

A PILOT STUDY TO EVALUATE THE
IMPACT OF THE STUDENT PARTICIPATION
ASPECTS OF THE CITIZENSHIP ORDER ON
STANDARDS OF EDUCATION IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Report to the DfEE

By Derry Hannam

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INTRODUCTION

There is a worldwide political concern that many young people have little interest in or knowledge of their democratic systems of government. Even those who have either interest or knowledge appear to have shaky confidence in either the capacity of their systems or the integrity of their politicians to work for beneficial change. This is expressed in a declining inclination of 18-25's to vote in elections or join mainstream political parties. It is to be found in both the 'long-established' and the 'new' democracies. Potentially it provides dangerously fertile soil for the xenophobia, racism, and nationalistic demagoguery for which the twentieth century set an all-time planetary record of death and suffering.

It is evident from major investigations into citizenship education such as the IBE/UNESCO (Abela-Bertrand, 1997) and IEA (Torney-Purta et al 1999, and NFER 2001) studies that successful education for democracy needs to be at least in part experiential. Democratic structures and practices need to be modelled in the everyday lives of students in their classrooms and schools. Many governments have accepted this in theory and have attempted to introduce democratic structures into their secondary school systems. Our own foreign minister signed the Declaration on the importance of Citizenship Education at the 50th anniversary of the Council of Europe in Budapest in May 1999 which included student participation in school decision making as a key issue (Council of Europe 1999). Understanding the need for this is one thing, actually translating it into successful practice is another - and it is not easy. School attendance is compulsory and traditions are often authoritarian. The vocabulary of 'uniform' and 'discipline' at first sight seems to have more in common with a military environment than 'a democratic society in miniature'.

In Spain the experience of dictatorship is more recent than for most of Western Europe. After eleven years of implementation of Citizenship Education '...efforts to bring reform at the level of practice have not been all that successful.' (Naval and Iriarte, 2000) The recent Euridem study (Davies and Kirkpatrick, 2000) used Denmark and Sweden as exemplars of good democratic practice. Their legislation and school structures are indeed impressively democratic. But it has been very clear to me in discussions with many young Danes that making these structures work effectively is an altogether different matter. In Norway the 'Guide' (National Centre for Educational Resources 1994) for upper secondary students explicitly refers to the exploration of democracy in 'the mini-society of the school'. Typically Scandinavian there is no school uniform and students and teachers are normally on first-name terms. There is little 'misbehaviour'. The Reform 94 programme of which the 'Guide' forms a part actually requires young people to become involved in decisions about the content and assessment of their studies as well as creating democratic structures that include them in governance processes at school, regional and national levels. An ideal environment for education for democratic citizenship one might think. Yet Monsen (1999) in his official evaluation of the programme finds that the theoretical opportunities provided by the reforms are only being effectively operationalised in some 25% of upper secondary schools. (This is supported by my own work with students from 65 Norwegian schools). Those schools with headteachers and a nucleus of staff that were already disposed to work democratically quickly took up the democratic practices. They spoke of feeling legitimised by the Reform in the same way that I have heard a few English teachers speak of the Citizenship Order. Bringing about change beyond the 25% has proved to be a very slow process however.

The new Citizenship curriculum in England recognises the importance of the experiential dimension in requiring young people to learn skills of 'participation and responsible action'. The teaching profession generally accepts the need for some form of citizenship education though there is much anxiety about curriculum overload. However, it has been suggested by

some commentators that citizenship education might actually represent a threat to academic standards as it could distract teachers and students from the serious learning for examinations that is regarded by these commentators as the principal, if not the sole, purpose of schooling.

In my work as an Ofsted trained inspector I found that there are some, perhaps it would be more accurate to say 'a few', English secondary schools that are significantly more democratic than most. These schools seem to manage to 'square the circle' of authority and compulsion with real freedom and responsibility. They appear to be able to create an ethos where education for democracy is experientially possible and by so doing enhance the ethos in such a way that makes it progressively more possible. Very often superlatives such as 'excellent' or 'outstanding' creep into the normally staid 'Ofsted speak' when inspectors in their reports describe relationships between students and between students and teachers. These schools are to be found in leafy suburbs, in rural areas, and perhaps most surprisingly in socially deprived parts of cities. They are becoming models of successful education for democratic citizenship. In fact it is time that some of these schools gained 'Beacon' status for this quality. My impression as an inspector has been that although significant staff time is indeed devoted to supporting the activities that create the democratic ethos of these schools there appears to be no price being paid in conventionally measured attainment. On the contrary it appears that some students who might otherwise give up on school learning develop a renewed sense of purpose in an environment that raises their self esteem through the sharing of trust, responsibility and participation in decision making - most obviously for some less academic boys. Unfortunately the research evidence in this area is thin. (Annette, 1999)

In conducting this study I have had the opportunity to attempt to be a little more systematic in creating criteria by which 'more than usually student participative' schools can be identified. The opportunity to spend three weeks visiting the schools and talking with the people of all ages that are making them work was indeed a privilege. On the one hand it shows what is possible. Some schools are helping young people develop 'skills of participation and responsible action' sometimes in surroundings that are less than sympathetic. These are the schools that did not need a Citizenship Order. For these schools the 'light touch' is absolutely right. They have no need for detailed prescription and would almost certainly resist it if slow progress nationally should eventually tempt government in that direction.. Whether there are as many as the Norwegian 25% is doubtful. Alderson (1999a and 1999b) and Baginsky and Hannam (1999) suggest that something like that proportion might have made a start but 10% (or less) is probably a more likely figure for 'more than usually student participative' status. As in Norway the challenge will be to help those schools that have barely set foot on the road to participation and democracy find the courage, vision and perhaps above all energy to take the first step - which as Mao-Tse Tung pointed out is the start of every journey.

It is not easy to square circles. Some schools seem to be on the way to achieving it. The interweaving of the various threads contributing to their success will take more detailed unpicking than has been possible in this report. Replication will meet obstacles and here the Israeli experience could be pertinent (Hecht, 2000) but at least we can be sure that the 'trick' is possible. Real participation and experience of democracy can be provided in mainstream secondary schools. Students recognise and value it when they experience it. It does lead to enhanced self-esteem. Collectively in the twelve schools, which are the focus of this study, it is associated with better than might be expected GCSE examination results. **This is good news for Education for Democratic Citizenship.**

[NB Throughout the report end of section findings or judgements have been highlighted by underlining and the use of bold italics in slightly larger type.]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The investigation set out to test the hypothesis that ‘...in schools that are already taking the ‘participation and responsible action’ elements of the Citizenship Order seriously for significant numbers of students of the full range of academic ability, an improvement in attainment would be found across the full range of GCSE results, though not necessarily mainly at the higher grades.’ It further suggested that ‘... if the hypothesis proves to be accurate this might well be, in part at least, a consequence of higher self-esteem and a greater sense of ownership and empowerment of students leading to greater motivation to ‘engage’ with learning across the curriculum.’

Criteria were created by which secondary schools could be identified as being more than usually ‘student participative.’ A working definition of ‘student participation’ was developed that referred to ‘learning to collaborate with others (peers and/or adults), in the identification of needs, tasks, problems within the school or the wider community, to ask appropriate questions and gather appropriate information, to discuss and negotiate possible courses of action, to share in planning and decision making, to share the responsibility for implementing the plan, to evaluate/review/reflect upon outcomes and to communicate these to others.’

From a long short list of 50 schools 16 that best met the criteria were invited to participate in the study. 12 accepted and provided data. 9 of these were visited. 15 senior managers, 38 teachers and 237 students were interviewed. The senior managers and students completed questionnaires. The selected schools offered a combination of ongoing whole-school context and ethos-creating activities that impinged upon the lives of all students and a wide range of participative projects for discrete groups of students for more limited periods of time.

The study set out to explore ‘associations’ between ‘student participation’, enhanced self-esteem, motivation and willingness to ‘engage’ with learning, exclusion and attendance data, and overall attainment at GCSE. It did not attempt to explore or purport to demonstrate direct causal links between these phenomena. For much of the analysis the data from the 12 schools was regarded collectively.

The overwhelming view of headteachers and other senior managers was that ‘student participation’ impacts beneficially on self-esteem, motivation, sense of ownership and empowerment, and that this in turn enhances attainment.

The teachers also believed that the participative activities were of great benefit to all students whatever their gender, academic ability or social background and that working with these students, although often adding to their workload, was a major source of their job satisfaction. They commented upon improved attendance, enhanced self-esteem, motivation to learn, engagement with learning, and attainment, though their evidence was largely anecdotal.

Many teachers were able to give examples of where such participation had had a ‘transforming’ impact on individual students.

It became evident that the vision and commitment of the headteacher and other key senior and middle managers was crucial to the process of developing effective student participation and that this vision was usually most effective when formulated in collectively developed policy that was consistently documented and against which progress was evaluated.

Care was taken to ensure that a balance of boys and girls from the full range of secondary age, ability and social background were interviewed. The overwhelming view of the students interviewed in all the visited schools was that the participative activities were of great benefit to them in a wide variety of ways.

The cluster of questions in the students' questionnaire that received 90% or more positive responses strongly suggested that a 'benign circle' or cycle was at work. The activity, because it was 'participative' and required student initiative and decision making, generated motivation, ownership, a sense of being independent, trusted and responsible, which in turn supported the generation of communication and collaboration skills. This in turn created quality results which both intrinsically and through recognition from others led to enhanced self-esteem, which in turn led to an overall sense of personal and social 'efficacy' - which is probably the sine qua non for the development of political 'efficacy', a major aim of the Citizenship Education Project.

Involvement in student participative activities brought real benefits to relationships between students and teachers, which in turn probably enhanced attainment.

It was the perception of students that involvement in participatory activities enhanced learning across the curriculum - sometimes in unexpected and unpredictable ways. In many cases students described the development of important organisational and time-management skills in order to ensure that the participatory activities had no adverse effect on their 'regular' schoolwork. Students who were missing all or parts of lessons as a result of participatory activities spoke of developing greater powers of concentration in order to squeeze the maximum benefit from the time when they were in lessons in order to avoid having to do extensive 'catching up.'

It was also the perception of students that the time they devoted to participatory activities did not cause any anxiety to their parents or teachers. Their teachers shared this perception...

There was no gender difference in the extent to which 'participative' activities made students feel 'more independent, trusted and responsible,' however there was a tendency for more girls to become involved in participatory activities than boys. In the 11 mixed schools in the sample the ratio was approximately 4.0-4.5 boys/5.5-6.0 girls.

School, Year or House and 6th form Councils provided effective opportunities for student participation in the 12 schools but in some schools more work needed to be done to ensure that these opportunities were extended to all students through effective tutor group discussions. These schools needed to give more attention to staff development of this aspect of the role of the tutor and to allow more time for such discussions to take place.

Three schools operated successful schemes that involved large numbers in participative activities, in one case all the students in the school and in another an entire year group.

The overall rate of permanent exclusions from the 12 schools was significantly lower than for 'schools in similar circumstances' (using the QCA/OFSTED free school meal bands)

Attendance was slightly higher in the 12 'student participative' schools than in 'schools in similar circumstances' (using the QCA/OFSTED free school meal bands) when the schools were considered collectively. However there was consistent variation between schools that needs further investigation. There was strong anecdotal and some systematic evidence that the attendance of less academic and potentially alienated students, particularly boys, was improved through involvement in participative activities.

When compared to similar schools, higher than expected levels of attainment at GCSE were found in the 12 'student participative' schools when viewed collectively. The author's judgement is supported by the judgement of Ofsted. The gap in attainment between the 12 sample schools when viewed collectively and 'similar schools' is tending to increase year on year. As predicted the 'gap' is most evident in the figures for 5 Grades A*-G. In 2000 only 1 of the 12 schools had results that were worse than average and this school is known to have a downward 'skew' on its judgement grades which, if corrected, would bring it into the 'average' category or above. The 'gap' is also to be observed at 5 Grades A*-C, 1 Grade A*-G and in the figures for Average Points Scores (APS).

Within the limitations of the study the 'associations' predicted in the initial hypothesis have thus been confirmed in the 12 selected 'student participative' schools.

(**The Ofsted judgement** on the overall GCSE performance of the sample when it consisted of 16 schools was '*...that when compared with similar schools these sixteen are performing consistently better than expected.*' The reduction in sample size to 12 schools slightly enhanced this effect.)

PART A - The investigation

1. Backgrounds and Hypothesis

On the 30th of June 2000 the Secretary of State was asked by the author in a public session at a conference in Sheffield on Citizenship: “whether he agreed with the hypothesis, that accords with my observation, that in schools where there are high rates of student participation, either in school Councils or the organisation of the school in other ways, there is a positive effect on performance in most or all other subjects?”

He replied: “I give you a commitment that I will ask for this to be studied.”

The DfEE funded this study, which has been administered by CSV, specifically to fulfill this commitment. Positive examples of student participation were needed from a wide range of schools, while recognising that no causal connection can be made between student participation and performance in a limited study with a tight timescale as enjoined by the Secretary of State.

The view expressed by the author at the June 2000 Sheffield conference was that some schools were tempted to place disproportionate emphasis on the minority of Year 11 students who could perhaps achieve a ‘C’ grade at GCSE with extra help in order to improve the school’s position in the ‘league tables.’ This could result in less support being available for less academic students who, even with their best efforts, were not likely to achieve a high grade. The speaker expressed the view that this was contrary to the inclusive spirit of the Citizenship Order.

The Hypothesis - In schools that are already taking the ‘participation and responsible action’ elements of the Order seriously for significant numbers of students of the full range of academic ability, an improvement in attainment would be found across the full range of GCSE results though not necessarily mainly at the higher grades. If the hypothesis proved accurate this might well be, in part at least, a consequence of higher self-esteem and a greater sense of ownership and empowerment of students leading to greater motivation to ‘engage’ with learning across the curriculum.

2 The Aim of the Investigation:

To test the hypothesis through a search for and analysis of evidence that might confirm or refute it. This evidence to be obtained from schools that are already significantly ‘student participative’ and from Ofsted with reference to -

- improved student commitment to learning across the full range of academic ability
- improved attainment across the full range of academic ability

In light of the specific meaning of participation and action skills for citizenship learning, whether in school or community activities, the objectives of the research are as follows:

- to provide positive examples, useful in advocacy to allay fears of overload, of where high levels of participative citizenship activities, whether in school or in the community, appear to support good standards in all subjects
- to evaluate associations between 'student participation' and self-esteem, motivation, sense of ownership and empowerment using exclusion and attendance as indicators, as well as ascertaining the perceptions of students and teachers through interview, and/or questionnaires
- to evaluate associations between 'student participation' and attainment at GCSE/GNVQ

3 The Methodology

1. Criteria for 'good practice in student participation' and for 'schools that are becoming significantly student participative' were drawn up.

