Research Report DCSF-RR001

Real Decision Making? School Councils in Action

Geoff Whitty & Emma Wisby

Institute of Education, University of London

department for
children, schools and families

Research Report
No DCSF-RR001

Real Decision Making? School Councils in Action

Geoff Whitty and Emma Wisby
Institute of Education, University of London

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

© Institute of Education, University of London 2007
ISBN 978 1 84775 000 6

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Andrew Adonis, Victoria White (DCSF), Anne Diack (Innovation Unit), David Kerr (National Foundation for Educational Research) and Hugh Starkey (Institute of Education, University of London) for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this report. We are also grateful to the representatives of the various organisations who helped us with the study. Our greatest debt is to the teachers and pupils of the schools that we visited during the course of the research.

Contents

Executive summary 4

1. Introduction – policy background 12
2. Aims and objectives 16
3. Overview of the report 17
4. Definitions of pupil voice 18
5. The case for pupil voice 21
6. Research design 32
7. National picture on school councils – presence, practice and perceptions 37
8. School case studies 50
9. Policy in Wales 66
10. Issues raised by provision for pupil voice and school councils 70
11. Reflections and conclusions 96
12. Recommendations 99

Annexes 103

- Annex A – Other forms of provision for pupil voice 103
- Annex B – Research participants 107
- Annex C – Interview schedules 109
- Annex D – MORI Teacher Omnibus Survey 112
- Annex E – MORI Schools Omnibus Survey 121
- Annex F – Independent schools survey 127
- Annex G – School case studies 129
- Annex H – Welsh legislation 140

References 147

Executive summary

Background to the research

1. The research described in this report stems from the Government's commitment in the 2005 schools White Paper, *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* (DfES 2005a), to update guidance for schools on pupil participation in decision making, with particular reference to the work of school councils. The report will inform the revised guidance by reviewing current practice, identifying drivers and barriers to change, providing examples of good practice and making recommendations about the place of school councils in school decision making and school improvement. The Innovation Unit was the catalyst for the research, which follows the Unit's work in promoting school councils in primary schools.

2. The report refers to a range of policy developments across public services and specifically within education that encourage the involvement of young people in decision making (for example, the National Healthy Schools Standard).

3. Under the 2002 Education Act the Government has powers to prescribe regulations for school councils by order, but it has so far preferred encouragement to prescription. This contrasts with the situation in Wales, where, from December 2005, it has been compulsory for every primary, secondary and special school to have a school council. The Welsh legislation is relatively detailed, with guidelines on the frequency of meetings, links to senior staff and the governing body and the selection of councillors.

4. The House of Commons Education and Skills Committee has recently published a report on its investigation into citizenship education. This report contains a recommendation that every school should be required to have a school council. In response, a number of the teaching unions have voiced their strong support for pupil involvement in school decision making. Indeed, some are already working with organisations concerned with pupil voice – for example, School Councils UK – in order to spread good practice. However, some unions have concerns about the potential burdens that school councils might place on schools, especially in the context of the number of initiatives that they are already tasked with implementing. While, for this reason, most union leaders are not in favour of mandatory school councils, their strongest concern is to avoid any attempt to prescribe the nature and practice of school councils in ways that lack sensitivity to local needs.

5. Within the literature, consideration of school councils is often couched in a more general discussion of pupil voice. Much school council provision is anyway coupled with other activity to encourage pupil voice – such as whole school surveys, working groups or peer mentoring. Because of this, the

report addresses broader issues around pupil voice in addition to looking more specifically at school councils.

6. Pupil voice can be understood as pupils having the opportunity to have a say in decisions in school that affect them. It entails pupils playing an active role in their education and schooling as a result of schools becoming more attentive and responsive, in sustained and routine ways, to pupils' views.

7. It is possible to identify a number of different arguments for pupil voice. These include:

   - a 'children's rights' driver, which recognises that children have rights, including the right to have their opinions taken into account in decisions that concern them – something recently reinforced by the *Every Child Matters* agenda

   - an 'active citizenship' driver, which highlights the way in which pupil voice can contribute to preparation for citizenship by improving pupils' knowledge and their 'transferable' and 'social' skills and, in doing so, enhance the quality of democracy

   - a 'school improvement' driver, which recognises that consultation with pupils can lead to better school performance, whether in terms of behaviour, engagement or attainment

   - a 'personalisation' driver, which utilises pupil voice to ensure that schools are meeting the specific needs of their pupils as consumers of education.

8. There are thus a number of potential benefits to be gained from pupil voice – whether facilitating recognition of children's rights or promoting active citizenship, school improvement or personalisation. Nevertheless, the extent to which pupil voice effectively serves these different ends has yet to be fully demonstrated, not least because a lack of clarity about goals on the part of those involved in the pupil voice movement at national and school level makes it difficult to establish clear success criteria. As a reflection of this, much of the literature in this field takes the form of advocacy rather than research or evaluation. There is a particular need for more robust research on the links between pupil voice and improved attainment.

9. Whichever benefit of pupil voice is being considered, school councils are a particularly tangible and visible manifestation of its presence. They can be important in offering a formal, democratic, transparent and accountable whole-school forum for pupil participation – one which links to the broader governance framework of a school.

10. Large scale surveys on provision for pupil voice suggest that the proportion of schools with a school council has grown rapidly in recent years, with some suggesting an increase from around 50 per cent in the mid-1990s to over 90

per cent today. Particularly strong growth has been identified in primary schools.

Findings from the research

National surveys of teachers and pupils

11. The 2006 MORI Teacher Omnibus Survey, which was used in this research, provided more up-to-date data. This showed that 95 per cent of the 999 teachers surveyed worked in a school that had a school council. Sixty-two per cent of respondents (England and Wales) felt that England should follow the example of Wales and make school councils statutory. However, only 46 per cent (England and Wales) wanted pupil involvement in the process of appointing teachers and only 35 per cent (England) wanted pupil representation on school governing bodies. Support for making school councils statutory was noticeably more marked among the teachers in Wales than those in England, while teachers in England gave much stronger support for involving pupils in the appointment process for teaching staff. A survey of independent schools undertaken by the researchers showed similar levels of school council activity and similar concerns among teaching staff regarding the extension of pupil voice into staff appointments and pupils sitting on governing bodies.

12. The 2007 MORI School Omnibus Survey, which the research team drew on in addition to the teacher surveys, provided a national picture of secondary school pupils' views on school councils. The responses show that a significant proportion of pupils attend schools which already have some form of provision for pupil voice in place. Of the 2,417 pupils (from 100 schools) surveyed, 85 per cent reported that their school had a school council. The pupils also noted their involvement in the development of school policies and the opportunities some had to take part in school surveys and focus groups. The areas in which they could input into decision making included anti-bullying initiatives and recycling policies. Only a small percentage (7%) had been involved in the staff appointment process or decisions around teaching and learning and the curriculum. Just over half of the pupils, 55 per cent, agreed with the statement that "every school should have a school council". A further 22 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, but only six per cent disagreed with the statement. The pupils' comments when asked to expand on their answer suggest that any concerns they have about school councils may be due to deference to staff or cynicism, perhaps reflecting the relative novelty of notions of 'pupil voice' in schools in England and the fact that practice is still developing within schools.

Findings from the case study schools

13. Findings from school visits undertaken for the research show that practice between councils varies in many respects – for example, on how councillors are selected, the frequency and timing of meetings, staff attendance and role, typical agenda items and means of involving the whole school. There are also significant differences in the extent of senior leadership involvement and commitment. Together with the survey findings, such differences highlight a number of issues for consideration.

14. The first is the need for schools to have a clear understanding of why they are introducing provision for pupil voice in general or establishing a school council in particular. There is a danger that, as school councils grow in popularity, schools will concern themselves with the *processes* of school councils, rather than the *purposes* they would want their council to fulfil. The frequency with which councils are set up only to fade away again may be linked to this issue. Even if current Ofsted self-evaluation and citizenship requirements make this outcome less likely, the mere existence of a school council for accountability purposes is unlikely to yield significant benefits in terms of the drivers identified above.

15. Another factor in establishing credible school councils is a willingness on the part of schools to change their ethos and structures where necessary. School leaders will need to be clear that they are ready to involve pupils in decision making, listen to their views and act on those views where appropriate. They will need to take steps to ensure that they have assigned sufficient time and space for pupils' involvement in decision making for it to be effective. They may also need to take steps to ensure that pupil voice mechanisms are accorded sufficient status to gain the respect of the whole school. The extent to which a school council is involved in the routine business of the school – for example, through the drafting of behaviour policies, the evaluation of teaching and learning, the recruitment of staff and links to the school governing body – can be indicative of the seriousness with which pupil voice is taken, as can a council's influence on spending decisions, however small the amount.

16. Teacher support for pupil voice is important for its growth within a school and crucial if its influence is to move beyond environment and facilities issues to the heart of teaching and learning. Teacher concerns include workload, already busy timetables in relation to the formal curriculum and whether pupils will act responsibly. There may be fear of the unknown, particularly in terms of changes in the balance of power in the classroom. Ways of helping teachers to appreciate the benefits of pupil voice include their attendance at information/training events, visits to other schools, or starting with small scale consultations. Over the longer term, teacher training will need to equip teachers for working more collaboratively with pupils. This, of course, relates to broader arguments for a more 'collaborative' or 'democratic' teacher professionalism. Even where other members of the school workforce take the

lead on encouraging pupil voice, this does not obviate the need for teacher support and involvement.

17. Schools must also endeavour to include all pupils in their provision for pupil voice, not just those actually on the school council or who are most comfortable expressing their views in a school context. This will not only ensure that feedback from pupils speaks for the whole school, it is also key to meeting Ofsted recommendations in relation to effective citizenship provision. Means by which schools could achieve such participation include making full use of councillor elections to involve pupils, having a system of class and year group meetings feeding into the whole school council, providing different opportunities for pupils to raise items for consideration (including anonymously) and ensuring good two-way communication between the school council and the rest of the school. More innovative approaches to emerge from the research included use of an email facility for submitting comments and suggestions and open or self-selective membership of the school council. Approaches which combine 'representative' and 'participatory' forms of democracy seem to be particularly effective.

18. Pupils with special educational needs may require particular support to participate in school councils. Schools would benefit from greater support in designing provision for pupil voice that can accommodate a wide spectrum of abilities and disabilities. Where pupils require very high levels of direction, schools can focus on developing 'action competence', i.e. awareness of role and the skills required to be an active citizen. Schools should also recognise that a school council will not be the most useful format for pupil voice for all pupils. It may be that the definition of pupil voice could usefully be extended to include taking an active interest in events and developing a positive sense of belonging.

19. Training and support for pupils is essential if they are to contribute effectively to decision making. Pupils involved in school councils will need support in terms of juggling their new responsibilities and managing their new role. They can also benefit from specific skills training, particularly in relation to managing meetings. Council members may need help in managing the expectations of their peers and benefit from guidance that helps them and their peers understand the purposes of pupil voice, what proposals will and will not be feasible and the time it can take to achieve change. The extent to which local authorities provide training and support, and their arrangements for doing so, vary considerably. Although training is increasingly available from national organisations, this is often still overlooked by schools or considered too expensive. Increased use of pupil voice websites may prove helpful here (see, for example, www.schoolcouncilswales.org.uk).

20. The importance of other issues that schools will need to address depends partly on the main driver behind their provision for pupil voice. For example:

- Where the central interest is in children's rights, there is a particular need to clarify the relationship between children's rights and parents'/carers' rights in relation to decisions about schooling. All schools should, of course, demonstrate the link between pupil voice and the *Every Child Matters* agenda and present that link explicitly in their documentation.

- Where provision is largely intended to enhance education for citizenship, the link to the curriculum is key. Teachers who are not citizenship specialists may not feel able to make the most of the potential learning opportunities. Schools will need to ensure joined-up working between members of staff responsible for citizenship provision and those overseeing the school council where these are different.

- For school improvement purposes, it is essential that the school council is fully involved in school development planning. Schools using pupil voice as a vehicle for school improvement should also consider whole school surveys and involving pupils in lesson observation and in the staff appointments process, however informally (for example, asking pupils to meet with applicants for senior posts). Ideally, such provision should be organised in conjunction with the school council.

- The personalisation driver, in positioning pupils as consumers, may require a particularly radical change in the relationship between staff, pupils and parents/carers. Perhaps more consistent with prevailing educational values are those notions of personalisation that go beyond a mere consumerist model to one of co-production between provider and user.

21. Policy makers should be aware of the tensions both between and within movements associated with the different drivers outlined above. They should also beware of the potential pitfalls of viewing pupil voice as merely a means of supporting the current policy agenda. These pitfalls include the potential for pupil voice to change schools in ways that may be uncomfortable for other stakeholders. Genuine provision for pupil voice requires some power and influence to be passed to pupils, at which point pupil voice becomes unpredictable. In contrast, where this does not happen, there is the danger that pupil voice, and school councils in particular, could produce a cohort of young people who are cynical about democratic processes.

22. On the basis of these conclusions, the recommendations to emerge from the research are listed below.

Key recommendations to Government, local authorities and relevant agencies

(i) School councils should be regarded as just one component, albeit an important one, of overall provision for pupil voice.

(ii) The Government should require all maintained secondary schools in England to have a school council, perhaps by exercising the powers it already possesses under the 2002 Education Act. However, it should not prescribe in the same detail as the Welsh regulations the frequency, membership and functions of such school councils.

(iii) The Government should strongly encourage all maintained primary and special schools to have a school council, but any extension of a statutory requirement to primary or special schools should await an evaluation of the secondary initiative.

(iv) The Government should encourage improved pupil-governing body communication, including the appointment of associate pupil governors where appropriate, as in Wales.

(v) The Government and its agencies should encourage, through guidance and curriculum, inspection and self-evaluation frameworks, the sorts of school councils and such other means of promoting pupil voice that have been demonstrated as effective in meeting specified aims.

(vi) The findings of this report should inform the preparation of new guidance materials and exemplars to replace *Working Together* (DfES 2004) and *Promoting Participation* (DfES/NHSS 2004), and related National Strategies publications on pupil participation.

(vii) The Government should work with teachers' professional associations and other relevant agencies to disseminate good practice in relation to school councils and pupil voice more generally as an important component of personalised learning, which is now such a key strand of Government policy.

Key recommendations to schools

(i) School leaders should develop a policy on pupil voice to guide their schools' work in this area. This should encompass, but not be limited to, consideration of school councils.

(ii) School leaders should encourage and facilitate the development of school councils as a valuable component of their overall provision for pupil voice. They should try to involve their school councils in all aspects of school life, i.e. not only environment/facilities concerns but also teaching and learning issues, including behaviour policies.

(iii) Schools should include pupils in the production of their School Development Plan. Ideally, they should include a section produced by the school council in the plan.

(iv) Allocating a material budget for activities supported by the school council will help to raise a council's status within a school. Schools should consider allocating a minimum of 0.05 per cent of their overall budget for this purpose. For a large secondary school with a budget of £3 million this would mean an allocation of £1,500 a year for school council activities.

(v) Schools should endeavour to create clear links between their school councils and their wider governance structures. As part of this, schools should involve pupils in the staff appointment process, as appropriate to the nature of the appointment and the age of the pupils.

1. Introduction – policy background

A range of policy developments have supported the move towards greater consultation with children and young people on matters that affect them. An early development was the 1989 Children's Act, implemented in 1991, which made it a legal requirement for young people to be consulted and involved in decisions that affected them. This coincided with the UK's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The often cited Article 12 states that:

> 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.

Provision for young people in England to contribute in a *systematic* way towards policy decisions came with the introduction of the Children and Young People's Unit following the 2001 general election. The unit was a cross-Whitehall mechanism for bringing young people into Government decision making. As host of the unit, the Department for Education and Skills (*as from 28th June 2007 replaced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families DCSF)* took the lead on this work, managing the involvement of other Government departments. It has now been integrated into the DCSF.

In 2003 the Government published the Green Paper *Every Child Matters* (HM Treasury 2003), followed in 2004 by the Children Act, which represents the main piece of legislation in relation to children's rights in England. The Children Act stipulates that local children's services should reflect the needs of children and young people and that, accordingly, local authorities and partners need to encourage a good level of participation by children and young people in the design and delivery of services. When inspectors assess how local areas are doing, they are now obliged to listen to the views of children and young people themselves.[1] The Act also provided for the establishment of the Office of the Children's Commissioner, whose main purpose is to give children and young people a voice in public life. The commission began its work in April 2005.[2] Later Green Papers, including *Youth Matters* (DfES 2005b) and *Care Matters* (DfES 2006c), have reinforced the same message by seeking to empower young people and improve advocacy for those in care.

Specifically within education, an early development was the Healthy Schools programme and the National Healthy Schools Standard (NHSS), which was introduced in 1999 as a vehicle to support the delivery of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). The NHSS and PSHE frameworks support each other

[1] Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships have been required to conduct annual audits since their formation in 1998. This includes a requirement to obtain feedback from children and young people as to their preferences for childcare and other support services.

[2] A Children's Commissioner for London was appointed in 2000 and for Wales in 2001.

and engage staff, pupils, governors, parents/carers and the wider community in a whole school approach. This aims to improve educational achievement, health and emotional well-being, and make schools a safe, secure and healthy environment in which young people can learn and develop. To meet NHSS criteria, schools must give pupils a voice across all areas of school life and involve them in policy development.

The Department's publication *Schools Building on Success* (2001) subsequently emphasised the need for pupils to be involved in decisions about their own learning, as well as school life more generally. The publication specifically mentioned the establishment of school councils and pupil surveys (p61).

The citizenship curriculum introduced in 2002 placed further emphasis on pupil voice, though in this context pupil voice was primarily for the purpose of active learning for citizenship. More particularly, it was about supporting pupils' learning in relation to the three main strands of citizenship education advocated by the report of the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools (Crick Report) – the development of pupils' social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy:

> Schools need to consider how far their ethos, organisation and daily practices are consistent with the aim and purpose of citizenship education and affirm and extend the development of pupils into active citizens. In particular, schools should make every effort to engage pupils in discussion and consultation about all aspects of school life on which pupils might reasonably be expected to have a view, and wherever possible to give pupils responsibility and experience in helping to run parts of the school (Crick 1998, p36).

The 2002 Education Act and subsequent guidance to local authorities and schools – *Working Together: giving children and young people a say* (DfES 2004) – provided more general support for pupil voice. It did this by emphasising the potential benefits of pupil voice to schools and arguing for a broader dialogue between staff and pupils, rather than provision centred on citizenship:

> …effective class/school councils have a positive impact on the general atmosphere in the school, pupils' behaviour, commitment to learning, and exclusions (p8).
>
> By pupil participation we mean adults working with children and young people to develop ways of ensuring that their views are heard and valued… This means, in practice, opening up opportunities for decision-making with children and young people as partners engaging in dialogue… (p2).

The accompanying booklet designed to support the Department's guidance – *Promoting Children and Young People's Participation through the National Healthy School Standard* (DfES/NHSS 2004) – included a range of practical advice for schools wanting to develop their provision for pupil voice.

In September 2005, Ofsted introduced a new framework for inspection which contains the expectation that schools will systematically seek the views of young people, including on matters to do with the quality of teaching and learning (Ofsted 2005b).

The 2005 White Paper, *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All: more choice for parents and pupils* (DfES 2005a), reinforces this emphasis on pupil voice, both generally and in relation to teaching and learning. In order to ensure that education enables all children to achieve their potential, it argues, parents/carers and pupils should have a greater say in how schools are run. On this basis, the Government has pledged to "[encourage] schools to involve school councils in decision-making" (p64):

> We will…be updating guidance to secondary schools, including special schools, to give stronger encouragement for school councils to be engaged in decision-making. School councils have a vital role to play, alongside better parental/carer engagement, in promoting schools as strong community institutions (paragraph 5.25, p71).

It is from this pledge that the research reported here stems.

The 2002 Education Act gave the Government powers to prescribe regulations for school councils by order but it has so far preferred encouragement to prescription. This means that the formal position in England contrasts with the situation in Wales, where, from December 2005, it has been compulsory for every primary, secondary and special school to have a school council. The legislation is relatively detailed, with guidelines on the frequency of meetings, links to senior staff and the governing body and the selection of councillors (Welsh Assembly Government 2005b). Nevertheless, even without such legislation, pupil voice is enjoying something of a revival. As Tim Brighouse (2006) comments, alongside the wide-ranging work of school councils:

> Schools regularly seek the views of their pupils through externally conducted surveys designed to uncover their concerns as well as taking the temperature of student motivation, affiliation and habits outside school and their ideas for school improvement. Nor does it stop there. There are bullying courts in some schools; there is circle time. There are also…lots of 'peer' tasks performed by pupils, whether in counselling, tutoring, mentoring, mediating or community action (p3).

As indicated earlier, there are close links between school councils and citizenship education. Alongside the review of school councils reported here, changes in the provision of citizenship education are currently being considered. In addition to an overall review of the curriculum at Key Stage 3 by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the Government commissioned a report on how diversity can be promoted throughout the curriculum and whether modern British history should be incorporated into the secondary citizenship curriculum (Ajegbo et al 2007). The QCA will consult formally on any necessary changes resulting from this.

In addition, the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee has recently published a report on its investigation into citizenship education, which contains a recommendation that every school should be required to have a school council (House of Commons Education and Skills Committee 2007a). In response, a number of the teaching unions have voiced their strong support for pupil involvement in school decision making. Indeed, some are already working with organisations concerned with pupil voice – for example, School Councils UK – in order to spread good practice. The unions have, though, raised concerns about the recommendation that school councils should be mandatory, largely because of the number of initiatives that schools are already tasked with taking forward. The union leaders who participated in the current research also commented that, if England were to follow Wales in making school councils mandatory, they would want to resist any prescription of practice, arguing that the form that provision for pupil voice takes is closely tied to the ethos of each school, and should therefore be left to schools to determine.

2. Aims and objectives

As specified by the DCSF, the aim of this research was to provide recommendations for updating the current DCSF guidance on pupil participation (*Working Together: giving children and young people a say*, DfES 2004) in terms of the role that school councils can play as a vehicle for involving pupils in school decision making and school improvement.

The objectives of the research were to:

- review what is currently known about school councils through existing research evidence
- outline the current practices of school councils
- examine the role that school councils play in supporting contemporary policies (e.g. *Every Child Matters*, parental/carer involvement and personalised learning)
- consider how barriers in setting-up and maintaining school councils can be overcome
- identify examples of good practice – generally and in terms of school improvement and whole-school engagement.

3. Overview of the report

The report begins by looking at definitions of pupil voice and the arguments for greater provision for pupil voice within schools. It notes how there are a number of different cases for pupil voice – from children's rights and active citizenship to school improvement and personalisation – and looks in more detail at each. It then considers the specific case for school councils as a key example of provision to enable pupils to have a say in what happens in their school or local community.

The report then examines the national picture on school councils as outlined in the existing research on the presence and practice of school councils in England and Wales, covering the ways in which they typically operate, the issues they look at and pupils' perceptions of their school council. In providing this overview, the report also presents findings from national surveys of teachers in the maintained and independent sectors and of pupils in maintained secondary schools conducted for this review. This section also considers young people's participation beyond the school.

Additional qualitative research was undertaken to provide more detail on provision for pupil voice at a small sample of schools, and a selection of these school case studies is contained in the report. The case studies cover infant, primary – Junior Mixed and Infants (JMI) – secondary and special schools. They include schools that find having a school council sufficient for allowing pupils to participate in decision making, and schools that have a range of provision for pupil voice in place. Much of the research literature and many of those involved in the current research commented on the benefits of having different channels for pupil voice. Examples of different approaches to pupil voice that emerged from the research are discussed throughout the report, while a summary of other possible approaches is provided in Annex A.

The case study examples are followed by a brief report on current practice in Wales.

The report goes on to explore the issues raised by provision for pupil voice and school councils. It looks first at general issues that all schools will need to consider whatever purpose their encouragement of pupil voice is intended to fulfil. It then looks again at the specific drivers listed earlier and the considerations schools will need to prioritise to ensure that their arrangements meet those aims effectively. As part of this discussion, the report considers the importance of pupil voice to various contemporary policies – in particular, *Every Child Matters*, parental/carer involvement and personalised learning.

The report concludes by summarising the benefits of pupil voice and school councils. At the same time, it identifies some of the tensions within the pupil voice movement and their implications for policy. It closes by offering recommendations to policymakers and schools, which are intended to inform the revision of the DCSF guidance on pupil voice.

4. Definitions of pupil voice

Although this report is focused on school councils, it encompasses research on pupil voice more generally. This is partly because much of the research literature takes this wider perspective. It is also the case that many of the issues concerning school councils are part of the broader debate about pupil voice. Furthermore, school councils are anyway often combined with other ways of facilitating pupils' involvement in decision making. Because of this, the report considers what is meant by pupil voice and the case for pupil voice before looking more closely at school councils.

Pupil voice can mean, and is often intended to mean, very different things. As Hargreaves (2004) outlines, in its widest sense, pupil voice includes every way in which pupils are allowed or encouraged to offer their views or preferences. In this sense, all teachers from time to time encourage and are involved with pupil voice. Taken more narrowly, pupil voice can be understood as pupils having the opportunity to have a say in decisions in school that affect them. It entails pupils playing an active role in their education and schooling as a result of schools becoming more attentive and responsive, in sustained and routine ways, to pupils' views.

Both definitions require more than just the introduction of formal structures, such as school councils; in each case, more open and trustful relationships between staff and pupils are necessary (Hargreaves 2004). However, it is the second interpretation of pupil voice – where schools promote pupil voice in more systematic and purposeful ways – on which this report concentrates.

In this approach it is possible to place examples of pupil voice along a continuum. At one end, pupil voice is largely passive, with, for example, the pupil as a respondent to a consultation. At the other end, pupil voice is the initiating force in an enquiry process, with pupils undertaking their own research (Fielding 2004).

A number of frameworks are available to illustrate this spectrum. Perhaps the most commonly cited is Roger Hart's 'ladder of participation' (Hart 1992), which is shown below. The steps on this ladder describe the degree to which children are in control of the process. At one end Hart places 'manipulation', 'decoration' and 'tokenism'. This is where children are used to carry adults' messages or where they have the appearance of a voice but have been selected to promote a particular view. Here, young people are effectively being used as a source of information, consulted for the purposes of quality control and even to build greater compliance and control among them. At the other end of the continuum there are more consultative and child-initiated activities, where young people are involved in order to make a contribution. This goes up to the eighth level where children initiate the process and invite adults to join them in decision-making.

Degrees of participation	**Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults**	Children have the ideas, set up the project, and invite adults to join with them in making decisions.
	Child-initiated and directed	Children have the initial idea and decide how the project is to be carried out. Adults are available but do not take charge.
	Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children	Adults have the initial idea but children are involved in every step of the planning and implementation. Not only are their views considered, but they are also involved in taking the decisions.
	Consulted and informed	The project is designed and run by adults but children are consulted. They have a full understanding of the process and their opinions are taken seriously.
	Assigned but informed	Adults decide on the project and children volunteer for it. The children understand the project, and know who decided they should be involved and why. Adults respect their views.
Non-participation	**Tokenism**	Children are asked to say what they think about an issue but have little or no choice about the way they express those views or the scope of the ideas they can express.
	Decoration	Children take part in an event, e.g. by singing, dancing or wearing T-shirts with logos on, but they do not really understand the issues.
	Manipulation	Children do or say what adults suggest they do, but have no real understanding of the issues, or children are asked what they think, adults use some of their ideas but do not tell them what influence they have had on the final decision.

Children's Participation: from tokenism to citizenship (Hart 1992)

There have been criticisms of this and similar approaches. Some have questioned the validity of the concept of the ladder, which suggests a hierarchy and the objective of striving for the topmost rung (Treseder 1997). As Shier (2001) similarly points out, different levels may be appropriate for different tasks as part of an activity, project or organisation. Nevertheless, such frameworks are useful in highlighting the need to understand and distinguish between different levels of empowerment afforded to children (e.g. see Sinclair 2004). Other such frameworks include Thiessen (1997) and Thomson and Holdsworth (2003).

In looking at definitions of pupil voice it is also necessary to consider the different forms that such provision can take. Michael Fielding (2004) usefully identifies

three broad categories through which to understand the different approaches to pupil voice and these are presented below.

Category of activity	Examples of activity
Peer support arrangements	Buddying/peer mentoring Circle time[3] Peer tutoring/teaching
Systems that enable pupils to articulate their views and see through appropriate changes	School councils Working groups Citizens' juries Involvement in reviews Pupils as researchers Pupils as associate governors Pupils on appointment panels
Activities that encourage various forms of overt pupil leadership	Pupils as lead-learners Learning walks

Adapted from Fielding 2004, p199

As noted earlier, while a similar range is reflected in this report, the emphasis is on the second category of activities.

[3] Circle time is a group activity in which any number of people (although up to about 20 is most practical) sit down together with the purpose of furthering understanding of themselves and of one another. It is a space in which children can learn 'life skills', such as effective communication, emotional literacy, anger management, peer mediation and conflict resolution.

5. The case for pupil voice

5.1 Different arguments for pupil voice

From the existing literature and the current research with relevant organisations, schools and local authorities, it was possible to identify a number of arguments for pupil voice. These can be categorised as follows:

- children's rights
- active citizenship
- school improvement
- personalisation.

In its discussion of the case for pupil voice, this section takes each of these arguments, or 'drivers', in turn.

Children's rights

Proponents of the children's rights driver argue for the need to consult young people on matters that affect them, and to take their views into account, as a matter of principle. Of the four drivers, this one in particular can be related to new social studies of childhood which argue "that children should be recognised as competent agents, who are participants in, and producers of, rather than passive recipients of, social and cultural change" (Bragg 2007, p15).

