

# Working Together

Listening to the voices of children  
and young people



department for  
**children, schools and families**

# Foreword from Jim Knight, Minister for Schools

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The great majority of young people make a positive contribution to their school and community. Improving outcomes for every child means encouraging young people to engage in decision-making and support their local community. We make decisions that impact on children and young people every day. Ensuring their views are heard and valued not only improves services for young people, but also has a positive impact on the school environment and the local community.

As we set out in the Children's Plan, our aim is for all young people to want and be able to participate and take responsible action. Giving children and young people a say in decisions that affect them can improve engagement in learning, help develop a more inclusive school environment and improve behaviour and attendance. Through effective pupil participation,

schools give young people the opportunity to develop critical thinking, advocacy and influencing skills, helping every child to fulfil their potential.

This guidance is an updated version of *Working together: giving children and young people a say* (2004) and is intended to promote best practice in pupil participation, reflecting the excellent work already under way in many schools. It reflects comments and suggestions received from a range of stakeholders. I am grateful to all the young people and adults who contributed to drafting the guidance and to all those who sent in comments.



# Introduction

This guidance promotes the participation of children and young people in decision-making in school, local authority and related settings and provides advice on the principles and practice that support such involvement.

## About this guidance

This guidance is issued by the Secretary of State under Section 176 of the Education Act 2002. The Law requires local authorities and schools to have regard to any guidance given by the Secretary of State (in relation to England) or the National Assembly for Wales (in relation to Wales) about consultation with pupils in connection with the taking of decisions which affect them.

The guidance reinforces the many existing opportunities for skills development and participation, including: personal and social development<sup>1</sup>; Citizenship education<sup>2</sup>; and Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education with particular reference to the Personal Wellbeing programme of study (revised curriculum key stage 3 & 4).

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1 Section 78, Education Act 2002.

2 Citizenship: The National Curriculum for England – Key Stages 3-4.

The guidance is also relevant in relation to inspection where the views of pupils play an important part. Section 7 of the Education Act 2005 places a duty on Ofsted to have regard to the views of pupils when conducting a routine inspection of a school. Inspectors are also interested in how a school seeks the views of pupils, as well as what action the school has taken in response to this. Section 2 in Part A of the Self Evaluation Form asks schools to evaluate this and inspectors will consider this alongside discussions which they will have with pupils during the inspection visit. Pupils receive feedback on the outcome of the inspection in a letter from the lead inspector, which summarises the main findings about their school. This provides the opportunity for schools to discuss the findings and to work with pupils to consider how they can contribute to the school's improvement.

The guidance also relates to Section 38 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which places a duty on schools to promote children's wellbeing as well as community cohesion, as part of which they must have regard to their local authority's children's and young people's plan.

At the local authority level, Section 53 of the Children Act 2004 requires local authorities to give due consideration to the views of children and young people before determining what (if any) services to provide where these may impact on children and young people.

Each of these requirements and entitlements is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)<sup>3</sup> and the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda and, in particular, two of the five ECM outcomes:

- *enjoying and achieving – getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood*
- *making a positive contribution – being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour.*

While there is now widespread agreement with the principle of participation, there is no single right way of supporting children's and young people's participation in relation to the duties outlined above, and the process of developing effective values and structures to this end is not a straightforward one. But the principles and practices set out in this guidance, identified through consultation as key aspects of involving children and young people, offer a point of reference for local authorities and schools in taking forward this work.

It is important to emphasise that participation is not separate from other initiatives. For example, it is integral to the achievement of the goals of the Government's Children's Plan.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the aims of the curriculum, recently identified by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority as enabling all young people to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens, can only be achieved if children and young people are actively involved in decisions about their lives. Finally, effective participation can both benefit from and provide support to other government programmes, such as SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning). Other relevant initiatives and programmes are mentioned throughout this guidance.

3 Article 12

- states Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child
- for this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

4 DCSF (2007) *Children's Plan: building brighter futures* [www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/)

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## Additional copies

An electronic version of this document is available to download from <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/>.

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## What do we mean by children's and young people's participation?

By children's and young people's participation we mean adults working with children and young people to ensure that their views are heard and valued in the taking of decisions which affect them, and that they are supported in making a positive contribution to their school and local community.

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This guidance is not aimed at diminishing the ability of decision-makers to apply established policies in cases related to individual children and young people. It is, however, emphasising the importance of and significant benefits which can follow from taking account of children's and young people's views and working with them.

