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Involving pupils in school design

A guide for schools

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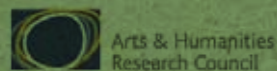
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Name: A guide for Sch

Date: 2009

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Why pupil participation is worthwhile

Who should read this guide

The Education Act 2002 requires all UK schools and local authorities to consult with pupils 'in the exercise of any function' relating to a school's conduct. This applies to any, kind of redesign, refurbishment or reconstruction of school buildings. After all, such activities are typically important events in a school's life, 'function' and 'conduct'.

As well as being a requirement, pupil participation in school design and redevelopment projects can produce many positive results. Although the AHRC project from which these guidelines are derived focussed on pupil participation, our findings show that when students are involved the whole school benefits, including teachers and school management.

You should read this guide if your school is in the process of, or just starting any design or refurbishment, where you want pupils and as much of the school to be included as possible.

If you are not directly involved in this process, then pass the leaflet on to the members of staff who are going to be involved, so that they can start planning how to involve as wide and fair a group of people in the process as possible. We have sent out companion guides to LEAs and architects, but if the people you are working with have not seen one, then feel free to share and discuss the contents of this with them. We have found that LEAs and architects are eager to engage young people but may not know the best way to do this.

How to read this guide

This guide was produced by a team of researchers from the experiences of a two year funded project. We want to show you the benefits of involving as large a range of pupils in the process as possible, and suggest some relatively quick and easy ways this can be accomplished. We have therefore left sections open for you to consider how such methods would fit in with your school ethos and could be used to draw in a wide range of pupils. The guide concludes with sections on how to prepare for pupil participation and what your pupils can do to get the most out of the new school build programme.

But first, let's look at the benefits of pupil participation...



The benefits

Improvements to the spaces and day-to-day running of school buildings

"Our experience is... that pupils come up with really perceptive ideas, that can genuinely improve a space. And a lot of things that come from the pupils are mostly cost neutral. They are not asking for the earth – they are very realistic in what they want." (Architect)

School buildings with local 'character'

"Getting the pupils involved was crucial – they're the ones who've really helped us to bring a local 'stamp' to the project." (Head teacher)

Greater user satisfaction with the school environment

"I think is particularly good for pupils to be involved... because it gives pupils ownership – you know it makes them feel good because it's their school, their role in that kind of decision-making... It makes them feel more at home in their school." (Teacher)

Fostering a culture of trust and collaboration

"The whole [redevelopment] project has been a kind of... bonding exercise really. It does encourage everybody to be enthusiastic about every aspect of a school... It has brought people together." (Head teacher)

Reduced vandalism and 'anti-social behaviour'

"Giving the pupils something new, something they have a stake in – it's treating them with respect. It's saying 'we trust you'. Our pupils have responded magnificently. They really take pride in it." (Head teacher)

"Basically – there's no graffiti in the corridors any more!" (Teacher)

Opportunities for teaching and learning

"We've started to link [the school redevelopment project] into the curriculum in all sorts of ways – numeracy, design... learning about the history of the building and looking at old photos and maps." (Teacher)

Enhanced design literacy

"[Involving pupils in school design] gives them a bit of an insight into different parts of the process – design, budgeting, strategic decisions... It expands their knowledge and hopefully helps them to understand things in a different way." (Architect)

Raising learners' self-esteem

"The input [into the development project] made him [son] feel important. He'd come back and tell me what they were talking about in school: they had discussions... I really noticed a difference." (Parent)

"[a group of disaffected students] realised perhaps for the first time that they could have a voice and they could come up with ideas and that people could listen to them." (Deputy Head teacher)

Familiarising pupils with new school environments

"You see a psychological impact of consultation as you start to involve children: it has engendered a sense of ownership, and there was no shock for pupils of moving into new environment, because they already knew a lot about the new building, were prepared to move." (Head teacher)

*Interacting with this
this guide.
Please write on me!.. any
thoughts you have about
pupil participation while
reading this guide...
Please get scribbling in
the margins!..*