2. A database of some 50+ schools that appeared at first sight to broadly match these criteria was compiled from a range of sources. These included the databases of CSV, Learning Through Landscapes, Changemakers, the author's database built from his previous research into student participation issues and his experience of inspecting some 80 schools for Ofsted, and the DfEE website of Beacon Schools.

3. From this database, 20 'best-case' schools were selected from which consent was sought to participate in the project. Several were very interested in the study but faced imminent Ofsted inspections and regrettably declined. 15 agreed to participate. Returns of data were actually provided by 12 schools, 9 of which agreed to follow up visits by author. These visits were conducted in late February and early March 2001.

4. Ofsted was approached for assistance and agreed to facilitate the study. GCSE (and equivalent), attendance and exclusion data for the target schools was provided in a format that enabled comparisons to be made with national levels and, more valuably, with the performance of 'similar' schools using the Ofsted/QCA free school meal banding approach. This approach to comparing like with like is less than perfect but it was the best available and is certainly more useful than raw data and national comparisons alone. Anomalies were unearthed in one school that are described in the attainment section of this report. GCSE (or equivalent) data was requested and provided for performance at 5 Grade A*-C, 5 Grade A*-G, 1 Grade A*-G and GCSE Average Point Score (APS).

Given the time frame of the study it was not possible to explore Year 9 SAT results or more sophisticated value-added data held by some of the schools. Neither was it possible to match the performance of individual students engaged in the participatory activities against their individual predicted and attained examination performance. This will provide fertile ground for further investigation.

5. Ofsted reports for the target schools were trawled for further 'illuminative' comments and data.

6. A questionnaire was sent to the Headteachers of the 15 schools that agreed to participate (12 were returned) requesting, in addition to GCSE, attendance and exclusion data, information as to

- whether student participation featured in whole-school philosophy/ policy/ aims/ mission statements and to give examples;
- whether and how this was operationalised through the school development plan or similar documents, again with examples;
- whether there were participatory methodological expectations for teaching and learning styles in subject departments with details of implementation;
- what participatory structures/processes/activities outside the work of subject departments were in place, including data on numbers, age and gender of students involved;
- what training programmes for staff and students had been provided;
- what opportunities existed for students to participate in the evaluation of curriculum, teaching and learning;
- what evidence schools had as to the impact of participatory experiences on the self-esteem, motivation, engagement with learning and attainment of students
- whether the time spent on such activities had had any adverse effect on the expected examination performance of any students

A working definition of student participation was set out in the questionnaire as a yardstick for the responses. It stated that: -

For the purposes of this investigation, ‘student participation’ means students’ having the opportunity during their time at school to learn through experience the skills of participation and responsible action. In its fullest sense this would involve learning to collaborate with others (peers and/or adults), in the identification of needs, tasks, problems within the school or the wider community, to ask appropriate questions and gather appropriate information, to discuss and negotiate possible courses of action, to share in planning and decision making, to share the responsibility for implementing the plan, to evaluate/review/reflect upon outcomes and to communicate these to others.

7. The data supplied in the headteacher questionnaire was further explored in a structured interview with senior managers during the visits to 9 schools. In 5 cases this was with the headteacher or acting principal, in 3 cases with the deputy or assistant headteacher or vice-principal, and in 1 case with the head of PSHE/Citizenship. In all, a total 15 headteachers and deputy headteachers were interviewed.

8. Open interviews were conducted with a further 38 teachers (an average of 4 per school visited) closely involved with the identified participatory activities and subject learning experiences.

7. 237 students, consisting of 89 boys and 148 girls, in 9 schools were interviewed and completed a part-closed and part-open questionnaire. This gives an average of 26.4 students per school and, when allowance is made for one school being all-girls, gives an average for the mixed schools of 11.1 boys and 15.5 girls per school. The questionnaire was designed to elicit and explore student’s responses to and their perceptions of outcomes from, the participatory activities. The procedure used was for the students to briefly explain their

activities and then complete the closed section of the questionnaire if they wished to do so by ticking the appropriate boxes. None declined, including several severely physically disabled students and others with hearing impairment. This was then used as the basis for a group discussion following which the open section of the questionnaire could be completed by written response if the student wished, together with any changes to the closed section that they chose to make on reflection. It was stressed that the written responses were entirely optional so as not to embarrass those with poor writing skills. 82% chose to make written responses and, in some groups, the figure was 100%. Students with physical disabilities were especially determined to do so. There appeared to be a close link between level of motivation for the activity and the willingness to make written comments. It was rare for students to change the ticked boxes after time for reflection but it did occur. Notes of all discussions were made. The interviews were overwhelmingly conducted with groups of students without teachers being present. The groups varied in size between 2 and 12 students. The average group size was 4.8. These groups were created by the schools to give an overall balance of academic ability, activity (but always including representatives from school Councils and large-scale programmes), age, ethnic background and gender. Participants were interviewed from 71 of the total of 178 activities identified. Additionally, the author covered some lessons of absent teachers where this could provide opportunities for discussion with whole classes. The student questionnaire was not used on these occasions but notes were made.

4 The Criteria for the selection of the Schools

The final short list of 20 schools was identified by the use of the following criteria.

These require a mix of two types of opportunity for student participation. These might exist within or without timetabled lessons but in many cases were expected to occur outside this framework, though possibly within whole school occasions when the conventional timetable might be suspended for a cross-curricular day, 'block week', or, as was the case in School E, in a regular one afternoon per week devoted to a extra-national curriculum programme of 'electives'.

The two types of structure/process/activity identified were: -

(a) those which **with some regularity** impinge on the experience and awareness of a **significant number** of students (i.e. a majority or ideally, all), across the full range of age and academic ability.

These usually consisted of a structure of School, House, year or 6th form Councils or committees that met regularly, had good communication procedures to all classes or tutor-groups and are perceived as being effective by most students in the school. It could also include a whole-school policy for active learning monitored by senior management that requires the curriculum to provide regular opportunities for all students to engage in collaborative participatory learning activities that are substantially student-initiated, planned, implemented and evaluated. This could be within all or some subject departments or faculties and/or within a whole-school period when the conventional timetable is suspended. It could also include the systematic involvement of many students in school self-evaluation procedures, which might involve aspects of management, curriculum, teaching or learning as exemplified by the 'Students As Researchers' programme in School E.

(b) those which provide a more intense experience for **clearly identifiable minorities** of students for possibly **more concentrated periods of time**.

This second category could take an almost infinite variety of forms. However, to contribute to the 'student participative' ethos they were expected to involve the participant students in a significant degree of responsibility that is more than merely tokenistic for all or most of the following - **collaboration with others in the identification of need/initiation, the planning, the collection of information and resources, the implementation, the communication of results to others, and the reflective evaluation** of the activity. The activities could occur either within the community of the school or the wider community, including the business community, or both. They could involve the school students using the facilities of the wider community or members of the wider community gaining access to the facilities of the school, or a mix of the two. They might include building links with other schools either within the same phase or between phases. These projects might be organised under the umbrellas of CSV/Barclays New Futures, CSV/Lighthouse activities, Changemakers, Learning Through Landscapes, Youth Action/Crime Concern, or involve the organisation of anti-bullying procedures, peer mentoring or counselling or mediating, peer education, membership of local Youth Councils, involvement in staff-selection procedures, involvement in the work of governing bodies, carrying out research projects in the school, work experience or 'service' placements. This list was not definitive and many other activities emerged that fell, at least in part and sufficient for inclusion, into this category.

It was anticipated that there may well be a spectrum of activities that span the two polarities and this was often found to be the case. However it was expected that where the first type of activity was well developed it would provide a fertile participatory ethos, and an environment within which the more time - and number-limited activities of the second type could flourish.

It was further anticipated that schools that provided a rich programme of opportunities for student participation would probably demonstrate an indication of conscious intent in the wording of their mission statement or aims and objectives, and that this would be reflected in their school development plans and curriculum, staff, departmental and pastoral development planning, implementation and review.

The 'Hannam Hypothesis/Question' as put to the minister at the Sheffield conference incorporated this view that a combination of less intense but nonetheless 'real' participation by large numbers over extended time-periods with more intense participation by smaller numbers probably over shorter periods of time could create in a school a totality or 'critical mass' that justified the description 'student **participative ethos**'.

Part B - The Twelve 'Student Participative' Schools

1. Background details and comments from Ofsted reports

School A - An 11-18 mixed community comprehensive school of 1030 students without specialist status in a satellite town near to a major city in the West of England with a free school meal eligibility of 10.78% (Ofsted/QCA band 3) in 2000 and which is oversubscribed. 25% of students have special needs without statements and 4% have statements.

The 1999 Ofsted report stated that 'Students have good attitudes to work and behaviour is good', 'relationships between students and with their teachers are good,' and that 'provision for the moral and social development of students is good.' Teaching 'styles often involve students co-operating with each other in groups.' Students '...do not simply participate in the school council, they run it.' There were no key issues for action that relate to student participation.

School B - An 11-18 mixed foundation comprehensive school of 1360 students with specialist Sports School status in a small satellite town near to an East Coast city. It had a free school meal eligibility of 6.56% (Ofsted/QCA band 2) in 2000 and is oversubscribed. 18% of students have special needs without statements and 1% have statements.

In 1998, Ofsted reported that the school 'ethos is very positive; the staff and pupils enjoy good relationships in an orderly community', that 'the school has a warm and welcoming atmosphere', that there is 'strong provision for moral and social education' with 'excellent pastoral care' and 'excellent community involvement.' Pupils '... co-operate well in pairs and larger group work.' 'Pupils...take increasing responsibility as they become older...evident in the school and year Councils...the pupils are given a great deal of freedom to organise themselves...and they respond maturely.' However the report does identify '...the improvement of students...capacity for independent learning' as a key issue for action.

School C - An 11-18 girls community comprehensive school of 1490 students seeking specialist Arts School status on the edge of a major city in the North West with a free school meal eligibility of 39.66% (Ofsted/QCA band 6) in 2000 and which is heavily oversubscribed. 14% of students have special needs without statements and 1% have statements.

Ofsted reported in 1999 that the school ethos is 'very good', 'student's attitudes to learning are good,' that '...provision for social development is excellent' and that '...enrichment through community links is excellent.' There were no key issues for action that referred to student participation.

School D - An 11-18 mixed community comprehensive school of 1800 students without specialist status on the South Coast with a free school meal eligibility of 13.61% (Ofsted/QCA band 4) in 2000. Further expansion is imminent. 27% of students have special needs without statements and 3% have statements.

The 1999 Ofsted report states that the school 'provides a strong community ethos...effective provision for the students' social development and good quality relationships across the school' and that the 'working atmosphere promotes good learning and enhances progress.' It

contains no key issues for action that relate directly to student participation. However there was some suggestion during the author's visit that comments relating to the difficulties experienced in introducing a whole-school participatory approach to active citizenship had been edited out of the report prior to publication...

School E - An 11-18 mixed voluntary controlled comprehensive school of 770 students without specialist status and very heavily 'creamed' by the independent sector. It is situated in a small town in the South Midlands near to a prestigious university city with a free school meal eligibility of 2.25% (Ofsted/QCA band 1) in 2000. 13% of students have special needs without statements and 2% have statements. The school attempts to fully integrate the students of an attached unit for physically disabled young people.

The 1999 Ofsted report states that the school ethos is 'very good' and the 'social development of pupils is very good', 'curriculum provides many rich learning experiences through...innovative electives programme.' 'Pupils enjoy... and are enthusiastic about the electives programme.' 'Attitudes to learning are very good and often excellent...in the electives programme.' '...The group work needed to participate in many of the electives sessions provides an excellent awareness of citizenship.' electives '... include many good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for major events' 'end of topic evaluations incorporate the views of the pupils in the light of which activities are modified...' Overall, the '...significant improvements since the previous inspection include...the extension of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and participate in decision making in the school.' There were no key issues for action that relate to student participation.

School F - An 11-16 mixed community comprehensive school of 1240 students without specialist status but in the Excellence in Cities programme. Over 90% are of ethnic minority origin, predominately Asian, with a much higher than average proportion having English as a second language. It is oversubscribed. It lies on the edge of a large East Midlands city and had a free school meal eligibility of 16.57 % (Ofsted/QCA band 4) in 2000. 20% of students have special needs without statements and 3% have statements.

In 1999, Ofsted reported on the 'Excellent ethos,' 'Excellent social development; pupils given a strong appreciation of the responsibilities of citizenship...' The inspectors' judgements are strongly supported by the parental response: 'The school council works in a democratic manner and pupils learn to appreciate the benefit of that system...excellent levels of citizenship are further promoted through a commitment to community service...the school promotes active involvement in the school community...' There were no key issues for action that relate to student participation.

School G - A 13-18 mixed foundation comprehensive upper school of 1500 students with specialist Arts status and a Beacon School. It is oversubscribed. It lies in a rural village between two large South Midlands towns and had a free school meal eligibility of 5.35% (Ofsted/QCA band 2) in 2000. 9% of students have special needs without statements and 3% have statements.

The most recent Ofsted report dates back to 1996 and is thus of limited value to this study. However, although it makes little reference to the 'students' voice' issues which are now an outstanding feature of the school it does describe the school as being 'outstandingly good' and there were no key issues that relate to student participation.

School H - An 11-18 mixed community comprehensive school of 1120 students with specialist Language School status in a satellite town of a West Country city with a free school meal eligibility of 6.94 % (Ofsted/QCA band 2) in 2000. It is heavily oversubscribed at Y7 and rapidly expanding. 13% of students have special needs without statements and 2% have statements.

The most recent Ofsted report dates back to 1997. It states that the 'social development of students is an important aim of the school,' and that 'year and school Councils enable students to contribute ideas on all aspects of school life, including the vision statement and Programme for Continuous Development...' (School Development Plan). There were no key issues for action that relate to student participation.

School I - An 11-18 mixed community comprehensive school of 820 students with no specialist status in the centre of a West Country city with a free school meal eligibility of 35.4% (Ofsted/QCA band 6) in 2000. 33% of students have special needs without statements and 12% have statements.

In 1999 Ofsted reported that despite the high proportion of students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds the school has a 'good ethos', that 'pupils coach and help to manage sports teams for younger pupils', 'pupils welcome the opportunity to influence and share responsibility for the running of the school...in the effective school council.' There were no key issues for action that relate to student participation.