Subject to rules on child protection and safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection, all children and young people should therefore be involved in as wide a range of decision-making processes as possible. To ensure that this involvement is worthwhile, effective and positive for all concerned local authorities and schools must work in *partnership* with children and young people, as one group of stakeholders among many. Only then can participation make a positive difference.

In this respect, local authorities and schools should endeavour to ensure that the children and young people they work with are not simply passive receivers of decisions and services, but contribute to them and, ultimately, help to 'co-produce' them.

This progression is illustrated in the diagram below:

### **Levels of participation**

Children share power and responsibility for decision-making

Children are involved in the decision-making process

Children's views are taken into account

Children are supported in expressing their views

Children are listened to



increasing  
empowerment  
and  
responsibility

*Drawing on Shier (2000)<sup>5</sup>*

Participation which is tokenistic or unreflective will lead to cynicism and feelings of powerlessness among children and young people.

### **What are the benefits?**

Local authorities and schools which have supported effective participation by children and young people have found a range of benefits. These are listed below on the basis of four key categories – children's rights and wellbeing, active citizenship, school improvement and community enhancement. They can be mapped on to the goals of the other initiatives mentioned in the opening section.

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5 Shier, H. (2000) Pathways to participation: openings, opportunities and obligations *Children and Society* 14

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### **Children's rights and wellbeing**

Children's and young people's participation gives practical expression to children's rights and supports their wellbeing. It does this by:

- sending a powerful message that children and young people of all ages are citizens too
- recognising children and young people as major stakeholders in society with important contributions to make to their community
- enabling children and young people to influence decisions and services which affect them in order to make them more sensitive to their needs
- helping every child to fulfil their potential.

*Recognition for local authorities and schools which place children's rights at the centre of their provision for pupil voice is provided through the Unicef UK Rights Respecting Schools Award. This supports schools in teaching about children's and human rights and modelling rights and respect in all relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers/adults. Schools that have used this approach report improved ethos and improved attitudes and behaviour among pupils, including increased respect and tolerance for others. For more information see <http://rrsa.unicef.org.uk>*

### **Active citizenship**

Children's and young people's participation can encourage and support active citizenship. It achieves this by:

- offering first-hand experience of how decisions are made and how to contribute to them
- providing the opportunity to experience how rights go hand-in-hand with responsibilities
- providing real life opportunities for engaging with the taught Citizenship curriculum



- developing skills of participation and responsible action, including Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)
- increasing confidence, self-esteem and aspirations.<sup>6</sup>

*At Stoke Damerel Community College, Plymouth, there is a strong sense that citizenship is something you learn in action. Its Citizenship education provision (within and outside the curriculum) provides opportunities for as many pupils as possible to be involved in hands-on community participation projects as well as school decision-making. Perceived impacts include the challenging of negative stereotypes about young people, improved relationships between pupils and teachers and between pupils and improved self-esteem and communication skills among pupils.<sup>7</sup>*

### **School improvement**

Where it is integral to the work of a school, children's and young people's participation can contribute to school improvement in a number of ways, making a positive difference for pupils, teachers and parents. This may be in terms of:

- establishing a more inclusive environment
- improving behaviour, attendance and engagement in learning
- creating a climate of dialogue between teachers and pupils that supports assessment for learning and personalised learning
- enhancing curriculum provision, including, but not restricted to, Citizenship and PSHE education provision
- offering valuable opportunities for teachers to work in more creative and innovative ways with pupils
- facilitating pupils' growth and development outside the formal curriculum
- supporting schools' self-evaluation processes.

*The Four Dwellings High School, Birmingham, has linked pupil participation to school improvement through its Teaching and Learning Discussion Groups. These are made up of twelve volunteers from each year group, and meet twice a term. The twelve pupils are randomly chosen by a teacher taking into account gender, ethnicity and ability, with representation for all the tutor groups. The work of the discussion groups, together with teachers, includes a review of the school's Improvement Plan, focussing on behaviour, feedback and assessment, professional development and extended schools. This has raised the profile and perceived importance of pupil participation in the school, particularly among teachers and governors. As a result, the school reports that pupils take greater responsibility for their learning pupils feel increasingly that they are trusted and valued.<sup>8</sup>*

