

Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 1 March 2022

Children and Young People's Participation

Item number
Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note the progress with participation work during the pandemic
 - 1.1.2 Agree the next steps outlined in section 5.
 - 1.1.3 Request a further progress report in March 2023.

Amanda Hatton

Executive Director of Education and Children's Services

Contact: John Heywood, Lifelong Learning Strategic Development Officer/David Maguire, Principal Officer, Involvement and Engagement/Stephen Gilhooley, Quality Improvement Education Officer

E-mail: john.heywood.2@edinburgh.gov.uk / david.maguire@edinburgh.gov.uk / Stephen.gilhooley@edinburgh.gov.uk |

Tel: 0131 529 6507

Children and Young People's Participation

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out activity during the pandemic in relation to children and young people's participation and highlights examples from across the city. The report identifies some of the main issues that children and young people have raised across a range of participation activities.

3. Background

- 3.1 Previous reports in May and October 2019 outlined progress in relation to children and young people's participation, including What kind of Edinburgh? and the establishment of a Children and Young People Participation Group. Committee received a further report on participation and progress relating to top priorities in March 2020.
- 3.2 The COVID pandemic resulted in a number of planned large-scale engagement activities either being suspended or postponed (e.g. Youth Talk, Primary Climate Summit) and almost all engagement work with children and young people has taken place online or via survey.

4. Main report

4.1 Scottish Youth Parliament elections

- 4.1.1 The **Scottish Youth Parliament** (SYP) represents Scotland's young people. Democratically elected members listen to and recognise the issues that are most important to young people, ensuring that their voices are heard by decision-makers. All young people aged between 14 and 25 can stand for election to the SYP and all young people aged 12 to 25 are able to vote.
- 4.1.2 SYP elections were held in November 2021. Elections were held in four out of the six Edinburgh constituencies and a total of 2,456 young people took part in the election, the highest turnout in the city since 2015, despite many of the usual campaigning activities being curtailed due the pandemic. Edinburgh had the highest number of expressions of interest from potential candidates in Scotland and fielded the most confirmed candidates (26). Eleven candidates were successfully elected.

- 4.1.3 Voting took place online using the Single Transferable Vote system. Young people voted using their Young Scot cards or temporary numbers which were issued by Young Scot for those who did not have a card.
- 4.1.4 The work was overseen by a group chaired by Councillor Eleanor Bird, consisting of former Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament, Lothian Association of Youth Clubs, Lifelong Learning staff, Quality Improvement Education Officers and SYP staff.
- 4.1.5 SYP elections normally include live hustings events and visits by candidates to schools and youth work agencies. This was not possible in this election due to Covid restrictions and campaigning primarily took place in candidates' own schools and online. The support of schools was a crucial element in the success of the elections.
- 4.1.6 Of those elected, ten attend City of Edinburgh Council schools, seven are young women and three are from a Black and Minority Ethnic background.
- 4.1.7 Candidates were elected unopposed in two constituencies and there remains one seat to be filled in Edinburgh Northern and Leith. A by-election is currently being planned in the constituency to fill the vacant seat.
- 4.1.8 The newly elected Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament are currently undertaking training in relation to their roles along with other MSYPs from across Scotland. They will also be supported locally to engage with young people and decision-makers in their constituencies and across the city.

4.2 Youth Climate Action Summit

- 4.2.1 The City of Edinburgh Council is proposing to develop a City Sustainability Strategy, a ten-year plan to take action on climate change with an aim for the city to become carbon-neutral by 2030. As part of this, the Council hosted a Youth Climate Action Summit on Friday 28 February 2020 attended by over 100 S1-S3 young people.
- 4.2.2 On 13 October 2021, a follow-up event for primary-aged children took place on-line. More than 500 children took part from 22 primary schools across the city. The children were asked to discuss two questions: what actions (if any) are you taking within your primary school to help tackle climate change? (i.e. recycling, food growing, encouraging active travel etc.); and, what would you like to see your school do more of to tackle climate change? Their responses were collated and categorised, and each school was asked to devise an action plan for what they will do to help tackle climate change.