School J - An 11-18 mixed voluntary aided comprehensive school of 1080 students with no specialist status on the outskirts of a West Midlands city with a free school meal eligibility of 2.99% (Ofsted/QCA band 1) in 2000. It is heavily oversubscribed in Y7. 7% of students have special needs without statements and 1% have statements.

In 1998, Ofsted reported that the school was 'good and improving', and that it 'functions well as a society where all have a part to play.' 'Co-operative and collaborative work is a feature of many lessons,' and '...the school council allows pupils to participate in, and gives them an understanding of, the democratic process.' These and other features '...contribute to the very good provision for pupils' social development.' No key issues for action were identified that relate to student participation.

School K - An 11-18 mixed community comprehensive school of 1040 students with no specialist status in a Home Counties New Town with a free school meal eligibility of 9.2% (Ofsted/QCA band 3) in 2000. It is oversubscribed in Y7. 16% of students have special needs without statements and 1% have statements.

The most recent Ofsted inspection report was from 1996 and only the summary was available for scrutiny. The school was described as '...a good, well run school' but significantly a key issue for action was to 'give pupils in years 7 to 11 more opportunities to exercise responsibility, and in some subjects to take the initiative in their learning and to develop the ability to make decisions.' The school was being inspected during the period of this study and thus, despite the Headteacher's enthusiasm to participate, a visit was not possible. However, it is very clear from the documentation provided and the evidence from Learning Through Landscapes that effective action has been taken subsequent to the 1996 Ofsted report and that the school now merits inclusion in this study.

School L - An 11-18 mixed community comprehensive school of 1270 students with specialist Arts School status in a South East London borough adjacent to deprived housing estates and with 33% from ethnic minorities. It is a Beacon School and is heavily oversubscribed. It had a free school meal eligibility of 32% (Ofsted/QCA band 5) in 2000. 23% of students have special needs without statements and 4% have statements.

The Ofsted report of 1999 states that 'the school has an outstanding ethos' and sets out to 'create an environment in which all are involved, through the consultative process, in contributing to decision making.' The inspectors' judgements are strongly endorsed by the parental response. 'The school is a very orderly community and pupils generally have a

positive attitude to learning.’ ‘Boys and girls work together...a feature of the school is the high quality of relationships between pupils and with teachers...’ ‘There is little graffiti and instances of vandalism are low.’ It comments that students ‘do not give up easily...are resilient...’ (Author’s note - all this in an area of strong ‘gang’ culture famous for a violent racial murder.) The report contains no key issues that relate to student participation.

2 Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Assessment of Student Participation and associated Skills in the 12 Schools

Policy

Question 1 of the questionnaire for headteachers asked ‘**Does the development of the skills of participation and responsible action feature in your whole school policy for all students?**’

Most headteachers replied ‘yes’ and this was supported by scrutiny of documentation such as prospectuses, mission statements and, in one case, a governor’s annual report that were either returned with the questionnaire or made available during the visit.

Examples of strong commitment included:

‘This will include educating young people to be full participants in a democratic society.’ (Prospectus, School D)

‘...To provide for children, in an educational context, the best possible experience of all that is good in human relationships...we are committed to empowering our students as participants both within and beyond our school boundary’ (Prospectus, School E)

‘The student voice is a central part of the work we do at ...School.’ ‘One very significant manifestation of our student voice commitment is the presence and voice of students at Governing Body Meetings and at Governor Strategy Conferences.’ ‘Fundamental to the development of this work is the involvement and input of the students.’ (Governors Annual Report to Parents, School G)

‘To promote...co-operative activity...and to prepare students for... active involvement in the community.’ The prospectus contains a specific section entitled ‘student involvement’ (School prospectus, School H)

‘Maintain a secure and caring community founded on principles of justice, tolerance mutual respect and self-discipline...to ensure that all members of the school community are aware that their voices are valued, and that they have a voice in bringing about change. (School L Prospectus) The equal opportunities statement of School L is sent to all parents and is clearly headed ‘This statement was drawn up by pupils and staff of the school’. It is also included in the pupils’ planner.

Several schools referred explicitly to their school Councils in their prospectus:

‘The school council plays a key part in the curriculum review process, discussing individual subjects, cross-curricular issues, school policies and procedures, and the distribution of the school fund, as well as co-ordinating charity work and social occasions.’ (School H Prospectus)

‘The school council has as its aim to provide a forum for pupils’ views to be discussed and for changes to be agreed. The School Council has a powerful influence on many aspects of school life, from the pupils’ statement on equal opportunities and bullying, to the school environment and school uniform’ (School L Prospectus) The School L School Council Constitution refers explicitly to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, stating as one of its aims ‘To monitor the school’s implementation of Article of the UN Convention on the Rights of the child.’ (NB. The members of the school council who were interviewed did know what Article 12 says. This was clearly not tokenistic in this school.)

Unusually, one vice-principal wrote in a covering letter ‘...the school actively encourages student participation in a number of ways but, to my surprise, much of this involvement does not feature in written school policy, philosophy or objectives’ In fact, the school (School B) involved the students in many participatory decision making processes and activities. The Head could be described as an ‘opportunist’ in that he was permanently on the lookout for new ways of drawing ever more students into the processes. It was one of the three schools where students were involved in governors proceedings, in fact student representatives were given voting rights on one sub-committee, as well as having involvement in the Health and Safety committee, the Parent-Teacher Association, curriculum review procedures, and the appointment of teachers.

Planning for implementation across the whole school

The second question in the questionnaire for headteachers shifted the focus from policy to planning for implementation. 11 of the 12 schools reported that ‘student participation’ featured in planning documents at whole-school level. Examples included:

- The school development plan of School E identifies ‘... key initiatives that specifically support/enhance student opportunity to increase learning through participation’

- The ‘5 Year Development Plan’ of School G states that ‘...the level of involvement of students, both in decision-making processes of the school and in specific improvement activities will continue to be optimised. Increasingly, student involvement and feedback opportunities on curriculum delivery and the effectiveness of learning will be developed...’ and, in its Beacon School Submission, there is a section entitled ‘Student Involvement in School Improvement’ which states that ‘...in the last two years it has involved active involvement of students as researchers and partners in the school improvement process.’

- The ‘Plan for Continuous Improvement’ of School H states - ‘...students demonstrate independence in their learning by initiating learning experiences...taking increasing responsibility for their own learning.’ The Plan has a separate Area of Focus called ‘Student Participation’ which requires the development of ‘active year and school Councils’ on which ‘students contribute to agendas which focus on aspects of learning, as well as other issues’. It also requires ‘opportunities for student representation in governors’ and teachers’ meetings’ as ‘students observing/participating in a range of meetings, including governors and working groups,’ and ‘research into student perceptions...should inform school policy and planning...including bullying.’ It concludes with a statement on the importance of environment ‘...to redesign the external environment taking account of students’ ideas...space for students to sit and play in an environment, which enhances positive behaviour.’

- There are many references to student participation in the School Development Plan of School K which include ‘Looking back - we recognise the establishment of the RE garden, increased pupil participation in current affairs e.g. global citizenship conference, Stevenage Youth Forum’ ‘piloted use of pupils as evaluators.’ The section entitled ‘What remains to be done’ states ‘co-ordinated action to increase participation’. It proposes to ‘further involve

pupils/students in evaluation and related activities...' and sees the need 'to build a clear picture of the current level of pupil involvement in the school and the wider community...' and to sustain existing '...formal mechanisms for involvement, including peer mentoring.'

- School K has as a success indicator the achievement of 'identifiable further development in pupil responsibility' and refers to the DfEE Hay McBer study specifically (which advocates student feedback on teaching and learning) 'we intend to disseminate the outcomes of the Hay McBer research into teacher effectiveness.' In a strong Vision Statement called 'The School of the Future' it refers to 'the need to develop areas *not* measured by examination outcomes alone...' giving as an example 'a School Council that is a forum for debate about important matters *and consequent action* about the future of the school and the quality of provision.' It plans to 'revamp the School Council by Key Stages...helpful in refocusing some of the discussion on what is important in terms of pupil responsibility and learning; there is still and probably always will be a 'wish list' aspect to the meetings but further progress is possible.'

- School K further proposes in its Vision Statement that 'Pupils/students involved directly in the monitoring and evaluation of courses and other aspects of school life, e.g. our reward policy.' It recognises the challenge in this proposal '...potentially unnerving but a school that has the confidence to maintain a high level of classroom observation should be able to take this in its stride; it is a further step in the enhancement of pupil responsibility, including responsibility for learning; the experience of teachers and schools who have implemented *properly prepared* formal evaluation by pupils is highly encouraging - it can also save staff time.'

Two schools (F and G) included the development of student participation in the job descriptions and targets of deputy heads and in School D the job description for head of house requires the post holder 'To supervise and direct the running of the House Council - to organise representatives from each tutor group to make up a house council.'

When asked for how long such policies and plans had been developing in the school responses included:

'...Mainly since the last Ofsted report which had criticised us for our lack of student involvement. It made us think.' (In this case 1996) (School K)

'It started under the previous head and I've pushed things on over 5 years...' (School L)

'...Developing over 10 years but accelerated over the last 5 with students as researchers.'

Five years was the most commonly mentioned period though two schools spoke of 10. None felt that the Citizenship Order had started the process but several felt that it had, to some extent, legitimised their efforts. Others were critical, however, with one headteacher of a highly participative school commenting with vehemence '...they (the DfEE) should come and live in the real world of schools for a bit.' There was no time to explore the issues behind this remark as the author was climbing into his car as it was passed. It was a farewell shot!

Planning for implementation - in mainstream subjects and PSHE

10 of the schools answered 'Yes' to the question 'is there any expectation that the opportunity to learn participation and action skills will be built into subject schemes of work or feature in subject development planning?' The other 2 said 'Not Yet.'

Comments included:

'Not specifically but it is in ethos of the whole school - many do.' (School B)

'A range of teaching and learning styles expected everywhere' (School C)

'Yes, through 'lifeskills' cross-curricular work - though not clearly set out or monitored - more a wish than a reality in some areas' (School D)

'These skills are underpinning all of our work in subject depts/commitment to whole-school programmes PSHE/Electives/Residential Trips (wide ranging programme involving years 7-13).' 'Cross curricular projects are expected to involve engagement of all students in their processes. Teachers are engaged in peer observation to develop and share good teaching to enable more participative learning to take place.' Lifeskills Handbook states 'students' teams are fully engaged in the project process, successfully overseeing all stages of process from planning, implementation and evaluation.' (School E)

'High-quality teaching and learning is founded on open and positive staff-student relationships. Most staff try to encourage active participation - certain subjects such as Enrichment and Drama are planned carefully to build necessary skills' (School F)

Yes - 'expected across the curriculum.' Participation and responsible action skills are explicitly referred to in ETC (*NB. Ethics, Theology and Citizenship Dept. - effectively the PSHE department in this school*) policy paper, together with all the many ways in which they might be developed. (School G)

Yes - 'policy encourages students to be active learners and requires teaching and learning styles which develop a sense of ownership and control for students but this can be an uphill struggle especially where staff feel driven by national curriculum content overload...' (School H)

'Yes - all departments have been engaged in the nurture of participative...approaches to learning for a number of years.' (School J)

'Yes - 'all departments are encouraged to develop teaching styles that encourage participation' (School L)

The departments actually stated to be systematically using participative methods are listed below in the Activities section of this report.

Monitoring

Senior-management monitoring of the extent to which participatory approaches are actually being implemented in subject departments appears to have been more patchy than the policy making and planning in the past. However, the auditing process required to prepare for the effective cross-curricular delivery of Citizenship Education from 2002 is giving monitoring a higher profile. Citizenship Curriculum audits had either been completed or were being undertaken in all of the 12 schools. In addition to this, audits connected to local developments of the National Healthy Schools Standard (NHSS) initiative were also being conducted in 5 of the schools, which, to some extent, covered the same ground. Some of the citizenship audits had involved or were involving students. The headteacher of School D referred specifically to the need for this and School G had created a 'students as researchers' project group to work with department staff especially to explore citizenship opportunities in the history curriculum. The accreditation requirements of the NHSS initiative state that student representatives should be involved in the steering group to conduct the Healthy Schools audit. This was actually happening to good effect in the 5 schools that had such projects up and running.

School G reported in their annual audit that '...there is some slipping backwards as vocational courses become less student-owned.'

Monitoring of student participation in extra-subject activities and processes was also being undertaken, often as part of the Citizenship or Healthy Schools audits.

In School H the 'Programme For Continuous Improvement' (Equivalent to School Development Plan) contains a review of progress each year, which is effectively an annual audit of student participation. The most recent review of progress records that '...some students are actively engaging in environmental projects, schools for health and local Youth Council; discussion is needed re. student representation in other fora...some Year Councils running effectively...firmer evidence needed re. student's views.'

School G employs an administrative assistant who is closely involved in the 'Student Voice' Programme, part of whose work is to monitor student participation developments across the whole school. She is supported by a part-time ex-pupil in his 'gap-year' who is paid for two days per week and is described as 'Students as Researchers Liaison Facilitator'. He monitors participatory developments within that programme.

Assessment

Headteachers were asked 'How do you assess whether participation skills are actually being learned?' This was an issue where most felt that a lot of work still needed to be done.

Responses included:

'...A self-assessment Lifeskills Progress Card in PSHE for all KS3/4 students.'
(School A)

' Some participative activities have their own assessment requirements such as Barclays New Futures, Learning Through Landscapes, Duke of Edinburgh Award.' (School C)

'Lifeskills are accredited at KS4 through Challenge 21, the (LEA) Life Long Learning Programme.' (School D)

'We have begun to think about this, but there is much more to be done.' (School E)

'All students are entered for the Life Skills exam and do well. There is a politics test in Enrichment - but it is more of a general knowledge quiz.' (School F)

'We do not feel it is appropriate to formally assess or report on a student's development in PSD ...sex and relationships education...though some aspects will fall within RE and Citizenship assessment.' Citizenship assessment will include the key skills. We are still working on it. We may use the grade criteria of the RE short course. All students take this short course.' (School G)

3 Staff Development and Student Training in and for Participatory approaches and methods

Headteachers were asked in their questionnaire what staff development opportunities were provided and what training was given to students in the development of the skills of participation and responsible action.

For staff

Provision seemed to be quite patchy in many of the 12 schools. Several referred to training for tutors, usually as part of PSHE INSET, which included in two cases a focus on facilitating tutor group meetings that would enhance year council or school council feedback and discussion. 5 schools highlighted the need for such training to improve the effectiveness of their student democratic structures and processes.

In School H a whole-school IST on teaching and learning has contained 'the development of student ownership and control as a focus issue' however '...more staff development on the managing of student participation is required - especially in the context of effective meetings in tutor groups.'