Techniques for involving pupils

The following techniques are ones which we have found or believe could be used in the pupil participation process. Do not rely on the architects or the LEAs to necessarily provide you with methods. Also, the most important things to remember are that you, or the person(s) in charge of the process at the school should:

- **try to engage as many pupils as possible in some way – it is an exciting time – and you and your pupils are the ones that know most about your school**
- **manage pupils' expectations, by telling them the constraints the design process is under – restricted budgets and long time scale**
- **follow your school's ideas to ensure the requirements you have gathered find a place in the final design.**

A full set of guidelines for teachers, pupils, LEAs and architects, along with more details of our project is available from the project web site at: <http://www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/d/699>

Show of hands

A collective vote on predetermined issues.

Advantages

- Getting opinions on a small number of clear-cut issues.
- Choosing from a small range of options.
- Quickly consulting with a wide range of pupils.
- Establishing short-term collective opinions.
- Getting pupils excited about a project.

Disadvantages

- Difficulty if 50/50 split.
- If the problems require debate and are complex.
- Used without any other form of participation.
- No follow up actions are taken on the basis of the vote.

Ballot box

Polling station or ballot box in an accessible part of the school allowing pupils to vote on particular issues. Prior to each poll, pupils would need to be briefed on the voting process and the issues at stake. This could be done in assembly or in PSHE lessons.

Advantages

- Getting opinions on a small number of clear-cut issues.
- Enabling a broad cross-section of pupils to have some say.
- Galvanising pupil enthusiasm around the decision-making process.
- Gathering opinions quickly.
- Getting pupils to reflect on participation in democratic processes.

Disadvantages

- There is little consensus.
- Particular groups 'opt out' of, or dominate, voting.
- There is limited staff time to count and analyse the vote.
- The vote is the only way in which pupils are involved pupils receive no feedback and/or do not see action taken on the basis of their vote.

Ideas board / tree / box

This is different from 1 and 2, because pupils directly and in their own words contribute and share suggestions. This could be through post-it notes, a graffiti wall, messages hung to branches on a tree, or more confidentially – through a suggestion box. All ideas need to be discussed non-judgementally and then acted on (perhaps in conjunction with 1 or 2).

Advantages

- Encouraging 'blue skies thinking'.
- Establishing a tangible focus for enthusiasm and opinions.
- Gathering a range of ideas and comments about a wide range of aspects of the school environment.

Disadvantages

- Pupils' contributions could be unfocused, 'irrelevant' or 'unrealistic'.
- Particular groups of pupils 'opt out' of, or dominate, the activity.
- Follow up discussions are not managed.
- Pupils receive no feedback.

Questionnaire survey

Surveys can be designed to elicit pupils' (or others) opinions on key issues such as the design of different areas of the school. These can contain open and closed questions (which limit the responses e.g. to agree, disagree or uncertain).

Advantages

- Gathering baseline statistics on opinions.
- Consulting widely with a range of stakeholders.
- Neat way of documenting, presenting and evidencing decisions.

Disadvantages

- Questionnaire design can be difficult.
- Response rate may be poor or biased.
- May be non inclusive.
- More appropriate for secondary schools.
- Time to design, administer and analyse results.
- Findings may be quickly filed and forgotten.

Focus groups

This is a group based interview in which a predetermined set of issues are discussed by all participants (usually 5–8) for about an hour. The participants should represent a wide range of the school population. Responses and debates need to be noted and passed on.

Advantages

- Understanding in-depth opinions.
- Allowing pupils to fully outline their concerns.
- Establishing thought provoking dialogues.

Disadvantages

- Time to organise, run and write up results.
- God facilitator is essential.
- Ideas may not be representative or inclusive.
- Pupils need sufficient time to express problems.
- May become tokenistic (e.g. the gifted and talented).
- A few voices may dominate.

Focussed classroom activities

In this case consultation with pupils is embedded in the school day, perhaps in PSHE or Design and Technology lessons, in tutor groups, assemblies or whole day events. These can be facilitated by teaching staff, outside professionals such as the Sorrell Foundation or the architects who will be involved in the final design. Scheduling events into the school time table may require more organisation, but can achieve greater awareness and inclusivity.

