

## Student voice within the context of wider participation activities in school (with a subject focus on student views in relation to English)

### Agreed purposes of the visit

- To review the school's current practice and identify next steps
- To explore the use of student voice meetings
- To consider the breadth of student participation across the school

### Evidence base

- Meetings and discussions with key members of staff across the different aspects of participation
- Joining two student voice meetings (Yr 11 with a focus on English; Yr 7 students with SEND)
- Learning walk and observation of Yr 11 lessons
- Discussion and reflections with key members of staff

### Overview of strengths and recommendations

The following thoughts were explored during the visit. They are discussed in full in the note of visit.

#### Strengths of the school's current practice

- A range of student voice/participation activities are embedded in day-to-day practice. All members of staff showed a desire to further develop practice.
- Student voice/participation activities cover many types and levels of participation.
- Observations indicated that students treated opportunities to share their views with appropriate consideration. They appeared to understand that their views are important and are respected.
- Staff involved in the discussions were insightful about student voice/ participation activities and are motivated to improve opportunities for meaningful participation.
- Both student voice sessions were well-run, positive, purposeful and enjoyable. Students were supported to engage and were enabled to contribute honest and helpful views.

#### Areas for development

My view is that the 'voice' element of practice is currently stronger than the collaborative voice/ participation element. Increasing more collaborative activities should be a relatively easy step, as the foundations of participation are already so well embedded. Specific developments discussed include:

- Creating a visual map of all the current participation activities, so that the breadth and nature of the activities can be appreciated and understood.
- Vulnerable and harder to reach groups will continue to be a focus for ensuring access to opportunities for voice/collaboration.
- The *Ladder of Participation* may be a useful tool for identifying which participation activities can foster more collaborative approaches, where students are engaged in steering/influencing.
- Making all student voice/participation activities meaningful to students by 'closing the loop', so that students know their voice has helped informed thinking and/or practice.
- Helping student leaders and the school council use various participation techniques and strategies (work is already underway).
- We discussed some general good practice points for student voice/participation sessions, to build on the current good practice (information sheet shared after the visit).
- A great suggestion from faculty leads was to log and coordinate which students have taken part in student voice groups across curriculum subjects.

Dr Helen Squibb  
Consultant Educational Psychologist & SEND/Inclusion Advisor  
Chartered Psychologist; HCPC registered Psychologist