

Participation in Learning – Pupil Voice

Your pack:

- **Pupil Voice is here to stay! Professor Jean Rudduck**
- **Your school, your say: Influencing the future of your school (Primary and Secondary leaflets)**
- **A curriculum for the future: Young people consider the challenge**
- **Sustainable development in action: A curriculum planning guide for schools**
- **Disciplined curriculum innovation: Making a difference to learners**

A Starting Point

1) *'The fact is that pupils themselves have a huge potential contribution to make, not as passive objects but as active players in the education system.'*

'Students can and should participate, not only in the construction of their own learning environments, but as research partners in examining questions of learning and anything else that happens in and around schools.'

Source - [Pupil Voice is here to stay! Professor Jean Rudduck](#)

2) Where to begin:

Ask the following questions:

- What do we mean by pupil voice?
- What do we mean by pupil participation?
- What benefits are associated with increased pupil consultation within schools?

Think about current examples of 'pupil voice' in your school.

- How is this expressed?
- How is it responded to?
- Does every pupil have an equal opportunity for their voice to be heard?
- How authentic is the school in its aim to allow pupils to effectively participate?
- How is pupil voice allowed to evolve?
- What are the perceived problems associated with having a powerful pupil voice?

The reasons for the current emphasis on pupil voice are explored fully in **Research Matters, Student Voice and Learning-focused School Improvement**. There are a range of social, economic and political reasons discussed but perhaps it is the inextricable link between the necessity for curriculum innovation and the contribution that pupil voice can make that is key. Pupils should not simply be a sounding board for peripheral issues such as school uniform, but should be active participants in the design of their learning experience.

3) In order to ensure that pupils experience a relevant curriculum that prepares them for life, their participation in curriculum design is seen as essential.

'Only by listening to their views will we succeed in building a curriculum that captures their imagination and their needs.'

(Mick Waters, Director of Curriculum, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority)

Share the leaflet [Your school, your say: Influencing the future of your school \(Primary\)](#) or [Your school, your say: Influencing the future of your school \(Secondary\)](#) with your pupils. This includes:

- quotes from young people you can share with your pupils
- focused questions you can ask them
- key views that you can find out if they agree with
- suggestions of ways to find out what pupils think
- ideas for sharing pupil ideas within your school.

Source: [A curriculum for the future: Young people consider the challenge](#)

4) Once you have gauged the level of effective pupil participation within your school, it is up to you to decide how to take this forward.

Consider:

- Where is your school on Hart's ladder of participation? Where do you realistically aim to be by the end of this research?
- How will you ensure that each 'pupil state' (see table on **Pupil Voice is here to stay!** **Professor Jean Rudduck**) has the opportunity to have a voice?
- What methods will allow your learners to participate most effectively?

5) *'We need to understand what's going wrong with the world and try and prevent it. Our future is in our hands!'*

If increased pupil participation leads to a curriculum that is relevant and equips the learner with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed for later life, then the area of sustainable development is particularly important if pupils are to feel a sense of ownership and be engaged in this area of the curriculum.

Source: [Sustainable development in action: A curriculum planning guide for schools](#)

See also:

[Education for sustainable development: improving schools – improving lives \(Ofsted, December, 2009\)](#)