Advantages

- Focusing attention and discussion upon the school redevelopment project.
- Coordinating consultation activities.
- Gaining a snapshot of opinions and debates from a cross-section of pupils.
- Getting all the school talking, thinking and working collaboratively in relation to the school redevelopment.

Disadvantages

- Activities are inconsistently delivered or poorly coordinated.
- Particular groups feel disenfranchised and/or disengaged in classroom settings.
- No mechanism through which pupils' activities contribute to decision-making processes.
- If this is just a one-off activity which is ignored in the mainstream planning.
- May become tokenistic (e.g. the gifted and talented).
- A few voices may dominate.

APPLYING THIS IN MY SCHOOL

We could use this with ...

We could use this to ...

We would have to ...

APPLYING THIS IN MY SCHOOL

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Drop in sessions

One or more members of staff may be involved more in the consultation process than others. To signal that the school and its users (both staff and students) are part of this process, regular drop in sessions could be timetabled in which interested parties can raise issues, look at plans, and discuss ideas – perhaps with the architects and designers.

APPLYING THIS IN MY SCHOOL

*We could use this with ...
we could use this to ...
we would have to ...*

Advantages

- Provides regular, accessible, ongoing point for pupil engagement.
- Embeds participation as an everyday practice in the school.
- Provides opportunities for pupils to contribute opinions and debates.
- Gets staff and pupils talking, thinking and working collaboratively.

Disadvantages

- Pupils do not feel willing or able to participate.
- Confrontational atmosphere exists between pupils and staff, and vice versa.
- Staff members themselves do not feel able to meaningfully contribute to decision-making processes.
- There is limited progress to report.
- There is no mechanism for student issues to be passed forward.

Visit based activities

Off site visits, to gain new experiences, to see local, recently-redeveloped school buildings and/or a range of notable local architectural features. Photographs and discussions need to focus on likes and dislikes, comparisons with your own school and reflection on whether these provide viable solutions.

APPLYING THIS IN MY SCHOOL

*We could use this with ...
we could use this to ...
we would have to ...
we could visit ...*

Advantages

- Providing access to ideas and possibilities beyond the everyday school environment.
- Provides a dedicated opportunity for staff and pupil discussion.
- Provides opportunities for pupils to contribute opinions and debates.
- Enabling pupils and staff to articulate the pros and cons of diverse facets of design and architecture.
- Generates excitement and enthusiasm.

Disadvantages

- Only a small, nonrepresentative group of pupils can go.
- Confrontational atmosphere exists between pupils and staff, and vice versa.
- This is a one-off experience.
- Unrealistic expectations are built up.

Role-play activities

These activities could be used to simulate scenarios such as planning meetings, council meetings or boardroom discussions. Pupils could act as 'key players' in these scenarios. They could also involve local decision-makers (e.g. school governors, architects, councillors). These could allow pupils to voice concerns, and debate and vote upon key decisions relating to the school redevelopment project.

APPLYING THIS IN MY SCHOOL

*We could use this with ...
we could use this to ...
we would have to ...
we could visit ...*

Advantages

- Enable pupils to voice concerns and issues to decision-makers.
- Provides a dedicated opportunity for staff and pupil discussion.
- Provides opportunities for pupils to contribute opinions and debates.
- Enabling pupils and staff to articulate the pros and cons of diverse facets of design and architecture.
- Generates excitement and enthusiasm.
- Prompts pupils' reflection on participation in democratic processes.

Disadvantages

- Only a small, nonrepresentative group of pupils can take part.
- Pupils feel intimidated and/or receive inadequate preparation.
- This is a one-off experience.
- There is little consensus on an issue.
- This is not taken seriously.
- Unrealistic expectations are built up.

Model based activities

This could take various forms, the simplest being a large model of plan or model of the current school on which students could make comments on the design of various areas (either verbally, in discussion or using post-its). This could be built on with children being encouraged to build their own models, or comment on the designs the architects produce using plans, section drawings or computer-aided design packages.