School D had launched a whole staff initiative in citizenship that had met significant resistance from enough staff for the programme to be switched to one just for willing volunteers. This volunteer group appears to have gained significant benefit from the programme, however, as four teachers of a range of subjects commented favourably upon it and students from these groups were very positive in their interviews.

School G had conducted whole staff training days for its 'Students as Researchers' programme to good effect. One member of staff explained that he had been hostile to all such ideas for student involvement but that now he was '...a complete convert...it's done more to improve my teaching than any other staff development in my career of 25 years...and if I can do it anyone can...' 'It' being the acceptance of the value of feedback from students about his teaching.

School E reported that ‘...the Healthy Schools’ audit has started our thinking on this - it is needed - some staff have greater strengths than others. The audit itself was carried out as an INSET activity.’

The School L staff equal opportunities committee had organised IST around these issues jointly with the school council equal opportunities committee. Both groups were especially proud of a recent joint staff/students ‘anti-homophobia campaign’.

For students

A wider, and in many ways more-focused, programme of training appeared to be provided for students than for staff across the full range of 12 schools.

Three schools (A, B and C) sent their school council members on training courses run by the LEA or the Children’s Society. All had found these extremely helpful in developing effectiveness.

School F took its school council away for a day for intensive training with older councillors substantially running the day. This council has run courses for other schools and is producing its own training pack and video to market to other schools.

Two students in School G who had attended a conference organised by the European Bureau of School Student Unions (OBESSU) had recently organised a school conference for all Year, School and 6th Form councillors on a day when the school had been closed for staff training. Some 50 students attended and voted it one of their best days ever. The students have written a fascinating report.

Training for peer mentors, educators and counsellors is provided in-house in 9 schools (A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I and L) which often involves older students in the training of new recruits to the programmes.

The environment group in School C has had guidance from Conservation Trust.

Two Healthy Schools Groups have had training from LEA staff (Schools E and H)

LEA staff has trained peer mediators in School F.

Students in School E have been involved in helping the LEA to mount a staff/student Citizenship conference - a physically disabled student gave a speech from his wheelchair, which so impressed the organisers that he was sent the LEA sent a personal letter of thanks to this student...

School G has a sophisticated programme of joint staff/student training for its ‘Students as Researchers’ scheme and has introduced a new ‘student consultants’ role to provide ongoing advice to working groups.

School I is involved ‘...in a new project with a school in Wales and Bath College to develop a student-directed curriculum.’

4 Links with Feeder Schools

All 12 schools had active programmes of collaboration with their feeder schools and several had sharing relationships of different kinds with adjacent secondary schools. None of these links featured collaboration over student-participation issues though several headteachers said that 'on reflection' these should be developed. The Healthy Schools group in school E did have student representatives from local junior schools.

5 Opportunities for Students to participate in the evaluation of teaching and learning or curriculum review procedures

It is perhaps not surprising that, as the schools participating in the study were chosen because of their commitment to student participation, 9 of them reported some degree of student participation in curriculum evaluation and review. Most frequently, this involved the PSHE programme or its equivalent. (Schools G, H, J, and L) In School G the course had been entirely re-written in conjunction with a team of students. In this school students also evaluate teaching and learning on a systematic basis. Other schools are considering this but, in the light of current teacher union attitudes, are understandably moving with great caution.

In School C 'the gifted and talented cohort have been asked to review their entire curriculum activities programme (Y7-11). 70 pupils in total are involved.'

The School D 'a Y9 task group has the task of monitoring and reviewing progress of other task groups.' These task groups are made up of the most academically able students in Year 9 who spend a week working with the management teams of local companies.

School E commented that 'this is an area where we need to expand our work. In May 1998 there was a major review of our electives programme based on student's views. These are sought in an ongoing basis in electives. Students' views being incorporated into a new after schools activity programme - funded by New Opportunities fund.'

In School F 'a student council action group is currently looking at support for learning through student planners and learning handbooks.'

School G regularly has parts of its 'Students as Researchers' programme working on these issues. 'This year one group is assessing science lessons by observation and interview.' 'Also, groups are currently researching PE, Technology, English, Expressive Arts and Citizenship in History.' In this school such groups regularly observe lessons and evaluate teaching and learning.

In School H 'this is widespread through year surveys that refer to subjects. School and year Councils have evaluated aspects of the curriculum, e.g. PSD schemes of work and delivery, and ICT provision and delivery. Students discuss subject progress in tutor groups - this is fed back to curriculum managers. All post-16 students are asked to evaluate the working of the subject-choice system.'

In School K '6th form have recently been involved in logging lesson activities'. But the headteacher adds that 'this is the least developed aspect of our work, but we are totally committed to doing more.'

C - The Activities

The Range and Scale of the Participatory Activities in the 12 Schools

1. The total number of activities per school extra to timetabled national curriculum subjects and PSHE programmes referred to in headteachers' questionnaires, and senior manager and other teacher interviews.

<u>School</u>	<u>No of activities</u>	<u>No/% stdts involved per annum</u>	
A	10 (inc. SC, YC's)	270	26% (most of Y8 - BNF)
B	11(+44) (inc YF, 6C,SC, YC's)	320	24% (all Y7Ch'mkrs44grps)
C	7 (inc SC)	115	8%
D	11 (inc YF, 6C, SC, some HC's,)	200	11%
E	25+(inc 6C, SC and YC's)	770	100% (Electives/CCPs)
F	14(inc YF, SC, some HC's)	200	16%
G	25+(inc 6C, SC,YC's)	280	19% (S as R)
H	11(inc YF, 6C, YC's)	125	11%
I	8(inc YF, SC, YC's)	95	12%
J	8(inc 6C, SC)	150	14%
K	7(inc 6C, SC)	120	12%
L	20(inc YF, 6C, SC,YC's)	395	<u>31%</u>
Average			23.7%

Notes: -

YF	=	Youth Forum, Youth Council or Young Peoples Council serving a larger area
6C	=	Sixth Form Council, Committee or Union
SC	=	School or Students' Council
YC	=	Year, House or Division Council
Y7, 8 etc.	=	Year 7, 8 etc.
BNF	=	Barclays New Futures project administered by CSV
Ch'mkrs	=	Changemakers Project
CCP's	=	Cross-Curricular Projects for whole-year groups with suspension of normal timetable
S as R	=	Students as Researchers Programme

2. The extra-subject activities

Incidence of provision (12 schools)

Elected representatives on Youth Forums or Councils or Young People's Cttee's in locality	5	
Reps on LEA Assn of School Councils	1	
School Councils		12
SC sub-cttee for fundraising	2	
SC sub-cttee for Equal Opportunities	2	
SC sub-cttee for website design/management	2	
SC sub-cttee for homework diary/planner	2	
Schools with other assorted SC sub-cttees	5	
6th Form Councils, Committees, Unions	8	(11 schools - 1 is 11-16)
Year or House Councils	9	(max 5 per school - 1 is 13-18)
Student representation on governing body	3	
Student representation on Parent/Tchr Assn	1	
Student representation on Health/Safety Cttee	2	
Student representation on Equal Opps Cttee	2	

Students as Researchers or other feedback groups on curriculum, teaching or learning	5 (14 grps/90 stdts in Schl E)
Electives Programme	1 (all Y8-11 - 83 activities)
Cross Curricular Citizenship/PSHE Projects	1
Learning Through Landscapes/Eco/	
Environmental committees or projects	8
Barclays New Futures Projects - diverse	5
Changemakers projects	1 (all Y7 pupils - 44 groups)
Peer Education/Mentors in the same school	8
Peer Education/Mentors in feeder school/s	4
Peer counselling/mediation/Guardians for younger pupils in same school	7
Student involvement in the appointment of teaching staff	4
Bus Monitor's Group (created by school council)	1
Drama coaching groups	2
Frequent student input to assemblies (SC/YC)	5
PE/team managing/coaching groups	2
Young Enterprise groups	6
CSV/Active Citizenship programme/Lighthouse	2
International links managed by students	2
Arts Festival (run by students)	1
Produce Y11 Year Book	3
Organise Year 11 Prom	3 (1 is GNVQ 'A' B. Studs grp)
Schools In Action Project	1
Healthy Schools Group (NHSS-related)	5
School Brochure production	
Training other school Councils	2
Youth Action/Crime Concern Project	2
CSLA	1
JSLA	1
Amnesty Group (student run)	1
CEWC group (student run)	1
Mural Project	1
Coca-Cola Valued Youth Project	1
School bank (student run)	1
Auschwitz Study Group	1 (part of an A level History class)
Euroboum group (ethical trading company)	1
Year 11 conference organising group	1
Formula 2000 group (Builds and races model car)	1
Cats Welfare Group	1
Students negotiate and review their setting for subject lessons (maths)	1
Producing programmes for school TV system	1 (SC, each YC, and 6C)
Total number of groups/activities	178 (Changemakers, Electives and Students as Researchers counted as 1 activity)
Groups from which students interviewed	71

3. Regular collaborative participatory approaches in normal timetabled subjects and PSHE highlighted in headteachers' questionnaires, and senior manager and other teacher interviews.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Number of schools reporting regular occurrence (total 12)</u>
PSHE (or equivalent)	12
Drama	10
English	7
ICT	5
Business Studies	4
RE	4
Art	4
Science	4
Music	3
Mathematics with jointly)	3 (In School E students also negotiate their set placement with staff. These are regularly reviewed by student/staff jointly)
Modern Foreign Languages	3
Dance	3
PE	3
Humanities	2
Geography	2
History	2
Design/Technology	2
Sociology	2

The electives programme in School E currently includes enrichment activities that enhance learning in most mainstream curriculum subject areas. Students are generally expected to choose one for one term per year in Years 8-11. Those observed during the visit were all highly participatory.

The 'Students as Researchers' Programme in School G in the current year includes investigations into aspects of curriculum or teaching and learning in Science, PE, Technology, Expressive Arts, English, History, Citizenship, and PSHE.

Most of the headteachers/senior managers asserted that participatory experiences were expected and included at some point in the schemes of work of many, most or even all subject departments or faculties. It was not possible within the scope of this study to verify this either from the scrutiny of schemes of work or by lesson observation. However from the comments of the interviewed students, such participatory methodologies for teaching and learning seemed to be more widespread in mainstream lessons in some schools than others and overall probably somewhat less common than headteachers/senior managers believe or assert. The regularity of occurrence of subjects mentioned by the students approximated in order of frequency to the incidence highlighted by senior managers in the above table.

The students were far more certain in their agreement that the extra-subject activities, electives, and students as researchers projects listed above were genuinely participatory within the terms of the working definition. Of course not all matched every aspect of the definition but for inclusion in the list they had to reasonably approximate to it based on the judgement and fairly extensive experience of the author.

The combined evidence from the headteacher questionnaires, Ofsted reports, and other sources supports the judgement that the 12 selected schools were becoming significantly 'student participative' and that they were more than usually determined to become more so.

Part C - The Outcomes

1 The impact of the participatory experiences on the students in the 12 schools

Introduction

The study has gathered and initially analysed data that would enable the impact on students of each activity, each type of activity and the range of activities in each school to be compared but unfortunately the sheer number and scale of the activities and the tight deadline for this report did not permit it to be done at this stage. The data collected from headteacher questionnaires and interviews, teacher interviews, and student questionnaires and interviews will be considered from the point of view of the 'participatory' activities as a whole with some special attention being paid to those referred to as 'ethos' setting in the 'criteria for the selection of schools.' These are 'the activities/ structures/ processes which **with some regularity** impinge on the experience and awareness of a **significant number** of students (i.e. a large majority or ideally, all), across the full range of age and academic ability.'

These will include the 'student democracy' structures of school Councils, year or house Councils that exist in all 12 schools, the 'Electives' programme in School E, and the 'Students as Researchers' programme in School G.

(a) The impact of all participatory activities

The headteachers' and senior managers' view

Headteachers were asked in the questionnaire 'Do you have any evidence that the learning of the skills of participation and responsible action leads to any **enhancement of self-esteem, motivation to learn, engagement with learning and attainment?**' They could respond with YES or NO and were invited to comment.

11 responded YES to **enhanced student self-esteem, motivation and engagement with learning.**

The head of School I was more cautious saying 'one likes to believe this - but no hard evidence at present '...It's... difficult to be honest and clear about the difference that student participation makes. For less-engaged students there is so much going on that, as a single issue, this cannot be judged.'

The head of School L wrote ‘All anecdotal at this stage.’ This was in fact also the case for most of the others though activities in 2 schools had been the subject of external academic evaluation and the students involved were certainly not ‘already keen to do well’ when the activity started. They had been selected because they were at risk of dropping out of school. The first of these was in School C where an evaluation of a self-directing group of potentially alienated girls engaged in a climbing wall scheme found that ‘all the pupils on the pilot programme showed an improvement in motivation, confidence and self-esteem. This was reflected in their attitude towards school, GCSE course work and their future aspirations.’ In School L a team from the University of Greenwich evaluated the Coca-Cola Peer Mentoring project, in which a group of potentially alienated students mentored and tutored similar students in junior schools. They found consistent improvement in attendance in this group, indicative of improved motivation.

On the question of **attainment** 9 heads responded with YES, Schools A/D/G said ‘not proven’ or ‘not yet known’, and School F, while saying YES, qualified this with ‘anecdotal’.

In reality little systematic gathering of evidence that could directly connect student participation with **attainment** was evident in any of the schools. Heads believed that the existence of such a direct connection should be the case and anecdotally believed it to be the case. All would agree that they needed hard evidence, which perhaps explains why all were so co-operative with this investigation. However, School E not unreasonably claimed ‘...**good evidence of examination success** - one of 100 most improved schools Ofsted 2000 - staff believe down to participatory approaches - especially ‘citizenship-based projects.’ Have won Schools In Action Citizenship award for several years from elective activity and students are keen to be enrolled in future projects that operate in a similar vein.’

School F stated that ‘the general **improvements in attainment** gained by our students is attributed by many people to the active and socially committed ethos that characterises the school. Named as one of Ofsted’s most successful schools last year.’

School H claimed that ‘...**results have improved considerably** since Ofsted (1997) in science and modern foreign languages - both departments have focused much more on active/participatory learning in the last 3/4 years and there is MUCH less disaffection in both subjects. Maths is now going the same way...’

When asked the negative question about whether involvement in participatory activities was ‘...a distraction for students from the task of examination preparation. **Have you noticed any evidence of this or any adverse effect on attainment?**’ the response was brief and to the point. 9 Schools replied No, and 2 Schools **NO!**, though School I gave a more cautious ‘hopefully not!’