In policy terms, this driver relates most notably to the ratification of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).[4] The rights agenda can also be linked to the movement for democratic schooling. Apple and Beane (1995) provide a summary of the characteristics they believe are central to a democratic school. These are:

1. The open flow of ideas, regardless of their popularity, that enables people to be as fully informed as possible.

[4] In the report on her research with pupils on pupil voice, Alderson (2000) provides a useful summary of the main civil rights contained in the UNCRC:

- to respect for your worth and dignity
- to express yourself and to develop your skills and talents fully
- to be heard and to have your views taken seriously in matters which affect you
- to share in making decisions about your life
- to have all kinds of useful information and ideas
- to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- to learn to live in peace, tolerance, equality and friendship
- to privacy and respect and to fair discipline
- to work together for rights and to see that these are shared fairly in your school (p123).

2. Faith in the individual and collective capacity of people to create possibilities for resolving problems.
3. The use of critical reflection and analysis to evaluate ideas, problems, and policies.
4. Concern for the welfare of others and the 'common good'.
5. Concern for the dignity and rights of individuals and minorities.
6. An understanding that democracy is not so much an *ideal* to be pursued as an *idealized* set of values that we must live and must guide our life as a people.
7. The organization of social institutions to promote and extend the democratic way of life (pp6-7).

As Osler and Starkey (2005) point out, there has not been a British tradition of applying democratic principles in mainstream schools. Indeed, some have questioned whether it is even possible to democratise education given the prevailing model of mass schooling (e.g. Meighan 2004). Nevertheless, there are current examples of democratic schooling. Such practice has been promoted by, amongst others, Unesco (Meyer-Bisch 1995) and the Council of Europe, which has sponsored a study of pupil participation in schools in a range of European contexts (Dürr 2003). Another example is provided by the Unicef Rights Respecting Schools award, which was developed in conjunction with schools. It has been piloted in over 30 schools across the UK and was launched in Spring 2007.

The Rights Respecting School Award

This new nationwide award scheme promotes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as the basis for enhancing teaching, learning, ethos, attitudes and behaviour. A Rights Respecting School not only teaches about children's and human rights but also models rights and respect in all its relationships: teacher/adults-pupils; pupils-teacher/adults; pupils-pupils.

The Award programme is complementary to other schemes (e.g. the Healthy Schools Award) and can be part of a programme to build a positive school ethos. It is open to all schools: nursery, first, primary, middle, secondary and special.

For a school to receive the RRS Award, they must show evidence that they have reached the required standard in each of four aspects:

1. Knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC amongst the school community and its relevance to the school ethos and curriculum.
2. Teaching and learning styles and methods commensurate with knowledge and understanding of children's rights.
3. Pupils' active participation in decision making throughout the school.
4. Committed leadership to building a rights-based school ethos through strategic direction and appropriate professional development.

http://www.unicef.org.uk/tz/teacher_support/rrs_award.asp

The need to recognise children's rights has also, of course, recently been highlighted through the *Every Child Matters* (ECM) agenda, and schools are already involved in promoting the five ECM outcomes – to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

Active citizenship

Another argument for pupil voice is its value in providing a context for effective citizenship education (Harber 2004), particularly for pupils' learning about the principles and processes of democracy. In this, it links to New Labour's notion of 'active citizenship' or 'stakeholder democracy' and, associated with this, the aim behind the Crick Report (Crick 1998) of generating greater participation in democratic institutions. As recent national guidance has rearticulated:

> The citizenship curriculum recognises the importance of learning the 'skills of participation and responsible action'. Clearly citizenship and democracy is best learnt experientially, by living in a culture where it is seen as part of everyday life, not as an optional extra which does not create real change (DfES/NHSS 2004, p9. See also Council of Europe 2006).

As this suggests, and viewed more pragmatically, pupil voice can have positive spin-offs in terms of pupils' development of skills with much broader application. Those 'transferable' or 'life skills' typically developed through pupil voice include:

- communication
- inter-personal skills
- compromise
- responsibility
- organisational skills
- political skills.

There may be additional personal outcomes of greater self-esteem and confidence. These are said to be particularly apparent for school councillors and others taking a public role. They are also apparent for those with special needs, who seem to gain a stronger sense of self-belief and engagement in learning (Shier 2001, Davies et al 2006b. See also, Estyn 2007).

School improvement

In school improvement terms, the emphasis is on the range of different ways in which pupils can be consulted about their school and their learning in order that teachers will respond, attainment increase and standards rise. Here, then, the focus is particularly on what can be gained by giving pupils a say on teaching and

learning issues. As part of this, there is a keen interest in the potential contribution of pupil voice to improving behaviour and emotional well-being, which has, in turn, been found to impact positively on pupils' receptiveness to learning.

This section looks first at how pupil voice might contribute to the development of emotional well-being in schools. It then turns to the literature on consulting pupils about their learning.

Before this, though, it is important to sound a note of caution. The relationship between pupil voice and school improvement has generated a significant volume of literature in recent years, most of which points to the apparently positive link between the two. In their recent literature review on pupil voice, Davies et al (2006b, 2006c) point out that the evidence base is mostly perceptual and that direct attribution of causation is problematic. Nevertheless, they are still able to conclude that: there is "…some compelling evidence to support the fact that pupil voice can have a positive impact on pupils and schools" (2006c, p7). This is reflected in Hannam's comment that "school democracy and raising standards are, at the very least, compatible aims" (Hannam 2001, quoted in Hallgarten, Breslin and Hannam 2004, p5).

Behaviour

A number of commentators have suggested that the opportunity to share in decision making can have a positive impact on pupil behaviour in all areas of school life. Fielding (2001), for example, argues that rules are better kept by staff and pupils if democratically agreed to in the first place. It could be that, in helping to draw up codes of conduct and similar frameworks, pupils simply develop a better understanding of the position of school staff. But improved behaviour could also accrue from pupils gaining a sense of ownership, being trusted and having their views respected. It is also the case that pupils themselves sometimes use their involvement in decision making to introduce initiatives to improve behaviour, particularly in relation to pupils' relationships with one another. This is achieved through participation in developing behaviour, bullying and peer support policies (Davies et al 2006b).

Ofsted has now reported on its monitoring of schools with unsatisfactory behaviour, outlining what contributes to improvement in this area. The report indicates that the most successful schools did not deal with behaviour in isolation but tackled it as part of a wider school improvement strategy and emphasised ownership and teamwork across the school. This included seeking pupils' views about each stage of the improvement process and involving them in developing the improvement strategies (Ofsted 2006a). School councils provide an obvious mechanism for involving pupils in this way. As the report states:

> The schools making sustained progress sought feedback from the students about how well the new strategies were working. They

> ensured that the school council was strengthened and that the students knew that their voices would be heard (p6).

Further support for the suggestion that pupil voice improves behaviour is provided by a small scale evaluation of the Active Citizens in Schools scheme (ACiS), which is a flexible award that empowers pupils to get involved in volunteering projects that benefit the school and wider community. Of the 13 schools surveyed, 11 reported improved behaviour and enhanced relationships between pupils and staff (Ellis 2005).

Emotional well-being

Research shows that people need to be in a positive state to learn effectively (Weare and Gray 2003). On this basis, pupil voice would appear to be particularly valuable in terms of helping to enhance emotional well-being in schools.

As well as facilitating efforts to, for example, reduce instances of bullying in school, pupil voice can develop skills in all pupils that help them manage their relationships better. Such skills build on the 'transferable'/'life skills' listed in the previous section on active citizenship.

The development of 'emotional' skills is an important element of current school improvement work. At primary level, this is being taken forward through the 'social and emotional aspects of learning' (SEAL) programme. At secondary level, it is covered by the 'Developing social, emotional and behavioural skills' (SEBS) component of the National Strategy for school improvement (see DfES 2006a, b). Both programmes are structured on Goleman's (1996) typology of social and emotional skills, which divides skills into five aspects:

- self-awareness (e.g. self-perception, self-presentation)
- managing feelings (e.g. mood regulation, stress management)
- motivation (e.g. motivation and goal orientation, delay of gratification)
- empathy (e.g. perspective-taking; listening/counselling skills)
- social skills (e.g. self-disclosure, leadership, group dynamics).

Schools, for example, could use peer support initiatives to help pupils develop listening skills, or attendance at working group or school council meetings to develop their learning about self-presentation and group dynamics.

Teaching and learning

Pupil voice may also contribute to school improvement by encouraging consultation with pupils on teaching and learning provision. Such consultation could be for a number of reasons: better to understand pupils' response and attitude towards particular aspects of teaching and learning; to support individual

learners who find learning difficult; or to develop and experiment with new approaches (see James and Pollard 2006).

This sort of pupil input can enhance both pedagogic effectiveness and curriculum quality by providing teachers with new insights from the learner's perspective (see, for example, Jeffrey 2001). In addition, as indicated earlier, the opportunity to be involved in decision making and feel one's views have been taken into account may improve pupil behaviour in, as well as out of, lessons. Such involvement can also change pupils' attitude towards learning. As Flutter and Rudduck (2004) explain, if pupils are consulted about teaching and learning, they understand the learning process more and they see learning as a serious matter. This is partly about pupils acquiring a technical language for talking about learning (Lodge 2005).

Studies on the extent to which pupils can conceptualise 'learning' have reported positive findings. Based on a sample of 44 Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, McCallum et al (2000) found that pupils as young as seven were able to articulate learning strategies and processes they use (see also Rudduck and Flutter 2000).

So, where pupils give feedback on teaching, this potentially has the triple effect of refining teachers' practice, improving pupils' engagement and raising their awareness of the learning process. Research conducted through the ESRC's Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP) has articulated the overall benefits for schools, teachers and pupils of involving pupils in decisions about teaching and learning, and these are summarised below.

What's in it for schools?

- a practical agenda for change that pupils can identify with
- enhanced engagement with school and school learning
- a different, more partnership oriented relationship between pupils and teachers
- a sound basis for developing democratic principles and practices
- a more inclusive approach to self-evaluation
- development of the school as a learning organisation.

What's in it for teachers?

- a deeper insight into young people's capabilities
- the capacity to see the familiar from a different angle
- a practical agenda for improvement
- a renewed sense of excitement in teaching.

What's in it for pupils?

- a stronger sense of membership, feeling more positive about school and more included in its purposes – the organisational dimension
- a stronger sense of respect and self worth so that they feel positive about themselves – the personal dimension
- a stronger sense of self-as-learner so that they are better able to manage their own learning – the pedagogic dimension
- a stronger sense of agency so that they contribute to improvement in teaching and learning and wider school matters – the political dimension (see Flutter and Rudduck 2004, James and Pollard 2006).

Some research has gone further and attempted to provide evidence to back anecdotal claims that participation improves *attainment*. In a study of his own school using value-added measures, Trafford found an association between pupil voice and improved attainment (see Trafford 1997, 2003). Hannam (2001, 2002) compared similar comprehensive schools that did and did not have provision for pupil voice and claimed there was a noticeable difference in the same direction.

Studies of new community schools in Scotland (Sammons et al 2002) and of Healthy Schools (Blenkinsop et al 2004) and extended schools (Cummings et al 2006) in England have all tried to explore this link in a more systematic manner. Evidence from these studies certainly suggests that pupils in healthy and extended schools – and in particular those committed to developing social, emotional and behavioural skills – have a more positive experience and attitude to school. For example, in terms of:

- feeling valued as part of the school community
- being routinely consulted and listened to
- seeing the impact of their views on teaching and school decision making
- having their achievements celebrated and rewarded

- being able to access appropriate support
- feeling committed to promoting the school within the local community.

This level of engagement with school processes in partnership with adults creates a positive climate for learning and it is anticipated that this will ultimately be reflected in pupil achievement and performance.

However, so far the link has not been established robustly – in part because of the relatively short time span under analysis in some of these studies (Sammons et al 2002) and also because such improvements as have been identified could be accounted for by other factors, such as changes in school composition (Cummings et al 2006). Carefully designed experimental and/or longitudinal studies will be needed if causation is to be more firmly established. This research will need to explore statistically the nature of any links between school climate, behaviour and attainment in different types of schools.[5]

Nevertheless, the community and extended schools research is useful in showing no immediate decline in pupil attainment in these schools – despite concerns on the part of those like the Campaign for Real Education that the widened mission of such schools, including their encouragement of pupil voice, would distract attention from schools' 'core business' of teaching and learning (see BBC 2006).

Finally, it cannot be taken for granted that any improvements in attainment that emanate from pupil voice work will benefit all groups equally. It is clear from studies of 'productive pedagogies' in Australia (Hayes et al 2006, Lingard 2006) that developing pedagogies that impact upon achievement in a sustainable manner is particularly difficult in schools in challenging circumstances. We need to be aware that, although pupil engagement, representation and self-regulation are necessary features of effective learning, they are not in themselves sufficient.

Personalisation

One of the broader trends behind greater recognition of the importance of pupil voice is the consumer movement, with its emphasis on the engagement of consumers in choice with a view to improving quality. Linked to this is the new emphasis on personalisation across public services. Within current policy, personalisation is viewed as a means of harnessing the drive of competition and consumer choice in order to enhance public sector provision (Blair 2004). Consequently, the push is towards applying choice and provision tailored to the individual to all services, including education. In this sense, pupil voice becomes part of efforts to establish user-led education provision and ensure that schools are meeting the needs of their pupils. Indeed, when the Government announced its new commitment to personalisation in education, the then Minister of State for

[5] Publication of a report commissioned by the DfES and Home Office – *Exploring the Link Between Pupil Participation and Pupil Attainment at School Level* (2006) – is still awaited (but see House of Commons Education and Skills Committee 2007b).

School Standards, David Miliband, cited pupil voice as central to the achievement of this change in schools (see Thomson and Gunter 2006).

Within education the link between pupil voice and personalisation is most apparent in the example of assessment for learning as it relates to personalised learning. Assessment for learning can be defined as 'a process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there'. Feedback is provided to learners on their learning and performance in such a way that either the teacher adjusts the teaching in order to help the pupil learn more effectively, or the learner changes his/her approach to the learning task, or both of these (Hargreaves 2004, p22. See also Black et al 2003).

Importantly, collective expressions of pupil voice, such as school councils, do bear on the potential of individual pupil voice for personalising learning. As Hargreaves (2004) explains, this is for two reasons:

- even if the individual has no direct involvement in such activities, their existence shapes the general culture and climate so that students feel they are valued and trusted, and may express themselves in open ways
- such activities affect teachers by making them generally more responsive to student voice and its potential values, both in what it says and in how it improves relationships.

(Hargreaves 2004, p10)

Taken to its logical conclusion, personalised learning has the potential to move beyond a consumerist model to one of co-production, an approach that is epitomised in the work of Charles Leadbeater (e.g. 2004, 2005). Leadbeater (2004) outlines different 'levels' of personalisation, ranging from incremental service improvement to a more radical vision of personalisation through participation. Here, users – or in this case, pupils – are co-designers of services. As a result, they begin to take on some of the role of the producers in the actual design and shaping of the education system. At this point, of course, it is possible to make links back to New Labour's notion of active citizenship. Recent work by Hargreaves on personalisation appears to reflect this approach, with his suggestion that freedom to influence school life is at the heart of personalised learning. He advocates giving pupils choice over the curriculum they follow, how they are assessed and who teaches them, calling for pupils to have opportunities to give feedback on lessons and to participate in the interview process for prospective new teachers (see Marley 2006).

5.2 The place of school councils within provision for pupil voice

School Councils UK defines school councils as:

> Democratically elected groups of pupils who represent their peers and enable pupils to become partners in their own education, making a positive contribution to the school environment and ethos.
>
> (www.schoolcouncil.org)

School councils have existed for a long time, but they have been given more attention in the last few years in the context of renewed interest in pupil voice.

To date, the citizenship curriculum has been particularly important in building interest in school councils. As outlined earlier, the Crick Report and subsequent Government guidelines stressed active learning approaches in citizenship education. In this, they strongly endorsed school councils. In response, schools became interested in establishing and maintaining school councils to demonstrate their delivery of citizenship education and to facilitate personal and social learning for pupils (see, for example, Taylor and Johnson 2002; see also James and Pollard 2006 on the popularity of school councils as a means of introducing pupils to the ideas of democracy). The findings from the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEEA) survey have confirmed the particular value of school councils in a context where children have had relatively few opportunities, in and out of school, to debate political issues (Kerr et al 2001, 2002).

But school councils have, at the very least, the potential to play a key role in responding to all four of the drivers for pupil voice outlined in the previous section.

As Priscilla Alderson (2000) notes, school councils are a particularly tangible and visible manifestation of pupil voice:

> School councils are a key practical and symbolic indicator…only councils provide a formal, democratic, transparent, accountable, whole-school policy forum (p124).

Accordingly, it is often argued that a school council should feature somewhere in a school's provision for pupil voice (see Davies et al 2006b).

A survey of teacher leaders of school councils in a representative sample of 25 primary and 25 secondary schools concluded that the majority of these school councils were:

- giving pupils a voice
- enhancing personal and social skills

- developing citizenship as part of the National Curriculum
- promoting the development of the school as a community.

(Taylor and Johnson 2002)

Similarly, in a study of 443 schools in Essex (Bell 2003)[6], just over half (52 per cent) of schools perceived their council to have had a 'significant benefit' on relationships between pupils. Over a third (37 per cent) of schools reported that the school council had a 'significant benefit' on behaviour. Twelve per cent of schools reported that the school council had a 'significant benefit' on academic work.

The surveys conducted for this review, reported in section 7, provide a more up-to-date picture.

[6] The research comprised written responses and field studies, and looked at the effectiveness of structures that involve pupils in school decision making.

6. Research design

The research comprised the following components:

- literature review
- interviews with representatives from relevant national organisations
- use of teacher web forums on pupil voice/school councils
- school/local authority case studies
- attendance at relevant events
- national survey of teachers in maintained schools
- survey of independent schools
- national survey of pupils.

Literature review

The literature review covered relevant publications from the last 15 years, national and international. A range of evidence was used, from large scale surveys to single school studies. While the former provide a national picture on prevalence and practice, case study approaches offer more detail on effective practice and potential pitfalls. The sample for each research source is noted throughout the report where appropriate.

The literature was identified through the following search terms, which were used on the databases listed below.

Search terms		**Search engines**
School/pupil/student -	council voice democracy representatives	British Education Index CERUK Educational Research Abstracts online
Pupil/student -	participation involvement consultation viewpoint perspective led	ERIC Ingenta Select Scottish Education Research Database
Citizenship education PSHE Political literacy Decision making in schools Students as researchers		Web of Science

In addition to these searches, the research team utilised the theme-based bibliographies available on the National Foundation for Educational Research

(NFER) website and similar web-based resources. They also scanned sources' reference lists.

Interviews

The second stage of the research was to conduct interviews with representatives from relevant organisations. These involved over 20 national organisations, the majority of them charities or Non-Governmental Organisations, as well as the main teaching unions and associations (see Annex B for details). A small number of these organisations approached the research team, while the remainder were identified by these interviewees or through web searches. The schedule for the interviews (see Annex C) was shaped through the literature review findings.

Web forums

Before commencing the school case study visits, the research team made use of the teacher web forums on pupil voice and school councils run by the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) and the Innovation Unit. These online discussions provided useful insights into the issues that pupil voice had raised in schools and the contrasting views on pupil voice among practitioners. As reported below, some of the case study schools were recruited from an advertisement placed on this website by the research team. In addition, one case study school was approached on the basis of the recommendations they made in the forum.

Case study visits

The research team completed 15 school case studies – covering infant, primary (JMI), secondary and special schools – and compiled feedback from seven local authorities (see Annex B for full list).

Recruiting schools

Schools were recruited to the research through an advert (see below) placed on the aforementioned website and included in a citizenship/PSHE e-newsletter run by the National Children's Bureau.

New research on school councils
The DfES Innovation Unit has commissioned some new research on school councils. The findings from the research will be used to inform existing guidance on pupil participation. The project is aimed at primary, secondary and special schools.

As part of the project we would be very interested to find out about:

- Current practices of school councils
- How school councils can be used as a way to engage with pupils across the whole school
- Barriers and problems in setting up and maintaining school councils
- The role of school councils in supporting teaching and learning and school improvement
- Whether schools have alternative ways of consulting pupils and encouraging participation in ways other than school councils

If you are interested in finding out about the research and possibly contributing to it please e-mail…

Sample

The national organisations interviewed as part of the research often recommended schools that they felt offered examples of good practice. However, the research team wanted to avoid using these schools as many had been included in other publications on pupil voice. The encouraging response from schools to the advertisement meant that the research team in fact had sufficient 'new' schools.

It was intended that the research would include the following sample of schools:

School phase/type	Sample
Primary	5
Secondary	5
Special	2
Other	3

Bearing in mind that the nature of the research was determined to some extent by the schools volunteering to take part, the research team endeavoured to include at least one of the following examples for both the primary and secondary school samples:

1. a school with a longstanding school council
2. a school with a council that has developed more sophisticated /innovative practice
3. a school, or group of schools, having difficulties in getting pupil participation activity started
4. a school with alternative arrangements for including pupils in decision making.

The number of special schools volunteering for the research was low. Those selected were chosen to provide examples of established provision, where schools could have been expected to have refined their practice in relation to pupil voice and, therefore, be able to make recommendations on effective practice.

The research team 'reserved' three of the 15 visits to be decided upon part way into the programme of visits. This allowed the team to identify schools that could add most to the initial selection.

After a few fieldwork visits, the research team felt that it would be useful to supplement the school visits with interviews with relevant local authority staff. The team conducted interviews with seven such contacts, all of whom had responded to the research advertisement.

Format of the visits

For each school visit the research team sought to interview a member of the senior management team and, where different, the lead teacher for the school council/other pupil voice activity. The team were also able to observe school council meetings and/or talk to the council as a group. On a number of occasions, the team were able to speak with other staff, pupils not directly involved and, in a few cases, governors who had links with their school's council.
The schedules for these different interviews (see Annex C) were shaped by the literature review, findings from the national organisation contacts and from the web forums. The schedules were refined over the course of the visits.

Attendance at relevant events

The fieldwork was augmented by attendance at a number of events. These included a training day for local secondary schools run by School Councils UK, which the research team were able to participate in and which offered the opportunity to talk informally with trainers, school staff and pupils. The team also attended two national conferences. One conference was hosted by the University of Nottingham and focused on academic research in the area of children's rights and pupil voice and showcased the work of a range of organisations working in these fields and research projects being run in conjunction with schools. The second conference was hosted by the English Secondary Students Association and brought together relevant national organisations and ran workshops with teachers and pupils on implementing and developing pupil voice in their schools.

National survey of teachers

Another component of the research was a short 'questionnaire' on pupil voice, which formed part of a larger survey of teachers. A small number of questions on pupil voice were drafted to be included in the MORI Teacher Omnibus Survey, which took place in November 2006. The telephone survey was conducted with a nationally representative sample of 999 maintained primary and secondary school teachers across England and Wales (507 in primary and 492 in secondary schools). The sample was representative by sex, age, school phase and Government Office Region. There were also 'soft' quotas on, for example, length of teaching experience, level of responsibility and subject specialism (secondary teachers only). For more information on the survey design see Ipsos MORI (2007a).

National survey of pupils

Finally, the research team drew upon the 2007 MORI Schools Omnibus Survey to explore pupils' views about school councils. Again, a small number of questions were drafted to be included in the larger survey. This survey used a sample of 2,417 11-16 year olds across England and Wales, who were taken from around 100 schools. The sample was designed to be representative of young people within all those secondary and middle schools in the state sector that deliver education to Years 7-11 in England and Wales. Self-completion questionnaires

were distributed to pupils during a classroom session. For more information on the survey design see Ipsos MORI (2007b).

For both the Teacher and Schools Omnibus surveys, the questions were funded by the DCSF as an additional strand for the current research.

Survey of schools in the independent sector

In order to gauge the prevalence of school councils among independent schools and obtain data on the work of these councils, the research incorporated an online questionnaire survey of Independent Schools Council (ISC) members. Of the 2,500 independent schools in the UK, 1,283 are in membership of an association represented by the ISC. A total of 108 schools responded (8.4 per cent). While not representative, the findings provide a broad indication of current practices in relation to school councils in the independent sector.

7. National picture on school councils – presence, practice and perceptions

Prior to this research, a small number of sizeable surveys had been conducted which provided a national picture on school councils in England. Together they offer an insight into the growth in the number of school councils and the ways in which they typically operate. This research is outlined here and supplemented with up-to-date evidence from the surveys of teachers and pupils noted in the previous section.

7.1 Existing research evidence

Studies through the 1990s that attempted to gauge the proportion of secondary schools in England with a school council found the figure to be around 50 per cent (e.g. Fogelman 1991, Ashworth 1995, Alderson 1999, Baginsky and Hannam 1999 – quoted in Hallgarten et al 2004, p8).

The 2003 DfES citizenship baseline survey (Kerr et al 2003) reported that one third of pupils had participated in elections for school councils and ten per cent had experience of membership of a council. One year on, the follow-up survey (Kerr et al 2004) noted that pupil participation in school council elections had risen to 50 per cent. By the 2005 study (Cleaver et al 2005), it appeared that the number of school councils had grown even further – with councils in place in almost all of the schools surveyed (97 per cent of schools and 98 per cent of colleges).[7] In this study, a greater percentage of senior managers than teaching staff perceived that pupils were, at least sometimes, consulted about the development of school rules and policies (82 per cent and 64 per cent respectively), and that pupils had at least some say in how their school/college was run and organised (88 per cent), particularly through their involvement in school councils (73 per cent).

There has hitherto been little data on the prevalence of school councils by phase or in special schools. A 2002 study found that secondary schools were more likely to have had a council in place for longer than primary schools, on average twice as long (Taylor and Johnson 2002).[8] There is, though, some anecdotal evidence that provision in infant and primary schools has grown considerably in more recent years.

[7] *Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study* (Cleaver et al 2005) was based upon a sample of 237 schools and 50 colleges. It reports the responses of 238 school and college leaders, 876 teachers and college tutors and 6,400 pupils across Years 8, 10 and 12 (pupils aged 13-14, 15-16 and 17-18 respectively) in the academic year 2003-2004.

[8] This project was conducted over three school terms. It included a telephone survey of teacher leaders of school councils in 25 secondary and 25 primary schools. Case studies were conducted in seven of these schools, which involved observation of council meetings, group interviews with councillors and non-councillors and informal discussions with staff.

In order to get a sense of how school councils actually operate, Baginsky and Hannam's 1999 study is a useful starting point due to its size.[9] Although completed a number of years ago now, its findings have been reflected in a number of subsequent smaller studies.

Selection of councillors

Of the 294 secondary schools with councils in Baginsky and Hannam's study, 92 per cent used elections to select councillors.

Frequency of meetings

The frequency of meetings in these schools varied enormously. The majority (45 per cent) met twice a term, while 27 per cent met once a term. In the remaining 22 per cent of schools, councils met every one to four weeks.

Timing of meetings

The largest percentage of schools, 44 per cent, held their council meetings in curriculum time. Another 35 per cent held meetings during the lunch break, and 25 per cent after school. Other meeting times included before school and in assembly time.

Senior staff attendance

Seventy-five per cent of all council meetings were attended by a senior member of the school's management team.

Limits on remit

Fifty-four per cent of schools reported that there were specific topics their school council could not discuss. Most frequently these were matters relating to members of staff (44 per cent of schools) or individual pupils (19 per cent). In a few schools, other areas included uniform, the length of the school day, curriculum content and disciplinary matters.

Typical agenda items

In the survey some of the most frequently mentioned agenda items were toilets, canteen matters and uniform.

These findings are very much reflected in Taylor and Johnson's (2002) study, though they add improved facilities and equipment to the areas in which school councils have typically achieved change. Although teaching and learning and

[9] A questionnaire was sent to a random sample of teachers in 200 state primary schools and students and teachers in 600 state secondary schools in England and Wales. Staff from 294 secondary schools and 89 primary schools responded; 226 of the 240 secondary schools with councils also submitted a pupil response and pupil replies were also received from 30 of the 54 secondary schools without councils.

the curriculum were discussed by some schools in Taylor and Johnson's study, changes in these areas were far less likely to have occurred.

Setting the agenda

Baginsky and Hannam found that in the majority of schools (91 per cent) pupils contributed to the agenda, with staff also contributing in 66 per cent. There was, however, considerable variation in the consultation processes around these agendas.

Whole school involvement

The vast majority of councils had established mechanisms for informing pupils and staff about their work.

Wider role of the school council

Twenty per cent of the school councils surveyed had discussed staff appointments.

Further details of current practices as revealed in the research interviews and case studies are outlined later in this report.

A particular issue to emerge from the wider literature is that of links between a school council and their school's governing body. Although pupils cannot legally be full school governors, since September 2003, the governing body of a school has been able to appoint pupils as 'associate members' (DfES 2003 – see box below).

Statutory Guidance on the School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations 2003

The regulations in outline:

1. The framework for school governing bodies aims to:
    - allow a more flexible approach to governing body membership, which will make it easier for governing bodies to influence the size and composition their school needs to meet its own individual circumstances
    - allow schools that wish to collaborate to have a range of options available
    - allow governing bodies to provide additional facilities and services
    - free governors from activities that are incidental to their primary strategic role.
2. All Governing Bodies should have reconstituted themselves by September 2006.
3. Associate Members are seen as a means of adding to the capacity of governing bodies, and in particular committees, by adding specific expertise on certain issues to governing bodies.
4. From 1 September 2003 it has been possible for pupils and others to be appointed as associate members of school governing bodies. Associate members can attend full governing body meetings and be members of governing body committees. There are no plans to make it compulsory for governing bodies to make such appointments. The decision rests with each governing body.