Advantages

- Understanding pupils relationships to their school environment, individually and collectively.
- Provides a tangible, multisensory focus for discussion and anticipation of school design.
- Provides a focused opportunity for staff and pupils to discuss school design and redevelopment.
- Provides opportunity for pupils to make creative contributions generates excitement and enthusiasm.
- Allows opportunities for development of visualisation, drawing and model making skills.

Disadvantages

- Only a small, nonrepresentative group of pupils are invited.
- Limited staff commitment to building on the exercise.
- Nothing is done with the pupils ideas.
- No buy in from the developers.

APPLYING THIS IN MY SCHOOL

*We could use this with ...
we could use this to ...
we would have to ...*

Design competitions

Identify a feature of a school redevelopment project in which pupils might be given creative licence, and set a design competition. This could be one area, or pupils may choose areas which are meaningful for them. Award winning sessions may allow greater exposure and discussion of key areas, which could be attended by architects and designers.

Advantages

- Establishes excitement and anticipation for a school redevelopment project.
- Provides a tangible, multisensory focus for discussion and anticipation of school design.
- Provides a focused opportunity for staff and pupils to discuss school design and redevelopment.
- Provides opportunity for pupils to make creative contributions.
- Generates excitement and enthusiasm.
- Allows opportunities for development of visualisation, drawing and model making skills.
- Ensures pupils have a direct 'stake' in their school environment.

Disadvantages

- Only a small, nonrepresentative group of pupils are invited.
- Limited staff commitment to building on the exercise.
- Pupil participation is limited to superficial design projects.
- Pupils' concepts are not taken seriously.
- Designs cannot be renewed and redesigned by future cohorts.
- Ability if pupils to create models and drawings.

APPLYING THIS IN MY SCHOOL

*We could use this with ...
we could use this to ...
we would have to ...
This would work with ...*

Peer research

Here, pupils are given the role of researchers, to develop a set of questions/issues – find out the background information and then discuss ideas with their friends, stakeholders or the planners. Taking on a journalistic approach, the students can create articles, and newsletters for the school, parents and the design team.

Advantages

- Gives a 'warts and all' perspective on pupils' issues and experiences in the school.
- Accesses the opinions and voices of pupils who may feel disenfranchised and disengaged in classroom situations.
- Provides documentation and dissemination of issues to the school community.
- Gives pupils a sense of ownership.
- Provides a vehicle for student voices.

Disadvantages

- May become tokenistic, with only gifted and talented contributing.
- May just become a cosmetic exercise, with ideas ignored or not discussed/taken forward.
- Pupils' concepts are not taken seriously.
- Designs cannot be renewed and redesigned by future cohorts.
- Research may not be taken seriously.
- Peer researchers are given insufficient praise or thanks for their work.
- Pupils receive no feedback and/or do not see evidence of action taken on the basis of peer research.

APPLYING THIS IN MY SCHOOL

*We could use this with ...
we could use this to ...
we would have to ...
This would work with ...*

On-line activities

Websites, blogs, discussion boards, webcams and/or online videos can be used creatively to foster pupil interaction with, and input into, school redevelopment projects. For example, blogs and discussion boards can be used to maintain ongoing virtual conversations around key issues relating to the school building. Webcams, videos and regularly-updated online material can sustain interest in the progress of a design and construction project.

Advantages

- Enable complex, iterative, collaborative discussions around key issues.
- Provide a forum for participation outside the 'formal' classroom environment.
- Provides documentation and dissemination of issues to the school community.
- Enables complex or controversial topics to be raised and debated anonymously.
- Provides an ongoing link between pupils and the school (conceivably, before they have joined or left a school).

Disadvantages

- Only an unrepresentative sample of pupils participate.
- Online materials need to be regularly moderated or updated.
- No mechanism through which pupils' discussions feed into decision-making processes.
- Pupils receive no feedback and/or do not see evidence of action taken on the basis of peer research.

Trialling / field testing

Pupils are provided with an opportunity to test out areas of the design (such as different dining rooms, classroom layouts, design features) before the new build decisions have been made.