The overwhelming view of headteachers and other senior managers in the 12 schools is that ‘student participation’ impacts beneficially on self-esteem, motivation, sense of ownership and empowerment, and that this in turn enhances attainment. However at present the evidence is largely impressionistic and anecdotal and therefore, to some extent, open to question. All the headteachers interviewed want to see this evidence gathered in a more systematic way and welcomed this investigation into their schools.

The teachers' view

Unlike the views of headteachers and students, no quantitative data was generated examining the views of the teachers. This was done entirely by open interview without a pre-prepared schedule. A total of 38 teachers were interviewed in the 9 visited schools. These consisted of

Heads of PSHE (or equivalent)	9 (6 included Citizenship responsibility 1 RE)
History	5
Art (3 HOD's)	4
Business Studies	3
Special Needs Co-ordinators	3
GNVQ	2
Work Related Programme	2
Heads of 6th Form	2
English	2
European Studies	1
Technology	1
PE/Dance	1
School Counsellor	1
Co-ordinator of after-school activities	1
Co-ordinator of Students as Researchers	1

All were supportive or very supportive of the participatory activities in their schools in general and invariably highly enthusiastic about the activity/ies for which they had direct responsibility. Most provided anecdotes relating to individual students who had had their entire attitude to school and themselves changed by their involvement in such activities. The head of RE in School G used the term 'Road to Damascus Cases' for such students, some examples of which are given below. Interestingly, a history teacher in School G described himself as a 'Damascus Case' when it came to the value of student participation. This was in connection with a Students as Researchers group evaluating his teaching - an experience for which he had rather courageously volunteered and now carried out as a matter of course with all his classes.

Some examples of teacher observations -

'It changed the whole attitude of the tutor group towards each other and to me. They made and stick to the class rules...' (School D, CSV/Active Citizenship, PSHE Tutor with own tutor group)

'The Year 11 conference group was magnificent and the event was a stunning success. The organisers have full statements in their NRA. The theme was 'Tomorrow's World.'" (School E, Year 11 Conference Planning Group, Head of Year 11, Art teacher)

'We have a working party with wide representation of staff and students - Year 7s, 8's, 10's and 13's - includes catering manager, nurse, governor and parent reps. It is a very active group taking many initiatives. 5 key areas emerged. Bullying - we have started a Buddying Group. Smoking - the students had the idea of putting smoke alarms in the toilets with the buzzer in Mrs X's (Deputy head)(also COL!!) office. Environment - students identified the need for quiet places. Healthy Food - catering manager very supportive... a team of adults and students have visited a Beacon School and reported ideas back...are to have theme days in cafeteria. Litter - the students group has made posters and set up a litter and recycling scheme. But the burden of AS levels on the sixth formers is making it hard for them to take part any more... I can't see why this is being done to them. They are very fed up and two have dropped out of school. It's damaging, just like the changes in grading for vocational courses. How can they do these things to kids and talk about citizenship?' (School H, Healthy Schools Group, GNVQ teacher)

'A 'steering' committee of students was elected to organise a 'celebration evening' - initially 4 but became 15 with delegated responsibilities - they met twice per week - elected Nicole as chair. They had to give a presentation at a local Barclays New Futures gathering - they were the youngest group - they did very well. There was great enhancement to the motivation and quality of work in English as a result.' (School A, Barclays New Futures Peer Reading Project with Year 8 students, Head of English and BNF link teacher.)

'I am responsible for the 'gardens group' of Year 9 special needs' girls. They have planned and made a garden, in a closed courtyard, which was a pretty depressing place to look at, with a small budget from the Learning Through Landscapes project. They make all their own decisions. They have found out about plants that thrive in this kind of environment and they asked the art department to help them make mosaics for the walls. They have been to the garden centre to buy their plants. I feel that the experience has completely changed the self-esteem of this group.' (School C, Eco Gardens Group, Head of Year 8 and Special Needs teacher.)

The comments of this teacher were entirely endorsed by the students in her group who were all interviewed later in the visit and proudly showed their courtyard garden to the researcher.

'There are two groups in this peer education project - one for Drugs/Alcohol and one for Sex. It involves 35 Year 11-13 students working in feeder middle schools. Also Student Counsellors work with younger students in this school. They have been trained and they work together in mutually supportive teams where they share responsibility for preparing their lessons. It is a big addition to my workload but I get such a buzz out of working with students like these. You can feel them growing through the work that they do.' (School G, Peer Education Teams, PE/Dance teacher)

'7 'at risk' Year 8 students run circle times with Year 6 groups in 2 junior schools - had 10 weeks training as a group having their own circle time. They developed their group morale by organising trips together before they did their first junior school visit. It has all had a tremendously positive effect on these students.' (School L, Peer Circle Time project, PSHE teacher and Head of Learning Support.)

'There are 10 students in the group. All have had the National Curriculum suspended. They meet and decide what 'project' to do next - the only criteria is that it must fill a 'school need'. They have developed a very strong sense of group identity. They plan trips and visits as a group. They identified the lack of benches for students to sit on. They renovated dozens of old benches and 'scrounged' wood to build new ones. You will see them all around the school. They hardly ever get vandalised. No one would dare!' (School L, Year 11 Work Related Group, Head of PSHE).

A number of teachers in several schools said how important to them was the lead and example provided by the Headteacher and, in some cases, other senior and middle managers. There were examples where this had changed the attitude of the teacher in question. In other cases it had empowered the teacher to do what they already believed. In yet other cases the support of a group of equally committed colleagues was crucial to individual teachers having the confidence to proceed in a 'participative' fashion with their students. Many teachers commented that they had been surprised at what sometimes quite unpromising students could achieve when trusted to work in this way but that, after gaining more experience, had come to expect it.

In all but one of the 12 schools there was more or less consistent policy and implementation documentation. This appeared to be of most value to guiding the practice of teachers when it had been generated, at least to some extent, collectively. Perhaps surprisingly, the fact that school C made little reference to 'student participation' in its documentation did not appear to inhibit the extent to which it was actually developing in the school, even though much was of an 'ad hoc' and opportunist nature. The teachers in the school certainly understood that it was the somewhat charismatic and 'larger than life' Headteacher's preferred style, which he daily exemplified in his own work with students. On the other hand the very clear documentation, target setting and review procedures in schools such as E, F, G and H were obviously affecting the thinking and practice of teachers, especially senior and middle managers.

The overwhelming view of the teachers interviewed in all the schools visited was that the participative activities were of great benefit to all students, whatever their gender, academic ability or social background and that working with these students, although adding to their workload as teachers in many cases, was a major source of their job satisfaction.

They commented upon improved attendance, enhanced self-esteem, motivation to learn, engagement with learning, and attainment though their evidence was anecdotal rather than systematically assessed.

It is evident that the vision and commitment of the headteacher and other key senior and middle managers is crucial to the process and that this vision is usually most effective when formulated in collectively developed policy that is consistently documented and against which progress is evaluated.

The students' view

This is based on the results of the closed section of the questionnaire with illumination from written comments made in the open section and student interviews. All figures are expressed in percentages. 89 Boys and 148 Girls completed the questionnaire. When the returns from the girls-only school (School C) are removed the gender imbalance in respondents is 89/124 or 4.2/5.8. This is broadly in line with the imbalance in take up for participatory activities indicated by Headteachers in their returns when the 11 mixed schools are regarded collectively.

NB. The questionnaire for students was structured in a simple and student-friendly fashion so that it would not deter less academic or younger pupils. Words such as self-esteem, engagement or efficacy were avoided for obvious reasons. The concepts were translated into Year 7 vocabulary. It proved effective in practice and easy to administer. There are essentially two positive 'tick-boxes' and two negative in the closed section. The two negative options both contain the word 'not.' The atmosphere was kept as convivial and 'un test-like' as possible - greatly helped when cakes, biscuits and drinks were provided as was regularly the case in several schools! (This 'civilised' and 'respectful of young people' behaviour certainly conveys a message about what kind of school 'participatory schools' are.) The questions that might reasonably expect a negative response were not grouped together to make it clear from the responses that the questions had been read and understood.

Question 1 is designed to elicit change in general motivation towards school.

Question 2 straightforwardly asks about change in self-confidence.

Question 3 looks for change in engagement with learning in lessons beyond the participatory activity

Question 4 concerns perceptions of enhanced attainment beyond the activity

Question 5 concerns the 'participation skill' of 'collaboration'

Questions 6, 7 and 10 relate to anxieties expressed in certain sections of the media about the possible detrimental effects of citizenship and student participation

Question 8 is about self-esteem

Question 9 explores improvements in relationships with teachers - which has a direct bearing on improvements in learning

Question 11 relates to any widening of political and other horizons as a result of the participation

Question 12 explores change in the student's sense of 'school efficacy' though it deliberately is not restricted to school. This is the first step towards 'political efficacy' as the recent IEA study makes clear.

Question 13 relates to the 'key skill' of 'communication'

Question 14 relates to overall sense of personal growth

All Students' Responses - Undifferentiated by GenderALL ACTIVITIES, ALL SCHOOLS, ALL INTERVIEWED STUDENTS, %

Has your involvement with this activity affected you in any of the following ways? Please tick the box that best describes your feelings.

	A lot	Quite a lot	Not much	Not at all
1 Made school a more interesting place to be?	33	51	14	2
2 Helped you feel more confident in school?	41	43	15	8
3 Helped you to concentrate better in lessons?	11	45	35	8
4 Helped you to learn more in lessons?	15	42	33	10
5 Helped you to work with others?	71	27	2	0
6 Taken too much time from other learning?	0	2	45	53
7 Worried your parents about other schoolwork?	0	2	11	87
8 Made you feel proud of your achievements?	63	34	3	0
9 Helped you to get on better with teachers?	41	41	14	4
10 Caused teachers to say you are falling behind?	0	2	12	86
11 Made you more interested in the world generally?	28	52	18	2
12 Made you feel that you can improve things?	50	44	5	1
13 Helped you to express yourself more clearly?	46	45	8	1
14 Made you feel more independent, trusted and responsible?	68	30	2	0

The overall response is clearly positive. When the two positive response groups ‘a lot’ and ‘quite a lot’ for each of the 11 ‘enhancing’ questions (i.e. all those other than Q’s 6, 7 and 10) are put together the response becomes overwhelmingly positive.

On this basis 98% feel ‘quite a lot’ or ‘a lot’ more able ‘to work with others’ (collaboration skills), and ‘more independent, trusted and responsible’ as a result of their participation. In both cases, the number choosing the strongest term ‘a lot’ is more than double those choosing ‘quite a lot.’ The next almost as enthusiastic response is to Q8 where 97% have experienced increased ‘pride in their achievements’ (self-esteem) through the ‘participatory activities.’ 94 % feel that they ‘can improve things’ (school and wider efficacy). 91% feel that their communication skills have improved ‘quite a lot’ or ‘a lot’- they can ‘express themselves more clearly.’

The cluster of questions in the students’ questionnaire that received 90% or more positive responses strongly suggests a ‘benign circle’ or cycle at work. The activity, because it is ‘participative’ and requires student initiative and decision making, generates motivation, ownership, a sense of being independent, trusted and responsible, which in turn, support the generation of communication and collaboration skills which, in turn create quality results which both intrinsically and through recognition from others lead to enhanced self-esteem, which in turn leads to an overall sense of personal and social ‘efficacy’ - which is the sine qua non for the development of political ‘efficacy’ – a major aim of the Citizenship Education Project.

Many comments made orally in interview and in writing in the open section of the student questionnaire would support this conclusion. Only a small fraction has been included here. Even though the list will appear to be somewhat extensive an attempt has been made to avoid repetition. It is important to realise that such comments were made by many students in every school visited -

‘... the council had very little power in the past...now more people are getting involved and things are actually being done...I do feel good about being part of that...’ (School A, ex-School Councillor now a Guardian/Peer Counsellor, Year 12 Girl)

‘...peer-led teaching has definitely made me more confident and willing to go out of my way to get chances to broaden my experience...’ (School B, Peer Education, Year 11 Girl)

‘Sometimes people come up to me and I feel I can do something about the problem...the money for the skate park was partly raised by young people and now it is treated with respect.’ (School B, School Councillor, Year 8 Boy)

‘It helped me get on and do things instead of just talking about it...we were trusted more to do things on our own.’ (School B, Changemakers, Year 8 Boy)

‘...now I’m on the school council I have become really interested in politics and how you get things done...’ (School C, School Councillor, Year 11 Girl)

‘...it brought the class together...helped me understand politics and democracy and things like that’ (School D, CSV Active Citizenship Project in Art lesson, Year 10, Girl)

‘...I’ve made more friends in the group...I was sleepless the night before the conference. A gay boy said ‘why should I be put down?’ I completely agree with him. Sometimes people just talk over you. Now I just say ‘By the way I’m a person in case you hadn’t noticed.’ I would do it again.’ (School E, Healthy Schools Steering Group, physically disabled Year 10 Boy suffering from Cerebral Palsy after giving a speech at an LEA staff/student Citizenship conference on behalf of his group.)