Pupils may sit on governing bodies, attend all meetings and take part in discussions to put across the perspective of pupils. In most cases, they are not permitted to vote and they can gain only limited voting rights at 18 years of age.

The projects by Hallgarten et al (2004) provide some examples of practice in schools. The research involved 13 schools. By its second phase, it was able to identify 'a number of axes along which each school sits at a different point'. These were as follows:

- *Number of pupils sitting on the governing body* – varied from two to as many as ten pupils (two for each committee and two for full governors meetings).
- *Age of pupils* – some schools choose to include just older pupils (Year 10 or 11 in the case of the 11-16 schools). Others involved younger pupils, usually for capacity building purposes.
- *Inclusion and equal opportunities* – the research found that pupils selected onto governing bodies were broadly representative of the pupil body in terms of gender, ethnic groups and in terms of engagement.

- *Length of service* – the most common term of service was two years but various more flexible proposals existed in some schools so as to involve more pupils.

- *Meetings attended* – this ranged from full governing body and all committee meetings, to just one committee. Some schools started by inviting pupils to attend a committee meeting, then the full governing body meeting. In all cases schools sought to send pupils to meetings in at least pairs.

- *Means of selection/election* – this ranged from staff selection of pupils through to whole school elections from an open panel of volunteers.

- *Links with pupils' representative structures such as school councils* – Hannam reports that most of the schools in the study ensured that their pupil governors were either elected or appointed from the school council, or that they become ex-officio members of the council. This improved communications between pupils and the governing body.

(based on Hannam 2004, pp26-7)

7.2 Current research – school and pupil surveys

MORI Teacher Omnibus Survey

The research team's questions in the 2006 MORI Teachers Omnibus Survey (Ipsos MORI 2007a) have elicited a more-up-to date picture of provision (see Annex D for an overview of the profile of respondents and selected tables summarising the survey findings).

The responses indicate that provision for pupil voice is commonplace in schools in England. The vast majority of the 999 teachers (England and Wales) surveyed – 95 per cent (949) – work in a school with a school council. For England, among the secondary teachers the percentage was 98 per cent, and among primary teachers it was 92 per cent.

A further 3 per cent (29) of all teachers worked in a school that had other provision for pupil voice in place. The most common option was for class or year councils, which were in place at 28 per cent (8) of these schools. A further 24 per cent (7) used circle time to consult with pupils. A small percentage indicated that they frequently asked pupils for their opinion on school matters on an informal basis. Just one per cent (10) of the teachers stated that they worked in a school that had no provision for pupil voice.

The most commonly cited reason for giving pupils a voice was to improve the school's environment and facilities, which was indicated by 27 per cent of respondents (265). The other main motivations identified were as follows:

- 21 per cent (206) developing pupils' social and emotional skills
- 17 per cent (167) enhancing citizenship provision
- 7 per cent (69) improving teaching and learning
- 2 per cent (20) improving attainment.

A further 3 per cent (29) stated that their school had a number of motivations for its pupil voice activity. Two per cent (20 respondents) were unsure of the main purpose of their provision. There were no marked differences between the responses of teachers from England and from Wales on this question.

Looking at the data for England, the opportunities that pupil voice provides for developing pupils' emotional and social skills was particularly welcomed by the primary teachers (28 per cent compared to 13 per cent of secondary teachers). The use of pupil voice for the purposes of responding to the personalisation agenda, and for improving teaching and learning more generally, was more of a focus for the secondary teachers than the primary teachers (cited by 15 per cent compared to seven per cent of primary school teachers, and by nine per cent compared to five per cent, respectively).

Asked what impact their school's provision for pupil voice had had on the school, improvement in the school's environment and facilities was the most commonly cited impact, reported by 41 per cent (403 out of a base of 982). The other responses to this question were as follows:

- 28 per cent (275) indicated that pupils were more engaged in their school
- 14 per cent (137) felt that decisions taken by staff were now more effective
- 10 per cent (98) felt that pupils better understood decisions made in school
- 8 per cent (79) felt that pupils' emotional and social skills had improved.

Primary teachers were generally more optimistic about the impact of pupil voice.

There was a within-school difference regarding the impact of provision for pupil voice, with head teachers and deputy head teachers more likely than other respondents to report improvements in school as a result of pupil voice. This reflects the findings of Cleaver et al 2005 as outlined earlier in this section. Meanwhile, deputy head teachers and staff whose professional role is likely to have a marked pastoral dimension (e.g. key stage co-ordinators or head of year) were more likely than other colleagues to say that relationships between staff and pupils had improved.

Respondents were asked to reflect in more detail on the impact of their provision for pupil voice – in terms of the extent to which it had achieved its original aim.

Of the respondents (England and Wales) who had stated that the main aim of their provision was to improve pupils' social and emotional skills, a significant proportion, 88 per cent (202), felt that pupil voice had done at least 'a fair amount' to achieve this. Similarly, of the respondents who thought that pupil voice was primarily to improve the school's environment, 87 per cent (278) believed it was helping to do that. Belief that pupil consultation was achieving its objectives at least 'a fair amount' was also high among teachers who thought its principal role was to improve pupils' behaviour (85 per cent), raise their attainment (83 per cent) or elevate standards of teaching and learning (78 per cent).

When asked whether England should follow the example of Wales and make school councils statutory, 62 per cent of the 753 respondents surveyed on this question stated that it should. Thirty-three per cent felt that it should not, while five per cent were unsure. Those teachers who responded that school councils should *not* be made a statutory requirement were likely to have lengthy teaching experience (46 per cent of those with 25+ years in service compared to 23 per cent in their first year). Notably, they were also more likely to work in England than Wales (34 per cent compared to 16 per cent of those in Wales). Indeed, the majority of the teacher unions spoken to by the research team had not had much feedback at all from teachers in Wales on the issue of mandatory school councils (see Estyn 2007).

The respondents were more split in relation to the question of pupil involvement in the process of appointing teachers: just over half felt they should not. Secondary teachers were more positive about increasing involvement for their pupils in interviewing candidates, with half responding that they thought pupils should be represented in the interview process, compared to 40 per cent of primary phase teachers. Head teachers and deputy teachers were more likely to say that pupils should *not* be involved in the interview process than classroom teachers (56 per cent and 57 per cent respectively compared to 41 per cent).

The 753 teachers in England were less convinced that pupils should sit on school governing bodies, with 59 per cent suggesting they should not and only 35 per cent in favour. Again, secondary teachers were more likely to support pupil involvement (38 per cent compared to 30 per cent of primary teachers).

MORI Schools Omnibus Survey

The findings from the research team's own discussions with pupils are reported in the case studies in this report, while further national data on pupil views, taken from the 2007 MORI Schools Omnibus Survey with secondary school pupils (Ipsos MORI 2007b), are reported below (see Annex E for full tables). (Note that this survey is based on a separate sample of schools to the Teacher Omnibus Survey).

The pupils in the survey outlined a number of different opportunities to participate in school decision making. The majority of the 2,417 pupils surveyed, 85 per cent (2,059), reported that their school had a school council. Of these, twelve per cent

were year/school council representatives. A further 28 per cent (677) had been asked for their views through school surveys or focus groups. Meetings between pupils and senior staff or governors were less common, though – reported by 16 per cent and 12 per cent of pupils respectively. Levels of involvement in these different aspects of pupil voice were relatively uniform across the Year groups, though participation does appear to tail off in Year 11, probably due to this being the GCSE year.

The areas in which the pupils had been able to input into school decision making were varied. Forty-one per cent of all 2,417 pupils surveyed (991) had been involved in decisions about school policies (e.g. anti-bullying, recycling, school uniforms), which equipment to purchase (e.g. for the playground), or which charities to raise money for. Seven per cent (169) had participated in the appointment process for new teaching staff. The same proportion had observed lessons and given feedback to teachers. Five per cent (121) had helped to design the curriculum at their school.
Asked what changes, if any, had occurred at their school as a result of having a school council, 26 per cent (535) stated that pupils had more of a say in school decisions. A further 25 per cent (515) felt that their school's environment and facilities had improved. Pupils also noticed effects on relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers:

- 17 per cent (350) felt that teachers better understood pupils' views and feelings
- 13 per cent (268) that pupils cared more about their school
- 11 per cent (226) that pupils were better at listening to the views of others
- 9 per cent (185) that pupils and teachers got on better with each other
- 8 per cent (165) that pupils got on better with each other
- Finally, 12 per cent (247) felt that parents now got more involved in their children's school.

These findings diverge from those of an earlier survey (Baginsky and Hannam 1999), which showed that pupils were optimistic about the potential for school councils to improve relationships between pupils (73 per cent). Half felt that school councils could also secure an improvement in the relationships between staff and pupils (see also Bell 2003).

Some pupils felt that having a school council had had a positive impact on teaching and learning:

- 15 per cent (309) felt that lessons were more interesting
- 10 per cent (206) believed that pupil attainment had improved
- and a further 10 per cent that pupil behaviour had improved.

Over half the pupils surveyed, 55 per cent (1,329), agreed that “every school should be required to have a school council”. A very small proportion, 6 per cent (145), disagreed with the statement, while 22 per cent (532) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Seventeen per cent (411) stated they did not know/did not provide a response. Girls were more likely to support the statement than boys (60 per cent against 50 per cent), as were younger rather than older pupils (60 per cent of the Year 7 pupils supported the statement against 49 per cent of the Year 11 pupils).

When asked to give a reason for their response, those who agreed with the statement valued school councils for giving pupils a say in school life and improving communication and relationships within school. Those who disagreed with the statement felt that school councils could be ‘a waste of time’, that such frameworks did not mean that pupils were listened to, and that councils did not always reflect the views of the majority of pupils.

Such comments are understandable when considered alongside those on the degree of involvement the pupils had had with their school councils. Of the 2,059 whose school had a school council, 43 per cent (885) had helped to choose their *year* council representatives. Only 20 per cent (412) had helped choose their *school* council representatives. Only 15 per cent stated that their school council representatives had talked to them about their views on areas of work the council was involved in, and only twelve per cent had been asked by their school council to vote on an issue. Twenty-three per cent (473) said that they did not know what changes had happened at their school as a result of the school council.

A further nine per cent of the respondents commented that it was the responsibility of teachers to make school decisions. A small number of pupils highlighted the point that pupils might not be interested in, or comfortable with, participating in provision such as school councils.

Overall, then, the survey findings suggest that, while the majority of pupils are positive about having a school council, the experience of a significant minority has not been what it might have been. The pupils’ comments indicate that this may be due to deference to staff or cynicism – both reflecting the relative novelty of notions of ‘pupil voice’ in schools in England and the need for schools to continue to refine their practice in relation to pupil voice.

Independent schools survey

There is very little public information available on pupil voice in the independent schools sector.

The research team interviewed one independent school head teacher who has been prominent in debates around pupil voice. This respondent was of the view that the independent school ethos was often tied to notions of pupil responsibility

as much as pupil voice – through, for example, prefect systems or cadet forces. But they also noted a more libertarian tendency in some parts of the sector, associated, at one end of the spectrum, with schools like Summerhill (see Vaughan 2006).

The survey of independent schools provided a broad indication of practice within the sector (selected charts are provided in Annex F). Of the 108 schools that responded 92 per cent (99) did have a school council. Just six per cent (6) did not have a council. The remaining two per cent did not know if their school had a school council.

Other provision noted by the respondents included representation of younger year groups by older pupils, ad hoc or issue-specific pupil/staff committees, house councils, peer mentoring and suggestion boxes. Some respondents noted that such provision was for pupils to raise issues, rather than to make decisions.

The most common reason for these schools to introduce provision for pupil voice was to enhance pupils' social and emotional skills:

- 71 per cent (76 schools) selected this as one of their two main reasons for introducing a school council/other provision
- enhancing citizenship and improving school facilities were the next most common motivations, both selected by over 50 per cent of the schools
- only 10 per cent (11 respondents) made any connection between their school council and the improvement of teaching and learning – though 16 per cent (18) made a link to the personalisation agenda.

Other comments made by the respondents highlighted an objective among schools to give pupils a sense of ownership of their school and a sense of belonging to the school community. One respondent questioned what they felt was the current emphasis on 'pupil rights', wanting their council to help pupils respond to the needs of a community and realise that they have the capacity to do so. This respondent suggested that the development of a sense of responsibility was more conducive to developing greater maturity among pupils.

The issues that these school councils are typically involved with tend to be related to the school environment/facilities:

- 92 per cent (97 respondents) said that their school council dealt with school environment issues
- 86 per cent (91) said that their council looked at school facilities matters
- 26 per cent (28) reported that their council looked at teaching and learning matters

- School uniform, food and extra-curricular activities were also selected by around two-thirds of the respondents.

Community service work and charity fundraising were also mentioned, as was the development of school policies, particularly around behaviour.

A significant majority of respondents felt that having a school council/other provision had encouraged pupils to be more engaged in their school – 91 per cent (96 respondents). Fifty-one per cent (54) felt that decisions taken by staff were better received by pupils, while 38 per cent (40) felt that relationships within their school had improved.

Other comments highlighted improvements in pupils' communication skills, confidence, leadership skills and sense of responsibility. Respondents also commented that appropriate change within the school could be initiated more quickly where pupils are involved in the decision making process.
None of the independent schools surveyed had pupils on their governing body.

7.3 Current research – feedback from local authorities

The remit of the seven local authority contacts with responsibility for pupil voice varied considerably. Three of these contacts were responsible for PSHE/citizenship and Healthy Schools, two for school improvement and two exclusively for pupil voice (one with a youth and community remit, the other with an education remit). This final job role was noted by the contact to be unusual across local authorities. One of the contacts was a SCUK trainer for their authority's schools. Across the seven contacts, the authorities' work in relation to pupil voice – in terms of development work, links to ECM and other consultation with young people and support to schools – varied considerably. Some of the contacts had a key role in linking provision for pupil voice in schools with local forums for young people, others did not.

One local authority contact had conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis with pupils from a number of schools. Some of the pupils' comments were positive: they welcomed the chance to offer their views and were pleased where action was taken as a result. They also noted the opportunity to meet other pupils and develop new skills. However, these comments were significantly outweighed by the criticisms pupils made of their school councils:

- no teacher or student commitment
- lack of awareness among stakeholders about what the school council does
- no clear purpose or role
- not focused on what is important to pupils

- not being informed about things
- poor organisation and team work
- poor communication between school council and governors
- no control over budget
- no follow-through on school council suggestions.

The comments are supported by the findings of a survey by Alderson (2000): in a survey of 2,272 pupils from 49 schools in the UK, she found that, while about half the pupils said they had a council, less than a fifth said they thought they had an effective council. Similarly, in his in-depth study of pupil voice in two schools, Wyse (2001) found that children's opportunities to express their views were extremely limited even where councils existed.

While the comments listed here are significantly more negative than those we encountered in our own school visits, there were examples of pupils raising similar concerns. The MORI survey findings similarly revealed a level of ambivalence among pupils regarding school councils. However, the weight of evidence in favour of school councils and provision for pupil voice more generally highlights the need to encourage and support more effective practice in schools rather than to dismiss the potential of involving pupils in decision making.

7.4 Current research – young people's participation outside school

Many school councils are linked to local, regional and/or national forums, the main example of which is the UK Youth Parliament. Although this work was not part of the remit of this research, some brief comments are made here as it has potential implications for the ways in which school councils come together locally or nationally and for the extent to which there should be a common approach to school councils.

UK Youth Parliament

Launched in 1999, the aim of the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) is to give young people aged 11-18 a voice in relation to local and national Government, providers of services for young people and other relevant agencies.

Each local authority represents a UKYP constituency, and 87 per cent of the authorities across England are currently represented on the UKYP (representing approximately 90 per cent of young people in England). This means that there are currently over 300 elected Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) who represent young people from a variety of backgrounds, and with physical and learning disabilities.

Once elected, MYPs work to identify the issues of concern locally, regionally or nationally and then address them through targeted campaigns. Recent campaigns have led to the establishment of a youth board to monitor the media's portrayal of young people (in partnership with Ofcom and the Press Complaints Commission), and to work with the Metropolitan Police Service to alter their Standard Operating Procedure on stop and search to ensure young people are treated with respect on the streets.

www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk

The research team came across many examples of local youth forums and youth parliaments, which provided a way of linking up representatives from schools and youth organisations. Where there were well developed school councils throughout an area, this provided a vehicle for contacting young people for statutory and other consultations on a systematic and broadly representative basis. In one northern city, for example, the youth parliament has an upper house with representatives from secondary school councils and a lower house with primary school representatives. They played a major role in consultations on the schools and young people's plan, while the youth 'Prime Minister' was seconded during one summer to work with the City Council on the local Building Schools for the Future programme. Such arrangements are made easier by a common pattern of school councils, which was one of the arguments for introducing a common approach across Wales (see section 9). Common arrangements nationally could also facilitate communication of national pupil opinion to bodies such as the Office of the Children's Commissioner.

8. School case studies

This section presents seven of the detailed case studies undertaken as part of the research. They cover a mixture of infant, primary (JMI), secondary and special school studies.

These case studies were selected from the total sample of 15 on the basis that they provided contrasting approaches, including some particularly innovative ones.

The findings from the other eight case studies inform the remainder of the report, together with insights into provision at other schools as reported in, for example, Davies et al 2006a, SEED 2005. (Another of the case studies can be found in section 10, while the field notes from the remaining studies are provided in Annex G.)

8.1 Secondary schools

Sydney Russell Comprehensive School, Barking and Dagenham

Sydney Russell Comprehensive School is a large mixed comprehensive community school for pupils aged 11-19. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average, as is the percentage of pupils with statements. The majority of pupils are of white UK heritage, though the percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is higher than average. Pupils enter with particularly low levels of literacy skills. Many pupils also arrive lacking confidence and having a low sense of self-esteem. The area has a very low percentage of adults with higher educational qualifications and many have very low educational aspirations, coupled with aspects of deprivation. [10]

Driver/perceived benefits

Active learning for citizenship and school improvement are the main drivers for this school's provision for pupil voice.

The school reported that it was pleased with the impact of its pupil voice provision. Examination results have risen by 27 per cent in eight years, this in a challenging neighbourhood. As indicated earlier in the report, it is not possible to claim a cause and effect relationship, but these school leaders felt pupil voice provision was part of what had brought about the rise in their school's results. They felt that pupil voice was a positive step forward for schools' management of pupil behaviour and attainment, moving schools on from sanction- and reward-based measures.

[10] Background information for all the case study schools is taken from their most recent Ofsted reports and information provided by the schools through their websites and during the school visits.

Constitution
The school council is made up of two pupils from each tutor group. The council often splits into smaller forums, e.g. including just the Year 7 and 8 councillors. The school also includes pupils on a range of committees covering all aspects of school life. There is a separate sixth form committee.

Organisation/processes – including involving whole school
The council meets twice a term, with the smaller forum meetings happening in between. After each meeting the relevant councillors report back to their form group on issues discussed.

Agenda/achievements
The agenda is shaped in part by planned policies/initiatives by the school, on which pupils are invited to comment. It is also determined by the issues that pupils have raised – directly with councillors or through the 'Student Voice' email facility, which is outlined below.

Other provision for pupil voice/responsibility
At Sydney Russell, the school council is coupled with two other main strands of pupil voice activity – the 'Student Voice' email facility and 'Senior Student' positions of responsibility within the school.

Every computer desktop in the school has a Student Voice facility. This allows pupils to email (anonymously or not) suggestions, requests, thanks or complaints to senior staff. The emails go to the deputy head and the pupil development lead teacher, who pass them on to the relevant members of staff.

Since this facility was introduced in 2005, pupils have sent around 1,000 emails. Most commonly, pupils use it to make requests or suggestions. Requests include air conditioning in the exam hall and larger library allowances. But many pupils have emailed to give positive feedback. Pupils have also used it to alert staff to personal issues. The school has only received about ten emails that have been inappropriate.

The school uses one-to-one meetings or assemblies to report back to pupils on action being taken in response to their comments. There is also a daily bulletin which goes to all pupils. The school is thinking of making more use of the facility, for example, using it for whole school consultations with pupils.

Student voice emails feed into the work of the school council, with the council asked to look at particular requests and suggestions as appropriate.

'Senior Students' is a system of responsibilities for pupils who want to contribute to the life of the school. The idea stems from the pupils themselves: in 2004 a small group of Year 11 pupils asked the senior management team if they could help around the school and made suggestions for roles and responsibilities.

Current areas of responsibility include work to support subject areas (e.g. supporting the after school PE club), improving the school environment and the management of school buildings at break times.

Each post is advertised in a booklet available to all pupils. Pupils produce a short application statement for the post they are interested in. They are then interviewed and those who are successful receive training.

In addition to role-specific training, there are a number of expectations of Senior Students around setting an example for other pupils to follow and being ready to offer support to peers when appropriate. Team work is an important part of being a Senior Student and the school looks for this quality when making appointments. Some Senior Students progress to become leaders of ad hoc projects.

Senior Students take an active part in the day to day running of the school and act as role models in terms of behaviour and attitude. They are ambassadors for the school. As the recruitment booklet states:

> Senior Students are our representatives. They help to make our school a better place by supporting pupils and staff. They do this by being helpful, volunteering when needed and taking on a position of responsibility.

The system has grown in size and strength over its first two years, with teachers' trust growing in pupils to assist in the daily running of the school. Last year, the school received over 100 applications for around 30 Senior Student positions.

Across all pupils, improved behaviour is encouraged by the after school clubs, which pupils buy into through a merit system, and which they can potentially assist in running.

Training

Training tends to be focused on those taking on Senior Student roles, where pupils receive guidance in relation to the particular tasks they will be undertaking.

Pupils' views

Pupils confirmed that they feel they have a say in what happens in their school and are listened to by staff.

Nailsea Community School, North Somerset

Nailsea is a relatively large mixed community comprehensive school in a small semi-rural town. Pupils range from age 11-18. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with statements of SEN. It is a Leading Aspect[11] school in 'active citizenship'.

Driver/perceived benefits

Nailsea has had a school council for over forty years, which supports its long-standing ethos of involving pupils in decision making. Of all the case study schools, Nailsea now appeared to use its pupil voice provision as a means of ensuring it was meeting pupils' needs. This links to the school improvement and personalisation drivers outlined in section 5.

Like many councils, this one tends to focus on facilities and environment issues. But, in addition to the council, the school conducts regular course evaluations and more general teaching and learning consultations with pupils through surveys and focus groups.

Constitution

The council is chaired by the two school presidents. These pupils are joined by two councillors from each year group. All are elected through an election campaign and secret ballot. Teachers as well as pupils vote in the presidential elections.

Organisation/processes – including whole school involvement

The council meets fortnightly at lunchtime. A senior member of staff attends each meeting, usually the deputy head. Other staff attend on an ad hoc basis for relevant items.

The council links to the whole school through feedback during tutor groups. It links to the school governors through the presidents, who attend governing body meetings. The presidents also attend local area meetings designed to give young people a say in decision making across the local authority. Teachers reported that such links can be useful in adding momentum to what is happening with pupil voice in school.

Agenda/achievements

While staff can request an item for the agenda, pupils are in charge of the agenda and lead the meetings. Areas in which the council has been involved include dealing with pupil requests (e.g. for clubs, events or fundraising), influencing school spending on facilities, writing the code of conduct and shaping the reward system.

[11] The Leading Aspect Award was designed with, and by, educational practitioners as a means to recognise leading practice that exists in schools, families of schools, higher and further education institutions, behaviour support services, foster care and secure accommodation.

Other provision for pupil voice/responsibility
The school already uses pupil outcome data as part of its line management reviews, which it has found 'opens up a new dialogue between staff'. The school intends to involve more pupils in this process and make the links between pupil voice and teacher evaluation more explicit. This is likely to involve pupil observation of lessons.

Pupils are already involved in staff appointments. Having attended a short meeting with each candidate they feed back their views to the appointment panel, for example, on how the candidate relates to young people.

In response to ECM, the school now conducts enjoyment audits. Pupils say how they feel at the start, middle and end of lessons. The school follows up the survey findings through focus groups. The senior management team believes that personalised learning will further embed pupil input on teaching and learning issues at their school.

Finally, as well as the school presidents' involvement in area-wide forums, Nailsea takes part in a peer drug education initiative that runs across a number of schools in the local authority. For this, pupils from Year 10 upwards receive training and then work with younger peer groups. Nailsea is a particularly valuable participant in the scheme as it works with local primary schools, encouraging these pupils to become peer educators later in their schooling.

Training
The school has not made extensive use of training for councillors or staff. This is partly due to the cost of training once the fees and lost time are taken into account. Staff did concede, however, that pupils could benefit from training in managing meetings and leadership in order to maximise the effectiveness of a school council, in particular in terms of the extent to which the council is raising issues that come from pupils, rather than simply taking up matters raised by staff.

Issues arising for this school council
The council noted that some councillors do not always attend meetings because they do not want to forgo their lunch break. On this basis, the council is currently considering whether to have four councillors from each year group, rather than two, to ensure that each year is represented at every meeting.

Staff were positive about the school council and could not see any disadvantage to having one in place; at worst, one teacher commented, it encourages debate.

Pupils' views
The councillors had a range of reasons for wanting to be on the council. Older councillors emphasised the opportunity to develop important skills and knowledge and noted the value of these skills for their CV/university applications.

Some had a strong sense that they were the school's customers and that, accordingly, the school needed to consult them on decisions wherever possible. Some suggested that they acted as 'market researchers' for teachers, checking/building support for a given proposal. Others saw the council as improving the relationship between teachers and pupils.

The council noted the difficulty in maintaining the interest and support of all pupils in its work, particularly where change is slow to occur.

The Blue School, Somerset

The Blue School is a large mixed voluntary controlled (Church of England) comprehensive school based in the south west. It caters for pupils aged 11-18. It serves a relatively advantaged catchment area. The percentages of pupils with English as an additional language and the percentage entitled to free school meals are below the national average. The percentage of pupils on the register of SEN is broadly in line with the national average. The school population is rising steadily, and pupil mobility is low. The school is over-subscribed. Pupils' attainment on entry is average.

Driver/perceived benefits

The current provision for pupil voice at The Blue School, which has been in place since 2001, is self-consciously innovative. Developed in conjunction with an external training organisation, Learning to Lead (www.learningtolead.org.uk), the emphasis is on providing pupils with the tools to work pro-actively in contributing to the life of the school. Membership of the school council is open to all pupils.

In practice, this provision has resulted in:

- a significant proportion of pupils directly involved in the life of the school, resulting in a growing sense of ownership and partnership that is meaningful and non-tokenistic
- improved relationships developing between pupils and staff based on mutual respect
- many parents/carers appreciative of the wide range of experiences and opportunities for personal growth their children's involvement brings
- pupils finding direction for their future and accumulating experience for future careers
- reduced levels of vandalism, especially in areas of the school where pupils are actively involved
- donations from individuals, companies and organisations

Constitution
In its first year, the project spawned a number of pupil-led teams, which began to work on projects that the pupils had identified as being important following an on-line survey. This has since grown to encompass around 23 teams and 200+ pupils, who, as part of their work in the teams, are automatically members of the school council. There is also a system of elected year representatives that runs alongside the council.

Organisation/processes – including whole school involvement
The whole school on-line survey enabled both staff and pupils to comment on their school community. The survey was launched through an assembly to engage pupils in the process. Once responses had been collated and analysed, the school held a 'This is our school' planning session to analyse the results of the survey together and enable pupils to work in tutor groups to respond to each area of the survey.

Teams were then launched in response to the main areas for action to emerge from the survey (e.g. healthy food, recycling and school environment). These self-elected teams then comprised the school council and produced five-year plans which joined together to form the five-year school council development plan.

The Governance Support Team is developing a process whereby the school council development plans are discussed and integrated into the School Development Plan (SDP). For example, the SDP includes the aim of working towards 'Dyslexia Friendly Status'. The school council Dyslexia Support Team is collaborating with the Learning Support Department to help facilitate this. The head teacher considers the contribution of the school council development plan as being on a par with development plan contributions from other areas in the school.

The pupils meet in their teams each week to plan their activities. Meetings take place during lunch times. Pupils share their achievements and ideas in the termly School Forum, which is a meeting of all members of the school council and year representatives. The teams share an office and are supported by one 'link teacher'.

The process is cyclical, and therefore available to new pupil cohorts, in that the 'This is our school' planning day is repeated with Year 7 pupils each year, and the whole school on-line survey repeated every few years.

Agenda/achievements
Amongst the more tangible outcomes of the school council's work, the Transport Team completed a school travel plan as well as successfully bidding for a £12,000 grant for refurbishing the school's bike sheds. They continue to be responsible for updating the travel plan each year. The pupils also negotiated funding from the local authority to help them establish healthy school lunches using local produce, and the Toilet Team received a grant from the local authority to go towards

refurbishment of the toilets. The Waste and Recycling Team arranged for two mini on-site recycling centres to be supplied by the county council.

The Energy Team has launched an 'Energy Watchdog scheme', training 'Energy Watchdogs' in every tutor group to encourage both pupils and staff to remember to save energy. The Dyslexia Support Team have created a booklet to support teachers' understanding of the needs of those with dyslexia and are now trialling a system of feedback forms from pupils to teachers about each module of work. The Africa Link Team has supported the building of a school in Ghana, now named 'The Blue School'. The Poly tunnel Team and various garden teams have created a garden area. They grow vegetables which are used for school lunches or sold to staff and parents. The Learning Support department uses the garden as a resource so that their pupils can enjoy caring for a garden.

The school is currently working towards Healthy Schools status. As part of this, the school council has been instrumental in encouraging fellow pupils to help the school reach the targets set by the Healthy Schools programme.

Other provision for pupil voice/responsibility
In addition to the elected year representatives there is a prefect system in which teachers appoint pupils.