6 Active Citizenship in Schools (ACiS) is a flexible award system that provides an innovative and exciting approach to school and community-based work. It can help schools address the citizenship curriculum through real-life experiences for young people. Visit [www.continyou.org.uk](http://www.continyou.org.uk)

7 Taken from Davies, L., Williams, C. and Yamashita, H. (2006) *Inspiring Schools: case studies for change – taking up the challenge of pupil participation* [http://cypi.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/files/InspiringSchools\\_3.pdf](http://cypi.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/files/InspiringSchools_3.pdf)

8 *Ibid*

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### Community enhancement

Children's and young people's participation can also help to strengthen communities.<sup>9</sup> This may be by:

- providing a means of engaging with socially-excluded groups of children and young people
- improving provision, uptake and cost effectiveness of services targeted at children and young people
- enabling young people to take action on issues in the community which impact on them
- giving children and young people the opportunity to mix with, and learn from and about, those from different backgrounds and generations
- highlighting to children and young people how they can act as positive role models
- encouraging volunteering
- helping young people prepare for the world of work.

*Greig City Academy has established strong provision for pupils' community engagement. This stems from a desire to foster pupils' sense of responsibility towards the community, and to encourage action for community improvement. It is achieved by the embedding of tasks relating to community action within the curriculum, including Citizenship education, but also work-related learning and enterprise challenges and the organisation of productions and events. Perceived impacts include better relationships between the school and its local community and more motivated pupils.<sup>10</sup>*

9 Guidance in relation to Section 38 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which places a duty on schools to promote community cohesion, is available at: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/communitycohesion/Community\\_Cohesion\\_Guidance](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/communitycohesion/Community_Cohesion_Guidance)

10 *Ibid*

## Principles of children's and young people's participation

Outlined below are some core principles of participation which will help local authorities, schools and children and young people to realise the benefits of participation.

### *There is a clear commitment to children's and young people's participation*

This will include:

- making a public commitment to the principle and practice of children's and young people's participation, particularly on the part of Directors of Children's Services, headteachers and governing bodies, understood by everyone
- working to generate support for children's and young people's participation across all stakeholders
- linking children's and young people's participation to ongoing organisational development and review/quality assurance processes.

### *Children's and young people's participation is supported*

This means:

- respecting and trusting all children and young people
- creating the necessary time and space and resources for participation
- providing training and support for children and young people to ensure that they are able to participate effectively
- providing training for adults so that they can support children's and young people's participation effectively
- sharing information that is timely and relevant, and that is jargon-free and can be understood by children and young people

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- managing expectations, i.e. explaining what is 'out-of-bounds', for practical, legal or political reasons
- supplying clear and timely feedback on outcomes to all children and young people, not just those directly involved in a given decision-making process
- celebrating achievements and recognising the learning that children and young people gain through participation.

### ***Children and young people have equality of opportunity to be involved***

This should ensure that:

- no-one is excluded or prevented from participating on grounds of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, culture, language or the area in which they live
- children's and young people's age, maturity and understanding is taken into consideration when deciding how to support their participation
- ways are found to involve those who may appear to lack confidence or motivation
- support is provided to help 'hard-to-reach' groups, e.g. disengaged young people, looked-after children, and those facing the greatest barriers, e.g. some pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- children and young people understand that they share responsibility with others for helping to support and promote effective participation.

### ***Children's and young people's participation is continually reviewed***

It is important to:

- set out a clear rationale and success criteria for children's and young people's participation
- regularly review how well those criteria are being met
- involve children and young people in the evaluation process and review of lessons learned.

### ***Quality standards are met***

Local authorities and schools must:

- abide by agreed quality standards and codes of conduct for working with children and young people
- handle child protection issues in line with established school procedures
- agree rules on confidentiality
- agree rules on data protection in line with the law.

## **Principles into practice**

Effective participation by children and young people will depend very much on the extent to which local authorities and schools meet the kinds of principles outlined in the previous section. These highlight the importance of the ethos of local authorities and schools within which provision for participation operates.

Outlined below are some typical approaches for involving children and young people, which might be used separately or in combination. The list is by no means exhaustive and is followed by a list of sources of further information, including links to further case studies of current practice.

### *Young people councils*

Councils or forums through which young people represent their peers are valuable in providing a formal and visible mechanism for children's and young people's participation and, importantly, one which can be embedded in the decision-making structure of a local authority or school. For these reasons, councils and forums work well as central components of provision for participation, around which other provision can be developed.

