



Pupil Voice

1. Introduction

The purpose of 'pupil voice' at Greenside School is to increase the influence of pupils in the provision of their own education by ensuring that their views are included when schools make key decisions.

2. Rationale

The 2001 Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice, (DfES 2001), Chapter 3 'Pupil Participation', begins with a statement: **"Children, who are capable of forming views, have a right to receive and make known information, to express an opinion, and to have that opinion taken into account in any matters affecting them. The views of the child should be given weight according to the age, maturity and capability of the child."**(Articles 12 and 13, The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.)

The SEN Code of practice acknowledges that **"Children and young people with special educational needs have a unique knowledge of their own needs and circumstances and their own views about what sort of help they would like to help them make the most of their education."** (DfES : SEN Code of Practice, para. 3:2)

It is the responsibility and duty of every adult to enable each pupil to be a real partner in their learning process.

The Mission statement of Greenside School:

"Working as One – Learning together."

Reflects a culture in which everyone is valued and everyone is learning – pupils and adults learn everyday. .

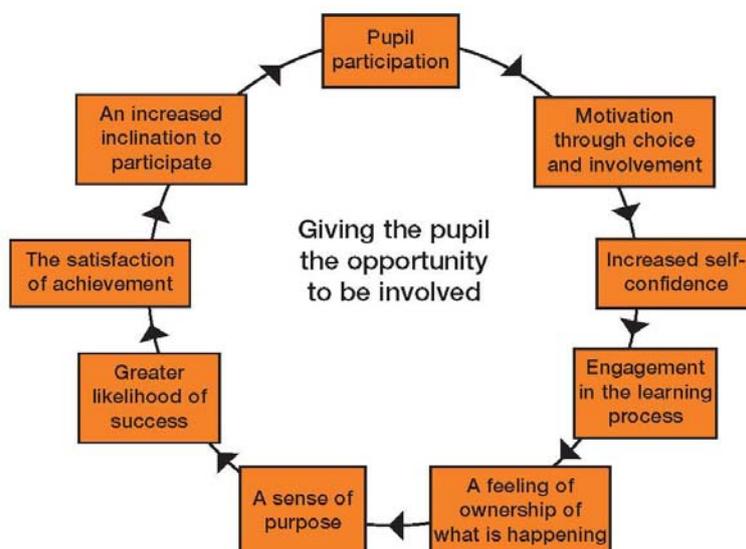
The fundamental principle of Pupil Voice at Greenside School is that **all pupils of school age, regardless of age or ability** will learn more effectively if their views, expressed by whatever means appropriate, are taken into consideration in planning and delivering their learning programme.

Every pupil needs to be happy and comfortable with their learning environment and curriculum in order to enjoy success.

The young person's perception of their life in school, their learning environment and their interactions with others will be unique to them and may well be very different to those of the adult observer. As adults, we must guard against making assumptions about what children or young people think. We must give them the principal voice in describing their learning world as they see it and let that voice inform provision.

3. Giving each pupil the opportunity to be involved

At Greenside we believe that:



This cycle is self-perpetuating and is underpinned by the opportunity for pupils to grow in self knowledge which, in itself, will make their participation in their own education more productive.

Motivation is essential for all learners, including those with profound learning difficulties.

The sharing of learning objectives is now a widely recognised feature of high quality teaching. A Greenside School, photographs, symbols, photographs and video are used to support pupils to understand the objectives of lesson and individual education plans.

At Greenside we acknowledge that involving all pupils with special needs meaningfully in the processes around their own education is not easy. The more significant their individual need, the more difficult this essential task becomes for teachers. The more their provision is shaped by their particular needs, the greater the sensitivity needed in discussing their needs with them. This document offers guidance on promoting pupil participation in mseveral areas:

Individual education planning, including:

- identifying and describing the pupil's individual needs and potential barriers to learning
- recognising strengths and capabilities which can be built on
- setting appropriate targets and objectives for learning
- planning suitable activities and tasks for the pupil
- deciding on the most helpful additional support for the pupil and, where appropriate, who best to provide it

Annual Review meetings, including:

- assessing, recognising and celebrating achievement
- enabling pupil involvement
- planning for the future, whether this is in the context of learning in school or
- concerned with the transition to other schools or to the young person's life after school

Inclusive teaching, including:

- maximising the pupil's enjoyment of learning and their comfortableness in the learning environment

Contributing to decision making, including:

- Contributing to planning, opportunities, resources.