Training
Before embarking on their work, each new team receives an initial day's induction and training session, run by Learning to Lead. In subsequent years, teams take a morning to review their work and the way they are working together. Pupils learn team working and facilitation skills, agenda planning and minute taking, collaborative decision making, planning, goal setting and budgeting, the distinction between governance, management and action and the meaning of accountability, transparency and responsibility.

In addition, the school has held a number of 'sharing days' with local schools. These events showcase the work of the pupil voice provision in place and what the pupils and school as a whole have achieved through it.

Learning to Lead is now working with three other schools in the area to help implement this model of pupil voice provision. Two of these schools have received funding for the training provided by the Local Community Foundation's Local Network Fund. One school continues to fund this work itself.

Issues
The school has had to encourage teaching staff to see the benefits to their learning of pupils' work on school council matters. The school has put formal processes in place to authorise occasional pupil absence from classes to take part in school council/team work – such as participating in the 'sharing days'.

Pupils' views
Pupil feedback on the provision has been very positive: in terms of contributing to their school, the development of social and emotional skills and seeing citizenship in action.

8.2 Infant and primary schools

Hampton Wick Infant and Nursery School, Richmond upon Thames

Hampton Wick is a small mixed, over-subscribed infant and nursery school based in greater London, catering for pupils aged 3-7. When pupils enter the reception classes in the year of their fifth birthday, attainment is above average. Hampton Wick was the first school in its local authority to have a school council for younger pupils.

Driver/perceived benefits
The school's head teacher is a strong advocate of pupil voice as a means of enabling pupils to develop a sense of ownership of their school. Other reasons that the head gave for introducing provision for pupil voice included: the need to trust pupils as well as providing opportunities for pupils to take on new responsibilities and learn life skills, from to learning about democracy to participating in meetings and developing a sense of fairness.

Constitution
The main strand of provision for pupil voice is the school council, in which the vast majority of the 60 Year 2 pupils are involved. The head always chairs the meetings.

The school has kept an open school council format as it feels this is best for younger children. Pupils who choose not to attend the council meetings, may prefer to be outside at break times, or perhaps are not ready for the structure of the school council, for being part of a team and contributing in meetings. The school ensures that these pupils have other related opportunities.

The council members are currently able to involve the Year 1 children by consulting them on particular matters (e.g. playground toys), but staff continue to look at how to involve these pupils more in school decision making.

Organisation/processes – including whole school involvement
Meetings are held on a weekly basis and last for around half an hour. Pupils are happy to attend meetings even though they are often held during their lunch break.

Agenda/achievements
Work undertaken by the school council includes helping to write the school rules, assisting with the design of a questionnaire survey for pupils and choosing equipment for the school. The council has also helped to organise a number of school fundraising events in the local community.

Other provision for pupil voice/responsibility
Two other opportunities for pupil voice at Hampton Wick include a buddying system and opportunities for older pupils to help staff at lunchtime.

Opportunities to be involved in peer support are very popular with the pupils. Those who want to be a 'counsellor' put themselves forward. They are then asked to make a speech outlining why they should be selected, and the school holds a vote.

The counsellors have photos in each classroom and wear tabards at break time so that pupils can easily identify them. Pupils can approach counsellors for help in finding someone to play with, resolving a difficulty, or if they are injured. As well as looking after pupils at break times, the counsellors are expected to set a good example for other pupils to follow, uphold the school codes, help the head teacher and help in assemblies. They hold the post for about six weeks, when a new cohort is voted in. At the end of their time as counsellors pupils provide feedback on how to improve the system.

Taking on responsibilities at lunchtime and supporting staff in the dinner hall is also popular with pupils. Again, pupils volunteer for this post. Pupils wear a badge and help other pupils at lunchtime.

Pupils have also produced a school newspaper and held a Mayoral hot seat visit. The pupils were then invited to visit their local council chamber.

Training
The school runs its own informal training where necessary.

Issues
The head teacher emphasised that, because the school had an open/self-selecting council they have to be flexible with regard to letting pupils who choose not to be involved join in related activities. But staff balance this with the need to develop pupils' understanding of the rewards that come from taking on responsibilities and giving up time.

The head teacher also noted an issue where pupils who are used to being involved in decision making in their current school then move to a school where such a large proportion of pupils are unable to be accommodated on their school council.

Pupils' views
When asked about the work of the school council, the pupils noted the following activities: organising events, making posters, taking registers and showing visitors round the school. They felt that the following skills were important in relation to being a school councillor: communication, caring for others, being fair, resolving problems, leadership and using IT. They also recognised that they were learning to vote.

Sandfield Close Primary School, Leicester

Sandfield Close is a large mixed, maintained JMI primary school based in the East Midlands, catering for pupils aged 4-11. The number of pupils who are entitled to a free school meal is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special needs is average. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is very high. The ability of the pupils who enter the school is average, though many pupils need extra support in English.

Driver/perceived benefits
The head teacher explained that this school council was primarily for the purpose of developing democracy in school and making pupils feel more involved in their school.

Constitution
There are 12 councillors, who each serve for one year. While this school uses discussions of the qualities that councillors need, it felt that secret ballots are too formal for younger age groups. In some classes, then, decisions about who is to be the class councillor are made through open discussions guided by the teacher. The school waits until a few weeks into the new school year to get younger councillors involved. Although there is no representative for the reception class, these pupils are consulted wherever possible.

Organisation/processes – including whole school involvement
The fortnightly council meetings are run by the head teacher. To avoid a situation where pupils are missing particular lessons on a regular basis, meetings are held in the lunch hour. All councillors come to meetings without having to be reminded. Staff attend on an ad hoc basis for relevant items.

Councillors are made known to pupils by their school council badge and photograph on the council notice board. There is good two-way communication between the council and tutor groups, which has been improved by better reporting on meetings.

To solve the problem that some of the younger councillors could find it difficult to report back to their class about what the council had been discussing, the head now writes up the minutes in a narrative style, covering what was discussed and next steps. Now the pupils have a fuller record to help them inform their class,

while the narrative style means the teachers can help them explain issues to the class. This approach has the added benefit of involving all teaching staff in the work of the council.
The head also reports on school council matters at staff meetings, while the school newsletter to parents/carers often contains council news. Findings from other pupil consultations are also sent to parents/carers. Governors on the school's teaching and learning committee sometimes attend council meetings.

Agenda/achievements
As outlined above, for this school, the council is about developing democracy in school and making pupils feel more involved in their school. On this basis, the head teacher guides the work of the council to keep it away from low level issues that would typically be covered by form captains and similar roles. In part to keep the council focused on whole school issues, its work is explicitly linked to national initiatives – such as Healthy Schools accreditation or assisting with pupil consultation around the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and School Development Plan (SDP).

Councillors were asked to consult their classes to find out what the children really liked about their school and areas which they thought could be made even better. The lists were compiled into one document, sorted under broad headings, by the school council. There was some discussion about what was actually realistic, achievable or affordable. The school council then prioritised the areas for improvement. The two priorities selected for action were improving the playgrounds and increasing the range of after-school clubs. The pupils' lists of things they really like about the school and areas which they think could be improved now forms part of the school improvement plan for the coming year.

Councillors are also ambassadors for the school, charged both with setting a good example to, and helping, pupils and with meeting visitors to the school.

Other provision for pupil voice/responsibility
As indicated, the school makes use of whole school surveys. The school also has a buddying system in place, where nominated pupils provide support to their peers during break times.

Training
Meetings early in the year are necessarily concerned with helping pupils to understand how to behave in, and run, a meeting.

Issues
This school saw an earlier manifestation of its council fade away and has addressed the problem by introducing a more formal structure.

Pupils' views
As in the majority of other primary schools included in the research, the pupils enjoy being on their council and were keen for their secondary school to have a council and similar opportunities for inputting into decision making. Pupils looked forward to what they perceived would be much bigger issues to get involved with. They acknowledged the much larger size of secondary schools, but still felt that a school council was an appropriate mechanism for giving pupils a voice in these schools.

8.3 Special schools

Danecourt School, Medway

Danecourt is a special school based in the South East. It caters for pupils aged 4-11 with moderate learning difficulties, though some have more complex learning needs.

Driver/perceived benefits
This school's council has been running for almost five years. Its introduction stemmed in part from the Healthy Schools initiative and its emphasis on pupil participation in school decision making. But it also stemmed from the head teacher's concern to counter perceptions that pupils at the school could not be given such a voice. Staff have become increasingly supportive, partly because of the more general shift towards active learning.

For the link teacher, other benefits of having provision for pupil voice include:

- improved self-esteem of pupils
- enhanced PSHE/citizenship provision
- the presence of role models and ambassadors for the school
- the contribution to the school's aim to run as near as possible to mainstream schools
- accessing the ideas and insights of pupils.

Constitution
The current council is made up of one elected pupil from each year group. They meet once a month and serve for a year.

Organisation/processes – including whole school involvement
The head originally ran council meetings; it is now the deputy head's responsibility, and she both organises and chairs the meetings.

The councillors are elected through a class voting system and introduced to the school at the start of the year and their profile is raised throughout the year through assemblies and whole school events.

Councillors are supplied with a folder containing the agendas and minutes of past meetings and other information relating to the council. Attendance at meetings is good, though some councillors opt in and out of meetings, and sometimes councillors from previous years attend meetings in another's place.

At the start of each meeting the chair reminds members of the rules and regulations, doing so by going round the table asking councillors to outline a rule, e.g. taking turns, putting hands up, listening, respecting what others are saying and so forth.

The chair feeds back the council's discussions to the senior management team or the individual members of staff concerned. Governors are also aware of the council through its role in organising events.

Pupils across the school are involved in the work of the council through tutor group discussions.

Agenda/achievements

Typical agenda items include matters relating to the Healthy Schools initiative, suggestions for school clubs and school events, which councillors help to organise. The councillors also recently assisted with the design of the school's learning network pupil survey. Pupils are keen to take on new responsibilities, and the councillors often request such opportunities, for example, older pupils volunteering to help staff at break times.

For the final council meeting of the year, the deputy head holds a lunch for the councillors to thank them for their help over the year.

Other provision for pupil voice/responsibility

The school regularly conducts questionnaire surveys with all pupils. As indicated above, the school ensures that there are other chances for pupils to be more involved in the life of their school by creating positions of responsibility, e.g. opportunities to assist teachers or through buddying systems.

Training

For the first meeting of the year councillors discuss what the meetings will involve and the format they will take, the need to communicate with their peers and help one another.

The chair makes use of some of the resources available from national organisations and recommended that schools access these to get ideas.

Issues
The main difficulty in running the school council that this school reported was the lack of time. Other issues included the difficulty in pitching an issue when the age and ability range of councillors is very wide. Pupils can also be impatient for change.

Bradfields School, Medway

Based in the South East, Bradfields is a special school for pupils aged 11-19 with mild to moderate learning difficulties. It provides education for pupils who primarily experience global moderate learning difficulties but who may experience speech, language, emotional, behavioural, sensory, physical or autistic spectrum secondary disabilities.

Driver/perceived benefits
This school council was introduced by the head teacher after reading about their potential in a PSHE newsletter.

The link member of staff noted a number of benefits in having a school council, including:

- giving pupils who might have less of a voice in other contexts the opportunity to input into decision making
- realising that pupils have insights and ideas that staff might not necessarily have
- helping the school focus on issues that matter to pupils
- putting in place a formal mechanism to show how pupils' views are taken into consideration.

Constitution
The current council has nine members. Members are elected through secret ballot and serve for one year.

Organisation/processes – including whole school involvement
Each councillor has a folder containing meeting agendas and minutes, a contacts book and their meeting notes.

The council meets once a term in the lead teacher's non-contact time. Meetings are chaired by the lead teacher, with the head teacher attending for some items.

Meetings are based on the feedback received from pupils. Younger year groups raise issues for the school council during their PSHE lessons or in their tutor groups, which their tutors note and pass on to the link teacher. The councillors comment on these suggestions. They then read out and discuss the issues raised by their own classes in tutor group time. For these reasons, the school

endeavours to hold meetings shortly after tutor group meetings, so that pupils' suggestions are fresh in the councillors' minds. Decisions are then made on which suggestions to take up and next steps. The lead teacher writes up the notes from the meeting and liaises with the head or relevant member of staff on any action points, though the work of the council is regularly reported to all staff. The work of the council is also reported to governors.

Agenda/achievements
Achievements of the council to date include toilet refurbishment, tree planting and the purchase of a shelter for the playground.

Other provision for pupil voice/responsibility
The school also involves pupils on staff selection panels. Pupils help to draft interview questions, meet the applicants, sit on the interview panel and give their views to governors. In this way, pupils' participation on appointment panels has helped to improve governors' awareness of the council.

Training
In the first meeting of the year, the councillors discuss their role and the skills required in taking part in meetings.

Issues
Established over ten years ago, the current format of the council has been in place for around seven years. Like most schools, then, this school found its council losing steam and took action to reinvigorate it. Improvements include better recording of pupils' suggestions to the council and the council's discussions, as well as better communication – passing on information to all staff, not just the specific individual who will take work forward. This has helped improve teachers' support for the council, which is important given their role in helping councillors consult with their classes.

The lead teacher's advice in terms of maximising the effectiveness of a school council included the need to ensure that all staff understand what the council is and that they know about its current work, and to use assemblies and other communications to showcase what the council has achieved.

9. Policy in Wales

As outlined in the introductory section on policy developments, the formal position in England contrasts with the situation in Wales, where, from December 2005, it has been compulsory for every primary, secondary and special school to have a school council.

The provisions in Wales require the establishment of a school council in each such school to ”enable pupils to discuss matters relating to their school, their education and any other matters of concern or interest and to make representations on these to the governing body and the head teacher”. Membership of a council must include at least one registered pupil from each year group above Year 3b elected by secret ballot and the council must meet on at least six occasions during the school year. The provisions also specify that secondary schools should each have two pupils from Year 11 upwards sitting on their governing bodies.

The research team visited the Welsh Assembly Government to look in more detail at the reasons for its policies in relation to school councils and young people’s involvement in decision making more generally.

The Welsh Assembly Government’s policy on school councils is part of a much wider emphasis on young people’s participation in Wales. Statutory mechanisms for young people’s engagement at local authority level were already in place when the school councils legislation was introduced, as were, in some authorities, youth mayors. These provisions, and the school councils legislation, take an explicitly ‘rights based’ approach. To this end, they are based in the ten entitlements listed below and linked to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is also reflected in the national ‘Funky Dragon’ initiative – the name chosen by young people for the Children and Young People’s Assembly for Wales. There is a young people’s participation unit within the Assembly, as well as a consortium encompassing voluntary organisations. All policy consultations are accompanied by young people-friendly consultation documents.

Within schools, an important driver for the development of school councils has been the Healthy Schools initiative, which meant that the majority of schools had councils in place before the Assembly introduced its legislation. There was already a concern to make that provision as effective as it could be and, particularly, to help move it towards the higher rungs on Hart’s (1992) ladder of participation. The legislation that was subsequently introduced sought to ensure a baseline of provision in all schools and, beyond that, to establish greater consistency across school councils in terms of their structures and effectiveness, which could also help to facilitate networking across schools throughout Wales.

The school councils policy has been driven at Ministerial level. The Education and Lifelong Learning Minister concedes that the common approach adopted in Wales is made possible by the relatively small number of schools there compared with England. She saw as important the development of clear pupil complaints

procedures alongside the school councils legislation, so that the two provisions could support each other.

The 10 entitlements

1. Your Rights
a. To learn what your rights are and understand them
b. Make sure you are able to claim them and to understand and accept the responsibilities arising from them

2. Being Heard
It is your right to have the opportunity to be involved in making decisions, planning and reviewing an action that might affect you. Having a voice, having a choice even if you don't make the decision yourself. Your voice, your choice

3. Feeling Good
To feel confident and feel good about yourself

4. Education & Employment
a. To be able to learn about things that interest and affect you
b. To enjoy the job that you do
c. To get involved in the activities that you enjoy including leisure, music, sport and exercise, art, hobbies and cultural activities

5. Taking Part/Getting Involved
To be involved in volunteering and to be active in your community

6. Being Individual
a. To be treated with respect and as an equal by everyone,
b. To be recognised for what you have to contribute and for your achievements
c. To celebrate what you achieve

7. Easy Access
Easy access in getting the best services that you should have, locally and nationally, and to have someone available to help you find them

8. Health & Wellbeing
To lead a healthy life, both physically and emotionally

9. Access to Information & Guidance
To be able to get information, advice and support on a wide range of issues that affect your life, as and when you need it including advice and support relating to your career

10. Safety & Security
To live in a safe, secure home and community

Welsh Assembly Government

Not surprisingly, the school council legislation was developed in conjunction with young people. They gave particularly strong support to, among other aspects of the regulations, secret ballots to ensure fair elections and for a minimum number of meetings to be held a year to ensure that schools made space for their school council.

However, the Minister does not view the Welsh regulations as overly prescriptive, as some English observers do. The stipulations outlined in the School Councils

(Wales) Regulations 2005 (Welsh Assembly Government 2005b, see also Annex H) are for the purpose of identifying minimum provision for pupil voice, after which schools can develop their provision as best fits their needs. Indeed, the Minister welcomes additional provision for pupil voice around the school council. There are many areas where the Assembly Government has not made binding specifications, for example, it is encouraging rather than requiring that pupils should be involved in staff appointments, and allows local authorities to cover the school councils 'brief' as appropriate for them, rather than through a specific centrally defined post.

School councils in Wales typically focus on issues relating to the school environment, healthy food and bullying. There is, though, growing involvement in teaching and learning issues. Estyn, the schools inspectorate for Wales, has introduced training for pupils to become classroom observers.

Estyn issues general guidance on young people's involvement in decision making, monitors provision and helps to spread good practice (Estyn 2006, 2007). The effectiveness of the Welsh policy – for example, in terms of whether school councils are the best route to pupil voice, whether they have supported a rights-based approach and whether or not they can be linked to wider structures – will also be evaluated through the Ministerial Advisory Group and commissioned research. A current focus for the Assembly is to ensure that mechanisms to facilitate young people's participation, whether in school or at a local authority or national level, are representative of all young people.

Research commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government before school councils became compulsory was not designed explicitly to explore the link between provision for pupil voice and school improvement. However, it shows that schools in challenging circumstances that have improved have typically had school councils which the pupils valued (Welsh Assembly Government 2005a).

In order to support schools in developing their school councils, the Assembly worked with young people to develop a toolkit. This has now been rolled out across schools. Baseline data on current provision has been collected and this will provide a basis for future evaluation of the impact of the policy.

With regard to young people's participation beyond the school, the Welsh 'Funky Dragon' initiative appears to be more highly developed than either the UK Youth Parliament or most of the local approaches encountered in England.

Funky Dragon

Funky Dragon, the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales, is a peer-led organisation. Its aim is to give 0-25 year olds the opportunity to get their voices heard on issues that affect them. It cites the UNCRC as the basis for its work. Funky Dragon see its main tasks as ensuring that the views of children and young people are heard, particularly by the Welsh Assembly Government, and to support participation in decision-making at national level.

While the membership of Funky Dragon is constituted via local Youth Forums and Young People's Partnerships, many of the representatives have become involved through school councils.

However, there is some feeling in Wales that Funky Dragon tends to be dominated by the more articulate representatives who have so far come through school councils and that a broader basis for youth representation is preferable. A national meeting of school council representatives, separate from Funky Dragon, has recently been mooted as a context to discuss common issues specifically linked to schools and for representatives to share and disseminate good practice.

10. Issues raised by provision for pupil voice and school councils

One of the key findings to come out of the research was that schools do not always have a clear sense of their primary reasons for introducing provision for pupil voice and of what they want to achieve with it. As Fielding and Rudduck (2006) suggest, the current popularity of pupil voice can lead to surface compliance, to "…a quick response that focuses on 'how to do it' rather than a reflective review of 'why we might want to do it'" (p219). Given that the purpose of provision for pupil voice will have a bearing on the form it takes, the report now returns to the drivers outlined in section 5 and looks at the issues that schools will need to address for each to ensure that provision is fit-for-purpose. Before that discussion, however, the report looks at the issues that relate to all provision for pupil voice, and the components of effective practice that need to be addressed by all schools looking to improve their provision for pupil voice.

10.1 General issues

The main issues to emerge from the research were as follows:

- having a clear rationale for provision
- being prepared to change school ethos, structures and processes
- creating the necessary time and space for participation
- taking steps to raise the status of the school council
- linking the school council to the school's governing body
- addressing teachers' concerns
- involving all pupils
- providing training to support pupils' involvement
- refining pupil voice resources for schools.

Having a clear rationale for provision

First of all, then, schools need to be clear about their reasons for introducing pupil voice activity and the specific purpose they would like it to serve.

Many of the national organisations and local authority participants in the current research reported that it was common for school councils to be established only for them to fade away within a year or two. This was confirmed by a number of the case study schools, who had needed to take steps to re-vamp their council. Not having a clear rationale for provision will only contribute to these difficulties in maintaining effective councils. And while current Ofsted requirements may provide an additional incentive for schools to maintain school councils, the existence of a

council simply for accountability purposes is unlikely to yield significant benefits in relation to the drivers identified in this report.
In thinking about these issues, questions that schools could usefully address include:

- what are we seeking to achieve – for pupils, staff and the school?
- what short term outcomes do we want to achieve?
- what outcomes are we aiming for in the long term?
- what forms of pupil voice activity will best help us to achieve those objectives?

This process of clarification applies regardless of who is initiating formal participation mechanisms or activity – staff, pupils or other stakeholders.

It is also important to note that much of the literature for practitioners on pupil voice takes the form of advocacy rather than research or evaluation. As part of this, such literature does not generally set out clear goals for practitioners in relation to pupil voice, or success criteria against which provision for pupil voice could be evaluated.

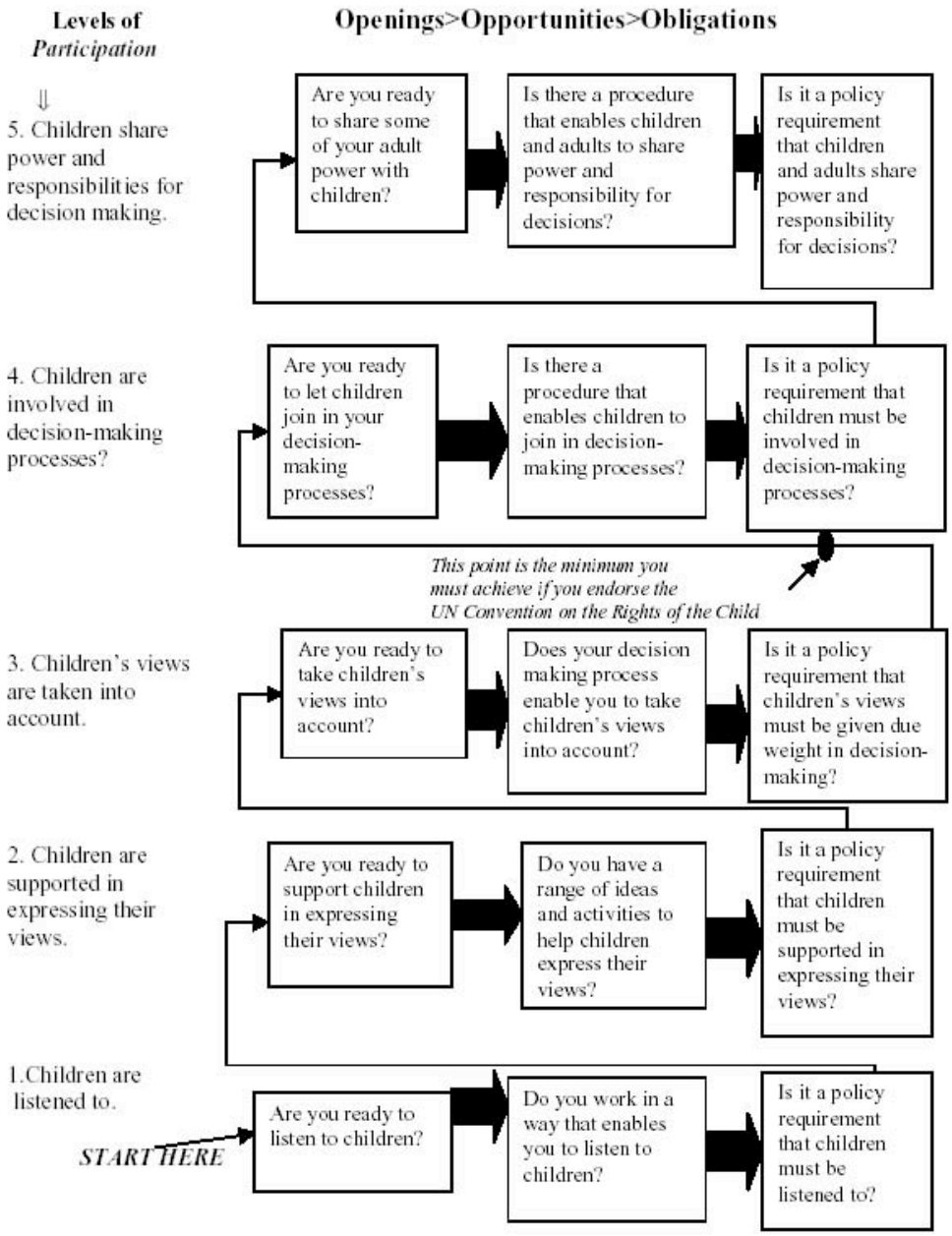
Being prepared to change school ethos, structures and processes

Section 7 provided examples of pupils' ambivalence towards school councils that emerged from the research. Local authority contacts noted pupils' cynicism when they sensed that provision was tokenistic, and the representatives from national organisations acknowledged that pupils not directly involved in their school council could sometimes be dismissive of its work. Similarly, there were indications from some teachers that a significant proportion of pupils did not involve themselves with their school council in any significant way or, in some cases, were even unaware of its existence.

As Alderson (2000) points out, a council which is seen by pupils as ineffective and tokenistic has as much of a negative impact – possibly a more negative impact – than having no council at all (see also Davies et al 2006b, Rowe 2003).

So, whatever the purpose of a school's provision for pupil voice, if it is to be effective schools will need to look at their ethos, attitudes, structures and processes to see if they are compatible with pupils' participation in decision making. As well as looking at *why* they want a council, schools need to consider whether they are *ready* for a council. The objective should be to embed participation into the culture of the school, rather than positioning it as a 'one-off' event or distinct activity.

In this respect, Shier's (2001) model of pathways to participation (below) is useful.



The framework maps loosely onto the five degrees of participation on the top half of Hart's 'ladder of participation', as outlined earlier, and the questions it poses help schools plan for greater pupil participation.

Other important questions for schools – and school leaders in particular – to address include:

- whether the climate is appropriate in terms of trust and openness – and, if not, how it could be made more so?

- who might feel (or what might be) most at risk as a result of introducing pupil voice?
- what can be learned from accounts of its development in other settings? (Fielding and Rudduck 2006, p220)

Once introduced, schools should monitor how far their pupil voice activity is democratic and whether pupils' views are listened to and acted upon by all members of the school – both adults and pupils. Such monitoring is often lacking at present. For example, from its recent review of pupil participation in primary schools in Wales, Estyn found that neither LAs nor schools had systems in place to evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts in terms of encouraging greater participation (Estyn 2007). It is also important that teachers' views are taken into account and acted upon; a number of respondents commented that teachers themselves often feel they do not have a voice, which can erode their own support for greater provision for pupil voice.

The next sections look in more detail at changes in routines and relationships that may contribute to the drive towards greater pupil voice.

Creating the necessary time and space for participation

Schools need to take practical steps to ensure that pupil voice activity is provided with the time and resources to operate effectively. Pupil voice activity, particularly school councils, can place pressure on the timetable, and the difficulties of finding time and a place for meetings is frequently raised in the literature. This can be a particular problem for schools in rural areas because of fixed transport times (see, for example, DfES/NHSS 2004).

The case study school councils met, on average, once a fortnight.
It was commented by one respondent that holding meetings every week was too frequent and did not allow for the development of agenda items between meetings, but that meetings held more than three weeks apart resulted in a loss of momentum. Many of the case study schools met at lunchtime as this was either the only time available or the longest block of time available. Some pupils, though, reported instances where councillors missed meetings. The comments from schools therefore highlighted the issue of lack of time for meetings and the tension between ensuring attendance and ensuring that lessons are not missed repeatedly, especially in one subject. Other options included using independent learning time, PSHE/citizenship lessons and circle time.

Part of providing sufficient time for the council is about finding time to discuss with pupils how they think the council is operating. The research fieldwork, in prompting meetings at which school staff and pupils came together to discuss their school council, demonstrated the benefits of such meetings – something that was not necessarily happening on a regular basis outside of this context. This links to a further point about the need to provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their pupil voice opportunities. There is a danger of focusing too much on creating

those opportunities and not allowing pupils to reflect on what they have achieved and learned through them, for example, to strengthen future pupil voice activity.

Taking steps to raise the status of the school council

Many of the school councils included in the current research were attended by the head teacher or deputy head, which demonstrated senior staff commitment. This can be very important in building support for a school's council throughout the school. Otherwise, the school councils were allocated a lead member of staff, often a member of the citizenship/PSHE team, with pupils or the lead teacher liaising with the senior management team. Other staff – teaching and support staff – typically attend on an ad hoc basis for relevant items.

There is, of course, a balance to be struck between having a (senior) lead member of staff who can provide clear line management and raise the profile of the council among other staff, and preventing the council from coming to be identified with just one person.

