with colleagues?

Jelly, Fuller and Byers (2000)

Appendix 4: Glossary

Participation standards	**National Children and Young People's Participation Standards for Wales** have been developed for and with young people, setting out how children and young people can be involved in decision-making in meaningful and effective ways. The standards and self-evaluation documents offer guidance to schools and demonstrate good practice in the process of children and young people participation. www.pupilvoicewales.org.uk/grown-ups/about-us/what-is-participation/
UNCRC	The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** is a legally-binding international agreement setting out the **civil, political, economic, social** and **cultural rights** of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities.
Rights Respecting School Award	The Unicef UK Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) supports schools across the UK to embed children's human rights in their ethos and culture. The award recognises achievement in putting the UN Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC) at the heart of a school's practice to improve well-being and help all children and young people realise their potential.

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