



Rethinking Curriculum

Pupil agency and pupil voice evaluation framework

Delivering an expansive and inspiring curriculum for all

This evaluation framework has been developed by the Chartered College of Teaching as part of the Rethinking Curriculum project, funded by the Helen Hamlyn Trust. It is one of a series of evaluation frameworks that have been shared as part of our Rethinking Curriculum toolkits.

The framework captures some of the key ideas explored in the Rethinking Curriculum **pupil agency and pupil voice** toolkit and offers some key ideas for you to evaluate your school's curriculum practice on this theme. These ideas are drawn from research and evidence and from our work with schools, and include input from leading experts.

The ideas explored are not intended to provide a definitive approach to curriculum development on this theme. There may be gaps or omissions and this should be viewed as a work in progress, which we will aim to develop further as the evidence base continues to evolve. You are encouraged to consider this framework alongside the [pupil agency and pupil voice toolkit](#), and to undertake your own reading and research to build your understanding of the key ideas discussed prior to implementing changes in your context.

This evaluation framework has been developed by Jenna Crittenden, curriculum design lead at the Chartered College of Teaching.



Chartered College
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Last updated: Autumn 2024



Part 1: Building a pupil agency and pupil voice learning culture

Evaluation

Reflect on where your school is in your journey and allocate a number against each of the statements below to evaluate the extent to which it reflects current practice in your context (1–2 = low; 3–4 = medium; 5–6 = high).

Key ideas from research, theory and evidence

- ✓ A working understanding of what pupil agency/pupil voice is within the school has been developed by the school community and is understood by all as a central value within the school.
- ✓ Leaders and teachers establish a culture that values the contributions of pupils and supports pupils to contribute to the design and implementation of school systems and policies.
- ✓ A culture of listening and valuing all voices is consciously built into curriculum activities and is a key element of the high-quality learning opportunities that pupils receive in order to acquire new skills and knowledge through the school life of each pupil.
- ✓ Staff understand that pupil voice is not the only authority in decision-making and that their skills, knowledge and experience are valued highly too.
- ✓ Staff are trained and provided with appropriate support to plan and deliver opportunities for all pupils to contribute their ideas, and they understand the pedagogical benefits to the approach. This is evaluated and built upon over time.
- ✓ Training is provided to the wider school community so that a shared understanding and value of pupil agency and voice is developed. This would include governors/trustees, school leaders, teachers, school staff, families and the pupils.

Your
evaluation
(1–6)

Common barriers

What might impede improvement?

The culture of pupil agency and voice is not authentic and is viewed as tokenistic to the pupils, resulting in limited impact.

Staff feel threatened by the value of pupil voice/agency in the school and feel that their authority is challenged.

Pupils' agency and voice is given priority in school decision planning and development, even when the knowledge and experience of staff members suggests that the approach is not the most effective.

There is limited professional learning available in this area, resulting in training that is narrow and does not develop a wider culture that supports pupil agency/voice.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. What do we as leaders mean when we use the term 'pupil agency/pupil voice' and to what extent is this understanding shared by all staff?
2. Do we have a clear picture of how opportunities for pupil agency and voice fit into our formal curriculum? How do we ensure that these opportunities are valued and that pupils feel valued in their learning over time?
3. What are pupils' perceptions of their agency over their school experiences? Do the pupils feel heard? How do we know?



Part 2: Building pupil agency and voice into the curriculum

Evaluation

Reflect on where your school is in your journey and allocate a number against each of the statements below to evaluate the extent to which it reflects current practice in your context (1–2 = low; 3–4 = medium; 5–6 = high).

