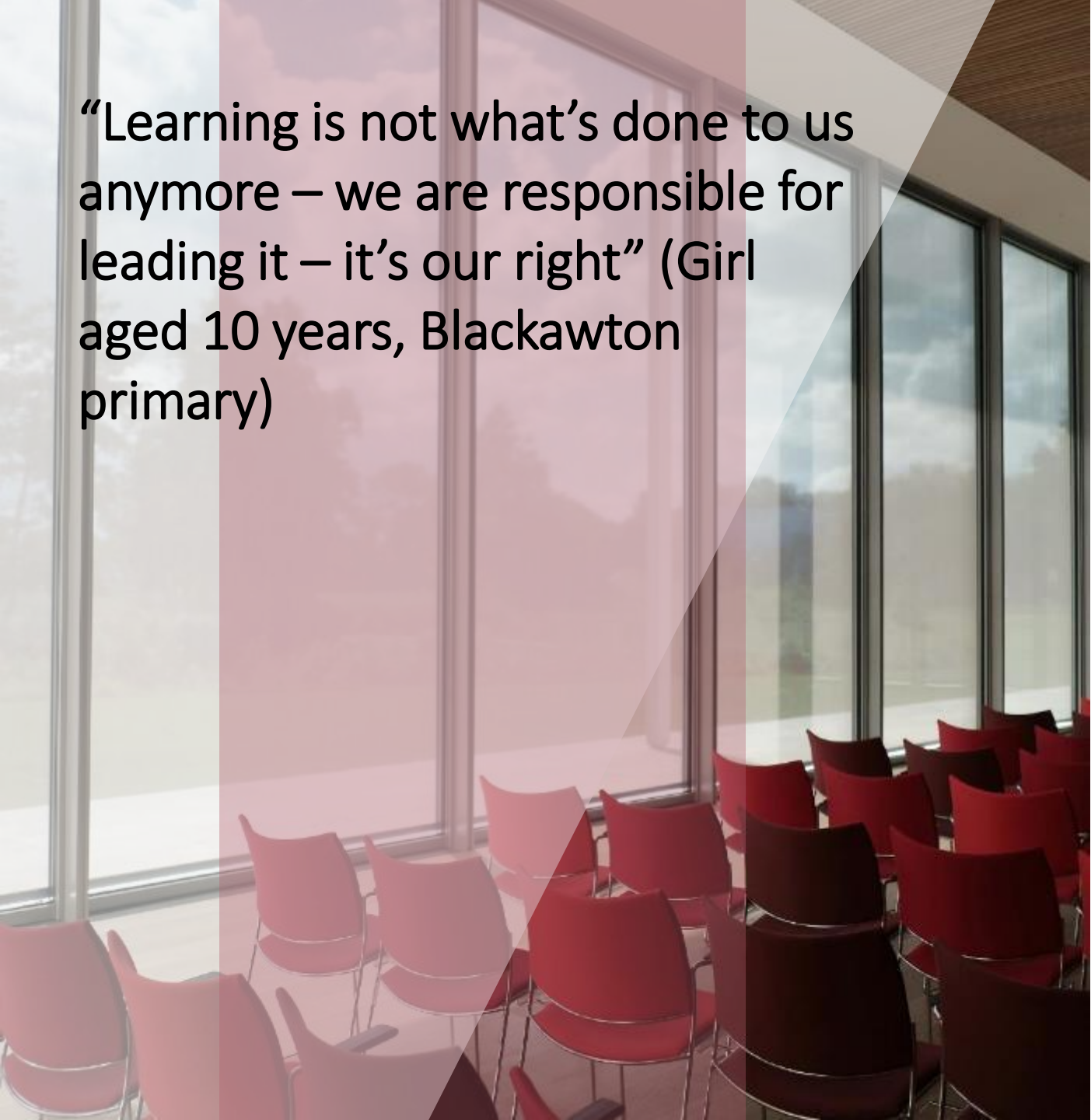




# Learner Engagement in a Rights Respecting School



**Article 3 (Best interests of the child):** The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children.

A photograph of a modern classroom with large windows and rows of red chairs. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

“Learning is not what’s done to us anymore – we are responsible for leading it – it’s our right” (Girl aged 10 years, Blackawton primary)

Research increasingly suggests that when learners are engaged in shaping and leading their own learning and education this can result in benefits for all learners, educators, the institution and the education system as a whole (eg Davies et al 2007). In particular, the benefits for learners who are involved are said to include:

- **greater sense of ownership over their learning**
- **increased motivation**
- **improved self-esteem**
- **greater achievement**
- **improved relationships with peers and educators**
- **increased self-efficacy.**



Article 12 (Respect for the views of the child)



## Paradigm of Motivation

### NOT THIS

Educators  
control and  
direct student  
learning.