Among schools, pupil or school councils are prized as a means of giving pupils a voice, developing their personal and social skills, enhancing the Citizenship curriculum and promoting the development of a school as a community.<sup>11</sup> These councils can take many different forms in terms of their constitution and remit. To be effective, however, a council does need clear links to its school's senior management team and governing body, as well as mechanisms for involving all pupils in its work on an ongoing basis. This could include the use of year group and class councils alongside a whole-school council.<sup>12</sup>

Links between school and local authority-level councils and forums for children and young people will strengthen both by reinforcing pupils' sense of entitlement to having their views heard and encouraging their involvement in decision-making across their school and wider community. There are many other local, regional and national youth fora, including, for example, the UK Youth Parliament ([www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk](http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk))

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11 Taylor, M and Johnson, R (2002) *School Councils: their role in citizenship and personal and social education* Slough: NFER.

12 See Whitty, G. and Wisby, E. (2007) *Real Decision Making? School councils in action* <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR001.pdf>

Regardless of the approach taken to participation, schools have often found it useful to involve partners from other schools and from their local authority, as well as voluntary sector organisations, to help them refine what they do. Most local authorities now have officers responsible for promoting pupil participation.

### ***Pupils as associate governors***

As of September 2003 schools have been able to appoint pupils as 'associate members' allowing them to attend full governing body meetings and become members of governing body committees.<sup>13</sup> Other ways of facilitating links between pupils and school governing bodies include governors meeting with pupils and pupil presentations at, or pupil reports to, governing body meetings.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Planned consultations***

When children and young people raise a particular issue or there is a particular decision to be made, it may be appropriate to use a consultation process. This could involve surveys, discussion groups or interviews.

#### Consultation checklist:

- children and young people are involved in the decision-making process at the earliest possible stage
- the mechanisms used for the consultation are appropriate for the age and understanding of the children and young people involved
- all children and young people affected by the decision to be taken are involved or represented
- any necessary additional support has been provided to enable the participation of all relevant children and young people
- the timing of meeting has been negotiated with the children and young people involved
- the consultation is being held at a location that is convenient for children and young people to travel to and access
- the objectives and protocols of the consultation are clear to the children and young people
- the language used is understood by all
- the children and young people understand the decision-making process – how their feedback will be used to inform the final decision, who else is being consulted and who has the final say
- a system is in place for providing feedback to children and young people on the decision taken and their influence on it.

### ***Working groups***

Issue-specific working groups are a further way of enabling children and young people to contribute to decision-making. These can be valuable in providing the opportunity for self-election. Working groups can also provide opportunities for children and young people to take responsibility for, or

13 See *Statutory Guidance on the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2003* on the publications page of [www.governor.net.co.uk](http://www.governor.net.co.uk)

14 See Hallgarten, J., Breslin, T. and Hannam, D. (2004) *I was a Teenage Governor* London: Citizenship Foundation [www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/resource.php?s186](http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/resource.php?s186)

show leadership in relation to a particular issue – for example behaviour, the school environment or community-based activities for young people. Groups might be comprised solely of pupils or pupils and teachers, governors or parents, local authority officers or youth workers.

### ***Lesson observation***

Pupils can be involved in observing lessons in order to provide feedback. In some cases this is negotiated between teachers and pupils on an ad hoc basis, in others it is part of departmental or curriculum reviews.

### ***Young people as researchers***

Children and young people can act as co-researchers with local authority officers and teachers on agreed issues or they can work as independent researchers – where research is initiated, conducted and reported by pupils.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Involvement in appointment processes***

Children and young people value the opportunity to contribute to the appointment process for relevant posts in schools and local authorities. Their participation can take a number of forms as appropriate. These include commenting on the qualities required for the post, helping to write job descriptions and interview questions, through to meeting with candidates and providing feedback to the panel or sitting on the interview panel itself.

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### ***Working with peers***

Many local authorities and schools facilitate children's and young people's work with peers in their own or other schools and in the wider community, for mutual learning, support and mediation. Peer mentoring can attract different kinds of children and young people to those involved with young people councils, for example. It may include:

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15 See Fielding, M. and Bragg, S. (2003) *Students as Researchers: making a difference* Cambridge: Pearson.

- **peer-support** – where older children directly support younger children, whether in groups or on a one-to-one basis, e.g. through help with reading, or by simply listening in order to support pastoral care provided by the school/other agencies.