Key ideas from research, theory and evidence

Your
evaluation
(1–6)

- ✓ Diverse pedagogical and systemic strategies are created across the curriculum to enable pupils to express their voice and agency at an individual, class or school level and beyond.
- ✓ Pupils are provided with opportunities of choice and teachers understand how to plan and deliver learning opportunities with authentic choice for pupils.
- ✓ Opportunities and approaches to developing pupil voice and agency are carefully planned to ensure that they are inclusive at all times, so that all pupils feel valued and heard.
- ✓ Structures to engage in school decision-making have been developed and agreed, and these are used within the wider curriculum as a learning opportunity.
- ✓ Teachers understand what knowledge and skills pupils need to participate in pupil voice fully and plan for these to happen in a timely and effective manner.
- ✓ Careful consideration of the impact of pupil voice and agency has occurred and teachers understand what is needed for the best possible outcomes.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. To what extent does pupil agency complement and enhance our planned curriculum? How do we know this?
2. How do we (or how do we plan to) build staff understanding and expertise around pupil voice and agency?
3. Do we have a good understanding of our current strengths and/or barriers to any work that we have done in relation to building pupil voice and agency in the curriculum?

Common barriers

What might impede improvement?

Leaders do not value pupil voice authentically, and therefore teachers do not feel supported to develop lessons and opportunities for pupils.

Pupils may feel marginalised, as their voice is not heard for a variety of reasons. (These may include the make-up of groups, teacher bias or method of delivery.)

It is difficult to monitor and evaluate the impact of pupil agency and voice, so this is not carried out and the impact is not known.

The curriculum timetable does not allow time for meaningful pupil agency and voice activities. This results in inauthentic activities, leaving the pupils feeling disengaged.

Pupil voice is relied upon too much, without sufficient consideration of the planned curriculum. As a result, the full breadth of the curriculum is not implemented as intended.



Part 3: Key considerations for successful implementation

Evaluation

Reflect on where your school is in your journey and allocate a number against each of the statements below to evaluate the extent to which it reflects current practice in your context (1–2 = low; 3–4 = medium; 5–6 = high).

Key ideas from research, theory and evidence

Your
evaluation
(1–6)

- ✓ Leaders clearly set out the vision and values that are to inform the school’s work around pupil agency, pupil voice and the wider curriculum, ensuring that these are understood by all.
- ✓ Leaders ensure that sufficient time, resources and supporting structures are in place to enable staff to deliver opportunities for pupil agency and pupil voice, and the wider curriculum, effectively.
- ✓ Leaders draw on research and evidence to inform curriculum development work relating to pupil agency and pupil voice; they gather data from their context to evaluate existing practice and consider how they will evaluate the impact of implementing a new approach.
- ✓ Implementation and development of experiential approaches is a collaborative process, characterised by iterative cycles of development, meaningful professional learning, shared problem-solving and ongoing review.
- ✓ There are dedicated members of staff to champion this work; these champions, along with middle leaders (where appropriate), have clarity around their role and are well positioned to support colleagues and help to drive the curriculum forward.
- ✓ Teachers are supported to build their expertise so that they develop strong subject/pedagogical content knowledge, have a deep understanding of effective pedagogical approaches and are able to combine these with knowledge of the school curriculum, pupils’ needs and the wider context, in order to plan and implement the curriculum effectively.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Is your school ready to implement curriculum development activity in this area? Have you already evaluated existing practice using the full Rethinking Curriculum evaluation framework to ensure a strong foundation for this work?
2. Do you have a clear plan for implementation? How will you involve staff in this process?
3. Is there existing capacity and/or how will you create capacity for this work? Is there anything that you will need to de-implement to enable this to happen?

Common barriers

What might impede improvement?

Leaders and/or staff find it difficult to articulate vision/goals/values.

Implementation may be rushed or not well thought-through.

There is a lack of resources/time to support development of curriculum.

Curriculum changes are implemented wholesale, without sufficient consideration of context, school needs and/or capacity.

School leaders do not systematically seek staff input into curriculum development and, as a result, there may be a disconnect between the intended and enacted curriculum.

Curriculum changes are seen as a ‘quick fix’, with new ideas introduced with limited further development or impact evaluation.

Teachers implement new approaches too quickly, without a clear rationale or understanding of how they fit into the school context, ultimately resulting in a lack of impact on pupil learning.