Advantages

- Involved pupils directly in decision-making relating to aspects of the school building.
- Provides a robust testing procedure for furniture, fixtures and fittings.
- Gives pupils a sense of 'ownership' over aspects of the future school environment.
- Provides pupils with insight into, and experience of, decision-making processes.

Disadvantages

- Only an unrepresentative sample of pupils participate.
- Pupils receive no feedback and/or do not see evidence of action taken on the basis of this activity.
- Pupils are only involved in the testing of materials designed to 'confine' them (e.g. locks).
- This is the only way in which pupils are/feel involved in the school redevelopment.
- Results are ignored.

World cafe activity

This is an alternative version of the ideas tree. Here pupils are sat around tables, in a cafe style environment. The paper table cloths have question(s) written on them. Students at the table debate the issue, and write down their responses on the table cloth. This can take place over several days (with a different tablecloth plus question appearing each day) or, for a more structured activity, pupils can be asked to rotate between tables containing different questions.

Advantages

- Gathers a range of ideas and comments about a wide range of aspects of the school environment.
- Enables pupils to discuss issues amongst themselves, with relatively little staff involvement.

Disadvantages

- Particular groups of pupils 'opt out' of, or dominate, the activity.
- It is not taken seriously by pupils.
- No mechanism through which pupils' activities contribute to decision-making processes.
- Pupils receive no feedback.

Pupil representation on decision-making fora

Pupils can be present in committees, panels and meetings relating to school redevelopment projects at all levels. For example, it may be effective to have pupil representatives on decision-making committees, or to enable a panel of pupils to fulfil specific roles (e.g. the interviewing/selection process of architects).

Advantages

- Directly empowers pupils in decision-making fora.
- Enables pupils to critically question and 'sock it' to adults.
- Provides pupils with insight into, and experience of, decision-making processes.

Disadvantages

- Only an unrepresentative sample of pupils participate.
- Pupils are treated patronisingly or tokenistically.
- Adults behave in exclusionary ways, or speak 'over the heads' of pupils.
- Pupils are inadequately prepared for, or supported in, the fulfilment of this kind of function.

Using existing participatory structures

Where existing in-school participatory structures (e.g. school councils) are well-developed, it may be effective to use these as foci for pupil participation in school design.

Advantages

- Requires existing participatory structures with meaningful decision-making capacity.
- Can build on previous successes, initiatives and templates.
- Enables a structured, focused, well-practices approach to pupil participation in school design.
- Provides pupils with insight into, and experience of, decision-making processes.

Disadvantages

- Only an unrepresentative sample of pupils participate.
- Participatory structures are treated as a 'box-ticking' exercise.
- Pupils are inadequately prepared for, or supported in, the fulfilment of this kind of function.

APPLYING THIS IN MY SCHOOL

we could use this with ...

we could use this to ...

we would have to ...

This would work with ...

APPLYING THIS IN MY SCHOOL

we could use this with ...

we could use this to ...

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APPLYING THIS IN MY SCHOOL

we could use this with ...

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This would work with ...

APPLYING THIS IN MY SCHOOL

we could use this with ...

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we would have to ...

we could do this when ...

APPLYING THIS IN MY SCHOOL

we could use this with ...

we could use this to ...

we would have to ...

we could do this when ...



Tips for helping teachers

Tips for helping teachers and head teachers preparing for effective pupil participation in school redesign projects

In this section, we present a range of 'lessons learnt' about the broader issues involved in planning for pupil participation. You need:

- To establish a clear, transparent, accountable system for gathering and acting on pupils' contributions, a way of accounting for different opinions and providing feedback.
- A member of staff to take 'ownership' of the participatory process before it commences. They should proactively build up a client-partner relationship of equals with the architects and designers prior to any participatory activities. They should be responsible for planning and facilitating engagement with students, and be given time out to do this.
- To establish a contract between the school and the design team to confirm how and when pupil participation will be dealt with and that this is an integral part of the process.
- To understand and relate the constraints and the length of the process to the school so that they can be realistic in what they ask for. This will prevent the building up of false hopes and lessen students' cynicism.
- To build on existing pupil participation schemes in the school.
- To use a 'multi-method' approach, tailoring it to suit your situation, resources and practicalities.
- To find out other local schools' (staff and pupils) experiences.
- To make 'pupil voices' a standing agenda item for meetings relating to school redevelopment. Ensure that this dedicated time is used to reflect upon pupils' opinions, issues and needs, and that this is minuted.
- To find ways of engaging as many pupils as possible in the projects.
- To not underestimate pupils capacity to understand financial issues.
- At a very early stage, to consult with pupils to identify issues which really matter to them and how these can be addressed.
- Remember to always thank pupils for their contributions and provide them with feedback about how and when their contributions will be discussed and/or used.
- To keep the wider community informed about the progress of the redevelopment. This could be done via a school website, blog, webcam or newsletter.
- To remember that hi-tech design tools are not needed or always the most effective for fostering pupil participation: some of the best ideas come from conversations around simple pencil sketches and doodling etc.
- Use the opportunity to think more broadly and critically about the culture, norms and ethos of your school e.g. decision making processes.
- To not overwhelm pupils with expectations. Participation works best when it tackles modest, everyday issues within a specific context and when decisions are followed through.
- To create situations where staff, students and architects can work together to figure out what we are going to do, and what needs to be done for us to get there. Collaboration needs to proceed in a mutually respectful, open and comfortable manner. For example where teachers relax their teacherly authority and collaborate with pupils, or where pupils are granted meaningful decision-making responsibilities. It may be appropriate and useful for a third party (e.g. an architect) to facilitate this kind of situation.
- To consider how the redevelopment of the school might be linked to the curriculum e.g. design, PSHE, citizenship, art, creative writing, local/oral history, maths, sciences, ecology, archaeology.
- To ensure that the school development project, and pupils' participation in it, is well-chronicled and exhibited in photography, art or written projects, a book, newsletter, webcam or blog, or a poet- or artist- in-residence.
- To have a means for evaluating both the project and how you engaged students, and share your experiences with other schools.
- To look for ways of involving primary school pupils in the redevelopment of their future secondary school, and secondary school pupils in the redevelopment of their old primary school.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to go on site visits to see progress on the redevelopment of their school. Ceremonies to celebrate breaking ground, laying foundation stones, 'topping out' and official opening should be treated as exciting, historic moments in the life of your school.
- To ensure that pupil contributions to the design are made explicit during and after the build.
- To make sure that pupil participation is not lost in the process.



Top tips for pupils

Tips for secondary pupils approaching pupil participation projects

Your school is about to enter what could be a long process of redesign and redevelopment. Written into this is the requirement to gain your views about the design and use of the school. You are experts in knowing the building, its good and bad points. Now is the time for you to use this, to make the design better for students who have to come to the school in the future. You should be given various opportunities to get your views across. The following points give you a starting point for thinking about how you might do this.