4.3 COP 26

- 4.3.1 On 4 October 2021, 12 students from six high schools took part in an on-line session to gauge their views on COP26 and climate change. They were asked how they felt about COP 26 and climate change, whether they planned to have any involvement in COP 26 and, if so, what schools could do to ensure they are safe.
- 4.3.2 The young people were sceptical about COP 26 and doubted whether it would achieve any meaningful outcomes. They also expressed frustration about the lack of urgency and general apathy in society about climate change. Climate change is an issue about which they feel very strongly and which they think that schools could do much more to raise awareness and understanding of. Most of them proposed to take some form of action during COP 26 and planned to protest regardless of whether or not they had permission from schools.

4.4 COVID

- 4.4.1 In November 2020, 21 senior phase students from 14 high schools took part in an on-line consultation about COVID. The purpose was to find out from them what had been the good and bad things about 2020, how effective COVID messaging had been and how we could improve compliance with infection control measures.
- 4.4.2 From this consultation, the following main points/next steps emerged:
- 4.4.2.1 All those consulted expressed anxiety about the future and its uncertainties. Schools need to consider ways in which they can offer reassurance or ease anxiety of some students.
 - 4.4.2.2 Compliance is generally good in school but less so, especially amongst younger students, at break times and before and after school. Schools should consider ways in which this might be addressed.
 - 4.4.2.3 Mask exemption system needs to be reviewed and applied more consistently
 - 4.4.2.4 Hand sanitisers should be checked regularly. A more pleasant-smelling product might encourage greater use.
 - 4.4.2.5 Make greater use of social media and 'influencers' that young people respect.
 - 4.4.2.6 There is a risk of 'Covid Fatigue' setting in. There is a sense that, for some, safety routines are maybe becoming a bit more relaxed and taken less seriously.
- 4.4.3 These findings were fed back to senior management and to the School Risk Timeline Review Group.

4.5 Equalities

4.5.1 20 students from seven high schools took part in an online Equalities 'seed' event in December 2021 (an event to gauge ideas with a view to planning a much larger event in May).

4.5.2 The purpose of the event was to:

4.5.2.1 Share ideas and inspire young people who are already actively taking a lead in their Pupil Equalities Groups

4.5.2.2 Explore what further support the young people need

4.5.2.3 Hear ideas for a larger young people's equalities event later in the session

4.5.3 Participants welcomed the opportunity to connect with their peers from other schools, to hear about their work and to discuss what the bigger event should cover.

4.5.4 Participants were keen that the event in May focuses on the following:

4.5.4.1 Identify staff training on things to do and how to resolve issues

4.5.4.2 Learning about other cultures, particularly from communities that are living here

4.5.4.3 All Equality groups to be involved

4.5.4.4 Pupils from each year group to take part

4.5.4.5 Input from speakers and activists

4.5.4.6 Share successes and also what has not been so successful.

4.6 Young People's Participation in Schools – UNCRC training

4.6.1 The Children and Young People's Participation Board was initiated in March 2021 as one of the 15 Edinburgh Learns for Life strategies.

4.6.2 The three overarching outcomes of the C&YPP Board are as follows:

4.6.2.1 To coordinate children and young people's participation activities.

4.6.2.2 To feedback on the outcomes of children and young people's participation activities to: Children's Partnership; politicians; children and young people and staff.

- 4.6.2.3 To seek to influence, and keep under review, authority policy and planning in line with information gathered through Children and Young People's Participation.
- 4.6.3 The Action Plan is subdivided into four Arenas: Decision making groups; Learning, Teaching and Assessment; Community involvement; Wider Achievement. The Action Plan is included as Appendix 1.
- 4.6.4 One of the main action points was training for staff in UNCRC.
 - 4.6.4.1 Three CLPL opportunities involving 100 members of staff were co-designed with an external provider, Scotdec, to support the philosophy of the learner being at the heart of all policy, improvement and planning. Themes included: the legislation, vision and values; The four Arenas of Participation; and Planning for Improvement.