‘... We meet as a group as support...we have our own room...gives us some status...this school really values the opinions of the students...’ (School E, Peer Counsellor, Year 13 Girl)

‘... It has helped me learn to listen to different points of view, negotiate and make compromises...’ (School E, Yearbook Group, Y11 Boy)

‘It’s made school a lot more interesting...I have learned new skills like teamwork and fund-raising...’ (School E, Yearbook Group, Year 11 Boy)

‘...You’re improving skills which interest you and it takes your mind off pressure and stress. Working as a team increases your confidence. We chose to do this activity.’ (School E, Yearbook Group, Year 11 Girl)

‘I realised we would have to really do what we said we would do. We used the ideas of targets and goals we had learned in PSD. No one ever let anyone else down. We learned to cope with discouragement - how to persuade others to do things. Why it is important to put things in writing. Has given me lots of skills and I want to work in a team when I leave school.’ (School E, Conference Planning Group, Year 11 Girl)

‘I was involved in the Youth Voice conferences here since I was in Year 8. We have a Human Rights sub-committee on the Youth Council - it grew out of ‘Youth Voice’ at this school. I sat on a select committee on the Rights of Young People with Peter Hain and I am interested in a career in politics.’ (School F, School Council rep. on local Youth Council, Year 11 Boy)

‘...Helped me feel more confident with the future and my career path...it was also a fun way of learning...very interesting meeting new people...’ (School F, Group doing Graphic Design for new school brochure, Year 10 Girl)

‘...Project showed off some of the skill I couldn’t show off in school subjects...’ (School F, Photography Group working on new school brochure, Year 11 Boy)

‘...Surely this work is as valuable as the national curriculum. It provides skills useful for life/work but NO GRADES (*his emphasis*) are placed on it.’ (School G, ex-student working in school with Students as Researchers Programme, Male)

‘...I personally feel a huge achievement...by going to Madrid and holding the Council’s Conference’ (School G, School Councillor who attended international conference on Learning. On return, organised conference for own school council, Year 12, Girl)

‘...I came from another school...I knew nothing about student voice AT ALL!...it has done so much for my confidence’ (School G, Secretary of 6th Form Students Union, Year 13 Girl)

‘...School should be education of the whole person not just the academic because it is meant to prepare you for life and life is not just facts, you need to know how to interact with people...’ (School G, School Councillor, Year 10 Boy)

‘... A lot has come out of the school council...new school day, lockers for Year 7, etc...I used to have problems interacting with other students...many fights...I have a black belt in Karate and used to really hurt people...I didn’t think I’d make it through school... the school council has helped me to learn to talk to people...made me see I could do things ...do stuff in my life which gave me the conviction to try in class.’ (School H, School Councillor, Year 11 Boy)

‘... 6th form committee and drama made me more confident in myself and with others...helped me grow into a well-rounded person...I would rate this school ten out of ten for involving the students!’ (School L, 6th Form rep. on School Council, Year 13 Girl)

‘...The involvement of the students at this school is great and means that all the gangs and fights from the estates do NOT come into the school...here we see another way of doing things...I visit other schools in my work for the Youth Council...some of them would make you feel hopeless if I hadn’t got this school to come back to...I have become a youth politician.’ (School L, School Council rep on local Youth Council, Year 13 Boy)

‘...I go to the school council meetings...makes me feel I am part of the school and can get things done...’ (School L, Hearing Impaired Unit rep on School Council and member of ‘Paint the School Gates’ sub-committee of School Eco Group, Year 9 Boy)

‘... Being a Year 9 council rep and going to school council meetings makes me feel like a person and not just a tick on the register.’ (School L, Year and School Councillor, Year 9 Boy)

84% of those who completed the questionnaire feel significantly more motivated or ‘interested in school’ through their participation.

82% feel that there has been significant improvement in their relations with teachers. This is highly likely to impact favourably on attainment. This was another topic on which students volunteered very many comments - but a few examples must suffice:

‘...My parents thought it was a good activity and we will learn more as it helps me understand what teachers actually go through...’ (School A, Barclays New Futures Peer Education Project, Year 9 Boy)

‘...I have not received any stick for being a guardian...younger students have a good relationship with me...teachers are happier to talk to me now, and it feels as if we are more open and equal... (School A, Peer Counsellor- Guardian, Year 11 Girl)

‘...The teachers have given us more responsibility so we respect them more. Our relationships with the teachers have improved, changed.’ (School B, School Councillor involved with teacher appointments, Year 11 Girl)

‘I failed the eleven plus in B and became very depressed because all my friends went to the grammar school. So my parents drive me 25 miles to this school. This school has been wonderful for me...it’s my idea for the teachers to have ‘Weakest link’ on red nose day...I get

on so well with the teachers here and I'm so grateful...but I still cry when I think about it all...' (School E, Year and School Councillor, Year 8 Girl)

'...All the year groups worked together...we negotiated refreshments from McDonalds...I was given responsibility. I was working WITH teachers rather than FOR them. Five Oxxxxxd's (*from physically disabled unit*) were involved.' (School E, all-age fund-raising 'elective' group, Year 10 Boy)

'... Teachers and students are learning to welcome positive feedback and constructive criticism ...there is more trust on both sides...' (School G, Student as Researcher, Year 12 Girl)

'... They asked us for our ideas on extra after-school activities...when we said dancing, mixing and DJ'ing they didn't just say no like happened in my friend's school...they listened and told us to get more information...I know Mrs A (*teacher in charge of after-school club*) has been finding out stuff as well...about the dancing class on 'x' estate...they make you feel you matter...this is a great school...the teachers are cool...we work together to make things happen.' (School L, School Councillor, Year 9 Boy)

Involvement in student participative activities brings real benefits to relationships between students and teachers, which can, in turn, enhance attainment.

80% have found the world to be generally a more interesting place as a result of their participation - current affairs and politics were mentioned by a number of students in every school. There were a wide variety of written comments to this effect but perhaps this one can stand for them all as it suggests even a grasp of 'realpolitik' -

'The OBESSU conference taught me a lot about how I learn...I have a better understanding of where teachers are coming from...at times student voice work is incredibly frustrating and at times incredibly rewarding. I have met people from different schools and different countries...addressed large numbers of (rather shocked) adults. It has increased my self-confidence, self-motivation and self-belief...communication and work with other people. I would love to still be around when things eventually get better for students in schools, but I have a feeling that this may take a while, and I'll probably be long gone!' (School G, School Council rep on Governing Body who attended an international conference on Learning organised by European School Students, Year 13 Girl)

The questions about 'concentration' (engagement) and 'learning more' (attainment) were extended to 'lessons' in Questions 3 and 4 in order to try to ascertain whether the students believed that there was any transfer from the participatory activity to learning in mainstream lessons. 57% of students thought there was in both respects and some of their reasons were quite unexpected... For example -

'When our group had to give the conference presentation we had to learn how to use PowerPoint...we did it in IT in key skills...' (School B, Peer Education Group, Year 13 girl)

'...It helped me become better at Art...I am doing my GCSE in Year 9...we work with a real sculptor...it's not like school, it's more like 'real life'' (School C, Barclays New Futures Sculpture Trail Project, Year 9 Girl)

‘...I was in the Euroboum Group. We have a school link with a school in Poland. Some of us in A level history decided to organise a trip to Auschwitz and we are going to stay with Polish families.’ (School C, Euroboum Ethical Trading Group, Year 12 Girl)

‘... Has helped me in other lessons with the skills I have learned...’ (School E, Yearbook Elective, Year 11 Boy)

‘...Being in the school council is worth it because it helps you to think about the school ...it also helps you to think about others and what their ideas are for the school...it has made me interested in psychology and it fits in with my religious ideas. I want to do psychology A level.’ (School F, School Councillor just returned from interviewing a government minister on a Channel 4 Youth Programme, Year 10 Girl)

‘...I have already designed my own website in IT and at home...I am using my ideas for the school council website.’ (School F, School Council website sub-committee, Year 8 Boy)

‘...Has helped me achieve things I would never do in ordinary lessons. It has helped me choose my career...my marks and grades have improved ever since...parents 100% behind me and very grateful.’ (School F, Graphic Design Group designing new school brochure, Year 10 Boy)

‘... It has absolutely no effect on my A levels because I have learned time management and leadership skills...’ (School G, Peer Education Group, Year 13 Boy)

‘...It does take more time from you but it improves your organisation...made me much more organised in lessons...I never waste time...more use to my life than some exams...I have come from another school. ..I wouldn’t want to go back!!’ (School G, School Councillor, Year 11 Boy)

‘...Being in the ECO group opened my eyes and ears, and I started to join other groups and help people and I am doing better in my school work than I ever have before.’ (School H, Eco Committee, Year 9 Girl)

‘...Thanks to the School Council I got interested in politics and drama...’ (School H, School Councillor, Year 9 Boy)

‘School council got me interested in politics so I did history at GCSE and now I am doing it at A level. When I was young I was VERY shy and would not talk to or about people. Now I am louder and my confidence is UP!’ (School H, School Councillor, Year 11 Boy)

In the perception of students involvement in participatory activities can and does enhance learning across the curriculum - sometimes in unexpected and unpredictable ways.

The 'negative' questions designed to see whether there was a 'downside' to participation in the eyes of the students received a negative from 98% to all three when 'not much' and 'not at all' are totalled. However, the mix of 'not much' and 'not at all' between the students judgement on whether they had given too much time to the activity to the detriment of other learning and their judgement of parental or teacher anxiety about this was consistently different through all the activities in all the schools. The split between 'not much' and 'not at all' was 45/53% for Q6 which was about the students' own judgement whereas a quite different split of 11/87% and 12/86% was recorded for Q's 7 and 10 which asked for their perception of their parents' and teachers' judgements. The sheer consistency of this variation in response makes it interesting if hard to interpret. Perhaps it just indicates that the parents and the other teachers did not always know what their offspring were doing, though this is contradicted, as far as parents are concerned by the high number of written and oral student responses that referred to parental pride in their achievements. It is probably not significant when set against the figures of only 2% parents, teachers or students having 'quite a lot' of anxiety about the participation and 'a lot' receiving a round zero!

In fact many students commented on the active support that they received from their parents for their participative work. Here are just three examples -

'...My parents were pleased and proud that I was given responsibility for this task.'
(School C, Kosovo Press Desk Group, Year 10 girl)

'...My parents are glad that I am getting stuck into things...we work in the rain, we love gardening...' (School C, The Garden Group, and Year 8 girl with special educational needs statement.)

'...My parents are very supportive...spending time on the school council makes me work harder in lessons so that I can catch up with my work...it will look good on my CV... it is helping me develop political skills... it has made me more reliable, confident and communicative...' (School F, School Councillor, Year 10 boy)

In the perception of students there is little or no evidence that involvement in participatory activities has any adverse effects on attainment, in fact there is considerable evidence to the contrary.

In the perception of students there is very little evidence that the time they devote to their involvement in participatory activities causes any anxieties to their parents or teachers. There is significant evidence to the contrary.

Students' Responses Differentiated by Gender

ALL ACTIVITIES. ALL SCHOOLS, ALL INTERVIEWED STUDENTS,
DIFFERENTIATED BY GENDER, % (BOYS in **BOLD**, GIRLS in *italics*)

Has your involvement with this activity affected you in any of the following ways? Please tick the box that best describes your feelings.

	A lot	Quite a lot	Not much	Not at all
1 Made school a more interesting place to be?	34 <i>33</i>	42 <i>57</i>	21 <i>9</i>	2 <i>1</i>
2 Helped you feel more confident in school?	31 <i>48</i>	51 <i>38</i>	18 <i>12</i>	0 <i>2</i>
3 Helped you to concentrate better in lessons? 10	50 <i>11</i>	38 <i>43</i>	2 <i>34</i>	 <i>12</i>
4 Helped you to learn more in lessons?	16 <i>15</i>	41 <i>43</i>	36 <i>31</i>	6 <i>11</i>
5 Helped you to work with others?	59 <i>78</i>	36 <i>20</i>	5 <i>2</i>	0 <i>0</i>
6 Taken too much time from other learning?	1 <i>0</i>	1 <i>2</i>	48 <i>40</i>	50 <i>58</i>
7 Worried your parents about other schoolwork?	0 <i>0</i>	0 <i>3</i>	1 <i>17</i>	99 <i>80</i>
8 Made you feel proud of your achievements?	62 <i>64</i>	33 <i>34</i>	4 <i>2</i>	1 <i>0</i>
9 Helped you to get on better with teachers?	37 <i>43</i>	42 <i>41</i>	16 <i>13</i>	5 <i>3</i>
10 Caused teachers to say you are falling behind?	1 <i>0</i>	1 <i>3</i>	15 <i>11</i>	83 <i>86</i>
11 Made you more interested in the world generally?	25 <i>30</i>	48 <i>54</i>	26 <i>12</i>	1 <i>4</i>
12 Made you feel that you can improve things?	44 <i>53</i>	47 <i>43</i>	7 <i>4</i>	2 <i>0</i>

13 Helped you to express yourself more clearly?	41	45	13	1
	50	45	4	1
14 Made you feel more independent, trusted and responsible?	68	29	3	0
	68	30	2	0

There appears to be a tendency for girls to have stronger perceptions of the benefits of participatory activities for their confidence, collaborative skills, communication skills, and sense of efficacy. This was consistent across all the schools. There is absolutely no gender difference in the extent to which these activities make students feel 'more independent, trusted and responsible.' The impression was gained in the student interviews that some boys judged being too enthusiastic as 'uncool' and this might have affected the result. However when the two positive responses of 'a lot' and 'quite a lot' are considered in total the gender differences substantially disappear.

(b) The Impact of activities that impinge upon the school lives of all or many students

School or Student Councils, Year or House or 6th Form Councils or Committees, Tutor Group Meetings - The structure of student democracy

All 12 schools in the sample had school Councils, most had year or house Councils, most of the 11 schools with 6th forms had committees or unions, and all attempted to extend the debate into every tutor group.

The investigation has generated a great deal of data about these activities, including constitutions, agendas and minutes from most. Link teachers from most and student representatives from all these groups were interviewed. The opinions of headteachers and senior managers were ascertained to understand their perceptions of what these groups had achieved and where more development was needed. There has not been time to fully analyse all this data before the deadline for this report and it is certainly worthy of fuller interrogation at a later date. However certain points have already clearly emerged that can be supported by the evidence.

Compared to other studies such as Alderson (1998) and, to some extent, Hannam and Baginsky (1999) none of these Councils and committees are regarded by their constituents as being ineffective and entirely 'tokenistic', though one council seemed to be less well regarded than all the others. This judgement is based on very many casual conversations at break, in lessons where the author covered for an absent teacher, over lunch, and during interviews for other activities. In almost all cases students who were not 'councillors' could describe things that the council had done for the benefit of the school and knew who their tutor group representatives were. This is not typical of all secondary schools as Alderson quite clearly shows and the author knows from 80 Ofsted inspections. It is not uncommon in some schools for students to answer the question 'What do you think of your school council' with another question - 'Have we got one?' It confirmed the belief that there was something unusually 'participatory' about the schools and that they had been appropriately selected for the study.

Also impressive was the evidence that many of the 12 schools had moved agendas on from the usual issues of the toilets, cafeteria and uniform. Though, having said this, these issues can be very important for the quality of school life of the students and can easily be treated as trivial by adults. In fact, one of the interesting developments in several schools that had created Healthy Schools groups was to see the issue of 'food' getting serious discussion in groups where students and adults were closely co-operating and changes were actually coming about in cafeteria provision.

There were also examples of a gap between the vision that some Headteachers had for their Councils and the reality of their practice. The author uses the term 'aspiration gap' for this phenomenon and it emerges clearly in other studies such as that of Dobie and MacBeath (1996). It is epitomised in the comment of the Head of School K that he wished to see in the near future a '...School Council that is a forum for debate about important matters *and consequent action* (his italics) about the future of the school and the quality of provision.'