- If you are interested in design, ask your teachers how you can get more involved in the design of your school.
- Find out who is working with the architects and designers and how they are doing this, and when you can have an input into this.
- Tell them about any things about your school that you and your friends really like or really don't like. Back up this up with evidence.
- Ask teachers and architects questions. If you don't understand some of the technical words, or why they are doing things, ask them to explain.
- If you enjoy getting involved in the design of your school, ask the teachers and designers about work experience or jobs relating to design.
- All designers go through lots of ideas. When working on a design project, don't be afraid to try lots of ideas. Don't be disappointed if you don't get it right first time, or your idea does not seem to be noticed.
- There are a lot of constraints which the school design process must meet. These may mean that some of the more creative and costly ideas can't be used. Find out how your design may be limited. Are you asking for something that is not possible? Ask why it is not possible, or if there is a different solution to the problem you are trying to solve.
- Designers use lots of different techniques. Work out how which is best for you to put across your ideas – sketches, chatting, presenting, models or computers. If you are asked a question, but find it difficult to put your ideas into words, try doing a sketch to explain. It is the idea that is important.
- When working on a design project, be open to ideas and respect different opinions. Think how you would feel if someone made negative comments about your idea.
- If you are asked to make models, sketches or ideas for a design project, find out how they will be used and who will see them.
- Ask to be kept up-to-date about how your ideas have been used. If no-one takes notice of your ideas, ask why not.
- Think about this: every time you make a model or drawing it is not the finished product, but the start of a new idea. Every sketch, model or idea is potentially valuable.
- Designers might be experts at inventing things and buildings, but they might not have much experience of working with younger people, and will have no experience of your school or what it is like to attend your school. Help them by listening to their instructions, contributing to discussions, or making suggestions about how you and your friends could make a difference in a design project. Invite them into the school, to spend a day going round with you.
- Keep asking 'why?' and 'what is happening now?' and 'what stage are we at?' If you feel you are being patronised or 'talked down to', say so. If you do not feel your ideas are being taken seriously, say so. If you want to ask the point, or about how much things cost, then ask.
- Some people think that school councils are 'nerdy' or 'teacher's pets', but it might be the best way to get your opinions heard. If you don't feel your school council represents you, then it's up to you get involved!

- Look around the school. What do you love about it? What do you hate about it? Why? Talk to your mates and decide on what matters to you about the school building and focus on these when you're asked your opinions about your school.
- If you get involved in a school design project – don't stop there! Look into other ways you can have a say in making decisions about your school. Investigate other ways you can make a difference you can have a say in your school or community.

Top tips for primary pupils asked to take part in school design projects

- Don't be afraid to ask teachers and architects (the people who design new buildings) questions. If you don't understand a word or question, ask.
- Don't be afraid to try lots of ideas. Don't be disappointed if you don't get it right first time.
- You can explain your ideas about your school in lots of different ways, so choose the ones that you like doing best. For example you may want to share your ideas by:
 - telling someone,
 - drawing pictures,
 - writing ideas down,
 - making models.
- Remember everyone's ideas are important, so don't be shy, even if you think you are no good at drawing or writing.
- Listen to other people and remember they might have good ideas too.
- Find out who will see your drawings or models and what they will do with them.
- If no-one takes notice of your ideas, ask why not.
- If you have good idea about your school ask a school councillor to tell everyone about it.
- Have a look around the school.
 - What do you love about it?
 - What do you hate about it?
 - Why?
 - Talk to your mates and decide on what matters to you about the school building.
 - Tell your teacher all the things you really love and really hate. When you're asked for you opinions about your school these are the things you need to think about.



For further information about the project go to our website:

<http://www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/d/699>

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Other useful resources for pupil participation projects

MacCabe, A. and Horsley, K. (2008) *The Evaluator's Cookbook: exercises for participatory evaluation with children and young people*. London, Routledge.

An excellent 'cookbook' of practical activities for involving younger people in decision-making, providing pragmatic details about the appropriateness and logistics of each activity.

Kirby, P. and Bryson S. (2002) *Measuring the Magic? Evaluating and researching young people's participation in public decision-making*. London, Carnegie Young People Initiative. http://cypi.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/files/2643_MeasuretheMagic_001.pdf
Provides guidance and tools to evaluate the effectiveness of participation projects involving younger people.

School Works (2001) *School Works Tool Kit*. London, School Works. http://www.school-works.org/docs/toolkit_online.pdf
A useful 'how-to' guide for those approaching the process of involving pupils in a school redevelopment project.

School Works (2005) *The A-Z Sketchbook of School Build and Design*. London, School Works.
An accessible guide providing evidence-based 'food for thought' intended to inform and prompt reflection around school redevelopment projects.

Sorrell Foundation (2008) *The Pupils' Brief*. London, Sorrell Foundation.
Identifies a range of common issues and concerns commonly held by pupils about their school spaces.

Sorrell Foundation (2008) *Joined-up Design for Schools*. London, Sorrell Foundation.
Provides examples of previous projects which have involved pupils in school design.



with thanks...

