

Case study summary (this may be included in a summary document of all the research)

School or Local Authority	Case study focus	Other issues of note
The John Roan School, Greenwich	Student voice pervading whole subject. Starting with Citizenship/PSHE/RE and being rolled out to whole school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students organising their own trips• Students organising their own campaigns on local, national and global issues.• MAD club - totally student-managed, working on Fair Trade status for school.

Case study (the 'About the School' section is taken from your most recent published Ofsted report, but of course you are still free to change it if you would like)

The John Roan School, Greenwich

About the school

The John Roan School is a comprehensive in Blackheath, South London. It is larger than most schools, and has a higher than average proportion of boys. It is located on two sites about 400 metres apart. All year groups are split between the two sites. The proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals is almost treble the national average. It has higher proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language than the great majority of schools. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. These are mainly specific learning difficulties or behavioural, social and emotional issues. The school has the Healthy School Award and the silver award for work-related learning.

Pupil voice activities

- School council and Year council: The school council is made up of two representatives from each Year council. Each year group is made up of 8 form groups from each year. Representatives are elected from each form group to form the year council. Each half-termly school council meeting has a particular focus, such as the dining room, school trips, ICT, and relevant adults (including non-teaching staff and governors) are invited to attend and contribute. School council members sit on certain sub-committees of the governing body.
- MAD ('Make a Difference') Club: A self-managing group that anyone can volunteer to be on. They work on various social issues, currently their focus is Fair Trade.
- Pupil surveys: A random selection of students are surveyed on a regular basis about their experiences of school and learning.

- Citizen Schools: The school is part of the pilot project for Citizen Schools and is aiming to gain a top award by embedding Citizenship throughout the school.
- Prefects: Prefects' main role is to assist in the practical running of the school (gate duty, checking uniforms, assisting in the canteen), rather than to provide student voice. That said, they do feed in to the school council informally through prefects who are also school councillors. Prefects are selected by staff.

Case study focus

Pupil voice pervading the whole curriculum. This is being modelled initially in Citizenship, PSHE and RE, with the intention of rolling out across the school.

Aims

The school appointed a new headteacher a year ago who had a remit to make significant improvements to the school following a Notice to Improve from Ofsted. Ofsted were concerned about behaviour in the school and the quality of teaching and learning. The school's recent Ofsted report makes it clear that these improvements are being made under the school's new leadership.

In his time at Deptford Green School the new headteacher saw first-hand the transformational effect active participation by students had on a school. These improvements were across the board, from attainment to behaviour to relationships with the local community. He aims for The John Roan School not only to emulate these successes but to become a pioneer and a beacon in its own right. To do this, active student voice is being embedded throughout the school. Citizenship, PSHE and RE are leading the way in this work, backed up by members of the senior leadership team (SLT). The nature of these subjects, especially the structure of the Citizenship Short-Course (and in-coming GCSE), lend themselves to participative working and so this department is modelling practice for the rest of the school.

Action

The primary aim is to engage learners actively with their own learning and learning community. The secondary aim is to create positive relationships with the wider community, extending from the local to the global. These aims are being carried through into the Citizenship curriculum in a number of ways: teaching skills over content; engaging directly with the wider community; co-construction of learning opportunities; student feedback on lessons and creating links across the curriculum.

Teaching skills over content: the central learning objectives as described by the Head of Citizenship are the acquisition of "citizenship skills". These include campaigning, critical thinking, research, debating, organisation and project management and allow students to be conscious learners, consumers and members of society. However, this is not to imply that content is neglected. There is a strong structure to this: pupils in years 7 and 8 start off by dealing with local issues and move on to national and eventually global ones as students reach Year 11. These issues are the core around which the skills are developed and provide the focus for pupils to develop their skills. A typical scheme of work might be on the Fair Trade movement. After some grounding in the issues around

Fair Trade, pupils would be encouraged to look at what citizenship skills they would need to take the issue further. They are then supported to conduct more research, write letters, organise trips and any other activities they can justify as helping them understand the subject (and which are within the school's rules and purview). In the case of Fair Trade some students were so taken with the issue that they formed an action group to encourage their school to become a Fair Trade School. Having been trained in citizenship lessons, this group is self-managing and has persuaded the governors to come on board with their plans for fairly traded uniforms.

Engaging directly with the wider community: as pupils are encouraged to research and campaign on the elements of the curriculum that really motivate them, they naturally start to reach out to the community. This has ranged from discussions with local businesses and community leaders, writing to politicians, entering debating competitions and even ended up in students being invited for tea with the Prime Minister. The school sees that taking students outside the classroom presents them with different ways of learning and engaging with their subject - particularly useful when that subject is actually the society around them. As well as the benefits to individual students this has greatly raised the standing of the school. They are now often mentioned in the local and national media, have represented their borough and country on a variety of stages and relationships with the immediate local community have improved.

Co-construction of learning opportunities: many of these encounters with those beyond the school gates are organised by the students themselves. Their enthusiasm for a subject is harnessed and supported by staff, which has enabled students to fully plan educational trips and campaigns. The Headteacher states that the key to the success of pupil engagement is "ensuring that issues are relevant and that pupils can see an effect or impact." Having students choose and organise their own trips ensures relevance and has a very visible impact. This also builds confidence amongst all students that the school staff value them and their opinions and are trying to do things in a new way.

Student feedback on lessons: In Citizenship, RE and PSHE each lesson and scheme of work is discussed with the class and they are given a variety of ways to feedback on it: verbally, in writing, or using pictorial representations. This ensures that students who are less vocal, literate or who struggle with English are not excluded from making their opinions known. This feedback is taken very seriously by the department and analysed by them as a team. It has led to the overhaul of modules on the EU and the UN. As well as being a method to improve learning and teaching this also plays a vital role in giving every student a genuine experience of expressing their opinion and having an impact on the core work of the school. It is accepted that not everyone will be motivated to run a campaign or organise a trip, but it is essential that all pupils acquire the skills to engage constructively with each other and staff.

Creating links across the curriculum: One of the issues that has come up through the school council is the lack of green space in the school. A group of pupils identified some unused land on the site and have secured permission and funding to develop it, including constructing an amphitheatre. Work on this will be carried out by students but the project has been written into the curricula of all subjects in the next academic year.

Impact

Even though the new emphasis on Citizenship is only in its first year, students and staff are already well aware of its effects. Staff say that it gives them the opportunity to “do things we’ve never done before” and “understand what the kids are talking about.” Students say that, “improving student voice changes the general behaviour and attitude around the school.” A year 10 member of the school council said she felt her role was to “make [school] as enjoyable as possible.” Students seem to feel they share responsibility with staff for improving the school. On an individual level pupils are learning key transferable skills to prepare them not just for the world of work, but to act as concerned, informed citizens.

DRAFT