The Deputy Head of School D felt that '...our school council is moribund because it does not attract enough members with street cred.' Students in two schools raised this issue. In one (School A) students stressed the value of having 'popular' students as members and claimed that that was why their council was now so successful. In another (School H) there were comments that the council had, to some extent, become the province of 'jitters like me' ('jitters' proved to be 'arty' or 'creative thinkers' in the argot of these West Country young people.) and that that might be a barrier to peer credibility though good fun for the members.

There were good examples of schools that had successfully extended council agendas beyond the traditional issues and the enthusiasm of both members and their constituents did seem to be higher in these schools. The link teacher in School A said 'Governors come to some meetings and have been very impressed. It's much better now the council has a constitution ...buses are an issue - old and unreliable - the school council gave the LEA transport manager a rough ride - they had facts and figures for him! The school council also created a safer cycle routes to school. This led to a big increase in cyclists and £25,000 from the LEA for a decent bike sheds.'

The formal links between school Councils and governing bodies seemed to be significant for raising the profile of several schools' Councils though, interestingly, the headteacher of School L, which had a very dynamic council engaged in a very wide range of school issues, said 'I wouldn't impose it on them!' when asked if they were represented at governors meetings... And it was the students he was protecting not the governors.

School Councils were involved in curriculum review procedures in several schools most commonly in the review and re-drafting of PSHE courses. Some had organised powerful campaigns on controversial issues through the whole school. The most memorable was the 'Anti-Homophobia' campaign in School L where staff and student equal opportunities committees had worked closely together. It was launched with an assembly taken by the school council which included a piece about murdered Nigerian schoolboy Damilola Taylor and closed with a speech by the chairperson on the story of the Holocaust. Interviewed staff and students both commented that the assembly, which overran by 15 minutes, ended with a stunned silence and then '...applause that seemed to go on for ever.' (Drama Teacher, School L)

Year and house Councils seemed to also work well on the whole and provide opportunities for more students to participate, though it was noted that servicing the house council was in the job description of Heads of House in School D, a very large school, yet there appeared to be no functioning house Councils in the school... A lot depended on the enthusiasm of the middle manager at this level.

Most schools managed to find ways to let both school and year or house Councils meet in lesson time - most usually, though not always, in PSHE time - and this significantly enhanced the status and motivation of the Councillors.

The area of difficulty most often mentioned was how to ensure quality discussion time in all the tutor groups so that the representatives could communicate effectively upward to the council and downward to the constituents. This is also critical for deciding whether all students get the opportunity to participate in democratic procedures and debate in the democratic structure of the school. . In the best example, some tutor groups had their own chairperson who was not the Council representative. But, in others, achieving quality discussion was problematic. Student comments include:

‘...it is hard to get good meetings in the tutor groups - there is not enough time and some tutors are not very supportive. It varies with the head of year...some make the tutors do it. Registration is too short and PSHE lessons are too full of ‘stuff’ Assemblies are not long enough for us to have much of a say - but Year 11 try.’ (Year 11 girl, School H)

The point about the importance of the Head of Year was borne out by the following:

‘I prepare the ground with the tutors to make sure they facilitate class meetings and support the representatives. There is a tendency for the same faces to appear from some groups so in mine we have voted that it is community service and we draw the names out of a hat each year. A jury service model if you like. Gives unlikely students a go. Sometimes we change reps. termly as communication is good in my group. Most tutors are supportive now - though one group has had four tutors in four years and they are more ‘vulnerable.’ We meet as a tutor team regularly and always discuss how to get more student involvement. Tutors are often surprised at what students can do.’ (Head of Year 11, School E)

Despite the difficulties of time and variation in tutor enthusiasm and skill in facilitating the discussion and supporting the representatives the students were overwhelmingly positive about their role as councillors - even in School D where the senior management regarded them as ‘moribund’! Enthusiasm was very high in School G where the various Councils had access to the school TV studio and actually broadcast council proceedings, as well as publicising agendas beforehand. This was certainly one way to overcome the communication difficulties presented by the sheer size of most of the schools in the study (average 1225 students).

It seems that the most dynamic Councils of whatever type in the 12 schools were those where regular meetings and issues that were perceived to be important bond the group with a strong sense of identity and mutual support. This was commonly the case in 6th form committees but was also evident in Councils and their sub-committees. The danger of this is that the group bonds so well and enjoys its own company so much that it loses touch with its electorate. To avoid this sensitive staff input seems to be crucial, as well as a good structure of meetings and time, and effectively trained tutors, that allows every tutor group to do its own bonding and develop its own democratic dynamic.

School, year, house and 6th form Councils provide effective opportunities for student participation in the 12 schools but in some schools more work needs to be done to ensure that these opportunities are extended to all students through effective tutor group discussions. These schools need to give more attention to staff development of this aspect of the role of the tutor and to allow more time for such discussions to take place.

The ‘Electives’ programme in School E

This programme has been developed over a period of years. The original conception emerged from anxiety of the senior management team about the high proportion of students prevented from engagement in extra-curricular after-school activities by the need for long bus journeys. It was decided to slightly extend each day in order to give the whole Wednesday afternoon session of 2 hours over to a programme that would be part extra-curricular, known as Personal Leisure, and part enrichment of the mainstream curriculum. All students would participate, as this was part of the official school day. A third range of activities was added to the programme known as Citizenship and Service in the Community. The time-slot is long enough for many of the activities to take place off the school premises. Years 8/9 and Years 10/11 are offered separate menus but there is considerable overlap and some groups are explicitly ‘all-age’. Some activities such as the ‘conference’ or ‘year-book’ are specific to one year group. Most, but not all groups run for one-term. The normal expectation is that every student will choose one elective from each of the three categories in a year.

Year 7 has a separate programme that emphasises key skills work and includes a large-scale cross-curricular project called ‘Citizenship In Action’ for which the normal timetable is suspended. It introduces the concept of being a ‘citizen of the school’ with rights and responsibilities. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is explained in detail and discussed in groups. The structure of school democracy is portrayed in this context.

6th Formers participate on a voluntary basis and help to run some groups. Adults other than teachers are involved in some groups.

There is an overall expectation that these groups will be ‘student participative’. Students are involved in the planning and the evaluation of the programme. It is clearly a programme that involves all the students in the school.

It is certainly well regarded by students. Ofsted in its 1999 report commented upon ‘... curriculum provides many rich learning experiences through...innovative electives programme.’ ‘Pupils enjoy... and are enthusiastic about the electives programme.’ ‘Attitudes to learning are very good and often excellent...in the electives programme.’ ‘...The group work needed to participate in many of the electives sessions provides an excellent awareness of citizenship’, electives ‘... include many good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for major events’ ‘end of topic evaluations incorporate the views of the pupils in the light of which activities are modified...’

A very clear-headed Year 9 girl who had been involved in teacher appointment processes on several occasions said -

‘...I always ask them (*the candidates*) ‘what electives could you offer that would be interesting for young people?’’

Other student reactions included -

‘This has been a great experience - we divide up the jobs like on a newspaper. We had a struggle to raise the funds - ran a Year 7 barbecue and bounce about. The Formula 2000 car group has designed and paid for an ad in the year book.’ (Year 11 Boy in Year Book Group) ‘

‘Our Formula 2000 elective group has designed and built a model racing car that was raced at Silverstone against 30 other teams...our group worked virtually without a teacher. We visited real Formula One racing teams based locally and visited their workshops to get ideas. ... We had the best aerodynamics but the car blew up after 2 races - due to engineering problems.’(Year 10 Boy)

Teacher comments included -

‘It’s my first year in post. I am amazed at the motivation that this elective is generating. It’s more like working in a small business environment than being a class teacher in a school. The loyalty these students have to their group produces much more effort than I could drive out of them!’ (History teacher working with the Year 11 Conference Planning Group)

‘This room feels like a newspaper office doesn’t it? I feel like a partner in a very responsible and competent publishing firm. It is a completely different way of working with students and it took me a while to get used to it.’ (English teacher in her third year of teaching, working with the Year 11 Year Book Elective Group.)

The ‘Electives’ programme at School E exemplifies one possible model whereby all students can become involved in participative activities. It works in a mutually reinforcing way with the parallel structure of student democracy that includes effective school, year and 6th form Councils supported by effective meetings in most, though not all, tutor groups.

The 'Students as Researchers' programme at School G

This programme grew out of a major Improving Quality In Education research project based in a nearby university. The acting headteacher described it as follows -

'We train students from Years 9 to 12 in methods of research and enquiry and they carry out research on behalf of the whole student body in areas that are of importance to them. The whole student body has historically voted on the topics about which they feel enquiry should take place. The... project has been co-ordinated by myself with support from...Cambridge University and three other members of staff in the school... The students do this work in addition to their normal curriculum...we hold whole group meetings to share ideas, problems, etc. In the second year of the project the role of student consultant was developed. This involved students who had been with the project before acting as 'critical friends to the groups. This year our model has expanded to embrace even more teachers and students. There are fifteen staff linked to the project (one from each curriculum)...the enquiry has been linked to curriculum work... In addition to this we have 16 students who are linked to our School Improvement project...Powerful Teaching and Learning...they are observing teachers' lessons, giving feedback, carrying out research with students in lessons as to what works and what does not.'

After completing their projects the groups write a report and present it to staff, governors and the school council for consideration and, in many cases, action. Currently over 90 students are directly involved in the research groups. Topics in 2000/2001 include -

- * Sex Education across Key Stage 3
- * Drop-out in PE
- * Citizenship in History
- * Structure and Loading of Homework
- * Evaluating/Improving Ways of Teaching in Science

The response of student participants is very positive -

'...Students as Researchers has helped me to think about how and what I learn (*her SaR is looking at Cit'ship in History*)...really builds an individuals confidence...had much more effect on me than the school council...I am a member of both' (Year 11 Girl)

'...My parents are very proud of me...teachers do not mind as long as I catch up...some of my teachers are even interested and ask what I am researching...it has made me feel more important in my own eyes...' (Year 10 Girl)

'...Gives you an insight into the running of the school...how decisions need to be made...I am much happier about why certain things are as they are...my parents support me so long as I organise myself and do my homework.' (Year 10 Boy)

'My parents think Students as Researchers is great - they think it will benefit me in many ways...it is a brilliant opportunity to do something for the school and learn at the same time...' (Year 9 Boy)

'...Teachers and students are learning to welcome positive feedback and constructive criticism ...there is more trust on both sides...' (Year 12 Girl)

Although the Students as Researchers programme does not involve all students it is growing year on year and is beginning to involve large numbers - almost 100 in the current year. The programme is certainly now on a sufficient scale to have a high profile with all students and staff. All the students asked casually around the school 'what do you know about Students as Researchers' were able to accurately describe the programme. The Students as Researchers programme provides a rich opportunity for student participation to support both learning and overall school improvement.

The Students as Researchers Programme at School G provides significant numbers of students, though not all, with rich and effective experience of student participation which combines enhanced individual learning with overall school improvement.

The 'Changemakers' programme for all Year 7 students at School C

This programme gave all Year 7 students the opportunity to form small groups of between 4 and 6 students to carry out a project that would 'Create an improvement in the community'. They were expected to identify the need, research the issues, seek resources, plan and implement their ideas, evaluate their progress and report back to the class. Each class voted to choose its 'best project' to present at a Year 7 assembly. The groups had 6 one-hour PSHE lessons to complete their work though they could extend it into their own time, which many chose to do.

Student comments included -

'It helped me get on and do things instead of just talking about it...we were trusted more to do things on our own.' (Year 8 boy)

'...It was very good to have this experience and my group worked really well **BUT** (*her emphasis*) we should have had more time so we could make even better achievements and do something that made a LOT of difference...' (Year 8 girl)

'Four of us formed a Cats Welfare Group. We started out to raise money for the local Cats Home but we have stuck together into Year 8 and collect stray cats and take them to the home. We have taken an assembly to tell others how important it is to look after your pets properly - or else you shouldn't have them. We are going to go on doing this. I am the chairman. We have a vice-chairman, a secretary and a treasurer. Everyone has a job.' (Year 8 Boy)

The Changemakers Project in School C is an effective example of how a whole year group can take part in a student participative programme thus providing an opportunity for all students to benefit from the experience.

2 - Permanent Exclusion rates in the 12 schools

Ofsted kindly provided data that enabled the performance of the 12 schools to be compared with the average for similar schools based on the QCA/Ofsted banding system for free school meals (FSM). This is not broken down into alphanumeric judgements based on percentiles as is the GCSE data (explained in section 3 below) and only exists for the two years 1998 and 1999. The figures for 2000 are not yet available as the data is based on Form 7 returns that are not made until January of the succeeding year.

The comparative 'similar school' data is not available from Ofsted in a form that differentiates by gender. The questionnaires from Headteachers do indicate that a higher number of boys are permanently excluded than girls when the 11 mixed schools are regarded collectively.

The raw annual data with boy/girl figures has been collected for the period 1996-2000 but there has not been time to analyse this thoroughly for trends in individual schools over time. The impression is clearly downward however and this is supported by the 'similar schools' data for 1998/1999 set out below on which the concluding overall judgement has been made.

The table below shows whether the permanent exclusion rate of the sample schools are much higher, higher, slightly higher, in line with, slightly lower, lower, much lower (or nil) than expected by comparison with similar schools

	1998	1999
School A	slightly higher	lower
School B	slightly higher	slightly lower
School C	much lower	much lower
School D	nil	slightly higher
School E	nil	nil
School F	nil	much lower
School G	nil	nil
School H	nil	nil
School I	much lower	slightly lower
School J	nil	slightly higher
School K	nil	lower

School L **lower** **lower**

If 3 points are awarded for nil or much lower, 2 for lower, and 1 for slightly lower and negative points in similar fashion for the higher side the very positive figures of +25 (-2 and +27) for 1998 and +18 (-2 and +20) for 1999 emerge. This is not entirely a satisfactory way of quantifying the data as the 'nilness' of a school in FSM band 4 (School D) is clearly more significant than the 'nilness' of a school in Band 1 (School J). However the picture is clear that these schools are doing better than 'similar schools' with regard to permanent exclusions. This accords with the findings of Davies (1998).

There was anecdotal evidence from teachers and students that involvement in the participative activities had saved students, usually less academic boys, from exclusion. This is typical of such cases -

'I have changed completely since I came on the School Council. I was about to be excluded because I was on level 3 of the disciplinary code. It has changed my attitude to everything - especially teachers. I just didn't know how to communicate.' (School A Year 9 boy after 6 months as a Student Councillor)

Other examples are given in the Attendance section that follows.

