

What does pupil voice work aim to achieve?



**PRIMARY EDUCATION:
what is and what might be?**

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Part 1 of Article 12 of UNCRC



State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.



Relevant educational policy documents



2002 Education Act required government bodies to consult with pupils about matter affecting them

2005 Education Act required inspectors to seek pupils' views during school inspections

2006 Education Act - required schools governing bodies to consult with pupils

2008 Working Together: Listening to the voices of children and young people – strongly endorsed benefits of listening to CYP

2014 Listening to and involving CYP



What is Pupil Voice work?

Working with students to elicit their perspectives on matters relating to any aspect of school life.

What does 'ideal/best practice' pupil voice work look like?



Elements of 'best practices' in Pupil Voice work



- Increasing pupils' confidence to voice their opinions.
- Providing opportunities for pupils to have the space and freedom to voice opinions.
- Encouraging pupils to initiate ideas

Is this sufficient to establish 'best' pupil voice practices?



Cautions around Pupil Voice practices



- Are issues on which pupils can voice opinions of central importance to school policies and practices?
- What areas of school life are pupils enabled to voice opinions? What areas aren't they?
- Are only the voices of pupils who demonstrate compliance with existing school values and norms listened to?





In what ways do school practices intended to empower and give pupils the freedom to have a voice, serve to disempower and to silence the voices of individuals and groups within schools?



What can we draw from these findings?

- All decisions in which pupils were involved were unlikely to take staff or pupils out of their comfort zones
- The measures taken by schools to give pupils a voice did not serve to challenge or re-define, in any significant way, the nature of existing forms of domination or the notions of power historically present within these school settings.



To conclude



If the goals of Pupil Voice work are to be achieved, do we need to reconceptualise the roles of teachers and pupils in schools?



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