

Student Voice Evaluation Report

School: Portfield School

Head Teacher: Sue Painter

School Type: Special School

Link School Council Teacher: Alison Swain

Date of Visit: 30th June 2014

Link School Council Governor: Beryl Thomas-Cleaver

Visiting Assessor: Rose Davis & Kathy Young-Powell

Thank you to the Head, Deputy Head, link teacher, link governor and school council who welcomed the visit. The visit included an observation of a school council meeting, formal discussions with school council members and senior staff and opportunities to speak to 10 pupils informally.

Key recommendations:

Portfield School have prioritised children's rights and student voice, which has become integral to the ethos of the school. They have invested in the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools programme and promote children's rights and the National Participation Standards in every classroom. School council is part of the school's weekly timetable, and the school council's role is respected by all staff in the school, who support the diverse community of students to participate in having a voice. Following the Student Voice Evaluation Visit, we recommend:

1. **In order to meet Standard 5, the school should introduce a system of rewards for the school council and carry out a consultation with all students and parents.**
2. **The school should undertake a self-assessment for the National Participation Standards as soon as possible in order to achieve the Kitemark.**

Good practice observed	Areas for development
<p>Standard 1 - Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All students interviewed were aware of their rights and able to tell us about them. There are posters of the UNCRC and Participation Standards in every classroom.• A Powerpoint presentation on children's rights has been delivered across the school.• Portfield School has achieved Level 2 of the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Scheme.	

- School council members are announced in assembly at the beginning of the year and all students interviewed were aware of the name of their school council representative.
- There is comprehensive and prominent information in easy to read format on noticeboards across the school, ie a school council board, regularly updated with photos of activities and dates for the next meeting.
- The link teacher prepares all information in pictorial format so all students can understand.
- School council minutes are put on the school website and Portal.
- A newsletter to parents includes information on school council activity.

Standard 2 – It's your choice

- The elections to school council are conducted by secret ballot, using polling booths and a ballot box. The students stood for election, made speeches and the ballot papers had photos of the candidates.
- Students interviewed had an understanding of the electoral process.
- The school council agenda is well balanced, with items from classes and the senior leadership team.
- School council members are involved in gathering ideas from their classes prior to meetings.
- There was evidence of students voting in classes on issues and bringing decisions back to school council.
- The school council meeting was chaired effectively by the deputy head boy, with good support as appropriate from the link teacher.
- School council meetings are held every week. This helps to maintain continuity and focus in following ideas up.
- The school council have been involved in developing policies which affect them, eg anti-bullying, keeping safe, food and uniform.

Standard 3 – No Discrimination

- There is a representative from all the upper school classes on the school council, with the members requiring support receiving this from staff in the meeting, allowing all to participate fully.
- Satellite units in Ysgol Preseli (y Porth) and Tasker Milward School are included on the school council, with a Skype link to y Porth.
- There is a lower school representative supported to attend the school council meeting. In the meeting observed, this representative had asked for views from the lower school in assembly.
- The school council reps are well enabled to speak to their classes, gaining their views in different formats and bringing them to the meeting, eg A3 pictograms, tally charts, etc.
- The school council have taken the lead with numerous fundraising activities, eg Crazy Olympics for UNICEF, Children in Need and Comic Relief.

Standard 4 – Respect

- The role of the school council is promoted well in the school and the community, with the school also ensuring that they are often featured in local newspapers.
- The school council is involved in representing the school at key events, eg the Enterprise Fair, receiving cheques for the school, attending Welsh heritage awards.
- School council members regularly attend governing body meetings to give talks and presentations.
- The link governor is very supportive of the school council's role, showing a great deal of respect for their views. She attends school council meetings and explained the role of the governing body to the school council at the beginning of the year.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff across the school get involved in school council matters as appropriate, showing respect for the school council priorities, eg school council asked Mr Davies (IT) about blocked websites, school council discussed portion sizes with the school cook, they have also spoken to Mr Wilcox (site manager) on various issues.• The school council are involved in spending decisions, with support from the link teacher and headteacher.	
<p>Standard 5 – You get something out of it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School council members receive a badge when they are elected and a certificate at the end of the year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school should develop a means of rewarding the school council officially for their contribution to the school. School council members could be involved in deciding the reward.• Consider a consultation with pupils and parents on the perceived benefits of the student voice system and ways it can be improved.
<p>Standard 6 - Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback is a prominent item on the school council agendas and minutes.• Feedback from the school council to students in classes is regularly carried out, with support from the link teacher and other staff. Students usually feed back immediately after the weekly meetings.• Face Time (using iPads) is used to give feedback to classes on school council decisions.• School council members often make appointments to see the headteacher and other staff to discuss actions from their meetings.• There is a good two-way dialogue between the school council and governing body.	

Standard 7 – Improving how we work

- The school council have made many changes to the school, working together with the governing body and the school community, eg playground (equipment etc) route to Tesco made safer, staff in Tesco taught to communicate with students. Currently they are in the process of deciding on the style of the new PE bags.
- The students have been well trained by the link teacher to participate in school council meetings and they demonstrated good skills.
- The link teacher is allocated protected time each week to develop the work of the school council.
- The link teacher has booked to attend the Pupil Participation training in September, demonstrating a commitment to further improve the good practice already in place.

- The school has already identified the need to meet with school councils in other special schools and are planning this for September 2014. This would be good practice and would benefit the students.

Signed: Rose Davis Kathy Young-Powell

Copies to: LA Head of Service, Headteacher and Chair of Governors

Date: 30th June 2014