### BUT THIS

**Educators  
empower  
students to  
lead their  
own learning.**



## So how does learning about their rights help children to become independent, engaged learners?



Knowing that you have a right to a voice, having someone really listen, and then see changes made as a result, is incredibly empowering. It enables children to see that they are part of a two-way relationship. They are not passive recipients, they are active participants and must in turn take joint responsibility for their education.



‘Pupils have the experience of being involved in a wide variety of learning activities, they are a rich resource, and they have a wealth of ideas about what supports their learning; it is, therefore, a missed opportunity to keep pupils on the periphery when it comes to discussing and setting learning agendas.’

Cambridge Primary Review – Carol Robinson



Learner voice is not about learners shouting to be heard, nor is it about educators giving away all their 'powers' to learners. Learner voice is about considering the perspectives and ideas of learners, respecting what everyone has to say, taking risks, sharing and listening, engaging and working together in partnership.



*Learner Engagement: A review of learner voice initiatives across the UK's education sectors.*



# RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD FEATURES OF A RIGHTS RESPECTING CLASSROOM

## Discussion groups

What does it look like now?

What do we want it to look like?

How do we get there?

unicef   
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RIGHTS  
RESPECTING  
SCHOOLS



## FEATURES OF A RIGHTS RESPECTING CLASSROOM – Learner engagement



- pupils and teachers negotiate and agree a classroom code of conduct, agreement or charter expressed in terms of rights from the Convention
- **Article 2 (Non-discrimination):** No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.
- **Article 12 (Respect for the views of the child)** This Convention encourages adults to listen to the opinions of children and involve them in decision-making -- not give children authority over adults.
- **Article 15 (Freedom of association):** Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as it does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.
- **Article 16 (Right to privacy):** Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes
- **Article 19 (Protection from all forms of violence):** Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally
- **Article 28: (Right to education):** For children to benefit from education, schools must be run in an orderly way
- **Article 29 (Goals of education):** Children’s education should develop each child’s personality, talents and abilities to the fullest. It should encourage children to respect others, human rights and their own and other cultures. It should also help them learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people

## FEATURES OF A RIGHTS RESPECTING CLASSROOM – Learner engagement



- pupils have regular opportunities to give their teachers feedback on what helps them learn and what they enjoy most about their lessons; and also to comment on what might hinder their learning
- pupils are fully involved in the assessment of their own learning and the evaluation of their own work; there is supportive evaluation of their peer's work
- pupils have responsibility for aspects of classroom organisation



## FEATURES OF A RIGHTS RESPECTING CLASSROOM – Learner engagement



- pupils have opportunities to make choices in their learning
- there is a strong emphasis on mutual support and collaboration
- teachers make use of a wide variety of teaching strategies and routes to learning, recognising that pupils may differ in their preferences for how they learn
- teaching assistants are valued and respected by all, as reflected in their relationships and communications with teacher colleagues and with pupils

## FEATURES OF A RIGHTS RESPECTING CLASSROOM – Learner engagement



- teachers and teaching assistants model rights-respecting behaviour, for example: teachers and teaching assistants listen positively to pupils' views and show respect for their opinions; they avoid put-downs and sarcasm; they give clear reasons for use of sanctions; teachers avoid use of 'blanket' sanctions of the whole class when only individual pupils have misbehaved; teachers show respect for teaching assistants and all other adults



If we really want children to become independent learners we need to facilitate this by actively listening and responding to their ideas and opinions.

“A feature of effective leadership is engaging pupils as active participants in their education and in making a positive contribution to their school and local community.”

Department for Education

- *Listening to and involving children and young people* (2014, p.2)

*...the greatest effects on student LEARNING occur when the TEACHERs become **LEARNERS of their own TEACHing** and...*



*...when students become their **own TEACHERs**.*

**John Hattie**

- *Visible Learning* (2009, p. 22)





One of the most  
**IMPORTANT**  
things we adults can do  
**for young children**

IS TO

**MODEL**  
the kind of person  
we would like them to be.

- Carol Hillman

Any Questions?