

TRANSCRIPT: Pupil voice, school council

Audrey Owen

I think everybody in this school believes it is hugely important to take account of what our pupils think. Just because somebody has a learning difficulty, it doesn't mean that you can't listen to their opinion. They do have opinions. They have strong opinions and they have wishes and desires and wants and they need to take control of the aspects of their life that they can do because a lot of aspects of their life are not within their control.

We have a school council which pupils vote for and it is a proper democratic vote. It is not rigged in any way! And the school council can take requests from throughout the whole school. So if somebody wants something brought to the school council, they can see one of the councillors and they bring that to a meeting and it's discussed. And we have actioned quite a number of changes via the school council.

Just because somebody might have a very severe learning difficulty does not mean they haven't the right to make choices. For those who have profound and multiple learning difficulties we've, in this last academic year, been doing some special projects on PMLD voice, working, basically on 'yes' and 'no'. So that the young person who has limited ability can actually make choices that they want something or they don't want something when offered it. And it might be, say, that a pupil just eye-points to the symbol of 'yes' or eye-points to the symbol of 'no', or it might be that they have a switch where a pre-recorded 'yes' and 'no' has been done, so they can understand that and it might be that they press the appropriate switch. And this has been really quite successful, so we're very pleased about that.