Status could also be accorded by giving the council a degree of freedom over the matters it is permitted to discuss and ensuring that, as often as possible, this is driven by pupils. Aside from being prohibited to talk about individual staff and pupils, there seemed to be few restrictions on agenda items among the case study schools. Typical agenda items were as follows:

- work linked to national initiatives, e.g. Healthy Schools
- school environment, e.g. refurbishment of toilets (which can often be linked to broader issues, such as bullying, intimidation, privacy, smoking – see DfES 2007), litter
- school policies, e.g. codes of conduct, rewards and sanctions, uniform
- teaching and learning issues – though this was much less common and tended to be indirect, e.g. responding to pupils' requests to be allowed drinking water in lessons.

Giving a school council some influence over particular areas of spending or spending options for a given item can influence pupils' perceptions of the council. Budgets over which the case study school councils had a say varied considerably. For example, one infant school council had received a Young Enterprise grant of £50 and a primary school council had £150 allocated to it. Another of the case study school councils had applied to their local authority for a grant to refurbish their bike shed, and received £12,000, which they took responsibility for managing. There were reported examples of school councils with much larger budgets; in one case, the school council had responsibility for their school's environment budget. It is suggested that schools might consider making available around 0.05 per cent of their overall budget as a fund to be used for activities supported by the school council. In the case of school budgets of £3m for a secondary school and £500,000 for a primary school, this would equate to around £1,500 and £250

respectively. The extent to which the school council has control of the budget will vary according to circumstances and, of course, will be partly determined by prevailing financial regulations.

Arguably more important in terms of influencing perceptions, however, is schools being seen to listen to the results of pupil voice. Something must be seen to have been done as a result of pupils' efforts or feedback (see Davies et al 2006b). This is an issue that Fielding addresses in relation to pupils as researchers, though his comments potentially apply to all forms of pupil voice work. He notes how schools tend to underplay and under-explore the later stages of such work – in terms of making meaning from the pupils' data, agreeing recommendations and suggestions for desirable changes and taking appropriate action which binds the community together in realising the desired changes (Fielding 2004, p207). Invitations to pupils to present work or discuss issues at staff meetings can be an important first step. One way of formalising this process and making a clear commitment to act on issues raised by pupils is to involve pupils in the production of the School Development/Improvement Plan. Examples of this process are provided in section 8 on the case study schools and in the additional example below.

Sweyne Park School, Essex

Sweyne Park School, a specialist science school, has a range of provision for pupil voice, which has been in place for over nine years. The school is now continuing the work of its former head teacher, who had a very strong commitment to involving pupils in their school.

Provision includes class, year and school councils, links to the governing body, a pupil newspaper, pupil hosted school events, pupil-initiated charity work and pupil involvement in staff appointments. A pupil voice wikki is also under development.

But the research team contacted the school to learn more about another aspect of pupil voice there – pupil involvement in department and whole school reviews.

Within departmental and school self review and evaluation exercises pupils from Year 7-11 form pupil panels, which put questions to staff. The school reported that this generated very helpful feedback for middle leaders. Staff view the process positively in that there is a strong emphasis on a collaborative approach between staff and pupils. More generally, the school makes on-going use of pupil discussion groups and interviews to gain insights on aspects of the school's effectiveness (e.g. regarding the learning environment).

As this indicates, pupils are also involved more directly in the production of the school's Development Plan. This is achieved most directly through an e-survey of around a fifth of the school, the findings from which are used to shape the plan.

To complete the involvement of pupils in these areas, there are links between pupils and the school's governing body. The school has found that the most effective way for them to build these links is to hold short informal meetings prior to the governors' meeting, during which pupils can highlight issues they would like drawn to the governors' attention.

The school endeavours to spread participation across all pupils by keeping a record of those that have participated.

Linking the school council to the school's governing body

Access to the governing body is similarly valuable in terms of raising the status of a council. But is it also important in helping to embed pupil voice in a school much more firmly.

A recent report by Hannam (2004) considers the particular benefits that accrue from having pupils as associate governors. These are said to include personal benefits for the pupil governors, improved profile and effectiveness of a school's school council and more effective decision making by the governing body. Hannam is clear that the use of pupil governors can support acceptance of pupil voice across the whole of the school community, seeing the potential for different opportunities for pupil participation in decision making to be mutually reinforcing. Pupil governors can also help to raise the profile of the governing body among pupils and parents.

The introduction of pupil governors raises similar issues to school councils – for example, balancing the opportunity for pupils to grow into the role and enabling as many as possible to experience the role and considering how best to equip pupils to take on this role.

Where pupils sit on the governing body it is important not just to put pupils into existing structures: two of the secondary case study schools from the current research that had pupil governors reported that even older pupils can be reticent about speaking at governors' meetings. Instead, schools must establish new working arrangements that will facilitate pupils' involvement. Pupils' preference is for informal training and support. Having more than one pupil governor at each meeting may also help to ease any anxiety they may have about their involvement (Hannam 2004).

Ensuring the confidentiality of governing body meetings is a concern that has been raised by the National Association of Governors and Managers (NAGM 2003, quoted in Hannam 2004), as well as the teacher unions that participated in the current research. Hannam found this not to be a problem at the schools participating in his project. He attributes this to the fact that none of the schools had at that point included pupils on their Human Resources committees.

Hallgarten et al (2004), provide a checklist for schools of decisions they will need to make in relation to the appointment of pupil governors:

- the number of pupil associate members – there is no minimum or maximum number
- whether associate members will serve on the full governing body, committees or both

- how associate members will be (s)elected
- how members will link with the school council
- the training and/or accreditation of pupil governors
- how existing governors will be informed and prepared (p16).

They also outline a number of questions that schools should consider when introducing pupil associate governors:

1. What are the likely needs of those pupils who become associate members of governing bodies – and how might we best meet those needs?
2. How might we ensure that associate members remain 'connected' to and representative of the wider student body?
3. What are the likely needs of current full members of governing bodies that involve pupils as associate members – and how might we best meet these needs?
4. Are there any pitfalls of associate membership, for the young people or the wider governing body?
5. How do we respond to, or pre-empt, these pitfalls?
6. Are we content that any pitfalls are more than balanced by advantages for associate members, the wider governing body, the wider pupil body and the school community as a whole (p14).

The issues listed earlier in the section and these questions are likely to be answered differently in different sorts of schools and with pupils of different ages.

The findings from the teacher survey in the current research revealed reservations among teachers in relation to the prospect of pupils sitting on school governing bodies. However, although only 35 per cent were in favour, this was in response to a question that referred to pupils as full members of governing bodies on a Scandinavian model (see, for example, Hallgarten, et al 2004). It is not clear how far the reservations relate to current arrangements for pupils as associate members or as observers on governing bodies or, indeed, whether the reservations apply equally to pupils of different ages.

Adoption of the current Welsh approach, which gives circumscribed powers and voting rights to associate governors from Years 11-13 in all secondary schools (see Annex H), would constitute a modest move beyond existing English practice, and would facilitate a more thorough evaluation of the arguments for and against more radical changes. However, given the other demands on pupils in Year 11, it may be worth considering the inclusion of Year 10 pupils or restricting the provision to schools with sixth forms. As indicated above, such an extension of the notion of pupils as associate governors would require training for pupils and those on the governing body to ensure that pupils were effective in their new role.

Whether or not this change happens, the research evidence provides strong grounds for encouraging better pupil-governing body communication by a variety of other means. As well as pupil representatives attending/making presentations to governors' meetings on a regular or ad hoc basis, this could be achieved by the head teacher reporting on school council matters at governing body meetings, by the school council issuing a regular report to the governors, and/or by governors attending school council meetings – all examples of practice to emerge from the school visit case studies. Such measures could help schools to build a stronger and more effective commitment to pupil-governing body links for the future.

Addressing teachers' concerns

Findings from both the research literature and the current research suggest that not all school staff are supportive of provision for pupil voice. National organisations in particular felt that for many schools and teachers, perhaps understandably, pupil voice becomes 'just yet another initiative'.

Whether or not as a direct result of this, it is often the case that provision for pupil voice is reliant on one or two members of staff, as was the case at some of the case study schools (see also Estyn 2007). This is problematic for two reasons: firstly, that provision becomes vulnerable should those staff leave the school; secondly, pupil voice usually requires the support of the whole school if it is to function effectively and not fade away. For instance, form tutors can play an important role in providing time for their class to raise issues for the next council meeting.

Lack of commitment to pupil voice among staff can be for practical reasons or external pressures. These include, for example, a lack of time or a concern to cover the formal curriculum. Compounding this, a number of the case study schools reported that teachers did not always see pupil voice as a learning opportunity which can feed back into academic work.

Lack of commitment may also stem from reservations about the principle of pupil voice. Davies et al (2006b) note that staff can be more concerned about the responsibilities rather than the rights of pupils and that, accordingly, a discourse of rights and political literacy is not always popular in schools. Added to this, as noted earlier, there is the issue of teachers feeling that they themselves do not have a voice in school decision making.

In turn, the research literature suggests that adults' assumptions about children and young people can be limiting. In Baginsky and Hannam's (1999) study, where teachers opposed the introduction of a council in their schools, it was mainly because teachers thought their pupils were too young to participate effectively or that pupils would be unable to adopt a wider perspective than their perceived intermediate concerns (See Grace 1995, and also Wyse 2001).

Equally, though, lack of support can be due to anxieties about the unknown and, as Fielding and Rudduck (2006) put it, the 'rupturing [of] the security of traditional power relations' (p225).

Hargreaves (2004) notes the natural suspicions among both pupils and teachers in relation to pupil voice:

> For students, the fear is that staff do not really want to listen, will only hear what they want to hear, and that 'consultation' is yet more empty rhetoric or merely tokenistic if students do not come up with the 'right' message. For staff, the nervousness is that the experience will be an unpleasant one that threatens their authority and control (p8).

Related to this, staff could also lack confidence in terms of how best to approach pupil voice activity.

Pupil involvement in teaching and learning matters may be a particular source of concern. But teacher support here is crucial if provision for pupil voice is to move beyond the school facilities/environment issues evident in the literature and the research as hitherto being the main focus of school councils and other provision for pupil voice.

One aspect of pupil voice in relation to teaching and learning that is already relatively well-established in schools, and being supported by the teacher unions, is assessment for learning. The unions that participated in the research recognised the necessity of professional development for teachers if this approach is to yield maximum benefit in terms of improving pupils' learning.

Outside assessment for learning, the involvement of pupils in relation to actual teaching and learning provision was growing among the case study schools. In most cases, though, current involvement took the form of consultation with pupils on matters *linked* to teaching and learning (e.g. having drinking water in lessons or re-arranging classrooms), or surveys on what pupils enjoyed about school. Schools were also taking more care to pass on any ad hoc feedback from pupils to staff. Elsewhere, a small number of the schools were already making use of pupil observation of classes. One school had intentionally used more disengaged pupils as observers, to 'bring them back in'. The school reported that this had been successful for informing teaching and learning, and for improving the engagement and behaviour of the pupils who observed lessons.

But wider research on pupils providing feedback to teachers on their lessons shows mixed responses from staff. Based on evidence from six teachers and their classes, McIntyre et al (2005)[12] reported that teachers found their pupils'

[12] The study explores how teachers use the ideas that pupils offer when consulted. Six teachers (two each in English, Maths and Science) and their Year 8 classes at three secondary schools were involved. The research was carried out in three stages. During the first stage the focus was on

suggestions about teaching and learning 'sensible, practical and educationally desirable'. They did, though, differ in what they did in response to those ideas. In the less successful examples, difficulties typically arose where the teacher's expectations of pupils were too high. The study concluded that training and support for both teachers and pupils is necessary if consultation on teaching and learning matters is to be effective. This is certainly an important part of building teacher support for pupil voice.

A further aspect of pupil involvement in decisions around teaching and learning is their participation in the staff appointment process. Three of the case study schools had reservations about pupils' sitting on panels for staff appointments. One saw it as tokenistic, another as undermining to professionals. One primary school felt that younger children's understanding of which candidate would be best may not be robust, feeling that children can get taken in by first impressions. However, even these schools saw the value in pupils' indirect involvement, such as asking them to think about the qualities they welcome in their teachers.

Looking at pupil voice more generally, even among more enthusiastic staff, training would be beneficial for helping them better to facilitate pupil involvement in decision making. For example, in the current research, observation of school council meetings revealed instances where staff were either too reluctant to step in, resulting in a lack of structure to discussions, or where staff tended to dominate proceedings.

Other means of building commitment to pupil voice and improving teacher effectiveness in a supporting role that were identified through the research include:

- use of case study examples to show the whole school what a school council is and can do
- attendance at local or national events on pupil voice – whether conferences or training days
- visits to other schools
- starting with small pupil voice activities – such as class consultations on a specific issue – and building gradually on these.

---

eliciting pupils' ideas about classroom teaching and learning and teachers' responses to their pupils' ideas. Six pupils from each class were interviewed individually about each of three observed lessons. Transcripts of these interviews were fed back to the teachers. Teachers were interviewed about their reactions to them. During the second phase teachers' use of pupil ideas was investigated and both the teachers' and the target pupils' evaluations of what happened were sought. In the third stage, each teacher was visited some six months later, in the following academic year, to explore how far the pupil ideas had had a lasting impact on the teachers' practice and what use the teachers were making of pupil consultation.

Over the longer term, the growing policy emphasis on consultation with young people will have implications for teacher training and continuing professional development provision (Fielding and Rudduck 2006).

The specialist initial teacher training provision for citizenship will go some way to building up the proportion of teachers with expertise in this area. The number of training places for this subject area is, however, relatively low at around 200. This means that the majority of secondary schools do not have a dedicated citizenship teacher. In its recent report on citizenship in secondary schools, Ofsted recommended that the number of initial teacher training places for citizenship should be increased (Ofsted 2006b). In the meantime, the recently introduced certificate in citizenship education for non-specialist teachers is a valuable addition.

But this issue concerns all teachers. A number of national organisation contacts felt that current provision, typically based on a 'traditional' model of the teacher-pupil relationship, does not adequately prepare teachers to work collaboratively with pupils and involve them in decision making. As Whitty (2006) discusses, this is part of a broader need to move from a 'traditional professionalism' to a 'collaborative' or 'democratic' professionalism where teachers work more closely with a range of relevant stakeholders.

Cook-Sather (2006) has addressed the challenge posed to initial teacher preparation by the emphasis on pupil voice. She suggests that rarely in teacher education is there any complicating of the dynamics of power and authority that characterise relationships between teachers and pupils. She goes on to discuss a radical approach to teacher education that encourages teachers to embrace a paradoxical model of leadership. This requires teachers to see themselves as at the same time both followers and leaders, thereby moving beyond received notions of leadership as hierarchical, top-down, and synonymous with a single person. This is about distributive leadership, where students are partners in the learning process.

An interesting example from the current research relevant here involved the appointment of pupil mentors to trainee teachers. Designed to provide trainee teachers with the perspectives of pupils, such practice is sympathetic to notions of more collaborative professionalism.

Trainee teacher pupil mentors

Established in 1998 by Nottingham University, the project provides each trainee teacher with two pupil mentors, who receive training for the role. The mentors are attached to the trainee for the whole of their 13-week training practice and all three meet regularly. The whole process is overseen by a senior leader within the school. The outcomes of meetings are shared with the senior management team to change practice across the school, while pupils' reflections are used in whole school in-service training through recorded discussions and questionnaire surveys.

The university reports that virtually all the trainee teachers believed it enhanced their understanding of teaching and learning and improved their practice. In turn, schools saw pupils grow in confidence and most become highly skilled 'pupil reflectors'. The pupils subsequently utilised these skills in other aspects of schools life – for example, as school council representatives and through involvement in staff appointments (see Mee et al 2006).

Provision through, for example, the National College for School Leadership, also needs to address the skills of school leaders in taking account of pupil voice. Smyth (2006, p282) outlines the leadership styles that support pupil voice:

- giving pupils significant ownership of their learning in other than tokenistic ways
- supporting teachers in giving up some control and handing it over to pupils
- fostering an environment in which people are treated with respect and trust
- pursuing a curriculum that is relevant and that connects to young lives
- endorsing forms of reporting and assessment that are authentic to learning
- cultivating an atmosphere of care built around relationships
- promoting flexible pedagogy that understands the complexity of pupils' lives
- celebrating school cultures that are open to and welcoming of pupils' lives regardless of their problems or where they come from.

The need for the development of school leaders in this respect was picked up by some of the national organisation participants in the current research, who suggested that training in this area should be part of the middle management and National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) programmes (see also Cook-Sather 2006, Smyth 2006).

There are also implications for non-teaching staff. In one of the case study schools, a teaching assistant ran the school council. As another of the research participants noted, the wider group of staff now in schools – from teaching assistants to youth workers – has created new opportunities for supporting pupil voice. For example, youth workers could take on a coaching and mentoring relationship with a council, one that avoids the authority relationship between pupil and teacher. However, such provision does not obviate the need for cross-school

support – and, in the absence of a truly collaborative professionalism, could militate against teacher involvement.

Estyn (2007) has now recommended that the Welsh Assembly Government encourage teacher training providers to include within their programmes consideration of pupil participation.

Involving all pupils

As the findings from the MORI School Omnibus Survey showed, it is possible for a significant minority of pupils to have little involvement with their school council, even on an informal, ad hoc basis.

There can be a tension between providing opportunities for a larger number of pupils to be directly involved in their school council, and sticking with a selected group of representatives over a number of years so that they can develop their skills and become more effective as councillors. Both of these approaches were represented among the case study schools selected for the research. This poses less of a difficulty where the majority of school pupils are involved in the work of the council on a regular basis.

There are many reasons why schools should endeavour to include all pupils in school decision making. One is the recommendations provided by Ofsted for effective citizenship provision. If a school's provision for pupil voice only involves a small number of pupils – for example, as an 'elite' group of council representatives not really connected to the school – this will be viewed by Ofsted as essentially an extra-curricular activity rather than activity that forms part of the school's citizenship provision (Ofsted 2005a). Where provision for pupil voice is primarily for the purpose of meeting these requirements, involving all pupils could simply mean participation in school council elections, opportunities to raise agenda items and being briefed on school council discussions.

Examples from the research of means of including all pupils on this basis, but also in more involved ways, are listed below. Most of these suggestions relate to school councils, which, of all the various pupil voice activities, have the greatest potential to centre on just a small number of pupils, as indicated by the MORI survey of pupils.

- *Use of hustings and similar activities as part of the process of selecting representatives*

  Among the case study secondary schools, the 'ideal type' process for selecting representatives was as follows:

  - discussion of the role of school council representatives in tutor groups/citizenship classes
  - pupils nominate themselves

- some form of hustings is run
- pupils vote in a secret ballot for one or two class representatives, who will usually serve for one year.

The nature of the hustings ranged from short speeches through to pupils running full election campaigns. Innovative practice included pupils voting on the basis of anonymous 'manifestos'. In practice, however, there was often mixed practice across classes – with teacher selection of representatives in some, selection through a show of hands in others. The process among the primary schools and special schools was often similar, though with some important differences. For example, staff reported that they found it beneficial to spend some time discussing the qualities that pupils should look for in their representatives.

- *A system of class and/or year councils in addition to the school council*

  The case study schools noted that there was a danger, particularly with school councils, of the most articulate and confident pupils being selected as representatives. With strong ideas of their own, they may not take a fully representative role. Consequently, where change is achieved, it may not reflect the wishes of pupils across the school and not gain their support. These are important reasons for taking steps to involve all pupils as regularly as possible through council sub-structures.

  Schools that had established a school council in an earlier period only for it to fade away after a year or so typically found that the introduction of more formal structures for communication were central to its new council. In most of the case study schools, then, there was now a system of tutor group and/or year councils feeding into the school council. Elections are often used for these representatives, though the process is usually more low key.

- *Opportunities to raise agenda items*

  This could be facilitated through, for example, time allotted in the school day to discuss school council matters, suggestion boxes, surgeries, or school council websites and email facilities. Due to some pupils' concerns about raising issues in front of their peers, it is important that schools have a means by which pupils can make comments anonymously, e.g. through a suggestion box.

- *Good two-way communication between the school council and the school*

  Means of enabling good communication include, for example, time allotted in assemblies, circle time, tutor groups or citizenship lessons for representatives to feedback on council discussions, or through notice boards, newsletters, websites/email, school radio or newspapers.

It was common for the secondary schools included in the research to establish a separate sixth form council so that these older pupils did not dominate the main school council.

There were, of course, examples among the case study schools of councils that were open to all pupils. Another approach from the case study schools to facilitating input from all pupils was the use of an email facility for raising issues (see section 8). Texting on mobile phones offers other possibilities for e-democracy. Such approaches open up the possibility of 'direct' democracy via referenda. In practice, though, approaches which combine 'representative' and 'participatory' forms of democracy are more common and seem to be the most effective.

A further approach to emerge from the case study schools was the focusing of the school council's work on one large project that ran for the whole year. The rationale for this approach was that it is both a way of maintaining councillors' interest – they have a longer-term project to manage and engage others in – and a way of involving all pupils.

But what of pupils who are more difficult to engage in pupil voice activity? Schools cannot hope that whatever structures they put in place will work for all groups; they must consider disengaged pupils at the outset. One solution is to put in place a variety of inter-linked structures and opportunities for participation. Many of the case study schools had found single-issue consultations useful in engaging pupils other than those directly involved in school council work. Research underlying the NHSS suggests that teaching social and emotional competences can itself play a part in making the inclusion of all pupils easier (see NHSS 2003).

It was notable that none of the case study schools explicitly noted any policy on how representative their school councillors should be – beyond ensuring that a boy and girl are nominated for each class. This is something that schools might consider when designing their selection processes.

Pupil voice for pupils with special educational needs

A small number of teaching resources have recently been produced to support the access of pupils with SEN to provision for pupil voice (e.g. for SCUK by Simon and Stone 2005, and for the Institute for Citizenship by Young 2002). However, it was noticeable that there is currently relatively little research literature on pupil voice within special schools, or on supporting pupils with SEN to participate in provision for pupil voice within mainstream schools.

Research by Blake and Muttock on pupils with SEN in mainstream settings and their access to PSHE/citizenship provision, including provision for pupil voice, is one important source of information and recommendations.
Special schools have always given a high priority to pupils' personal and social development through PSHE and citizenship. As Blake and Muttock (2004) explain:

> For many children and young people with additional needs, PSHE and citizenship is an essential part of the curriculum. It enables them to develop life skills that are important in keeping safe, ensuring inclusion in society and enabling independent living and employment (p3).

For these reasons, pupil voice activity can be particularly valuable for these pupils. It certainly has the potential to complement the work of support staff in facilitating these pupils' emotional and social development (Blake and Muttock 2004, p10). The case studies in section 8 show the successful ways in which special schools are using school councils.

Blake and Muttock note that pupils with SEN in mainstream schools may not have the same kinds of access to PSHE/citizenship provision. They may be deemed insufficiently mature to take part in school councils and other active citizenship activities or they may be withdrawn from PSHE and citizenship lessons for additional learning support. This has become a more pressing issue given the increased inclusion of children with learning disabilities in mainstream education and the changing nature of Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) provision.

Blake and Muttock go on to highlight the support that mainstream schools could benefit from in their work with pupils with SEN. Many of their recommendations stand for all pupils.

Firstly, for example, they note the value of 'up-skilling' teachers and support staff in relation to both the content and methodology of PSHE/citizenship provision, which should help them move beyond the 'safety net' of focusing on the information-giving aspects of this provision: "Guidance is helpful in setting a mandate and offering a positive context but it can only be put into practice where professionals feel confident and skilled" (p24).

In turn, schools may need assistance in designing provision for pupil voice that can accommodate a wide spectrum of abilities and disabilities among pupils. As part of this, suggest Fergusson and Lawson (2003), teachers must keep a broad view of the nature of 'participation' and develop activities that are relevant to all the pupils they are teaching. Means of gathering pupils' views might include interviews, diamond ranking, cue card prompted interview, drawing/photography, mapping, puppets/drama or filmed self reports (see Lewis et al 2005). Some pupils will require such high levels of direction and support that their participation may seem superficial. However, such pupils can nevertheless be helped to build up their 'action competence' – an awareness of their role and the skills required to be an active citizen.

A specific area for further research identified by Blake and Muttock is that of the PSHE and citizenship needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and how they might be met.

Providing training to support pupils' involvement

Another key issue – and one which the citizenship movement has failed to address adequately in the past – is preparing pupils to participate in decision making.

Most participation projects are open to all pupils. However, pupils are not the same in respect of offering a voice, with some groups of children much more likely to get involved, and get involved effectively, than others, e.g. middle class girls who feel more at ease with speaking in school and teacher contexts (see, for example, Silva 2001, Rubin and Silva 2003). Returning to the issue of disengaged pupils, Silva emphasises the need to think about which students are representing the 'student voice' of their school (Silva 2001, p98). Training for all pupils – in terms of, for example, articulating their views to authority – will help break down barriers to participation.

This is a particular issue in relation to younger children and children with communication difficulties. Practitioners should ask how the processes and mechanisms that they use influence who gets involved and who is excluded.

These issues aside, even among pupils who could be expected to be eager to get involved, pupil voice activity can be demanding and require new skills. In terms of school councils specifically, many of the councillors whom Taylor and Johnson (2002) interviewed had very positive attitudes towards their experiences. However, the researchers also found that pupils faced challenges in generating ideas, meeting diverse needs, and through personal tensions socially and as pupils. Similarly, Cotmore (2004) found that involvement in councils brought pressure to pupils in coping with new responsibility and the demands placed upon them by their peer group, combined with the prospect of missing out on some of the enjoyable parts of classroom experience. He found that staff were not always sympathetic in helping pupils to juggle their new responsibilities with their class work.

As well as help in managing their responsibilities, pupils will also benefit from specific skills training in relation to participating effectively. For school councils this will mean training on all aspects of operating a committee and being part of the school governance structure, through to running formal meetings and project management. This is particularly important if pupils are to operate pro-actively. The effectiveness of a school council is dependent on the quality of the representatives. If they do not have the right skills, they will not be able to provide a genuinely 'bottom-up' perspective from their peers, meaning that staff may have to play a greater role than they perhaps should in running the pupils' council.

The specific training needs of pupils include:

- understanding what it is to represent others – getting pupils to reflect on their own particular priorities and how they can represent the views and priorities of all pupils
- talking to authority
- public speaking/participating in meetings
- putting others at ease to speak
- listening
- diplomacy
- collaborative decision making
- team working
- managing meetings
- producing agendas
- taking/reporting minutes
- short- and long-term planning
- project management.

Team building activity may also be required, particularly where councillors/participants are from different year groups and do not know each other well.

In many cases there are relatively straightforward solutions to developing these skills. For example, one primary school uses circle time-type 'warm up' activities to get pupils listening to one another.

In turn, many of these skills requirements relate to the need for pupils to act in a mature and responsible way. If pupils are not used to being consulted on their views, as well as training they may benefit from pupil voice activity being supported and guided by staff. One example from the case study schools was the use of exam conditions when conducting a survey asking pupils for their views, thereby helping to minimise discourteous or flippant responses. The school found that as pupils became more accustomed to giving their views, and saw that their views were taken seriously, this became less of an issue.

Training is also about managing expectations. Pupils becoming disheartened at the pace of change and pupil apathy are clearly issues with pupil voice work. This can be addressed by training to a certain extent, though it may also point to the continuing need for teacher input. Many of the pupils included in the research welcomed the presence of a teacher at their council meetings as this both helped

to ‘keep the momentum of the meetings going’, and to keep pupils focused on proposals that were realistic and more likely to result in change.
Despite the acknowledged importance of training – and the fact that citizenship/PSHE is something of an ‘over resourced’ subject area, with a number of charities and NGOs developing citizenship materials – very few of the case study schools had provided any systematic training for pupils. Instead, they had typically addressed pupils’ lack of skills by introducing frameworks to guide them, for instance, templates for recording minutes. It was also notable how some of the schools relied on co-opting former councillors back onto the council to make further use of their skills.

Examples of training that had been undertaken included visits to the local council chambers to observe a formal meeting, visits to/from other schools, use of external training in schools, or pairing with a local university to provide training in school. In this last example, the training was recorded on film so that it could be used with other groups of pupils, thus overcoming some of the cost associated with training. It also has the potential to help alleviate another concern voiced by the case study schools – that of the repetitive nature of inducting new council representatives and enabling pupils to understand what kind of proposals are realistic. Pupil voice websites would be another way of reducing the cost of training (see, for example, www.schoolcouncilswales.org.uk).

The schools that had used external trainers felt that this worked well because the trainers had a different relationship to the pupils than school staff. Sometimes this training was undertaken by the local authority (e.g. through the Healthy Schools or citizenship adviser), though, as outlined earlier, the research revealed mixed levels of support from local authorities for this purpose.

Training days away from the school are obviously also available, and one of these events was attended as part of the research. Schools at this event reported that it can be useful to take pupils out of their immediate environment, which can engender a sense of responsibility. Other providers of resources and training who participated in the research noted that such events were more helpful in inspiring pupils and increasing their confidence about getting involved in school decision making – and perhaps identifying the skills they need – rather than in actually developing those skills. Even in this, though, they can be a valuable first step.

Ideally, such training – and, indeed, pupil voice opportunities – will continue throughout pupils’ school career, thereby extending their skills and personal effectiveness. This relates to a broader issue about the transition and progression of pupil voice within and between schools as pupils move through the education system, particularly with regard to the transition between primary and secondary schools, and secondary schools and post-16 providers. Both the current and existing research suggest that participation is uneven in this respect. As the proportion of primary schools with provision for pupil voice grows, and with this the expectations of primary pupils, so pressure builds on secondary schools to enable

pupils to continue to contribute to school decision making. Pupils who have only recently moved up to secondary school may need particular encouragement and support if they are to get involved in provision for pupil voice in their new school.

