

White Laith Primary School

Pupil Voice Policy

Agreed by Governors: February 2021

Review date: February 2024

Safeguarding

At White Laith we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by or invited to deliver services at White Laith. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

We also exercise this responsibility by educating our children so that they grow in their understanding of their rights and responsibilities to themselves and others, in safety consciousness, and, in their maturity and abilities to keep themselves and others safe.

We perceive this to be part of our role in promoting British values

School Aims

Through commitment, determination and a willingness to embrace change we will:

- Develop independent, effective learners who enjoy school and who will become life-long learners
- Create a cohesive school community in which there is mutual understanding, trust and respect
- Empower staff and children by raising confidence, self-esteem and self-belief
- Equip children with the attitudes, qualities, skills and understanding they need for success in our ever-changing, diverse world
- Bring about optimum achievement for every child
- Become an excellent school

Rationale

The United Nations Convention on the rights of children, Article 12, states that children should be free to express their views on issues which concern them.

The Education Act 2002 required schools to have regard to any guidance given by the secretary of state or National Assembly relating to consultations with pupils about issues which directly affect them. This was extended further in the Education and Skills Act 2008. In the 2008 Act, the governing body of a school must consider any relevant views expressed by pupils when making certain decisions, albeit taking into account the age and understanding of pupils.

Ofsted also now gives pupils opportunities to give views about their education as part of the inspection process. It also supports Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC) which concerns giving children the right to put forward their views and ensuring that those views are taken seriously.

What is the 'pupil voice at White Laith Primary School?

We believe that children need to be active participants in their own education and to feel that their opinions will be heard in the wider school community.

At White Laith Primary School, we therefore seek ways to listen to the views of our pupils and involve them in decision-making so that they are engaged as partners in the life of the school. We believe that this will make a positive contribution to the school environment and ethos.

We help children to 'find' their voice on entry to school through to year 6 through our use of the Kagan strategies, to promote the skills of listening and speaking and harnessing these to every aspect of teaching and learning through school. In this way, we produce children who can process their thoughts and articulate them clearly to others, while listening actively and respectfully to each other.

Aims of the policy

To improve motivation, engagement, academic achievement, negotiating skills, an improved sense of responsibility and to develop a positive impact on attendance and behaviour.

Student voice and pupil participation activities at White Laith Primary School

There are a wide range of approaches that we are developing at White Laith Primary School to support pupil participation and promote student voice:

- School Council forums
- Fundraising campaigns (both teacher and pupil initiated)
- Assertive Mentoring Meetings between each pupil and their teacher every half term to discuss current achievements/progress and new targets
- Pupil questionnaires
- Whole school assemblies

Pupils are informed of the outcome of their involvement.

Curriculum

We also believe in embedding pupil voice into the curriculum, with teaching and learning activities being used to enable pupils to focus on how to make informed decisions about their lives, their health and well-being, and the environment, for example. Extra-curricular activities, such as Green Gang, also give pupils a scope to explore issues that go beyond academic subjects.

School Council

One of the principle means by which pupil voice activity is progressed in school is by the use of the School Council. We believe that our school council will enhance and influence positive peer leadership and mutual responsibility throughout the school.

School Council will

- Be a positive forum
- Provide an opportunity for all children to be heard
- Provide a forum for the leadership of the school to listen to children's knowledge and opinions
- Aid communication throughout the school
- Build the children's confidence and self-esteem
- Encourage the children to be active citizens

- Provide the children with a democratic model

The above activities are integral to promoting fundamental British values in a meaningful way.

School Council will also be used to assist the school with its self-evaluation procedures and enable us to be more accountable to the whole school community.

School Council in Practice

White Laith School Council work towards the following two objectives:

1. To influence school policies and the running of the school
2. To contribute to the wider community

School Council members are recruited using a voting system that involves pupils from Year one to Year six. Every class elects at least two School Council Representatives and a Chairperson is elected from Year six also.

Every class holds class council meetings at least once a half term. This is an opportunity for School Council Representatives to discuss the School Council agenda, and to gather feedback. School Council meetings are advertised on the School Council Notice Board and take place periodically throughout the school year.

At each meeting, those present and absent are noted, and apologies read out. Matters arising from the previous meeting are discussed, followed by business for the meeting in accordance with the agenda. A list of main agenda items is set at the beginning of each term. Minutes of each meeting are kept by the Chairperson.

School Governors are invited to attend specific School Council Meetings throughout the year.

Minutes are recorded by the Chairperson, displayed on the School Council Noticeboard and are circulated to staff and school council representatives to share with their peers at the next class council meeting.

Other Opportunities for all

- Choosing a charity for class event
- Year six responsibilities around the school
- Active communication through Pupil Voice board in the corridor
- Completing questionnaires/surveys
- Peer and self-assessment in lessons
- AFL within classes e.g. What do we already know? What do we want to learn?
- Assertive Mentoring Meetings between pupils and their teachers every half term
- Deciding how to spend School Fund money e.g. new reading books/equipment
- Use of talk partners in classrooms to encourage pupil participation
- Opportunity to run stalls at school events
- Decide/vote for class targets and reward systems
- School Food Ambassadors
- School Sports Ambassadors
- Trust Pupil Forum (yr 5/6)

Involving pupils in their own learning

Pupil participation in their own learning means a range of different things in the classroom. It includes developing projects to reflect interests and needs as expressed by pupils; encouraging pupils' reflection on their own and others' learning; reflection by pupils on the style and content of lessons and opportunities to give feedback to teachers.

Assessment for Learning encourages a view of assessment as an essential part of everyday classroom practice involving teachers and learners in reflection, dialogue, decision-making and target setting.

'Kagan' Structures are used throughout the school in order to; make sure children are active learners, to improve listening skills and to develop social skills.

The Class Dojo comments tool is used to enable pupils to provide positive comments in response to items posted on the Class Dojo.

Benefits of pupil involvement

There are a range of benefits in greater participation. For pupils these include increased self-confidence and feelings of empowerment, and a greater sense of responsibility.

Learning behaviour has the potential to improve with pupils taking greater responsibility for their own learning, therefore becoming effective independent learners.

We believe that pupil participation has a positive impact on the school environment and the wider community.

Children's insight into the ways they learn best and the ideas that they have for lesson content and style as well as their ideas on the life of the school should be welcomed. Pupils' learning will improve when their views are taken into consideration. This can only have a positive impact on raising standards.

Developing a whole school approach

To encourage a consistent, positive attitude to pupil participation at White Laith Primary School, the whole staff should understand the benefits of pupil participation, be clear in their role in terms of supporting pupil participation and be kept well informed about issues being discussed and proposals put forward by the school council and other pupil representative groups.