4.7 Rights Respecting Schools

- 4.7.1 The Rights Respecting Schools Award puts children's rights at the heart of schools in the UK.
 - 4.7.1.1 UNICEF UK works with schools in the UK to create safe and inspiring places to learn, where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive. Our Rights Respecting Schools Award embeds these values in daily school life and gives children the best chance to lead happy, healthy lives and to be responsible, active citizens.
- 4.7.2 In the school year 2020/21, a further seven primary schools achieved the award at bronze level, two at silver and one at gold; one new secondary achieved bronze whilst another was reaccredited at gold; and one new special school achieved the award at bronze. This now means that 75 primary schools, 21 secondary schools and nine special schools are either registered as part of the programme or have achieved the accreditation.
- 4.7.3 Some examples of the work undertaken by children and young people in 2020/21 under the Participation, Empowerment and Action strand of the award are contained in Appendix 2.

4.8 Care Experienced Young People and enhanced transition

- 4.8.1 One of our Educational Psychologists set out to capture Pupil Voice in the GIRFEC and enhanced transition planning process in Edinburgh schools with the purpose of capturing and sharing best practice in the short term and creating a streamlined entitlement in the longer term.

- 4.8.2 With a focus on the voices of Care Experienced Learners, the researchers interviewed 12 participants working in promoted posts in primary, secondary and special school settings.
- 4.8.3 There are many impactful messages which stem from this report. One in particular emphasizes the nature of the approach: “It must be time and relationship based – if you want to remove barriers you have to spend time with the child - time that is not just time spent trying to get answers from them – they need to know that you really care about them and that there isn’t a right and wrong answer – you care what they think’
- 4.8.4 The report and findings will be shared with Senior Leaders and other professionals in Education, Communities and Families by May 2022.

4.9 Trinity

- 4.9.1 Trinity Primary School have gone for a different and unique approach this year in an attempt to include all children.
- 4.9.2 Trinity House Captains are elected in June by the rest of school. They take the ‘hot seat’ each week in assembly and, for example, share house points, general words of encouragement and help to support school events.
- 4.9.3 They call themselves ‘The Rainbow School’ - seven commitments allocated to a colour of the rainbow:
 - 4.9.3.1 Equalities and Diversity
 - 4.9.3.2 Outdoor learning
 - 4.9.3.3 Leaders of learning
 - 4.9.3.4 Sustainability
 - 4.9.3.5 Global citizens
 - 4.9.3.6 Health & Wellbeing
 - 4.9.3.7 Trinity Together
- 4.9.4 Each stage is the rainbow stage for 6 / 7 weeks. During their rainbow stage, all children lead on their chosen commitment and carry out learning activities. For example, leaders of learning make a foyer slide show of learning for the week ahead and have carried out class visits to observe learning and reported back. The Sustainability Group collect recycling and the Health and Wellbeing Group have stood on zig zags to encourage safe parking.
- 4.9.5 Each commitment has core learning assigned along with core texts to be shared with all children. This is the first year of this approach but has had positive feedback from all stakeholders so far.

4.10 Learner-led Participation

4.10.1 The Learner Led Consultation was a collaborative project between the City of Edinburgh Council, two early years centres and three primary schools in North West Edinburgh. The project was undertaken in order to meaningfully engage young people ages 0-12 years about their learning experience, interests, passions and ambitions in order to better establish how the curriculum and local learning provision can better respond to and reflect local needs. Taking a creative learner-led approach, the consultation consisted of a series of artist-led workshops in schools and EYC settings, and involved over 100 participants in engagement, consultation and creativity.