Refining pupil voice resources for schools

In addition to training events, there is a growing range of resources to support teachers and pupils working with school councils. Many of these have been produced by SCUK with DCSF/Innovation Unit support and have been found very useful in meeting many of the current needs among schools. For example, see SCUK's online network, which allows schools and their councils to talk to each other and share good practice. This site provides other free downloadable resources to help schools improve the effectiveness of their councils (see www.schoolcouncils.org). However, not all of the case study schools were using – or even aware of – such resources and a few teachers felt them to be biased towards a particular approach to pupil voice.

The reach of these materials and their legitimacy with teachers might be enhanced if future resources were to be produced jointly by SCUK (or other advocacy groups) and teachers' associations. The teacher unions that participated in the research felt strongly that this would be the case. This would also be consistent with the strategic aim of SCUK to develop stronger relationships with other organisations, including teaching unions.[13] As part of this, SCUK is already working with unions to explain the potential of school councils for happier and healthier schools and is beginning to hold joint training workshops with some of them. Another possible partner would be the National College for School Leadership.

Resources are also available from other bodies, including those promoting citizenship education. Support for high quality resources from a variety of sources should be encouraged. One recent example is the Citizenship Foundation's comprehensive introduction to effective citizenship education in secondary schools (Breslin and Dufour 2006). Another example is the four short films on schools councils produced by Teachers' TV.

However, it is important that school councils are not seen as dominated by teachers and their concerns and it is equally important to engage pupil representative bodies, such as the English Secondary Schools Association (ESSA), in developing, evaluating and disseminating resources.

Resources for teachers and pupils on practice with school councils in other countries could also be helpful, while details of practice in England and Wales could usefully be shared with others. To this end, the Council of Europe has

[13] Teaching unions are already producing relevant material themselves, e.g. National Union of Teachers (2007) *Pupil2Pupil: peer coaching – "when Harry helps Sally [and vice-versa]"* London: National Union of Teachers.

recently developed a tool on democratic governance in schools (Bäckman and Trafford 2006). Other materials could be developed from the recent QCA/NFER report on approaches to active citizenship in the countries involved in the International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks Internet Archive (INCA) (Nelson and Kerr 2006).

Despite the importance of guidance and good quality resources for schools, a recent Estyn report (Estyn 2007) usefully highlights the potential danger that such resources lead schools to develop new and burdensome activities for participation rather than concentrating on the more fundamental - and ultimately more productive - approach of embedding a culture of participation in their core work of educating young people.

10.2 Priorities for the different drivers for school council provision

This section uses good practice recommendations from the existing literature and the current research to provide a summary of the particular considerations schools should address depending on the main driver for their pupil voice work.

Children's rights

As the MORI survey of pupils indicated, young people can be unsure about their right to have a voice on particular issues and sometimes reticent about giving their opinions. This is often because they are simply not used to being asked for their views and, consequently, are unsure whether they will be taken seriously. This means that teachers, and parents/carers, have a role in helping young people to feel able to comment on a wide range of issues.

Schools introducing provision for pupil voice as a result of a particular concern for the principle of children's rights must ensure that provision is fully embedded in the school, in terms of links to decision making structures and support from all staff and pupils. They must also take steps to ensure that all pupils are equipped to participate effectively in school decision making. This means providing training for all pupils and making available different means of inputting into decision making. In this respect, the form that provision for pupil voice takes is less important than the principle of pupils' right to have their views taken into account and of supporting them to this end. However, this should still acknowledge pupils' right to privacy and right *not* to participate in pupil voice activity (Davies et al 2006c).

Across many of the case study schools provision for pupil voice involved links with the local community – whether through area-wide youth forums or the Youth Parliament network, issue-specific consultation conducted by the local authority, or through community work and fundraising. Participants in the research reported that links between a school council and wider youth forums can be very beneficial in terms of reinforcing what is happening in school, in part by strengthening pupils' sense of entitlement (see also Wyness 2006).

Under this model there is a particular need to clarify the relationship between children's rights and parents'/carers' rights in relation to decisions about schooling – between pupil and parent voice. This is a significant consideration given the potential for tensions between the two, particularly with older pupils.

Finally, it was apparent from the current research that there is an uneven understanding across schools as to the centrality of pupil voice to the ECM agenda, itself focused on the recognition of children's rights through its five outcomes for children: to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. Schools might find it beneficial to link their provision for pupil voice to planning around ECM.

Active citizenship

The obvious requirement for pupil voice established for the purpose of encouraging active citizenship is direct links to the citizenship curriculum. In this, schools are also able to bring skills training related to the school council to all pupils. But links can still be weak in some schools, with different staff managing the citizenship curriculum and the school council.

School councils are potentially a very useful means of helping pupils to understand democratic processes. This is particularly so where full election campaigns are run and there is consistent practice across classes when selecting representatives. As outlined, among the case study schools practice varied within as well as between schools. The unusual example of a school council election based on anonymous statements is an approach that could be expected to engage pupils in thinking about the candidates' manifestos rather than personalities.

Regular meetings, a clear understanding of where the school council fits in relation to the governance structure of the school and good two-way communication between the council and the whole school are also important practice for this model.

One issue is teachers' confidence in covering citizenship issues where they are not usually responsible for this component of the curriculum. Schools may need to make use of resources to ensure, for example, that they can get the most out of the election process (as provided by, for example, the Electoral Reform Society/Xchange, or the National Youth Agency's *Act by Right* materials, among various others).

School improvement

Where school improvement is the main driver for pupil voice it may be motivated by a concern to meet specific targets and improve a school's standing in performance tables. If so, there is likely to be an emphasis on pupil involvement in teaching and learning issues and, potentially, ECM issues.

It is unlikely that a school council alone would be sufficient to achieve such goals. Additional provision to emerge from the research included consultation on specific issues, often through pupil surveys, pupil involvement in school reviews, pupil observation of lessons and pupil involvement in staff appointment processes. In addition, the current research found examples where pupil voice activity had been useful in addressing pupil behaviour and in improving links between parents/carers and the school (see section 8). Ideally, such provision should be organised through the school council – for example, the council could help to design pupil surveys.

The current research revealed some reticence on the part of pupils in being given a voice in relation to teaching and learning matters. As Fielding and Rudduck (2006) comment:

> …in most schools it will take time and patient commitment to build open and dependable structures which will enable students and teachers, as partners, and without embarrassment, to talk about what gets in the way of progress in particular classes (p226).

Pupils' perception that lessons were not something for them to comment on could be expected to change with their ongoing involvement in consultations on different aspects of school life. The research also shows that taking steps, as some of the case study schools had done, to raise pupils' awareness and understanding of learning styles could be beneficial in terms of the quality of their reflections.

A small number of other schools raised concerns about the principle or practicalities of routinely involving pupils in the process of appointing staff. However, here too, they typically involve pupils in senior appointments in one way or another. Options include inviting pupils to:

- think about what makes a good teacher
- write job descriptions
- draft interview questions
- meet with candidates, whether through small group discussions or 'trial' lessons.

Where the candidate supported by the pupils is not appointed, it is good practice to explain the reasons why to pupils.

For these kinds of activity to impact on school improvement there is an obvious need for clear links to the school senior management team and, ideally, the governing body. Particularly important here is school council involvement in school development planning.

One of the case study schools reported that it had found provision for pupil voice useful in helping to build stronger links with parents/carers. For example, a recent pupil survey included a question on how pupils could get to school on time. Many pupils took this question home and discussed it with their family. Healthy Schools audits run by local authorities are also useful in this respect.

Personalisation

It was commented by one national organisation representative that schools have not been as open to viewing their 'users' as 'customers' and including them in decision making on this basis as, for example, the health sector. In a related point, some of the participants in the research indicated that it was rare that action stems from requests that were exclusively 'bottom-up'. Ideas and suggestions could often come from senior staff, with the school council simply a means of communicating with pupils on new developments.

Viewing pupil voice as a means of meeting customer needs, then, may well require radical changes in schools' relationship with pupils. This is certainly the case if schools are to move towards a situation where teaching and learning are co-constructed by teachers and pupils.

Again, under this model schools would need to clarify the balance between parents'/carers' and pupils' role as the 'customer'. With regard to engaging with parents/carers, this could be through fundraising and other social events or newsletters organised by pupils. Parents/carers may also be involved through surveys. As one respondent noted, pupils are keen to talk about pupil voice activity at home, so parents/carers often hear about their child's school through this provision. Such channels, as well as local authority level consultations, may be particularly important for those parents/carers who do not have a good experience of education and who are less likely to be involved in their child's school.

A summary of the priorities for the different drivers for school council provision is provided in the table below.

Driver	Priorities
Children's rights	• Provision for pupil voice that is fully embedded in the school's decision making structure • Opportunities for all pupils to be involved in decision making • Training for pupils to enable their effective participation in decision making
Active citizenship	• Direct links to the citizenship curriculum • Formal and consistent arrangements across the school for the election of representatives • Regular school council meetings, with good communication channels to and from the whole school • Opportunities for all pupils to benefit from training in relation to the school council
School improvement	• Formalised links to the senior management team • Regular involvement in teaching and learning issues and staff appointment decisions • Different forms of pupil voice activity to enable whole school involvement and to enable the school to tailor the activity to the kind of data required
Personalisation	• Pupil involvement in most areas of decision making in school, including teaching and learning issues • Consultation with pupils on a class by class and individual basis, particularly in relation to their learning • Formal links between pupil voice activity and parents/carers and the local community

11. Reflections and conclusions

The research findings reported here have indicated the many potential benefits of provision for pupil voice, including school councils, whether for pupils, schools or a wider group of stakeholders.

Such provision is an important part of a range of other initiatives that schools are currently involved in, such as Healthy Schools. It may also help schools give practical expression to greater recognition of children's rights, an area in which schools face greater obligations under the ECM agenda.

Pupil voice can enhance citizenship provision and provide additional opportunities for pupils to develop social and emotional skills which will serve them in their school career and beyond.

These skills may also impact positively on school improvement efforts. In turn, pupil input on teaching and learning matters specifically has been found, at the very least, to improve pupils' engagement in their learning.

Similarly, provision for pupil voice can support schools' work in developing personalised learning, by creating a climate of consultation and dialogue between teachers and pupils.

But, despite these perceived benefits, the argument for school councils often lacks clarity. This means that school councils and related activities are often being introduced with insufficient strategic thinking in relation to the purposes they are meant to serve and without a clear idea of success criteria against which they can be properly evaluated. This can lead to neutral or even negative outcomes.

Pupil voice can also lead to unintended outcomes. It is not just a tool to enable policy makers or school leaders to implement changes they would like to see, directly or indirectly. Genuine pupil voice requires some power and influence to be given to pupils and is, therefore, unpredictable. On occasions, pupil voice may challenge Government and teacher priorities. There is thus the potential for pupil voice to disrupt the status quo in schools. As Thomson and Gunter put it:

> The rights frame allows for more potentially disruptive dialogue since pupils are always involved in important discussions, rather than this being at the discretion of those in power… (Thomson and Gunter 2006, p845).

If handled properly, this can have positive, if sometimes unnerving, consequences. On the other hand, where there is no such potential for challenges to the status quo there is a real danger that school councils will produce a cohort of young people convinced that democracy is tokenistic and a sham. Ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of their rights, but also their responsibilities, will help to prevent any moves towards inappropriate expressions of pupil voice.

Notwithstanding these caveats, the research team have encountered some excellent, even inspirational, examples of pupil voice in action. However, these examples of good practice do not fall into a common pattern. Indeed, they vary considerably according to local circumstances. In the present stage of development, and in the absence of robust research findings on the impact of particular approaches, further encouragement of local experimentation is therefore preferable to national prescription of too rigid a model. Furthermore, in some senses, prescription of detail could be seen as being in conflict with the principles of pupil voice.

Nevertheless, the absence of *any* clear entitlement means that some pupils may be excluded from the potential benefits of provision for pupil voice. It also means that it is difficult to use such provision to access pupil opinion across local authorities or nationally. Requiring all secondary schools to have councils would potentially enable pupils in all these schools to be represented in local authority, regional and national initiatives that draw on school councils (e.g. youth parliaments). Schools would also have more of an incentive to allocate resources to pupil voice.

Accordingly, the research team believe that it is now appropriate that all maintained secondary schools should be required to have a school council, but that it would be premature, at the very least, to stipulate in any detail the frequency, membership and functions of school councils. Trade union concerns about the bureaucratic demands of the Welsh legislation, as well as the continuing need to experiment with different models, have informed the research team's position.

The research team is, however, persuaded that a statutory requirement for school councils in primary and special schools could place an unhelpful burden on a few of these schools. Furthermore, the wider representative bodies for young people that draw their membership from school councils and similar forums tend to involve only older pupils; this means that the need to ensure that every school can potentially contribute to such networks through its school council is less applicable to primary schools. For these reasons, a statutory requirement for primary schools is not proposed at this stage. The experience of a statutory requirement in secondary schools should be evaluated before any decision is made on extending it to maintained primary and special schools.

Whether or not school councils are made a requirement, provision for pupil voice should anyway be strongly encouraged through other mechanisms (e.g. guidance and curriculum, inspection and self-evaluation frameworks).

Ultimately, the key issue is how schools can embed pupil voice in their culture and ethos, rather than the particular form it takes. In developing provision for pupil voice according to local needs and what works best for their pupils, schools need to consider examples of effective practice – not least in terms of demonstrating that

it takes pupil voice seriously. The allocation of a specific budget for the school council to be consulted on is one such indicator, as is the active involvement of the council in school development planning. Links with the school governing body are also vital and these can be encouraged by a variety of means, depending on the local context and the age of the pupils involved. Indeed, the research team believes that the Government should monitor the requirement in Wales that all maintained secondary schools appoint associate governors (see Annex H), with a view to encouraging similar practice among secondary schools in England where appropriate. A requirement that all maintained secondary schools appoint associate governors from pupils in Year 11 upwards, as is now the case in Wales, would be a modest and manageable indication of the seriousness with which the Government takes the need for pupil voice in schools.

It is clear from this research that schools would indeed benefit from new national guidance to help them embed pupil voice and develop their school councils to the full. While schools were not necessarily aware of the *Working Together* guidelines, most had seen the Healthy Schools publication *Promoting Participation* (DfES/NHSS 2004). They found the practical suggestions in these publications particularly helpful and liked the descriptive case studies for showing them what other schools were doing. However, respondents did comment that the *Promoting Participation* document was out of date and insufficiently ambitious now.

Our research findings suggest that guidance will be most effective where it helps schools identify opportunities to 'double up' on tasks: for example, showing how provision for pupil voice feeds into a range of documents and processes – from drafting a school development or improvement plan, to preparing for Ofsted visits, to responding to the ECM agenda. Schools need to see pupil voice as integral to the success of their work, rather than an unwelcome or superfluous 'add on'.

There is also a need for new resources to help teachers and pupils develop their work in this field. We suggest that these could sensibly be developed jointly by bodies representing teachers and pupils. Many schools were particularly keen for the DCSF to produce or sponsor more materials for pupils, to help them understand what school councils are and what involvement could do for them.

12. Recommendations

On the basis of these conclusions, the recommendations to emerge from the research are listed below.

Recommendations to Government, local authorities and relevant agencies

Key recommendations:

(i) School councils should be regarded as just one component, albeit an important one, of overall provision for pupil voice.

(ii) The Government should require all maintained secondary schools in England to have a school council, perhaps by exercising the powers it already possesses under the 2002 Education Act. However, it should not prescribe in the same detail as the Welsh regulations the frequency, membership and functions of such school councils.

(iii) The Government should strongly encourage all maintained primary and special schools to have a school council, but any extension of a statutory requirement to primary or special schools should await an evaluation of the secondary initiative.

(iv) The Government should encourage improved pupil-governing body communication, including the appointment of associate pupil governors where appropriate, as in Wales.

(v) The Government and its agencies should encourage, through guidance and curriculum, inspection and self-evaluation frameworks, the sorts of school councils and such other means of promoting pupil voice that have been demonstrated as effective in meeting specified aims.

(vi) The findings of this report should inform the preparation of new guidance materials and exemplars to replace *Working Together* (DfES 2004) and *Promoting Participation* (DfES/NHSS 2004), and related National Strategies publications on pupil participation.

(vii) The Government should work with teachers' professional associations and other relevant agencies to disseminate good practice in relation to school councils and pupil voice more generally as an important component of personalised learning, which is now such a key strand of Government policy.

Other recommendations:

(i) The Government and local authorities, as well as schools, should be clearer about their reasons for encouraging school councils and other means of promoting pupil voice, as this will sharpen thinking about the form this provision should take and provide clearer criteria against which it can be evaluated.

(ii) Guidance should be given to local authorities on how they can best support provision for pupil voice in schools and relate it to their wider arrangements for consulting children and young people.

(iii) The Government should also encourage the development of training provision and training materials by relevant organisations. This support should include, but not be restricted to, the work of School Councils UK. Such work is likely to be particularly effective if it entails collaboration between organisations representing pupils and teachers.

(iv) In developing guidance on pupil voice, the Government and other organisations should be aware of the need for training and websites for pupils as well as school staff.

(v) The Government should work with relevant stakeholders (including the Training and Development Agency, National College for School Leadership and higher education institutions) to ensure that initial training and continuing professional development opportunities for teachers and other members of the school workforce support the development of greater pupil voice in schools by equipping staff to work collaboratively with pupils.

(vi) Further research should be undertaken in an attempt to establish more clearly any links between provision for pupil voice and school performance across a range of indicators such as behaviour and attainment.

Recommendations to schools

Key recommendations:

(i) School leaders should develop a policy on pupil voice to guide their schools' work in this area. This should encompass, but not be limited to, consideration of school councils.

(ii) School leaders should encourage and facilitate the development of school councils as a valuable component of their overall provision for pupil voice. They should try to involve their school councils in all aspects of school life, i.e. not only environment/facilities concerns but also teaching and learning issues, including behaviour policies.

(iii) Schools should include pupils in the production of their School Development Plan. Ideally, they should include a section produced by the school council in the plan.

(iv) Allocating a material budget for activities supported by the school council will help to raise a council's status within a school. Schools should consider allocating a minimum of 0.05 per cent of their overall budget for this purpose. For a large secondary school with a budget

of £3 million this would mean an allocation of £1,500 a year for school council activities.

(v) Schools should endeavour to create clear links between their school councils and their wider governance structures. As part of this, schools should involve pupils in the staff appointment process, as appropriate to the nature of the appointment and the age of the pupils.

Other recommendations:

(i) Schools need to be clear about the purposes of their school council and how it relates to overall arrangements for encouraging pupil voice (e.g. pupil surveys) and pupil responsibility (e.g. prefect systems). Schools should introduce other provision for pupil voice alongside their school council where this would be more appropriate.

(ii) Senior staff should actively support the provision for pupil voice that is introduced in their school, for example, by attending meetings on a regular basis and acting on requests where appropriate.

(iii) School councils need to think carefully about the appropriate frequency and timing of council meetings. There should be a formal timetable for meetings.

(iv) Schools should endeavour to make full use of the learning opportunities that are provided by school councils, especially in the context of their provision for citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education (e.g. in relation to the election of councillors).

(v) Schools should endeavour to include all pupils as fully as possible in the work of their school council. A sub-structure of tutor group and/or year group meetings which feed into the school council is a particularly good way of involving all pupils. Other options include print/online communications, surgeries and suggestion boxes.

(vi) Schools must ensure that they have good two-way communication between the school council and the rest of the school. From the outset, schools must consider how they will involve all pupils – including disengaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs – in their planning around provision for pupil voice.

(vii) Schools should provide relevant training for staff and encourage them to make use of national guidance and resources so that they can make the most of the school's provision for pupil voice.

(viii) Schools should equip pupils to participate in provision for pupil voice by providing relevant training/guidance. Ideally, this should be available to all pupils, not just those who have been selected as representatives.

(ix) Schools should encourage links with local area forums for young people, which are an effective way of supporting pupil voice within a school and demonstrating its relationship to wider democratic engagement.

Annexes

Annex A – Other forms of provision for pupil voice

That school councils are the most tangible form of pupil participation is both a strength and a weakness. School councils can impact positively on school atmosphere and the school environment simply in a symbolic way. By providing an immediate forum and site for consultation processes in the school, and direct involvement in decisions, they can be more effective than ad hoc or more individual efforts.

For that reason, however, their visibility means that they are controllable. On that basis, some commentators look positively on less bounded and more unpredictable forms of participation (see Davies et al, 2006b).

Furthermore, school councils typically only involve a small proportion of pupils. As indicated in the report, the use of class, form and year councils in addition to the school council is one solution to concerns about the limited participation of the majority of pupils in school councils. But still commentators suggest that school councils should be coupled with other forms of pupil participation, examples of which have been touched on throughout the report (e.g. pupil observation of lessons, pupil involvement in staff appointments). This section outlines other forms of pupil voice activity. These.include:

- buddying/peer mentoring
- working groups
- citizens' juries
- pupils as researchers
- learning walks.

Peer mentoring

Peer mentoring, or 'buddying', was very common amongst the case study schools, particularly for younger pupils. In most cases these systems were in place to help pupils who were new to the school and to monitor behaviour at break times. In a small number of schools, pupils were assigned buddies or mentors to help with instances of bullying or to help pupils who were finding it difficult to interact.

Peer mentoring is obviously different from the other forms of provision for pupil voice listed above in that it is not primarily about participating in school decision making. It does, though, often attract different kinds of pupils to those involved with, for example, school councils. It therefore offers opportunities for a wider range of pupils to take on responsibilities and contribute to school life in a broader sense.

Pupils who volunteer to be peer mentors usually receive some training – for example, in terms of listening skills, mediation, and knowing when to refer a pupil on to a member of staff.

Working groups/task forces

Working groups, or task forces, are, of course, a good starting point for schools in terms of the introduction of provision for pupil voice – not requiring a formal structure/constitution and taking the form of a discrete project.

But working groups can also be a valuable alternative or addition to a school council. The case study schools often reported that pupils welcome opportunities to get involved in decision making that are not possible when being voted onto the school council provides the only option, or where they want to look at a particular issue that concerns them (e.g. recycling, anti-smoking).

Where pupils are responding to issues that concern them, they can be more engaged and committed to the 'project'. Schools that had used working groups found that they encouraged a wider group of pupils to get involved in this kind of work.

Citizens' juries

The English Secondary Students Association, working with MORI, recently received funding from the Department for Constitutional Affairs to pilot the use of citizens' juries in schools.

- In school settings, around 15 pupils are randomly selected to form the jury. They are responsible for deliberating over a decision or issue that will affect them, such as the setting of a new behaviour policy or a proposed change to the structure of the school day.
- The jury is presented with evidence from expert witnesses – whether the senior management team, teaching or non-teaching staff, other pupils or governors.
- It then has time to deliberate and make informed recommendations on the issue.
- The recommendations of the jury must be fully considered by the school when making the final decision.

It can be seen that the process is as much a small research project as a meeting.

What is particularly positive about this method is that it allows schools to ensure that the views of a cross section of pupils are considered on any given issue, and that it allows for a relatively large proportion of pupils to be directly involved in decision making over time (Biermann et al 2006).

Pupils as researchers

Within pupils as researchers provision, there is a range of possible options, each putting pupils in a slightly different role. These are:

- pupils as sources of useful data for staff, but playing no active role
- pupils as active respondents, discussing the data openly with staff
- pupils as co-researchers with teachers on agreed issues
- pupils as independent researchers – where research is initiated, conducted and reported by pupils.

(Fielding 2004, quoted in Hargreaves 2004, p19)

In the case of the latter options, the process is broadly as follows:

- pupils are trained in research methods
- a research topic is identified by staff and/or pupils
- pupils conduct the research using a variety of methods – for example, interviewing other students, designing questionnaires
- they then write a report and present their findings to the governors, senior management team or teaching staff.

Fielding (2004, see also Fielding and Bragg 2003) and Hargreaves (2004) are strong advocates of pupils as researchers, especially where activity gives pupils a broader role. They see such activity as promoting partnerships in which pupils work alongside teachers to mobilise their knowledge of school and become 'change agents' of its culture and norms. Pupils as researchers, they argue, seeks to develop among pupils and teachers a shared sense of responsibility for the quality and conditions of teaching and learning, both within particular classrooms and more generally within the school as a learning community (Fielding and Bragg 2003, quoted in Hargreaves 2004, p16).

Learning walks

Typically, pupils will have attended only one primary and one secondary school, and therefore may be unaware that schools work in different ways. Learning walks give pupils the opportunity to experience different approaches to learning in different environments, and encourages them to think about effective approaches to learning.

Pupils visit a local school, and can spend a day as a pupil of that school, looking at the general experience or with a specific task, for example, to look at teaching styles or the structure of the school day. Alternatively, pupils could spend a shorter

length of time at the school looking at a specific issue, e.g. how the school council is organised. Pupils then report back to their school.

Learning walks can be useful for learning about good practice, changing pupils' expectations and helping pupils get a clearer idea of what they would like to see in their school. But they are potentially also valuable in terms of reinforcing pupils' pride in their own school (Biermann et al 2006).

Annex B – Research participants

National agencies

Carnegie Young People Initiative
Children's Services Information Network
Citizenship Foundation
Electoral Reform Society/Xchange
English Secondary Schools Association (ESSA)
National Healthy Schools programme
National Children's Bureau (NCB)
National Youth Agency (NYA)
Nuffield Foundation
Office of the Children's Commissioner
Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)
Save the Children
School Councils UK (SCUK)
Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT)

Teaching unions /professional associations

Association for School and College Leaders (ASCL)
Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)
National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)
National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)
National Union of Teachers (NUT)
Professional Association of Teachers (PAT)

Named schools

Bradfields School, Medway
Danecourt School, Medway
The Blue School, Somerset
Hampton Wick Infant and Nursery School, Richmond upon Thames
Nailsea Community School, North Somerset
Sandfield Close Primary School, Leicester
Sweyne Park School, Essex
Sydney Russell Comprehensive School, Barking and Dagenham
(A further 7 schools participated in the study – the field notes from which are reported in annex G)

Local authorities

Barking and Dagenham

Bolton
Hackney
Hertfordshire
Medway
North Somerset
Portsmouth

Government

Department for Education and Skills
Welsh Assembly Government

Annex C – Interview schedules

1. Areas of questioning for national organisations

- How is the organisation involved with matters of pupil participation/school councils?
- Has the organisation undertaken research in this area? Main findings? How will we know if the research is robust/methodologically sound?
- Main considerations for schools in deciding whether or not to set up a school council? (differences between schools of different phases/types? etc) [Do they have more detailed examples for individual schools?]
- Main barriers and problems that schools face in setting up – and maintaining – their school council?
- Key advice to schools thinking of setting up a school council?
- The kinds of support that schools – and pupils – tend to need in setting up and maintaining their school council? Readily available?
- How to build on school council-type arrangements to engage pupils across the whole school? How to encourage more pupils to take an interest in the work of their council or similar initiatives and maintain interest over time?
- How school council-type arrangements can become involved in supporting teaching and learning and school improvement?
- Alternative ways of consulting pupils and encouraging pupil participation? (How do they contrast with school councils in terms of format and effectiveness? etc)
- Any examples of innovative or effective practice in relation to school councils and similar arrangements?
- Examples of active citizenship (i.e. involving the community)?

2. Outline of questions for school visits

Questions for staff – head teacher and/or lead teacher

Current practices of school council/other activity

- What activity does the school have in place to support pupil participation (e.g. school council, peer mentoring, voting etc)?
- How long has the school had a school council/other activity?
- What prompted the introduction of the school council/other activity?
- How are pupils recruited/selected (e.g. elected, randomly selected, volunteers)?
- How long do pupils serve on the school council/get involved with other activity?
- Which members of staff are involved with the school council/other activity, and how?
- Are non-teaching staff/governors/parents/carers involved – in what ways?
- Training/support for staff and pupils – what works best?
- Timing/frequency of meetings?
- How is the agenda decided?
- Examples of issues addressed and action taken?

Barriers and problems in setting up school councils/other activity

- Did school make any use of current guidance/external resources/training? Views on these?
- Barriers re getting started (staff involvement, resources, training…?)

Engaging with pupils across the whole school

- Barriers to engaging all pupils? Solutions?
- Support that (different groups of) pupils need?

Supporting teaching and learning and school improvement

- Involvement of council/pupils in teaching and learning issues?
- Views on involvement of council/pupils re staff appointments?
- Views on pupils observing lessons etc?

Alternative ways of consulting pupils and encouraging participation

- Disadvantages/negative effects of having a school council?
- Changes in nature of council/decisions that it is involved with etc, over its lifetime?
- Does the school foresee any changes to their council in future?
- If the school has supplementary/alternative mechanisms for involving pupils in decision making – relative merits of each?

General

- What advice would school give to other schools thinking of introducing pupil participation activity?
- Any support/guidance school would have welcomed at time of setting up its school council/other activity?
- Perceived impact of school council/other activity on pupils or school as a whole?

Questions for students involved with school council/other activity

- Why did you get involved with the school council/other activity?
- What have you been able to achieve through your school council/other activity that you are particularly pleased with?
- Do council members/participants in other activity have broader responsibilities in school?
- How could more pupils be encouraged to take an interest in the work of the council/other activity?
- What makes a good council representative/participant?