At Greenside we recognise that children with special needs may not be used to exercising choice over things such as clothes and food. We cannot expect pupils to make major decisions in the future if we have not built up a culture of active participation. We may need to start with giving pupils an opportunity to rehearse lesser choices first.

It is the responsibility of each adult to contribute each day to a culture and practice that enables:

- a learning dialogue between adult and pupil,
- an approach to personal and social education, through such activities as Circle Time
- pupils see their involvement in whole school decision making as a normal part of school life and as part of their learning.

4. Areas of Participation

Individual Education Planning and Target Setting

For the individual education planning process to be worthwhile and for it to fully enable the participation of pupils, it needs to be far more than the production of the IEP document.

At Greenside class staff value diversity and openly recognises different learning styles.

Each IEP should consider 'what's in it for the pupil' and how the target will improve his or her experience of school.

Teachers involved need to work with each pupil to recognise his or her strengths and successes, drawing upon a wider variety of means of praising and celebrating pupils' achievements.

Wherever possible, targets in IEPs should involve or imply clearly understood *strategies* for the pupil so that they know what to do to achieve the target.

Individual Education Planning and Target Setting are processes which pupils may initially only contribute to particular aspects of the process.

At Greenside Pupils contribute to their IEPs in a number of ways and discuss their progress individually with an adult. They give their view on the progress they think they have made with their targets and what they think their future targets should be. These views are then written on their IEPs.

The school strongly believes that some pupils will be able and should be supported to contribute to planning and evaluating their learning targets and know what they want to achieve are more likely to succeed". Pupils often have their targets stuck on their desk / table.

Pupils may be supported to record for themselves examples which illustrate that an IEP target has been met.

Annual Reviews

Greenside School enables pupils to participate in their reviews in a variety of ways:

- Questionnaires,
- Consultation about what photos, video clips should be included in the PowerPoint presentations that are an important feature of each annual review,
- Presentations of their learning and achievements, including use PowerPoint.

Inclusive teaching

Educational inclusion is about ensuring that the learning provision made for all identifiable groups of pupils is effective in raising standards for those pupils and enabling them to achieve and make progress. There are many aspects which should promote strategies for inclusion, including effective use of pupil performance data and the selection of an appropriate curriculum and accreditation opportunities. However, in terms of 'participation in learning' and the voices of pupils being heard and included in lessons, the single most important aspect of provision is the quality of teaching.

At Greenside teachers must ensure that lessons and learning activities are relevant and accessible to all pupils, drawing upon their experience of their world

- Ensuring that pupils understand and can articulate how their work relates to prior learning and to things which they might go on to learn – that they are aware of the 'big picture' rather than classroom tasks in isolation
- Ensuring that pupils are aware of how aspects of their current work relates to their IEP targets and strategies
- Use interactive methods which ensure participation from all pupils
- Assess their understanding and to give them opportunities to give appropriate answers and thereby strengthen their self-esteem.
- Enabling effective peer support and paired work in order to provide opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning at their own level
- Find ways of ensuring that all pupils can contribute to a plenary discussion, perhaps by rehearsing their contribution with a teaching assistant
- allowing pupils, as appropriate, to be able to opt for time out from the classroom when they are beginning to find self-control difficult.

5. Contributing to the decision making process

At Greenside pupils are given the opportunity to influence their school and aspects of provision.

A flexible approach has been adopted in order to reflect the changing needs, abilities and interests of pupils. This has included engaging an independent, specialist advocacy service, the provision of a school council, school captains, as well as pupil involvement with specific projects such as: The Eco School working group, groups recommending lunch and post school activities.

A variety of ways are used to gain the views of pupils including: questionnaires, structured and informal meetings with senior staff, small group discussions.

Pupils are encouraged to raise concerns and make suggestions.

Pupils contribute to a range of decisions including the choice of class, teacher, facilities, opportunities, destinations for residential visits.

Pupils are enabled to reflect upon the school identifying what they like dislike as well as aspects they may wish to change.