4.10.2 The themes explored by the artist, practitioners and children were set with in these four questions.

4.10.2.1 Why is learning important to you?

4.10.2.2 What would you like to learn about, what is important to you?

4.10.2.3 Where could learning take place?

4.10.2.4 How do you learn best? Ownership over learning spaces indoor and outdoor

4.10.3 The dynamic approach enabled observations and information to come to the fore that would not have been captured in a standard consultation approach. The feedback from each school and setting shows clear themes that are important to, and for, the children, and were found to be broadly consistent across each project. These include:

4.10.3.1 Ownership of both indoor and outdoor space;

4.10.3.2 Pupils having a voice in improvements and changes that impact them;

4.10.3.3 opportunities for leadership of learning;

4.10.3.4 sustainability and climate change;

4.10.3.5 citizenship and activism;

4.10.3.6 knowledge of the local assets in their area;

4.10.3.7 making time for creativity and creative skills;

4.10.3.8 working with creative practitioners.

4.10.4 As well as using the findings as part of the wider Granton Learning Strategy work, we will revisit the project with each of the settings and consider how the findings could inform their own curriculum design and reform. Colleagues who worked on this consultation will also develop the materials used in this consultation and share these with other learning communities.

4.11 YouthLink surveys

4.11.1 Whilst not initiated by Education and Children's Services, the 'Lockdown Lowdown' surveys produced by YouthLink throughout the pandemic were widely distributed by Lifelong Learning staff and, consequently, the views of

young people from Edinburgh formed a substantial part of the responses. Edinburgh-specific breakdowns were also provided by YouthLink.

- 4.11.1.2 The findings from the most recent survey in July 2021 can be viewed at: [Impact of COVID-19 on young people as lockdown eases - Young Scot Corporate](#)

5. Next Steps

5.1 New Proposal

- 5.1.1 As this report outlines, there is a range of participation activity taking place and making a difference to establishments and services across the department. There is still a need to consolidate this so that children and young people's voices can have more strategic impact across the city.
- 5.1.2 We propose to set up a children and young people's liaison group, consisting potentially of MSYPs, young people from the Champions Board and young representatives from Equalities and Sustainability forums/groups. This group would act as a forum for feedback and liaison. Membership would be fluid rather than fixed and would depend on the specific issues being considered at the time. Young people could also bring forward their own priorities.
- 5.1.3 We envisage that the group could liaise with elected members, senior management and the Children's Partnership. Rather than one or two young people taking part in pre-existing, formal meetings – young people have told us that this can be off-putting – the group would meet in a young people-friendly setting with an emphasis on dialogue and discussion. This approach would incorporate learning from activities such as Youth Talk and What kind of Edinburgh? and focus on key issues for young people.
- 5.1.4 The group would also liaise with the Children and Young People's Participation Board to plan activities, identify priorities and inform children and young people and staff about the issues discussed and next steps/recommendations for action.
- 5.1.5 We aim to have the first meeting of the group before the end of the current school year and will invite MSYPs, Champions Board members and Equalities and Sustainability reps to participate on a broad agenda. The group should meet twice each year, or as the young people feel is appropriate. The aim is to have a pool of 25 or so young people with the participation of at least 12 at each meeting.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There is currently no requirement for additional resources for this work; costs are met from existing budgets.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 This report is specifically concerned with ensuring that children and young people's views and experiences are sought out and that their voices are listened to across the services that the department provides.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 What Kind of Edinburgh? E, C & F Committee 21 May 2019.
- 8.2 Choose Youth Work, E, C & F Committee 21 May 2019.
- 8.3 Supporting Children and Young People's Mental Health and Well-being in Schools, E, C & F Committee 21 May 2019.
- 8.4 Children and Young People's Participation, E, C and F Committee 8 October 2019
- 8.5 Children and Young People's Participation, E, C and F Committee March 2020

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 UNCRC training action plan
- 9.2 Appendix 2 Rights Respecting Schools – examples of practice

Edinburgh Learns for Life - A fairer, healthier, greener future for everyone, where learning for life happens at home, in school, in the wider community, and in the workplace.