3. Outline of questions for local authority representatives

- Current work re pupil voice/school councils
- Changes in provision
- School councils vs other kinds of pupil participation provision
- Issues raised by pupil participation/school councils – e.g. who gets elected etc
- Barriers to greater pupil participation and maintaining interest etc
- Support that schools/pupils need
- Pupil participation/school councils and contemporary policies (e.g. personalised learning, ECM, parental/carer involvement)
- Pupil participation/school councils and teaching and learning/school improvement
- Pupil participation/school councils and behaviour/pupil engagement

4. Outline of questions for teaching unions representatives

- Current work re pupil voice/school councils
- Consultations with stakeholders, including pupils
- Concerns raised by their members re pupil voice
- Members' experience in Wales
- Areas in which teachers need greater support re pupil voice/kind of guidance and resources they require
- Scope for union involvement with, e.g. SCUK, re developing guidance and support materials
- Views on a greater voice for stakeholders other than pupils – parents, business etc.

Annex D – MORI Teacher Omnibus Survey

Profile of survey respondents

Gender	%
Male	27
Female	73

Age	%
24 or below	3
25-34	28
35-44	23
45-54	30
55 or above	15

Phase	%
Primary	52
Secondary	48

Government Office Region	%
North East	5
North West (incl. Merseyside)	13
Yorkshire and Humberside	10
East Midlands	8
West Midlands	11
Eastern	10
London	12
South East	14
South West	9
Wales	8

Years' teaching experience	%
NQT/in first year of teaching	3
1-5 years	21
6-10 years	18
11-15 years	13
16-25 years	17
Over 25 years	28

Current professional role	%
Supply teacher	2
Classroom or subject teacher	29
Class teacher with special curricular or non-curricular responsibilities	27
Cross-school responsibilities without a class teaching role	2
Deputy/assistant head of department or subject, or deputy/assistant curriculum co-ordinator	5
Head of department or subject, or curriculum co-ordinator	15
Advanced skills teacher	1
Deputy/assistant head of year, or deputy/assistant key stage co-ordinator	2
Head of year, or key stage co-ordinator	4
Deputy/Assistant Head teacher/Principal (incl. acting)	7
Head teacher/Principal (incl. acting)	6
Other	1

Key Stages of respondents' pupils	%
Foundation/Early Years/Nursery/Reception	11
Key Stage 1	22
Key Stage 2	35
Key Stage 3	43
Key Stage 4	43
Post-16	23
Not stated	1

Subject specialist – secondary school respondents	
Base: All secondary school teachers in England and Wales (492)	%
English	20
Maths	18
Science	14
ICT	4
Design and Technology	5
Humanities (history and geography)	10
Modern Foreign Languages	7
Art/music/PE/citizenship	9
Other	13

Subject or curriculum specialism – primary school respondents	
Base: All primary school teachers in England and Wales (507)	%
English or literacy	16
Maths or numeracy	13
Science	9
ICT	7
Design and Technology	2
Humanities (history and geography)	8
Modern Foreign Languages	2
Art/music/PE/citizenship	19
Other	14
Don’t consider myself to have a subject/ curriculum specialism	8

Survey findings

Does your school have a school council?

	Total	England Primary Teachers	England Secondary Teachers	Wales Primary Teachers	Wales Secondary Teachers
Base: All teachers in England and Wales	*(999) %*	*(458) %*	*(460) %*	*(49) %*	*(32) %*
Yes	95	92	98	90	97
No	5	8	1	10	3
Don't know	*	-	1	-	-

Source: Ipsos MORI

Does your school make any alterative provision for pupils to have a voice?

	Total	England Primary Teachers	England Secondary Teachers	Wales Primary Teachers	Wales Secondary Teachers
Base: All teachers in England and Wales whose school does not have a school council	*(42) %*	*(33) N*	*(4) N*	*(4) N*	*(1) N*
Yes	69	27	2	4	-
No	31	10	2	1	1

Source: Ipsos MORI

Please can you tell me what this entails?

	Total	England Primary Teachers	England Secondary Teachers	Wales Primary Teachers
Base: All teachers in England and Wales whose school makes alternative provision for children to have a voice	*(29) N*	*(24) N*	*(2) N*	*(3) N*
Class councils/year councils	8	7	1	-
Circle time	7	7	-	-
'We just ask their opinion on things'	6	4	-	1
Questionnaires/surveys	5	4	-	1
Suggestion boxes	4	2	1	1
'Open door' policy	3	2	1	-
ECO council/ECO group/ECO health community	3	3	-	-
Older children act as buddies/mentors for younger pupils	2	2	-	-
House system	1	1	-	-
Other	2	2	-	-

Source: Ipsos MORI

What impact, if any, has the provision for pupils to have a voice had on the school?

	Total	England Primary Teachers	England Secondary Teachers	Wales Primary Teachers	Wales Secondary Teachers
Base: All teachers in England and Wales whose school has a school council or form of pupil consultation	*(982) %*	*(449) %*	*(454) %*	*(48) %*	*(31) %*
The school's environment and facilities are improved	41	43	35	67	46
Pupils are more engaged	28	30	26	29	29
Decisions taken are more effective	14	16	12	21	16
Pupils understand decisions better	10	13	7	8	18
Greater involvement in decision-making	9	7	11	13	11
Pupils' social and emotional skills have improved	8	11	5	4	14
Relationships between pupils and staff have improved	8	10	6	5	18

Source: Ipsos MORI

Which of the following, if any, best describes the purpose of your school's form of pupil consultation?

	Total	England Primary Teachers	England Secondary Teachers	Wales Primary Teachers	Wales Secondary Teachers
Base: All teachers whose school has a form of pupil consultation	*(982) %*	*(449) %*	*(454) %*	*(48) %*	*(31) %*
To improve the school's environment and facilities	27	24	30	37	26
To develop pupils' social and emotional skills	21	28	13	31	17
To enhance our citizenship provision	17	21	14	10	16
To help the school respond to the personalisation agenda	10	7	15	2	5
To improve teaching and learning	7	5	9	3	6
To raise pupil attainment	2	2	3	-	3
As a response to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	2	3	1	5	-
To improve pupil behaviour	2	2	1	2	-
To meet Ofsted's requirements	1	1	2	-	3
Other	4	4	4	2	13
Can't say – a combination of these things	3	2	4	8	8
Don't know	2	1	4	-	3

Source: Ipsos MORI

And to what extent, if at all, has the introduction of the school council achieved the purpose…?

	Total (saying a great deal a fair amount)	England Primary Teachers	England Secondary Teachers	Wales Primary Teachers	Wales Secondary Teachers
Base: All teachers in England and Wales whose school has a school council or form of pupil consultation	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
To develop pupils' social and emotional skills *(202)*	88	91	81	93	100
To improve pupil behaviour *(16)*	85	78	100	100	-
To improve teaching and learning *(70)*	78	88	72	100	42
To improve the school's environment and facilities *(278)*	87	91	83	100	73
To raise pupil attainment *(20)*	83	93	75	-	100

Source: Ipsos MORI

In Wales, school councils are a statutory requirement. Do you think they should be a statutory requirement in England, or not?

	Total	England Primary Teachers	England Secondary Teachers	Wales Primary Teachers	Wales Secondary Teachers
Base: All teachers in England and Wales	*(999) %*	*(458) %*	*(460) %*	*(49) %*	*(32) %*
Yes	62	59	63	85	72
No	33	37	31	14	21
Don't know	5	4	5	2	7

Source: Ipsos MORI

Do you think pupils should have a say in interviewing candidates for teaching posts, or not?

	Total	England Primary Teachers	England Secondary Teachers	Wales Primary Teachers	Wales Secondary Teachers
Base: All teachers in England and Wales who were interviewed after 9th November	*(822) %*	*(349) %*	*(404) %*	*(41) %*	*(28) N*
Yes	46	42	51	16	13
No	51	53	46	84	13
Don't know	3	4	3	-	1

Source: Ipsos MORI

In some countries, pupils are full members of governing bodies. Do you think school governing bodies in England should include pupils or not?

	Total	England Primary Teachers	England Secondary Teachers
Base: All teachers in England and Wales who were interviewed after 9th November (753)	*%*	*%*	*%*
Yes	35	30	38
No	59	64	55
Don't know	6	6	6

Source: Ipsos MORI

Annex E – MORI Schools Omnibus Survey

Profile of survey respondents

Age	
	%
11	19
12	19
13	19
14	19
15	17
16	7

Gender	
	%
Male	51
Female	49

Ethnicity	
	%
White	84
British Black	2
Black Caribbean	1
Black African	2
Black Other	*
British Asian	3
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	*
Chinese	*
East African Asian	*
Other	3

Not stated	*

Mother/stepmother's employment status	
	%
Works full-time	40
Works part-time	36
Is unemployed	4
Looks after house/family	33
Other	4
Don't know	2
Not stated	1

Father/stepfather's employment status	
	%
Works full-time	74
Works part-time	10
Is unemployed	4
Looks after house/family	10
Other	5
Don't know	5
Not stated	2

Year group	
	%
Year 7	31
Year 8	16
Year 9	20
Year 10	17

Year 11	17

Survey findings

Does your school have a school council?	
	%
Yes	85
No	2
Don't know	9
Not stated	4

Have you been involved with your school council in any of the following ways?

Base: All who have a school council (2059)

	%
I help to choose the pupils who are my year council representatives	43
I help to choose the pupils who are school council representatives	20
School council representatives have talked to me about my views on an issue	15
School council representatives have asked me to vote on an issue	12
I have been to an event organised by the school council	10
I have been involved in some other way	8
I am on my year council	7
I am on the school council	5
None of these	28
Don't know	10
Not stated	1

Do pupils at your school have a say in how the school is run in any of the following ways?	
	%
Being involved in decisions about school policies (for example, anti-bullying, recycling, school uniforms), which equipment to buy (for example, for the playground) or which charities to raise money for	41
Doing surveys, filling in questionnaires or talking in groups about things going on in the school	28
Putting forward ideas through a suggestion box	20
Going to meetings with the heads of year	16
Going to meetings with the head teacher or deputy head teacher	16
Going to meetings with members of the governing body	12
Small teams of pupils with responsibility for a particular project or initiative in the school	10
Helping to choose teachers who are going to work at the school	7
Watching lessons and giving feedback to teachers	7
Designing the curriculum	5
Going to other schools to find out about what they do	4
Some other way	2
Not involved in any way	13
Don’t know	23
Not stated	5

What changes, if any, have happened at your school because of your school council?

Base: All who have a school council (2059)

	%
Pupils get more of a say in decisions at the school	26
The school's environment and facilities are improved	25
Teachers understand pupils' thoughts, views and feelings better	17
Lessons are more interesting	15
Pupils understand decisions better	14
Pupils care more about the school and what goes on in it	13
More parents get involved with the school	12
Pupils are better at listening to the views of other people	11
Pupils get better results	10
Pupil behave better	10
Pupils get on better with teachers	9
Pupils get on better with each other	8
Another change	5
No changes	17
Don't know	24
Not stated	3

How far do you agree or disagree with the following sentence?

"Every school should be required to have a school council."

	%
Strongly agree	26
Tend to agree	29
Neither agree nor disagree	22
Tend to disagree	3
Strongly disagree	3
Don't know	10
Not stated	7

"Every school should be required to have a school council."

Why do you say that?

Agree	%
Gives students a say in the running of the school/students care more if they are involved	17
Beneficial difference/ helps make the school a better place	14
Ensures student voice is heard/teachers and governors don't decide everything	9
Schools should have one/ is a good idea if used properly	2
Helps build good relationships between pupils and teachers/ pupils with each other/ helps communication/enables balanced decision making	1
Easier to talk to another pupil about issues that concern you/ gives pupils a place to go/someone to talk to	1
Makes everyone happier/makes school life more enjoyable/less boring	1
Had experience of school council/ works well/ made changes/helps everyone	*
Improves pupils' behaviour/ gives them confidence/makes them feel important/ responsible	*
Makes more people aware of what is happening in school	*

Disagree	%
Makes no difference/is a waste of time	10
It's up to the school	8
They never listen to students/ Haven't been asked our views	2
Don't rate them highly/ Doesn't reflect the views of the majority	2
Teachers should decide/look after the school	1
Unfair on other people/popular pupils get picked every time	*
Takes pupils out of classes/makes them miss lessons	*

Neutral	%
No experience of school council/ don't know what they are/what they do	1
Depends on school	1
It's up to the pupil to decide/may feel uncomfortable with the idea/not want to be involved	1

Depends on who/age group involved/ some may pupils may not be mature enough to make major decisions	*
Other	2
Not stated	33

Annex F – Independent schools survey

Does your school have a school council?

	Total	%
Base: 108 schools		
Yes	99	92
No	6	6
Don't know	2	2

What are your school's main reasons for having a council/other provision? (please tick a maximum of two boxes)?

	Total	%
Base: 108 schools		
As a response to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	7	6
To enhance citizenship provision	59	55
To develop pupils' social and emotional skills	76	70
To improve the school's environment and facilities	55	51
To improve pupil behaviour	17	16
To improve teaching and learning	11	10
To raise pupil attainment	7	6
To help the school respond to the personalisation agenda	18	17
Other (please specify)	37	34

What issues does the council/other provision typically get involved with?

	Total	%
Base: 108 schools		
School environment	97	90
School facilities	91	84
School uniform	63	58
School food	86	80
Teaching and learning	28	26
Extra curricular activities	72	67
Other (please specify)	31	29

What noticeable impact, if any, has the council/other provision had on the school? Please tick all those that apply

	Total	%
Base: 108 schools		
Decisions taken by staff are better received by pupils	54	50
Pupils are more engaged with their school	96	89
Relationships in the school have improved	40	37
Parental involvement in the school has grown	9	8
Pupils have become more assertive about their rights	20	19
Other (please specify)	31	29

Annex G – School case studies

As noted in section 8, this section contains the case study field notes not included in the main body of the report.

Secondary schools

School A, Medway

School A is small, mixed, non-selective school catering for pupils from 11-17. A high proportion of the pupils come from areas of significant socio-economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is well above average, while the number of pupils with a statement of their needs is average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school has been well below the national average but is slowly rising.[14]

Driver/perceived benefits
The link teacher for the school council (the deputy head) reported that helping pupils develop a sense of ownership of school, enabling them to develop social/emotional skills, school improvement and the development of good citizens were the aims behind the introduction of their council.

Constitution
The system incorporates two tiers of representatives: 'Green Badge Holders' are tutor group representatives for their respective year councils. 'Red Badge Holders' have been elected by their year to sit on the whole school council. There are two Red Badge Holders for each year on the council.

Some representatives have served for a number of years. The link teacher wants to keep pupils as councillors for more than just one year, feeling that pupils need longer in post to build up their skills.

Organisation/processes – including whole school involvement
The Green Badge tier was added a year ago in the expectation that it would improve communication between the council and tutor groups. The Green Badge Holders liaise with their tutor groups in raising issues for the council and feed these back to the council. The council then reports its discussions to the Green Badge Holders, who then pass on information to their tutor groups.

Once an action point has been decided, the two councillors from a year group work on a particular project, e.g. investigating the possibility for introducing lockers. This means there are lots of projects happening at once. The pupils are considering changing this arrangement, so that the council can focus on one project at a time in the hope that change can be made more quickly.

The link teacher attends council meetings to advise on what is feasible and who pupils might talk to on a given issue. The teacher also provides briefings and weekly reminders for staff regarding the council.

Agenda/achievements
As well as the lockers, the work of the council to date includes efforts to reduce litter in the school grounds, changing uniform regulations and healthy food. Pupils conduct background research, present their case to relevant staff and then work with staff to implement change.

[14] Background information for all the case study schools is taken from their most recent Ofsted reports and information provided by the schools through their websites and during the school visits.

The council has recently been successful in having water fountains introduced at the school. When a small group of pupils vandalised the fountains, those pupils were made to apologise at a formal meeting of the council. This proved effective in ending the vandalism.

Other provision for pupil voice/responsibility
There are opportunities for the council and the whole school to get involved in teaching and learning issues. For example, the council members sometimes sit on staff appointment panels. More generally, teachers ask pupils to write in their work book about what they enjoyed and what they found difficult about their lesson.

The senior management team currently monitors a department every two weeks. This includes departmental self-evaluation and staff observation of lessons. The school is thinking of including pupils in this process – for example, talking through with pupils the notes they are asked to make about their lessons.

Two school councillors attend governors meetings.

There is also a range of provision for pupil responsibility. There is a prefect and head girl/boy system. Prefects are interviewed by the school council, though staff also have a say in which pupils are selected as one of the twenty-five prefects. The prefects then vote for two of them to be head boy/girl, who monitor the prefects and act as ambassadors for the school. Other positions of responsibility include classroom managers, assistant caretaker and sound and lighting crews.

The school has introduced a system of peer mediation as well as peer teaching, where Year 10 pupils mentor Year 7 pupils with their reading.

Training
The school has made use of SCUK and local authority training. It reported that a local authority-run consortium day, where local school councils worked together and pupils learnt from each other about how their councils work, had been particularly valuable. The school has also used team building activity to help the councillors get to know each other. The school provides information about their council to other schools, through a council 'road show'.

Issues arising for this school council
Some pupils noted that pupils may not always be comfortable with raising issues for the council in front of their class. As some pupils are shy about approaching the councillors even outside lessons, it is thinking of introducing an email address for pupils to make suggestions through.

Pupils' views
The pupils said that they put themselves forward for the council because they wanted to make a difference to their school. They like to feel involved in what is going on in school, and not feel 'in the dark'.

School B, South Gloucestershire

School B is a small mixed comprehensive school serving pupils aged 11-18. It has specialist status in business and enterprise and sports. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and of pupils for whom English is not their first language is low. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties/disabilities and statements of SEN is higher than average.

Driver/perceived benefits
The school has had a council for over two years. The council was introduced to sit alongside the PSHE/citizenship curriculum and develop this provision through active learning. Council meetings take place in PSHE/citizenship lesson time.

Constitution
The school uses elections to select councillors, who serve for two years in order to develop their skills. To support this process, it provides a 'candidate specification' designed to help pupils think through which of their peers could best fulfil the role. This includes having a good behaviour and attendance record, being responsible about their role in the pupil voice of the school, being able to negotiate and promote collaboration, facilitating the active participation of other pupils in council work, and encouraging improved communication between pupils, teachers, senior management and governors.

The main school council, which meets termly, allows one councillor from each tutor group to be involved in discussion and decision making on whole school issues. It also enables these pupils to take on roles and responsibilities within the school and provides a vehicle to link them to the teaching staff, governors and outside agencies.

There is a structure of meetings around the council, including whole school assemblies, tutor group meetings to discuss council business (fortnightly) and year group councils (twice per term) to provide an opportunity for tutor group councillors to meet together.

The sixth form has its own school council so that these older pupils do not dominate the main school council.

Organisation/processes – including whole school involvement
While only a small proportion of pupils serve as councillors on the main school council, the way the council is constituted ensures that all pupils can be involved in school council activity in one way or another.

Agenda/achievements
The council manages a small budget and maintains a council notice board. Members are also often charged with organising and publicising school events and providing hospitality for visitors.

As well as dealing with housekeeping matters, this school council is involved in teaching and learning and school improvement issues. Representatives attend governors meetings as appropriate, help to design school policies and contribute to curriculum planning.

The council has good links with the local authority and works with these staff to take forward policies on, for example, reducing litter.

Other provision for pupil voice/responsibility
The councillors have a role in helping students who are new to the school through 'buddying' arrangements and take on a 'prefect'-type role around the school. They also have the opportunity to sit on teacher appointment panels.

The lead teacher for the council commented on the value of giving pupils such responsibilities in terms of their contribution to school life and in terms of improvement in pupils' behaviour when they are given responsibilities.

Training
The school has worked with a local university to develop and provide training for its councillors. The training sessions are recorded to reduce the overall costs of training, as subsequent years' councillors and other pupils can then benefit from the recorded training sessions.

Issues arising for this school council
Helping pupils to become more self-directing is a gradual process. The deputy head oversees meetings to guide the chair and to provide advice on the feasibility of different options as part of the council's discussion. In part, this comes from a recognition that a school council needs 'quick wins' to garner support from peers and staff.

Pupils' views
Pupils welcomed the opportunity provided by the council to contribute to the life of their school and saw how they became more effective councillors over time, particularly in managing meetings.

School C, Surrey

Based in the South East, School C is a large mixed comprehensive school serving pupils aged 11-18. It was recently awarded business and enterprise specialist status. Students come from a wide socio-economic background. The number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is slightly above average, but few have statements of special educational need.

Driver/perceived benefits
At this school, staff had different ideas about the primary role of the school council. On the one hand, particularly among senior staff, it was seen as a means of consulting with pupils and of building pupil support for necessary policies or initiatives within the school (e.g. healthy food). On a day to day basis, though, the council is run by staff from the citizenship team, whose emphasis is on 'living democracy' and the ways in which the school council can enhance pupils' learning in citizenship.

Constitution
The school runs a house system, and each house has a council elected by tutor groups. It is from amongst these house councillors that the school council members – from Years 7, 8 and 9 – are selected. This is done through full election campaigns and a secret ballot. Members serve for one year. There is a separate sixth form council.

Organisation/processes – including whole school involvement
The school council meets on a weekly basis during the lunch hour. Pupils set the agenda and lead meetings, though, as with other schools included in the research, the school noted that pupils need ongoing training to develop these skills.

As a means of involving the whole school more in the work of the council, it is currently developing its own website, which will contain minutes, achievements, a message board and information on current work.

In addition, there are links to the governing body, with pupils attending governors' meetings and governors occasionally attending school council meetings. One of the governors has a particular responsibility for links with the school council.

To bring together the work of the council and of the associate governors, the school council, sixth form council and senior management team meet together three times a year.

The school council has strong links with other forums for young people in the local authority.

Agenda/achievements
The council has been involved in healthy food issues, improving the school's facilities and environment, and designing the school's teaching and learning survey for pupils. Councillors have the opportunity to join staff appointment panels.

Other provision for pupil voice/responsibility
The school also makes use of whole school consultations, e.g. through focus groups and teaching and learning surveys.

Training
The school does not make regular use of training at present, but does provide support in relation to specific roles, e.g. minute taking.

Issues
The school council has been in place for a number of years, but needed to be 're-vamped' three years ago. Since the council's re-launch, there has been much more emphasis on having formal structures and clear lines of accountability. As part of this, members have been given specific portfolios, e.g. chair, secretary, treasurer, web design.

The school is currently looking at ways to further enhance the role of the school council. These include:

- improving communication between the school council, house councils, tutor groups and sixth form council;
- building support for the school council across all staff and ensuring that all tutor groups are given time to discuss school council matters;
- helping pupils understand the place of the school council in the school governance structure and with skills that will enable them to put their ideas into practice.

Pupils' views
Pupils chose to put themselves forward for election because they wanted to contribute to their school. They are proud of what they achieve through the council. Many had been re-elected.

Infant and primary (JMI) schools

School D, Telford and Wrekin

School D is a small mixed infant school located in a relatively advantaged village in the West Midlands. Pupils (aged 4-7) are taught in two mixed age classes. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with SEN is below the national average. The school is a designated healthy school.

Driver/perceived benefits
This school established a council for the first time three years ago as a result of staff attendance at various events on pupil voice and on emotional well-being. Staff were impressed with the ways in which other schools were using pupil voice provision to address issues such as bullying. They were also impressed with the skills and confidence of the pupils making presentations at the events. The school sees a council as a means of developing pupils' skills. School improvement is also a driver in terms of getting ideas from pupils.

Constitution
The school council is made up of two pupils from each of the three year groups, who are elected through a secret ballot. The school waits until half term to establish the new council, so that the new intake has time to get to know each other.

The previous year's councillors explain what the role entails, while teachers get pupils to think more about the qualities they should look for in their representative. Teaching assistants help pupils with the voting process.

Councillors serve for one year. The school has found that pupils maintain their interest over the year, plus it gives pupils time to settle into the role and become more confident. This school has this year chosen to co-opt two councillors from the previous year as it wanted to keep their skills

and experience, and the lead member of staff reported that this had proved helpful in making the council more effective. All the councillors have particular roles (e.g. chair, treasurer), which are decided on at the first meeting of the year.

Organisation/processes – including whole school involvement
The council meets every two or three weeks, with meetings held during lunch time or independent learning time. A teaching assistant assists the teacher who has responsibility for the council, and guides the chair in running the meeting. The council begins by reading through the minutes of the last meeting, which form the agenda for the meeting along with other items that pupils and staff have raised.

The teaching assistant types up the minutes with the children's help. The council often makes assembly presentations on its work and circulates newsletters to pupils. It also maintains a notice board, which contains information on money raised, pictures of the councillors and thank you letters. This is coupled with citizenship boards in each classroom, documenting pupil achievements in and out of school.

All pupils are involved in the council through the use of circle time/citizenship time to discuss council matters. The school finds using circle time useful as this incorporates 'warm up' activities to get pupils listening to one another. These same exercises can be used in the council meetings themselves.

Parents/carers are often involved in school council events. Council matters are also covered in communications with parents/carers and the headteacher's report to the governors.

Agenda/achievements
The school council contributes to decisions on facilities and environment issues (e.g. games and toilet refurbishment), fundraising and sponsorship of animals. This last item has proved valuable in that sponsorship has to be renewed annually and this helps to maintain pupils' interest. It can also be used to make links with the curriculum.

The school council does not generally cover teaching and learning matters. Pupil involvement here tends to be on a whole school or class by class basis, and indirect (e.g. pupils helping to arrange the classroom). The school uses surveys on teaching and learning with pupils, but these are not designed or conducted through the school council.

This school council has built a number of links in the local community. It was provided with a 'start-up' budget of £50 by the local Business in the Community organisation. Shops have also donated food for events at the school organised by the council.

Other provision for pupil voice/responsibility
Six months after establishing its council, the school introduced 'playground friends', a buddying scheme to help pupils at break times. At the beginning of the year the school uses an assembly to tell pupils about the scheme. Pupils volunteer and the school council draws up a rota. Parents/carers sign a letter of consent for their child to become a playground friend.

Training
The lead member of staff for the school council attended a school council training course run by their local authority, covering, for example, helping pupils to run elections and meetings. The school was also visited by a linked primary school, whose pupils talked about their council and its work. The school reported that both the training and the visit were useful starting points for staff and pupils.

Issues
Finding time can be difficult, but the pupils are prepared to miss their break time if necessary. Pupils can be disappointed if they are not elected, but they all look up to the school council and more activity is driven by the pupils as a result of having the council.

Pupils' views
The councillors reported that they had put themselves forward for election because they wanted to help the school. They also welcome opportunities to meet others from outside the school and attend events away from the school connected to the council's work. They enjoy organising events and new facilities for the other pupils. Many had also been playground friends. The pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the need to compromise and of the way in which collective decisions are made.

School E, Cheshire

School E is a small rural JMI school based in the North West. The attainment of most children on entry to the school is above average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals, and the proportion who have SEN are well below average. No pupils have English as an additional language. The mobility of pupils is relatively high.

Driver/perceived benefits
The school introduced its council as it wanted to involve pupils more in the school and help them gain a stronger sense of ownership of their school.

Constitution
Unlike the other case study schools, School E runs its council elections at the end of the academic year, so that its councillors are decided upon and ready to start their work when they return to school in September.

The deputy head, who runs the school council, uses an assembly to explain the role of the council and the councillors. Pupils volunteer, make a speech to their class on why they should be elected and then pupils vote anonymously. The deputy head has found that pupils make sensible choices in selecting their representatives. As with some of the other case study schools, this school welcomed the flexibility to allow pupils to serve a second year if they have the right skills.

Organisation/processes – including whole school involvement
A notable aspect of School E's school council was that much of its work centred around one large project that ran for the whole year. The rationale for this approach is that it is both a way of maintaining councillors' interest – they have a project to manage and engage others in – and a way of involving all pupils. This year's topic was Fair Trade and activities included assemblies, tastings, campaigns to encourage the use of Fair Trade products throughout the school and fundraising events. All pupils could see the impact of their work on the school environment.

This school found that meetings at break times did not work for them, so they use silent reading time instead for the fortnightly meetings. Once the discussion has been established, the deputy head is happy to leave the councillors to come to their decisions. She then returns to round up the meeting.

Councillors regularly seek the views of, and feed back to, their class. The school is considering introducing school council surgeries or a suggestion box as a way of involving pupils more in setting the council's agenda.

Agenda/achievements
As well as organising events in relation to its main project, the council is involved in the kinds of work more typically associated with school councils – such as issues arising around school

facilities, or assisting with work in relation to national initiatives. It is also involved in teaching and learning matters. For example, the council helped to design a school questionnaire for the pupils on what they enjoyed about their school. They were also asked to write a passage on their work for the school's prospectus.

Other provision for pupil voice/responsibility
The school uses surveys and whole school votes to provide more pupils with the opportunity to be directly involved in the life of the school. There is also a buddy system and specific positions of responsibility in relation to recycling and school safety.

The school does not have pupils observing lessons but, as indicated above, pupils do comment on teaching and learning issues in school surveys, prior to which the school has taken steps to raise pupils' awareness and understanding of learning styles. This has led to, for example, greater use of more investigative styles of working.

The school would consider involving pupils in staff appointments for a full-time permanent post, but has not done so yet.

Training
The school does not make use of training for the councillors at present, but does want to improve their ability to run a meeting and might use exercises to model a meeting and a trip to the local council chambers for this purpose. In the meantime, it has already introduced a framework for minute taking and reporting.

Staff have not taken advantage of any training events, though they do use relevant websites for ideas. This was typical across the case study schools, with schools fitting the basic council model around their school.

Issues
The school tried running the council with a governor taking responsibility for it, but found that this did not work. The lead teacher would like to maintain links with the governors – ideally through a governor attending the council meetings – but this would be a large commitment. Instead, they may work towards the chair of the council reporting direct to governors at one of their two termly meetings.

The school reported that older pupils can get frustrated in managing the younger councillors and explaining items to them, though this is actually a useful learning opportunity for them, e.g. to develop their communication skills.