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- **peer-mentoring** – where young people support their peers on a more formal basis. Peer mentors have a clearly defined role and receive training. ‘Buddying’ activities are one example of peer-mentoring.
- **peer-mediation** – when young people are trained to mediate disagreements between peers, such as bullying, fighting and quarrelling. The approach is usually one of group support which enables children and young people to understand the hurt that they have caused so that each person comes away from the mediation with a positive experience and the sense that the outcome is fair to both sides.

### *Use of ICT*

ICT can help local authorities and schools support children’s and young people’s participation by enabling wider and/or more frequent communication, and in an efficient and cost-effective way. Specific uses include e-surveys, e-consultations, votes and discussion boards. As with suggestion boxes, this kind of facility can be particularly helpful where children and young people are nervous about offering their views or wish to do so anonymously.

### *Formal meetings*

Formal meetings with individual pupils may be necessary for a number of reasons, from monitoring progress and planning learning to discussing behavioural issues. Children and young people may also attend multi-agency meetings outside school. Local authorities and schools can structure formal meetings in a way that enhances children’s and young people’s participation.

Children and young people should be as fully informed as possible about the meeting in advance. Information must be accessible to the child or young person. Wherever possible, they should be



involved in decisions about the format of the meeting, such as when and where it will be held and who will attend, as well as discussion about the purpose and desirable outcomes for the meeting.

As part of this process children and young people will need support with their feelings as well as practical preparation. This may entail helping the child or young person to think about the meeting beforehand, what they may find challenging and how they will communicate their views. Access to advocacy services should be provided where necessary. Follow-up support should also be provided to ensure that the child or young person has understood the meeting and that they have any necessary continuing support.

## Useful websites and further reading

To show how different approaches to children's and young people's participation work and the particular strengths they offer, many of the websites listed below provide access to case study examples of current practice. They also offer a range of other resources for local authorities, schools and children and young people to support effective participation.

- **Citizenship foundation** [www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk](http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk)  
The Citizenship Foundation offers a range of resources for schools and others working with children and young people, as well as school- and community-based projects, many of which are linked to the National Curriculum.
- **Consulting Pupils** [www.consultingpupils.co.uk](http://www.consultingpupils.co.uk)  
This website provides access to a number of research reports on consulting pupils about teaching and learning.
- **Diana Awards** [www.diana-award.org.uk](http://www.diana-award.org.uk)  
The Diana Award recognises young people aged 12-18 who have made a notable contribution to and impact on their schools, communities and society.
- **Eco-Schools** [www.eco-schools.org.uk](http://www.eco-schools.org.uk)  
Pupil participation is a key part of the Eco-Schools programme. This website provides information on the Eco-Schools awards, which recognise schools' work with pupils in reducing the environmental impact of the whole school.
- **English Secondary Students' Association** [www.studentvoice.co.uk/](http://www.studentvoice.co.uk/)  
ESSA is run by students, for students aged 11-19 years old. It supports young people to have a voice on issues which affect their lives at school or college.
- **Futurelab** [www.futurelab.org.uk](http://www.futurelab.org.uk)  
The Futurelab website contains information on a number of innovative projects in relation to citizenship education and children's and young people's participation, including in relation to teaching and learning.
- **Innovation Unit** <http://www.innovation-unit.co.uk>  
The Innovation Unit website carries useful resources to support schools in developing provision for pupil voice and personalised learning.
- **National Healthy Schools Programme** [www.healthyschools.gov.uk](http://www.healthyschools.gov.uk)  
Provides information on the National Healthy Schools programme and advice on facilitating pupil participation in schools.

- **National mentoring and befriending foundation** [www.mandbf.org.uk](http://www.mandbf.org.uk)  
Provides guidance and support to organisations and practitioners involved in mentoring and befriending.
- **National Youth Agency (NYA)** [www.nya.org.uk](http://www.nya.org.uk)  
Many local authorities and schools make use of the NYA's 'Hear by Right' standards for the active participation of children and young people to map and plan how they will facilitate participation and evaluate its impact.