Transform-We will provide inclusive, equitable, valuable learning opportunities for everyone.

Connect-We will use a place based approach to build collaborative and sustainable learning communities and networks.

Empower-We will co-create the environments where learners can lead and shape their own learning.

Theme	Empower		
Owner	Stephen Gilhooley		
Engagement Dates			
Young People	Parents		Community
May-December 2021	May-December 2021		May-December 2021
Board and Committee Dates			
Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
			March 2021 May 2021
Purpose of Strategic Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To coordinate children and young people's participation activities. • To feedback on the outcomes of children and young people's participation activities to: Children's Partnership; politicians; children and young people and staff. • To seek to influence, and keep under review, authority policy and planning in line with information gathered through Children and Young People's Participation. 		
Strengths	<p>Youth Groups</p> <p>School based Pupil Groups (e.g. PC; Eco Schools; Curriculum; Learning Pathways etc)</p> <p>Youth Climate Summit (Feb 2020)</p> <p>Surveys, Questionnaires and Consultations (e.g. Wellbeing Survey)</p> <p>Increased YP participation in CPM</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing Team</p>		
Weaknesses	Culture of Learner Participation and Children and Young People's Rights not effectively embedded in Schools and Youth Groups.		

	<p>Opportunities for all Children and Young People in School Groups not consistent.</p> <p>Equity and poverty proofing in C & YP participation not consistent across the City.</p> <p>Pupil opinion and influence not evident in curriculum planning, policy making and other groups who make decisions which will affect their life chances.</p> <p>No standard consistent mechanism to track and measure C&YP wider personal achievement</p>
Opportunities	<p>Incorporation of the UNCRC – embedding of rights-based approach to fully involve children and young people in decision-making</p> <p>School and Youth Group staff trained in Learner Participation.</p> <p>Wider and diverse representation in Scottish Youth Parliament.</p> <p>Improved collaboration with Schools and Youth Groups.</p> <p>Further improvement in balance of C&YP voice in decision making.</p> <p>SEIC work. Mapping exercise.</p> <p>Granton Learning Strategy – consultation</p> <p>Service Provision and Delivery – C&YP Voice</p> <p>Political support – huge</p> <p>CLlr Ellie Bird – Motion in full council YP Elections. Explore.</p> <p>EY responsive planning.</p> <p>Learning Environment YP involvement Commitment.</p>
Threats	<p>Management of change process – political aspect</p> <p>Capacity for some Youth Organisations</p> <p>Collaboration</p>
Baseline	Targets
Arena 1 - Decision Making	
<i>Children and young people are involved in all decision making in line with our commitment to incorporation of the UNCRC</i>	

<p>How many schools/ Youth Groups have RRS status or have recently completed work in this area?</p> <p>How consistently is ‘My Views’ used for GIRFEC planning?</p> <p>Is equity, equality and poverty proofing in C & YP participation not consistent across the City?</p> <p>Is C&YP Voice captured consistently and effectively in crucial decisions for Care Experienced and CP cases?</p>	
<p>Arena 2 - Learning, Teaching and Assessment</p>	
<p><i>All School and Youth Group staff are trained in Learner Participation, Leading the Learning and Children’s Rights to support culture change.</i></p> <p>Use of Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment Toolkit?</p> <p>Review data and support schools and Groups to plan for change and establish targets.</p> <p>Offer training as required.</p>	
<p>Arena 3 – Wider Community</p>	
<p>Ensure a wider and diverse representation in Scottish Youth Parliament.</p> <p>Schools work with their communities to shape and build the best local curriculum with partnerships developing explicit learning opportunities</p> <p>Review data on Youth Work – is there effective collaboration with schools and communities – can we learn from each other?</p> <p>How can we get more children involved in Children’s</p>	