Pupils' views
As with most councillors the research team spoke to, these pupils felt that they and their peers made sensible decisions when voting for council representatives. They look for particular attributes, for example, being organised, responsible, good at listening and friendly.

School F, Barking and Dagenham

School F is a very large mixed JMI school based in greater London catering for pupils aged 3-11. The school's roll has changed considerably in recent years, with a large influx of refugee children. Nearly half the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The percentage of pupils who enter or leave the school at times other than the start of the school year is high. The number of pupils identified with SEN and the number with statements of special educational need is above average. Pupils enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding well below that of children of a similar age.

Driver/perceived benefits
School improvement was the main driver for this school's establishment of a council and other provision for pupil voice.

The school already had good value-added scores, but wanted to improve them further. It also wanted to address other issues – such as tackling the disengagement among some pupils that was impacting on the whole school, overcoming the fragmentation of the school site and separate locations of EAL pupils and pupils with SEN, and engaging parents/carers more in the life of the school. In this respect, school improvement for this school touched on attainment and ECM issues.

To meet all these school improvement aims, the school has a range of provision for pupil voice in place in addition to the school council. The school council is at the centre of this provision to provide a cross-school mechanism for hearing pupils' views.

Constitution
The council is made up of two councillors from each of the three forms. Teachers discuss the selection of councillors with their class and there is an open vote. Like many of the other case study schools, this school has found that the pupils who are not the best behaved can make the best councillors.

Organisation/processes – including whole school involvement
The current organisation of the council has been arrived at through re-launching previous arrangements, which were found to be led to too great a degree by senior staff, with poor communication of council business across the school.

The council now meets every two to three weeks and is run by the lead teacher. Other staff attend on an ad hoc basis for relevant items. Before a meeting, councillors ask their class for issues to raise. They then report back to their class on discussions at the meeting.

Agenda/achievements
Pupils are consulted on all areas of school life, often through the school council. Issues covered include bullying and after school clubs.

The school has found provision for pupil voice useful in helping to build stronger links with parents/carers. For example, a recent pupil survey included an item on how they can get to school on time. Many pupils took this question home and discussed it with their family. Healthy Schools audits run by the local authority are also useful in this respect.

Other provision for pupil voice/responsibility
There is a regular monitoring round, where a third of pupils from each class, a representative group, are asked about their enjoyment of lessons. The feedback is considered by the senior management team and disseminated throughout the school. In addition, all pupils, including SEN pupils, know their learning targets and monitor these themselves with their teacher. This, in turn, feeds into school reviews. All this provision forms part of the school's efforts to change approaches to teaching and learning within the school – towards, for example, greater use of dialogic teaching and assessment for learning.

Pupils are also heavily involved in the half-termly parent/carers' forum, where they make presentations on topics such as behaviour.

Other mechanisms for involving pupils more in school life and school decision making include house, head girl and boy, prefect and buddying systems. The head girl and boy and the prefects are chosen by teachers on the basis of good behaviour.

Training
The school is currently working with the older councillors to improve their skills in chairing meetings.

Issues
Although teachers' attitudes towards pupil voice and the importance they attach to it differ, it is now becoming an expectation on both sides.

Pupils' views
The councillors reported that they enjoy the opportunity to be on their school council. As with other case study schools, pupils occasionally commented that some pupils – typically the well behaved pupils – were listened to by teachers more than others.

School G, Essex

School G is a large mixed JMI school based in the South East. Pupils are organised into eleven classes, several of which cover two age groups. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Although there is a higher proportion of pupils whose first language is not English than in most schools, few pupils are in the early stages of learning the language. Pupil mobility is below the national average. Attainment on entry is average, with many children coming from homes where education is highly valued. The school is regularly oversubscribed. The overall proportion of pupils with SEN is well below the national average; the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average.

Driver/perceived benefits
At this school, provision for pupil voice is valued for helping pupils develop a sense of ownership of their school and seeing themselves as part of a school community. It is also seen as a means of developing pupils' skills, particularly communication and interpersonal skills.

Constitution
The school has deliberately chosen not to introduce a school council. The school gave many reasons for this – for example, that just adopting a school council could be seen as 'the easy option' and that a school council only directly involves a third of pupils at best. The school also believed that whole school participation is more appropriate than representative systems for primary age pupils.

The school had asked pupils if they wanted a school council, but they felt they did not, voicing concerns about issues such as identifying the best pupils to act as representatives.

The school also does not have a prefect or similar systems, due to a concern that they can have a negative effect on pupils' motivation.

Organisation/processes – including whole school involvement
Instead, the school endeavours to consult with pupils wherever possible, whether at whole school level (e.g. through assemblies) or in year groups or classes (e.g. for deciding on class activities). As a result, there is continuous formal and informal consultation with pupils and pupil voice becomes part of the school ethos, where the emphasis is on the school working together as a community.

There is a suggestion box to allow pupils to comment anonymously.

Agenda/achievements
Pupils are consulted on most issues that affect them, including on teaching and learning matters. Specific items include the playground rota/equipment, books to be purchased and the theme for the Year 6 post-SATs off-curriculum learning.

Other provision for pupil voice/responsibility
There are also opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities and contribute to the life of the school in this way. These responsibilities include, for example, ensuring that computers are switched off and collecting registers. Teachers select from amongst the pupils who have volunteered and jobs are changed every half term.

The head teacher felt that it was inappropriate to include pupils in staff appointments directly, though would ask pupils about what they felt makes a good teacher.

Training
Pupils receive support in relation to their particular area of responsibility. Older pupils often train younger pupils for these jobs.

Issues
One member of staff who had worked at a school in a more deprived area conceded that some schools might benefit from clearer structures and mechanisms in their provision for pupil voice, so that pupils could be better supported in putting their views across.

Pupils' views
As noted above, the pupils had rejected the idea of a school council. They welcomed the school's efforts to consult with them, and particularly liked the head teacher taking an interest in their views. One pupil suggested that a school council would be worse in a larger secondary school, where the proportion of pupils involved in the council would be that much smaller.

Pupils remarked that teachers consulted with them more as they moved up the school. They took the view that teachers knew what issues it was appropriate to ask pupils for their opinion on, though pupils also raise issues with staff (e.g. where they want more activities at break times). Where decisions had gone against what the pupils had suggested, it was important to the pupils that teachers explained why.

Annex H – Welsh legislation

Welsh Statutory Instrument 2005 No. 3200 (W.236)

The School Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005

© Crown Copyright 2005

Statutory Instruments printed from this website are printed under the superintendence and authority of the Controller of HMSO being the Queen's Printer of Acts of Parliament.

The legislation contained on this web site is subject to Crown Copyright protection. It may be reproduced free of charge provided that it is reproduced accurately and that the source and copyright status of the material is made evident to users.

It should be noted that the right to reproduce the text of Statutory Instruments does not extend to the Queen's Printer imprints which should be removed from any copies of the Statutory Instrument which are issued or made available to the public. This includes reproduction of the Statutory Instrument on the Internet and on intranet sites. The Royal Badge of Wales may be reproduced only where it is an integral part of the original document.

The text of this Internet version of the Statutory Instrument has been prepared to reflect the text as it was Made. A print version is also available and is published by The Stationery Office Limited as the **The School Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005**, ISBN 0110912357. The print version may be purchased by clicking here. Braille copies of this Statutory Instrument can also be purchased at the same price as the print edition by contacting TSO Customer Services on 0870 600 5522 or e-mail: customer.services@tso.co.uk.

Further information about the publication of legislation on this website can be found by referring to the Frequently Asked Questions.

To ensure fast access over slow connections, large documents have been segmented into "chunks". Where you see a "continue" button at the bottom of the page of text, this indicates that there is another chunk of text available.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2005 No. 3200 (W.236)

EDUCATION,WALES

The School Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005

Made	*15 November 2005*
Coming into force	*31 December 2005*

The National Assembly for Wales, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by sections 19(2), 19(3), 20(2), 21(3), 210(7) and 214(1) of the Education Act 2002[1], hereby makes the following Regulations:

Title, commencement and application

1. —(1) The title of these Regulations is the School Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005 and they come into force on 31 December 2005.

(2) These Regulations apply in relation to Wales.

Interpretation

2. In these regulations—

"school" ("*ysgol*") means a maintained school other than a maintained nursery school or an infant school; and
"infant school" ("*ysgol fabanod*") means a maintained school that does not admit pupils who are 8 years of age or older; and
"special educational needs resource base" ("*canolfan adnoddau anghenion addysgol arbennig*") means a class or department within a school for pupils with special educational needs.

School Councils

3. —(1) The governing body of a school must establish a school council, the purpose of which is to enable pupils to discuss matters relating to their school, their education and any other matters of concern or interest and to make representations on these to the governing body and the head teacher;

(2) The head teacher of a school must:

(a) ensure that meetings of the school council are convened on six occasions during the school year and, in so far as practicable, at regular intervals, the first of such meetings to take place by 1 November 2006; and

(b) ensure that all school council meetings are supervised by at least one member of the school staff.

(3) Both the governing body and the head teacher of a school must consider any matter communicated to them by the school council and provide a response to the school council.

(4) The governing body and head teacher of a school may agree to perform their functions under these Regulations jointly with the governing body and head teacher of other schools.

Membership

4. —(1) The membership of the school council must consist solely of registered pupils at the school.

(2) The governing body of a school and the head teacher must make arrangements for at least one registered pupil of each year group, from Year 3 and above, to be elected to membership of the school council.

(3) A person who is not a registered pupil at the school for which a school council is established is disqualified from membership of that council.

(4) The governing body and the head teacher of any school which has a special educational needs resource base, must make arrangements for at least one registered pupil from that special educational needs resource base to be elected to membership of the school council.

Special Schools

5. Regulations 3(2)(a), 4(2), 6 and 7 do not apply to community special schools or foundation special schools.

Elections

6. —(1) Subject to paragraph (2), appointment to the school council must be by election in a secret ballot in which all registered pupils are entitled to vote for candidates (if any) in their year group or within their special educational needs resource base.

(2) Paragraph (1) does not apply where arrangements are made for all registered pupils to be members of the school council.

Associate Pupil Governors

7. —(1) The head teacher of a school must ensure that the school council has the opportunity to nominate up to two pupils from Years 11 to 13 (inclusive) from its membership to be associate pupil governors on the school's governing body.

(2) The governing body must accept any pupil nominated in accordance with paragraph (1) above, and appoint him or her as an associate pupil governor on the governing body,

provided the pupil is not disqualified from membership in accordance with Schedule 5 of the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005[2].

Associate Pupil Governors: Amendments to the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005

8. —(1) The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005 are amended as follows.

(2) After regulation 12 insert:

“Associate pupil governors

12A. —(1) In these Regulations "associate pupil governor" means a registered pupil nominated by the school council to be a member of the governing body and appointed as such by the governing body in accordance with regulation 7 of the School Councils (Wales) Regulations 2005.

(2) The maximum number of associate pupil governors on any governing body is two.

(3) After regulation 20 insert:

" **20A.** Any associate pupil governor is in addition to the numbers of governors set out in Regulations 13 to 20 and Schedule 8."

(4) After regulation 25(5) insert:

" (5A) Paragraph (1) does not apply to any associate pupil governor who is to hold office for a period of one year from the date of his or her appointment. Nothing in this paragraph prevents an associate pupil governor from being re-appointed at the expiration of his or her term of office."

(5) For regulation 29 and its heading substitute:

" **Removal of appointed parent governors, partnership governors and associate pupil governors:**

29. Any parent governor appointed by the governing body under paragraphs 10 to 12 of Schedule 1, any partnership governor and any associate pupil governor may be removed by the governing body in accordance with the procedure set out in regulation 30."

(6) At the beginning of regulation 33(1)(d) insert "subject to paragraph (5),".

(7) After regulation 33(4), add:

" (5) Sub-paragraphs (d) and (e) of paragraph (1) do not apply to associate pupil governors."

(8) In regulation 44, substitute "regulations 44A and 63" for "regulation 63".

(9) After regulation 44, insert:

" **Exclusion of associated pupil governors from meetings**

44A. —(1) The governing body may exclude associate pupil governors from any governing body discussion relating to:

(a) staff appointments, staff pay, staff discipline, performance management of staff, grievances submitted by staff or dismissal of staff;

(b) admissions;

(c) individual pupil discipline;

(d) election, appointment and removal of governors;

(e) the budget and financial commitments of the governing body;

(f) in the case of a voluntary aided school, the Trust Deed; or

(g) any other matter that, by reason of its nature, the governing body is satisfied is and should remain confidential."

(10) In regulation 46(1) insert "any associate pupil governors," before "any vacancies."

(11) In regulation 46(2) insert "(excluding any associate pupil governors)" after "and voting on the question."

(12) After regulation 46(2) insert:

" **2A.** Associate pupil governors may not vote on any question to be determined at a meeting of the governing body.".

(13) In regulation 54(7) insert "associate pupil governors and" after "may include".

(14) At the end of regulation 54(8) add "excluding associate pupil governors.".

(15) For regulation 55(7), substitute:

" (7) Neither the head teacher of the school nor an associated pupil governor may be a member of the staff disciplinary and dismissal committee or the disciplinary and dismissal appeal committee.".

(16) In regulation 56(2) insert "or any associated pupil governor" after "the head teacher".

(17) In regulation 57(2)(b) insert "(excluding associate pupil governors)" after "other governors".

(18) For regulation 58(2) substitute:

" (2) Neither the head teacher of the school nor an associate pupil governor may be appointed as a clerk under paragraph (1)."

(19) In regulation 60(5) substitute ", 57(4) and 60(9)" for "and 57(4)".

(20) At the beginning of regulation 60(6) insert "Subject to regulation 60(8),".

(21) At the beginning of regulation 60(7) insert "Subject to regulation 60(9),".

(22) After regulation 60(8), insert:

" **60**

(9) For the purposes of paragraphs (5), (6), (7) and (8) above, the governing body shall determine whether associate pupil governors shall be treated as governors."

(23) At the beginning of paragraphs 1 and 11(1) of Schedule 5 insert "Save in the case of associated pupil governors,".

Signed on behalf of the National Assembly for Wales under section 66(1) of the Government of Wales Act 1998[3].

D. Elis-Thomas
The Presiding Officer of the National Assembly

15 November 2005

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations set out the requirement for maintained schools to set up school councils, which will provide pupils with the opportunity to discuss and make representations on matters relating to the school or other issues of concern to them.

Regulation 1 provides for the Regulations to come into force on 31 December 2005 and

regulation 2 contains the interpretation provisions.

Regulation 3 sets out the purpose of school councils and the duties of head teachers and governing bodies in respect of the school councils.

Regulation 4 sets out the membership requirements of each school council.

Regulation 5 provides that certain provisions do not apply to special schools.

Regulation 6 provides that appointment to school councils will be by secret ballot unless arrangements are made for all registered pupils to be members of the school council.

Regulation 7 provides that certain school council members must be given the opportunity to become associate pupil governors and regulation 8 sets out amendments to the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005.

A regulatory appraisal of these Regulations has been prepared and can be viewed on the National Assembly for Wales website (www.wales.gov.uk). Copies can be obtained from the Schools Management Division of the Department for Training and Education, Welsh Assembly Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ.

Notes:

[1] 2002 c.32.back
[2] S.I. 2005/2914 (W.211).back
[3] 1998 c.38.back

Cymraeg (Welsh)

ISBN 0 11 091235 7

References

Ajegbo, K., Kiwan, D. and Sharma, S. (2007) *Curriculum Review: diversity and citizenship* London: TSO

Alderson, P. (2000) School students' views on school councils and daily life at school *Children and Society* 14 (2) 121-34

Apple, M. and Beane, J. (1995) *Democratic Schools* Buckingham: Open University Press

Bäckman, E. and Trafford, B. (2006) *Democratic Governance of Educational Institutions* Strasbourg: Council of Europe

Baginsky, M. and Hannam, D. (1999) *School Councils: the views of students and teachers* London: NSPCC

BBC (2006) Extended schools 'aid community', BBC News Online 19th September

Bell, G. (2003) *Monitoring the Development of School Councils in Essex 1998-2002.* London: School Councils UK

Biermann, E., Chiarella, P. and Ali, Z. (2006) English Secondary Students Association presentation, ESSA conference, London

Black, P., Harrison, C., Lee, C., Marshall, B. and Wiliam, D. (2003) *Assessment for Learning: putting it into practice* Buckingham: Open University Press

Blake, S. and Muttock, S. (2004) *PSHE and Citizenship for Children and Young People with Special Needs: an agenda for action* London: National Children's Bureau

Blair, T. (2004) Speech to the Guardian's public services summit *Guardian* 29th January

Blenkinsop, S., Eggers, M., Schagen, I., Schagen, S., Scott, E., Warwick, I., Aggleton, P. and Chase, E. with Zuurmond, M. (2004) *Evaluation of the Impact of the National Healthy School Standard Final Report* London: Health Development Agency

Bragg, S. (2007) *Consulting Young People: a review of the literature* London: Creative Partnerships

Breslin, T. and Dufour, B. (2006) *Developing Citizens: a comprehensive introduction to effective citizenship education in the secondary school* London: Hodder Murray

Brighouse, T. (2006) Introduction, in Vaughan, M. (ed) *Summerhill and A. S. Neill* Maidenhead: Open University Press pp1-5

Cleaver, E., Ireland, E., Kerr, D. and Lopes, J. (2005) *Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study, Second Cross-sectional Survey 2004: listening to young people – citizenship education in England* Slough: NFER

Cook-Sather, A. (2006) 'Change based on what students say': preparing teachers for a paradoxical model of leadership *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 9 (4) 345-58

Cotmore, R. (2004) Organisational competence: the study of a school council in action *Children and Society* 18 53-65

Council of Europe (2006) *Education for Democratic Citizenship* www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/ - updated 29/6/06, accessed 31/7/06

Crick, B (1998) *Education for citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools: final report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship* September London: QCA/DfEE

Cummings, C., Dyson, A., Papps, I., Pearson, D., Raffo, C., Tiplady, L. and Todd, L. (2006) *Evaluation of the Full Service Extended Schools Initiative, Second Year: thematic papers* DfES Research Brief RB795 London: DfES

Davies, L., Williams C. and Yamashita, H. (2006a) *Inspiring Schools – Case Studies for Change: taking up the challenge of pupil participation* London: Carnegie

Davies, L., Williams C. and Yamashita, H. (2006b) *Inspiring Schools – Impact and Outcomes: taking up the challenge of pupil participation* London: Carnegie

Davies, L., Williams C. and Yamashita, H. (2006c) *Inspiring Schools - A Literature Review: taking up the challenge of pupil participation* London: Carnegie

DfES (2001) *Schools Building on Success* London: HMSO

DfES (2003) *Statutory Guidance on the School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations 2003* London: DfES 0430/2003

DfES (2004) *Working together: giving children and young people a say* London: DfES

DfES (2005a) *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All: more choice for parents and pupils* [Schools White Paper] Norwich: HMSO

DfES (2005b) *Youth Matters* [Green Paper] Norwich: HMSO

DfES (2006a) *Developing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills: approaches to implementation – guidance for school senior leaders* Norwich: HMSO

DfES (2006b) *Developing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Skills: generic advice on learning and teaching* Norwich: HMSO

DfES (2006c) *Care Matters* [Green] Paper Norwich: HMSO

DfES (2007) *Standard Specifications, Layouts and Dimensions: toilets in schools* London: TSO

DfES/NHSS (2004) *Promoting Children and Young People's Participation through the National Healthy School Standard* London: DfES

Dürr, K. (2003) *The School: A Democratic Learning Community – the all-European study on pupils' participation in school* Strasbourg: Council of Europe

Ellis, A. (2005) *Active Citizens in School: evaluation of the DfES pilot programme* DfES Research Briefing, London: DfES

Estyn (2006) *Young People's Participation in Decision Making 2005-2006* Cardiff: Estyn

Estyn (2007) *Participation of Children and Young People (3-11 year olds) in Local Decision-making Issues that Affect their Lives* Cardiff: Estyn

Fergusson, A. and Lawson, H. (2003) *Access to Citizenship: Curriculum planning and practical activities for pupils with learning difficulties* London: David Fulton

Fielding, M. (2001) Beyond the rhetoric of student voice: new departures or new constraints in the transformation of twenty-first century schooling *Forum* 43 (2) 100-9

Fielding, M. (2004) 'New wave' student voice and the renewal of civic society *London Review of Education* Special issue on 'Education for Civic Society' 2 (3) 197-217

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

Fielding, M. and Rudduck, J. (2006) Student voice and the perils of popularity *Educational Review* 58 (2) 219-31

Flutter, J. and Rudduck, J. (2004) *Consulting Pupils: what's in it for schools?* London: RoutledgeFalmer

Goleman (1996) *Emotional Intelligence* London: Bloomsbury

Grace, G. (1995) *School Leadership* London: Falmer Press

Hallgarten, J., Breslin, T. and Hannam, D. (2004) *I was a Teenage Governor – Project report phase 1: pupil governorship: initial thoughts and possibilities* London: Citizenship Foundation

Hannam, D. (2001) *A Pilot Study to Evaluate the Impact of the Student Participation Aspects of the Citizenship Order on Standards of Education in Secondary Schools* London: CSV

Hannam, D. (2002) *CSV Reports on the Impact of Citizenship in Schools* London: CSV

Hannam, D. (2004) *I was a teenage governor: getting ready for pupil governorship – project report phase 2, pupil governorship: initial preparation and experience in the project schools* London: Citizenship Foundation/IPPR

Harber, C. (2004) *Schooling as Violence: how schools harm pupils and societies* London: Routledge

Hargreaves, D. (2004) *Personalising Learning – 2: student voice and assessment for learning* London: SST

Hart, R. (1992) *Children's Participation: from tokenism to citizenship* Innocenti Essays No 4. Florence: UNICEF

Hayes, D., Mills, M., Christie, P. and Lingard, B. (2006) *Teachers and Schooling Making a Difference: productive pedagogies, assessment and performance* Sydney: Allen and Unwin

HM Treasury (2003) *Every Child Matters* [Green Paper] Norwich: HMSO

House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (2007a) *Citizenship Education* London: TSO

House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (2007b) *Citizenship Education: Government response to the Committee's second report of session 2006–07* London: TSO

Ipsos MORI (2007a) *Teachers Omnibus Survey: research study conducted for DfES*. Unpublished report

Ipsos MORI (2007b) *Schools Omnibus Survey: research study conducted for DfES*. Unpublished report

James, M. & Pollard, A. (eds) (2006) *Improving Teaching and Learning in Schools: a commentary by the Teaching and Learning Research Programme* London: TLRP

Jeffrey, B. (2001) 'Valuing primary students' perspectives' Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, Lille

Kerr, D. and Cleaver, L. (2004) *Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study: Literature Review – citizenship education one year on – what does it mean? Emerging definitions and approaches in the first year of the national curriculum citizenship in England* London: DfES

Kerr, D., Cleaver, E., Ireland, E. and Blenkinsop, S. (2003) *Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study: First Cross-Sectional Survey 2001-2002* London: DfES

Kerr, D., Lines, A., Blenkinsop, S. and Schagen, I. (2001) *Citizenship and Education at Age 14: a summary of the international findings and preliminary results for England* Slough: NFER

Kerr, D., Lines, A., Blenkinsop, S. and Schagen, I. (2002) *What Citizenship and Education Mean to 14-year-olds: England's results for the IEEA citizenship education study* London: DfES/NFER

Leadbeater, C. (2004) *Personalisation: how can we put the learner at the heart of the education system?* London: DfES

Leadbeater, C. (2005) *The Shape of Things to Come: personalised learning through collaboration* London: DfES

Lewis, A., Robertson, C. and Parsons, S. (2005) *Experiences of Disabled Students and their Families – phase one* London: Disability Rights Commission

Lingard, B. (2006) 'Pedagogies of indifference: research, policy and practice' Keynote address presented at the annual BERA conference, Warwick, September

Lodge, C. (2005) From hearing voices to engaging in dialogue: problematising student participation in school improvement *Journal of Educational Change* 6 125-46

Lodge, C. and Reed, J. (2003) 'Improvement in actions: sustainable improvements in learning through school-based, teacher-led enquiry' Paper presented at the annual meeting of ICSEI, Sydney, Australia

McCallum, B., Hargreaves, E. and Gipps, C. (2000) Learning: the pupil's voice *Cambridge Journal of Education* 30 (2) 275-89

McIntyre, D., Pedder, D. and Rudduck, J. (2005) Pupil voice: comfortable and uncomfortable learnings for teachers *Research Papers in Education* 20 (2) 149-68

Marley, D. (2006) 'Give pupils more say on education' *Times Educational Supplement* 24 November p11

Mee, D., Morton, K., Watts, R. and Youens, B. (2006) 'Harnessing the potential of pupils to influence school development' Paper presented at the Pupil Voice and Participation: pleasures, promises and pitfalls conference, University of Nottingham

Meighan, R. (2004) *Damage Limitation: trying to reduce the harm schools do to children* Nottingham: Educational Heretics Press

Meyer-Bisch, P. (ed) (1995) *Culture of Democracy: a challenge for schools* Paris: UNESCO

NHSS (2003) Literature search on the links between emotional well-being and participation and progression in learning (unpublished)

Nelson, J. and Kerr, D. (2006) *Active Citizenship in INCA Countries: definitions, policies, practices and outcomes* www.qca.org.uk

Ofsted (2005a) *Citizenship in Secondary Schools: evidence from Ofsted inspections 2003/04* London: Ofsted

Ofsted (2005b) *Framework for the Inspection of Schools in England from September 2005* London: Ofsted

Ofsted (2006a) *Improving Behaviour: lessons learned from HMI monitoring of secondary schools where behaviour had been judged unsatisfactory* (November) www.ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted (2006b) *Towards Consensus? Citizenship in secondary schools* (September) www.ofsted.gov.uk

Osler, A. and Starkey, H. (2005) 'Education for Democratic Citizenship: a review of research, policy and practice 1995-2005' BERA Academic Review

Rowe, D. (2003) *The Business of School Councils: an investigation into democracy in schools* London: Citizenship Foundation.

Rubin, B. and Silva, E. (eds) (2003) *Critical Voices in School Reform: students living through change* London: RoutledgeFalmer

Rudduck, J. and Flutter, J. (2000) Pupil participation and pupil perspective: 'carving a new order of experience' *Cambridge Journal of Education* 30 (1) 75-89

Sammons, P., Power, S., Robertson, P., Elliot, K., Campbell, C. and Whitty, G. (2002) *National evaluation of the New Community Schools Pilot Programme in Scotland: Phase 1 (1999-2002) interim findings and emerging issues for policy and practice* Edinburgh: SEED

SEED [Scottish Executive Education Department] (2005) Scottish schools ethos network www.ethosnet.co.uk/resources_casestudies.htm (accessed 05/06)

Shier, H. (2001) Pathways to participation: openings, opportunities and obligations – a new model for enhancing children's participation in decision-making *Children and Society* 15 107-17

Silva, E. (2001) 'Squeaky wheels and flat tires': a case study of students as reform participants *Forum* 43 (2) 95-9

Simon, J. and Stone, J. (2005) *School Councils for All: including disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs* London: SCUK

Sinclair, R. (2004) Participation in practice: making it meaningful, effective and sustainable *Children and Society* 18 106-18

Smyth, J. (2006) Educational leadership that fosters 'student voice' *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 9 (4) 279-84

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

Thiessen, D. (1997) Knowing about, acting on behalf of, and working with primary pupils' perspectives: three levels of engagement with research, in Pollard, A., Thiessen, D. and Filer, A. (eds) *Children and Their Curriculum* London: Falmer Press pp184-196.

Thomson, P. and Gunter, H. (2006) From 'consulting pupils' to 'pupils as researchers': a situated case narrative *British Educational Research Journal* 32 (6) 839-56

Thomson, P. and Holdsworth, R. (2003) Theorising change in the educational 'field': re-readings of 'student participation' projects *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 6 (4) 371-91

Trafford, B. (1997) *Participation, Power-sharing and School Improvement* Nottingham: English Heretics

Trafford, B. (2003) *School Councils, School Democracy and School Improvement* Leicester: Secondary Heads Association

Treseder, P. (1997) *Empowering Children and Young People* London: Save the Children

Vaughan, M. (ed) (2006) *Summerhill and A. S. Neill* Maidenhead: Open University Press

Weare, K. & Gray (2003) *What Works in Developing Children's Emotional and Social Competence and Wellbeing?* London: DfES

Welsh Assembly Government (2005a) *Narrowing the Gap in the Performance of Schools Project: Phase II Primary Schools* Cardiff: Welsh Assembly Government

Welsh Assembly Government (2005b) The School Councils (Wales) Regulations www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/legislation/wales/wsi2005/20053200e.htm

Whitty, G. (2006) 'Teacher professionalism in a new era' General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland Annual Lecture, Belfast, March

Wyness, M. (2006) Children, young people and civic participation: regulation and local diversity *Educational Review* 58 (20) 209-18

Wyse, D. (2001) Felt tip pens and school councils: children's participation rights in four English schools *Children and Society* 15 209-18

Young, H. (2002) *Citizenship Education for Young People with Special Educational Needs* www.citizen.org.uk/education/sen/download.html (School councils section: www.citizen.org.uk/education/sen/pdf/school_cncl.pdf)

Copies of this publication can be obtained from:

DfES Publications
PO Box 5050
Sherwood Park
Annesley
Nottingham NG15 ODJ

Tel 0845 6022260
Fax 0845 6033360
Email dfes@prolog.uk.com
Please quote ref: DCSF-RR001

ISBN: 978 1 84775 000 6

© Institute of Education,University of London 2007

www.dcsf.gov.uk/research

Published by the Department for
Children, Schools and Families

£4.95

department for
children, schools and families