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- **Participation Works** [www.participationworks.org.uk](http://www.participationworks.org.uk)  
Participation Works is a consortium of six leading children and young people's organisations that provides expert advice to anyone wanting to give a voice to children and young people. The Participation Works online gateway for youth participation is a hub for information, resources, news and networking on the involvement of young people in dialogue, decision making and influence across a wide range of settings.
- **Save the Children/Participation for schools** [www.participationforschools.org.uk](http://www.participationforschools.org.uk)  
This website offers guidance and tools to help schools increase pupil's participation. There are also school case studies which, as well as outlining current practice, discuss some of the hurdles in establishing effective provision for participation and how they can be addressed. The Carnegie Young People Initiative's 'Inspiring Schools' series, also found at this website, offers further advice and resources for facilitating participation.
- **School Councils UK (SCUK)** [www.schoolcouncils.org](http://www.schoolcouncils.org)  
Provides resources for teachers and pupils to help them establish a school council and ensure that it operates effectively. The site also provides access to a number of school council case studies.
- **SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning)** [www.teachernet.gov.uk/SEAL](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/SEAL)  
Provides information on the Primary and Secondary SEAL programmes and access to relevant resources.

- **UNICEF UK – Rights Respecting Schools** <http://rrsa.unicef.org.uk/>  
A Rights Respecting School teaches children and young people that they have rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. From this starting point they also learn their responsibility to respect others' rights in all relationships in the community.

## Effective participation – a checklist

Addressing the following questions will help to ensure that both the process and outcomes of children's and young people's participation are positive. This list is not exhaustive as there are likely to be other considerations linked to the circumstances of a local authority or school and the children and young people they are working with.

Action	Why?
<b>Identify the benefits you want to achieve</b>	By identifying the benefits that you are primarily interested in achieving through children's and young people's participation you will be able to set clear objectives and success criteria on which to base and evaluate that participation.
<b>Provide a range of opportunities</b>	By offering different kinds of opportunities for participation a local authority or school will help to facilitate and encourage the participation of a wide range of children and young people.
<b>Provide support to develop skills of effective participation</b>	Training for children and young people to enhance their participation skills is crucial. All children and young people should be able to benefit from this training, not just those currently directly involved in offering their views or representing their peers.
<b>Address equal opportunity issues</b>	<p>The children and young people involved in decision-making must be representative – in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, disability, culture, religion, language or the area in which they live.</p> <p>Local authorities and schools should take steps to facilitate and encourage the participation of hard-to-reach groups. They should also consider how to ensure those with special needs are involved on an equal basis. The SEN toolkit (DfES 558/2001) provides detailed advice on this.</p>
<b>Decide who will oversee children's and young people's participation</b>	In some instances it may be appropriate and necessary for an adult alone to be responsible for the process. In other cases adults might work with children and young people, or young people themselves might manage and conduct the process.

Action	Why?
<b>Ensure provision for participation links to the Citizenship curriculum</b>	Provision for participation should be embedded in the work of a school. This includes having clear links between pupils' participation and the school curriculum so that these components become mutually reinforcing.  This is particularly relevant to personalised learning and the need to develop a culture of dialogue between teachers and pupils. <sup>16</sup>
<b>Develop provision that is fun and interesting for children and young people</b>	If children and young people feel they are not being challenged by the process or feel that it is not relevant to them they are likely to lose trust in its importance.
<b>Think about providing rewards to recognise children's and young people's participation</b>	Show children and young people that their input is valued and help them to understand the potential benefits of their participation – for themselves as well as for their peers or wider community. A local authority or school may wish to recognise children's and young people's efforts formally through awards.
<b>Review the impact that children's and young people's participation is having</b>	It is important to monitor the impact that children's and young people's participation is having, in order to assess the benefits and refine practice. Schools may find it useful to work with partners from other schools or their local authority to assist with this.
<b>Provide feedback to children and young people</b>	Providing feedback to children and young people on how their views have been taken into account, and if not, why not, and on what has changed as a result of their efforts, will prevent them from becoming disillusioned where they feel their input is not making a difference. Feedback needs to be presented in an easy-to-understand format.
<b>Share effective practice with other local authorities and schools</b>	There is some excellent work taking place. As well as making use of published case studies, it is useful to visit other schools to share good practice. This will help local authorities, schools and children and young people to continue to enhance their provision for participation. Schools Partnerships may prove helpful here.

16 Hargreaves, D. (2004) *Personalising Learning – 2: student voice and assessment for learning*  
<http://www.schoolsnetwork.org.uk/content/articles/3625/chapt1studentvoice.pdf>

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