Parliament and Youth Parliament?			
Arena 4 – Personal Achievement			
Review process for tracking and measure C&YP wider personal achievement. Source effective mechanism for measuring and tracking personal achievement. Do we have good practice in use in CEC?			
Actions – improvement	Owner	Dates	Notes
Arena 1 – Decision Making Groups			
Children and young people are involved in all decision making including in relation to additional support for learning, in line with our commitment to incorporation of the UNCRC	Stephen Gilhooley/ Jen M/ Lynn Brand	•	
Children and YP Participation in schools and Youth Groups – looking at balance, equity, frequency, poverty proofing, stigmatising etc	David Ma G/John H	• By Sept 2022	
Baseline – Is C&YP Voice captured consistently and effectively in crucial decisions for Care Experienced and CP cases?	Euan/ Sharon McG	By June 2022	
Arena 2 – Learning, Teaching and Assessment			
<i>All School and Youth Group staff are trained in Learner Participation, Leading the Learning and Children’s Rights to support culture change.</i>	Shelley/ Stephen	• Session 2021/22	
Signpost schools to CRWIA Assessment for baselining.	SG	Session 2021-2022	
Review data and support schools and Groups to plan for change and establish targets.	SG/Shelley	Session 2021-2022	

Appropriate, bespoke CLPL for UNCRC, Learner Participation and Culture/Ethos/ Curriculum Change	SG/Shelley	Session 2021/22	
Arena 3 -Wider Community			
Work with stakeholders from SYP/CP and schools to ensure a wider and diverse representation in Scottish Youth Parliament.	John H/David	June – Nov 2021	Working group already established.
Conduct review on Youth Work – is there effective collaboration with schools and communities – can we learn from each other? Can it be better? Are Youth groups actively involved in the delivery of our school curricula?	Laurene/ Andy/ Jackie	Session 2021/22	
Arena 4 – Personal Achievement			
Owner	Dates	Notes	
Review process for tracking and measure C&YP wider personal achievement. Source effective mechanism for measuring and tracking personal achievement. Do we have good practice in use in CEC or further afield? How can this be widely shared?	Jen R/ Jacqueline S	Session 2021/22	

Appendix 2

Rights Respecting Schools - examples of practice

Roseburn Primary School:

P7 described the art show they organised with support from parents and staff which raised funds for play equipment that was for the local prison visitor centre family area. Visits were organised for children and staff to see the impact their fundraising and awareness raising had made on the environment for children to enjoy whilst they visited family members in prison.

P4 shared their input to the change and redecoration of toilets in the Huts. They recognised that the colour schemes were very “stereotypical” and wanted to change them. The final result is that the toilets are now gender neutral and much more inclusive.

The parent rep for ASN has been working with pupils on including a more diverse range of books in the library, learning a lot from them about what they feel is missing and what groups of children are under-represented.

The Parent Council plans to consult with pupils on the ongoing works on the playground and garden. They have already developed a sensory garden with input from pupils and will build on this.

Cramond Primary School:

The SLT advised that pupil voice had been an area they had really strengthened. Children can join a wide range of pupil leadership groups such as the Eco Group, Dyslexia Ambassadors, Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, Rights Reps, Play Leaders, Sport Leaders, Literacy Bookworms, Gardening Gang, Pupil Council and the Charity Committee. The impact of the pandemic on pupil voice groups being unable to physically meet has not prevented children in having their voices heard. During school closures, children recorded short video messages with ideas for improvements. Live assemblies using Teams have supported pupils to have their voices heard. Children are currently working with staff to look at how they can make pupil group meetings Covid-19 friendly, with the aim of rolling this out in the new term. Currently, pupil voice groups are meeting in their bubbles and sharing ideas. A class teacher shared an example of pupil voice, “Some girls raised the issue of sanitary products and how this linked with dignity...so we now have them available for girls as they need them, and they know they can talk to a trusted adult if they have any worries.” The SLT also advised that one positive of lockdown has been much more engagement with parents and carers and shared that “Children use the Wee HGIOS resource...the impact is that changes have been made at whole school level due to child-led initiatives. Policies are also developed using parent and pupil voice as it is recognised that it works better when everyone is on board.”

Children have engaged in a number of campaigns and events to promote not only their rights, but the rights of all children. Across the stages, pupils have had opportunities to engage in campaigns to promote their own rights; in P1 children learned about sustainability and the right to a safe clean environment through their recycling project, P3 were given funds to improve a small area of the garden, P6 implemented Plastic Free Fridays and grew this into a plastic pollution campaign, and P7 are currently raising awareness of the importance of building sustainable housing. P5’s Plastic Pollution campaign has led to reduced use of plastic across the school, and they have also written to businesses around the world to raise concerns of the use of palm oil. The children proudly received responses from Lamborghini, Tesco and Nutella. P6 also contacted Burger King to raise the issue of how they felt their products were linked to deforestation in the Amazon rainforest. P4 are currently involved in an ongoing campaign to Clean Up Cramond. This was highlighted as a concern by pupils

due to the smell and rubbish gathering along the banks of the local river. All children have since taken part in litter picks, spreading information throughout school and the local community, and sending letters to the local MSP.

Gracemount High School:

Pupils can join a wide range of pupil voice groups, such as the Pupil Leadership Team, RRSA, Equalities, LGBTQ+ and the more recent Community Support Group. The RRSA group lead assemblies and deliver annual rights lessons, particularly to new S1 pupils. They have been involved in creating a Junior RRSA group this session, to ensure sustainability as the senior pupils leave. The LGBTQ+ group focuses on promoting inclusion and raising awareness, and the Pupil Leadership Group focuses on involvement in school improvement, linking with the SLT. Pupil surveys feature regularly across the school year with responses used to feed into areas for school improvement. Pupils shared that they have been involved in influencing numerous improvements to the school, from upgrading the toilets and school grounds, to the timings of the school day. Pupils are currently looking to increase the options available in the canteen and hoping to secure Halal meat options.

Prior to returning to school, some pupils decided to create a video highlighting the changes being made around the school, and what to do to minimise the risk of infection; "We wanted to create a video to show how to be safe...the new one-way system and using hand sanitizer. It's important to know you are safe and we are trying our best not to be infected with Covid. We wanted to be creative with the video...so it wasn't just a poster on a wall. So, we made it fun, and got the information across. We used green paint on our hands to show how easy it is to pass on the virus. We filmed us touching a door handle, a table, school equipment...and as you could see the green paint you could see how easy it is to transfer the virus." One pupil said "We are always involved and asked our opinion...it's just what happens here. We were involved in updating and simplifying the school values recently. We have seen real improvements because of our rights work."

Pupils have engaged in numerous campaigns and events to promote not only their rights, but the rights of all children locally and globally. During the pandemic, pupils decided they needed to take more action to support the local community, so created the Community Support Group. Pupils volunteered 5 days a week, including during school holidays, to create a foodbank resource. This started initially with 100 meals, then developed to the Lunch Stop, moving from just food, to providing home learning resources and toiletries. Pupils were involved in delivering food parcels, and on return to school, continued offering support through a 'grab and go' service. The school secured funding through Cash for Kids and by teaming up with the local major supermarket who provided them with clothing. At Christmas, every pupil received a selection box through their Mission Christmas events. Pupils wanted to be inclusive, so decided to host an Eid celebration, providing 100 hot meals and gifts. This community work featured recently in an article published by Education Scotland. The school have supported families to access a number of high value financial grants, work they will continue to support in the future. A pupil told us: "It's important to remove the stigma of poverty...moving away from charity to a rights-based approach. We've turned a negative into a positive...and brought the community together."