The overall rate of permanent exclusions from the 12 'student participative' schools is significantly lower than for otherwise 'similar schools'

3 - Attendance rates in the 12 schools

The Ofsted data provided on attendance rates in the same schools are subject to the same limitations as apply to the exclusion data. Namely it only exists on a 'comparison with similar schools' basis for the years 1998 and 1999. As with the exclusion data the raw figures for attendance differentiated by gender have been collected for a longer period but there has not been time to analyse trends in individual schools. Thus, the overall judgement is based on the two-year 'similar school' patterns set out in the table below.

	1998	1999
School A	slightly lower	slightly lower
School B	slightly lower	slightly lower
School C	much higher	much higher
School D	slightly lower	slightly lower
School E	slightly lower	slightly lower
School F	much higher	much higher
School G	slightly lower	slightly higher

School H	in line with	slightly lower
School I	slightly lower	slightly lower
School J	much higher	much higher
School K	higher	higher
School L	higher	slightly higher

If a scoring of 1 for slightly higher, 2 for higher and 3 for much higher is given and the opposite negative numbers are applied to negative judgements, then taken across the 12 schools attendance scored -6 against +13 giving +7 in each of the years 1998 and 1999. However, there is considerable consistency between the two years when each school is considered individually so clearly some schools are consistently doing better than others with attendance.

There was considerable anecdotal evidence from senior managers, teachers and students in all the schools that the attendance of some individuals and groups of students significantly improved when they became involved in the participative activities. Examples include -

‘When ‘A’ was chosen as chair (*of the Sculpture Trail Group*) her attendance improved enormously. This has been maintained now she is in Year 9...’ (School C, European Studies teacher)

‘... One boy in particular stands out. His self-esteem became ‘sky-high, his attendance improved and he stayed out of trouble for a year...unfortunately this is slipping back now the project is finished...’ (School D, Art teacher involved with a student-led group preparing an Art-based exhibition of citizenship activities as part of the CSV/Active Citizenship Programme)

‘...’G’ was involved in endless fights and truancy. He was ‘turned round’ by the project. He ended up being co-opted onto the steering committee and has never looked back.’ (School A, Head of English and link teacher with Barclays New Futures Peer Education project)

This was especially the case for otherwise potentially alienated less-academic boys for example those in the Work Related Group, the Coca-Cola Peer Education Group and the Peer Education/Counselling work done by students from the Support Unit, all at School L. Examples referred to by teachers include:

‘This work has a tremendous effect on these students. ‘H’ hardly attended at all before he got involved (*in the Peer Education group run by the Support Unit*)...he used to be very aggressive but now he uses his strength to break up fights rather than join in them.’ (Head of Support Unit in School L)

‘His tutor say that ‘J’ lives for the visits. He always turns up on the visit days ...the tutor says he becomes ‘adult-like’ on those days.’ (Business Studies teacher responsible for Coca-Cola Peer Education Group in School L)

In this school the participative involvement of these students was quite explicitly and through clearly thought through written school policy backed by an integrated provision of support structures and services. In the case of the Coca-Cola Group systematic monitoring by an external university research team supported the anecdotal evidence. This feature of School L is associated with GCSE results that are consistently 'well above average' for 'similar schools' in every category (5 A*-C, 5 A*-G, 1A*-G, and Average Point Scores). In fact in 2000 the APS result put the school in the top 5th percentile in comparison with 'similar schools' as can be seen from the examination tables set out later in this report.

Attendance is slightly higher in the 12 'student participative' schools than in 'similar schools' (using the QCA/OFSTED free school meal bands) when the schools are considered collectively. However, there is consistent variation between schools that needs further investigation. There is strong anecdotal and some systematic evidence that the attendance of less-academic and potentially alienated students, particularly boys, can be improved through involvement in participative activities.

4 - GCSE results in the 12 schools compared to 'schools in similar circumstances' using the Ofsted/QCA free school meal eligibility (FSM) banding system

Because there are some question marks as to the reliability of this approach for individual schools the 12 schools are regarded collectively in this analysis. Unknown anomalies and 'skews' will have at least begun to cancel themselves out in a sample of this size although a larger number of schools would have increased the probability of this. However, this approach is certainly more informative and 'like with like' than comparisons between raw scores and national averages.

The study also gathered raw-score GCSE data broken down by gender for a more extended period (1996-2000) than that for which the 'similar schools' comparisons can be made (1998-2000). Further work needs to be done on this to see how the trends in differential performance by gender in the 12 schools compare with national trends and how the very obvious rate of improvement in most of the schools at most levels of performance compare with national rates of improvement.

The Ofsted statisticians withdrew the requested and originally supplied data which set out gender specific alphanumeric judgements for 'similar school' comparisons at the various level of GCSE performance as, on reflection, they decided that its accuracy was not sufficiently secure. In deference to their statistical expertise it is not included here and all the following tables refer to 'all pupils.'

The spread of the 12 sample schools across the 7 FSM bands for the three years for which data is available is as follows :-

	1998	1999	2000
Band 1	3	3	2
Band 2	3	0	3
Band 3	0	3	2
Band 4	3	3	2
Band 5	1	1	1
Band 6	2	2	2
Band 7	0	0	0

N.B. Band 1 has the lowest proportion of students eligible for free school meals. If Band 4 is taken as nationally average it can be seen that the sample shows a bias towards schools with lower than average numbers eligible for free school meals. Unfortunately this was created by the fact that the schools that dropped out of the study by failing to return questionnaires/data and arrange visits all had higher than average FSM eligibility (2 in Band 5 and 1 in Band 7). It is probable that such schools are under greater pressure created by the associated higher levels of social disadvantage and thus have less energy available to fill in questionnaires and endure visits from researchers' This bias does not affect the overall judgements, however, as these are made by comparing individual schools' results with percentiles of other schools within the same FSM band.

Average point score (APS) comparisons have been used as well as the conventional grade benchmarks of the league tables - 5 A*-C, 5 A*-G, and 1 A*-G. Ofsted regards APS as a more reliable indicator of trends in examination performance than the league table benchmarks. However, for the purpose of this study, the benchmarks are crucial to the testing of the 'Hannam' hypothesis as they enable the performance of students who may be reasonably assumed to have higher levels of academic ability, and thus generally less prone to alienation from school (5 A*-C), to be differentiated from the performance of students of all abilities, including those who are less academic and generally more prone to alienation from school, (5A*-G and 1 A*-G).

There is much research evidence to support the view that less academic students, especially boys, are more prone to alienation from school as they come to feel that the higher grades of GCSE are beyond their reach and that in the views of teachers, parents, some employers and indeed their fellow students these are the only grades that have any significance. This feeling, and the associated potential for lowered self-esteem and alienation, is likely to be heightened if the school very publicly allocates extra resources and more-effective teaching to those students who are on the borderline of Grades C/D. This, as was pointed out by the author in the dialogue with the minister that led to this study being commissioned, is hardly in the inclusive spirit of the Citizenship Order. However in the 'real world' of league tables and competition for students Headteachers are under great pressure to engage in such practices and this was the case in most if not all of the 12 participatory schools in this study. Several senior managers said that they were unhappy about it and, as a result were even more determined to extend the 'participatory opportunities' to as many students as possible - ideally all. They were putting compensatory energies into the curriculum and 'participatory opportunities' of the less able students because of the commitment of the school to equal opportunities and justice, and not just because of the troubles that alienated students can create for schools if they don't! Several commented on the danger that 'participatory opportunities' can easily become the preserve of the more motivated and usually generally more academic students unless the situation is monitored with care. A difference between the 12 schools of the sample and those that are less 'participatory' seemed to lie in the care that

was taken to foster the engagement of all students through a rich and fruitful mixture of participation and support.

This was certainly the aim of virtually all of the sample schools. It was being successfully realised in most and was magnificently exemplified in the case of School L in an area containing troubled housing estates and evidence of racism in the wider community. Against a powerful background ethos of participation and support for all a 'quiet word' to the students identified as 'Grade D with Grade C potential' with an offer of a little extra help, perhaps through mentoring, is less likely to have a disheartening effect on others. This approach is in contrast to some of the high-profile and very visible measures taken in some schools that the author has inspected where the efforts to 'drive up standards' for some appear to be blatantly 'driving down' the motivation and self-esteem of others.

In several of the 12 schools teachers playing key roles in developing participatory activities had widespread experience of GNVQ forms of assessment. They almost all feared, as did several senior managers, that the shift to GCSE grading in vocational courses would make it more difficult to maintain the motivation of those who, however hard they work, are unlikely to gain a Grade C. This would be a very unfortunate outcome of a legitimate attempt to raise the status of vocational courses in our schools.

N.B. The School E 'skew'. In the case of School E the Registered Inspector leading the team which conducted the most recent inspection in November 1999 decided, on the basis of carefully considered local information, that the Ofsted judgement of 'very much below average' (E*) for all 1999 GCSE comparisons with similar schools should be set aside as 'unfair.' The Ofsted judgement was based on the well below average number of students eligible for free school meals - 2.82% - thus putting the school in Band 1. However, it was clear to the inspectors, in part from feeder-school data that the school was subject to well above average levels of 'creaming' of more academic students from affluent families to the prolific local independent sector. This perception of 'skew' was supported by the higher percentage of students with special needs than is normal for band 1 - 13% without statements and 2% with. Thus the judgement of GCSE performance was, using the discretion allowed by Ofsted to the inspection team, changed from 'very much below average' (E*) to 'average.'(C). The GCSE results in 2000 were much improved on the 1999 results used in the inspection - from 50% to 60% at 5 A*-C, 88%-94% at 5 A*-G and APS rose much faster than the national average, thus making the school one of Ofsted's most-improved schools for the year. This would justify an 'above average' (B) judgement for 2000 at all levels whereas the Ofsted judgement used in this analysis only rose to 'well below average' (E). (The author was the curriculum inspector on this inspection team and thus has detailed knowledge of the basis for the inspection judgements.)

The known 'skew' to the School E judgements has not been used to adjust the Ofsted provided data in the analysis below. Clearly if an appropriate adjustment were made it would make the already positive picture even more positive.

The tables below show the data for all pupils. As stated above, the Ofsted statisticians withdrew the requested and originally supplied gender-specific data as, on reflection, they decided that its accuracy was not sufficiently secure.

NB The judgement alphanumerics used below mean in 'plain English', and refer to percentiles, as follows:

A*	Very much above average	0-5 percentile
A	Well above average	5-25 percentile
B	Above average	25-40 percentile
C	Average	40-60 percentile
D	Below average	60-75 percentile
E	Well below average	75-95 percentile
E*	Very much below average	95-100 percentile

The judgements

	<u>5 A*-C Grades</u>		
	1998	1999	2000
School A	C	E	D
School B	D	B	C
School C	A	C	A
School D	C	C	E
School E	E*	E*	E
School F	A	A	A
School G	B	D	A
School H	E	A	C
School I	C	C	E
School J	B	B	A
School K	B	A	A*
School L	A	A	A

The proportion of schools expected to be judged as average and above (C-A*) is 60% in any year.

In the sample 12 schools the figure is 75% for each of the three years 1998-2000.

The proportion of schools expected to be judged as above average or better (B-A*) is 40% in any year.

In the sample 12 schools the figure is 50% for 1998 and 1999, and 58% for 2000.

The proportion of schools expected to be judged as well above average or better (A-A*) is 25% in any year.

In the sample 12 schools the figure is 25% for 1998, 33% for 1999, and 50% for 2000.

The 12 'student participative' schools have collectively consistently shown attainment at 5 A*-C Grades at GCSE that is significantly better than would be expected in otherwise 'similar schools' and are improving on this year on year in the 'above average' and 'well above average' categories, most markedly in the 'well above average' categories.

This exceeds the prediction of the 'Hannam' hypothesis for this level.

The schools were selected before the 'league tables' for 1999-2000 were published. It is interesting that 3 of the 12 'student participatory schools' in the study (Schools E, J and K) appeared in Ofsted's list of 100 most-improved schools for that year. This is based on the increase in the % of students attaining 5 A*-C grades. Thus, 25% of the selected schools appeared in an 'honours' list that contained less than 3% of English secondary schools.

5 A*-G Grades

	1998	1999	2000
School A	A*	D	C
School B	D	A	B
School C	A	C	A
School D	D	E	C
School E	E	E*	E
School F	C	C	B
School G	D	C	A
School H	B	A	A
School I	C	E	C
School J	A	A	A*
School K	A	A	A*
School L	A	A	A

The proportion of schools expected to be judged as average or better (C-A*) is 60% in any year.

In the sample 12 schools the figure is 67% for 1998 and 1999, and 92% for 2000.

The proportion of schools expected to be judged as above average or better (B-A*) is 40% in any year.

In the sample 12 schools the figure is 50% in 1998, 42% in 1999 and 67% for 2000.

The proportion of schools expected to be judged as well above average or better (A-A*) is 25% in any year.

In the sample 12 schools the figure is 42% in 1998 and 1999, and 50% for 2000.

The sample 12 schools have collectively consistently shown attainment at 5 A*-G Grades that is significantly better than would be expected. Further, over the 3 years for which data is available, they have improved in all average and above categories (C, B, A and A*), most remarkably when the average and above categories are seen as a whole for the year 2000 when only 1 of the 12 schools had results that were worse than average. Furthermore, this school is known to have a downward 'skew' on its judgement grades that, if corrected, would bring it into the average category or above.

This is absolutely in line with the prediction of the 'Hannam' hypothesis for this level that reflects the attainment of students of a wide range of academic ability in the 12 participatory schools.

1 A*-G Grade

	1998	1999	2000
School A	A*	C	E
School B	B	B	C
School C	B	C	B
School D	E	E	D
School E	C	D	E
School F	A	A*	A*
School G	E	C	A
School H	D	A*	B
School I	D	D	D
School J	A*	A	A*
School K	B	B	A
School L	B	A	A

NB The apparently wild oscillations for some schools in some years in this table are explained by the very small numbers or % of cohort gaining no passes in many schools - hence a quite small variation from one year to the next can produce a disproportionate shift in alphanumeric judgement for an individual school.

The proportion of schools expected to be judged as C and above is 60% in any year.
In the sample 12 schools the figure is 67% for 1998 and 2000, and 75% for 1999.

The proportion of schools expected to be judged as B or better is 40% in any year.
In the sample 12 schools the figure is 58% for 1998, 50% for 1999 and 58% for 2000.

The proportion of schools expected to be judged as A or better is 25% in any year.
In the sample 12 schools the figure is 25% for 1998, 33% for 1999 and 42% for 2000.

The sample 12 schools have collectively consistently shown attainment at 1 A*-G Grades at GCSE that is better than would be expected, significantly better at above average or better levels (B-A*) and with steady year on year improvement in the well above average category (A-A*).

This is also in line with the prediction of the ‘Hannam’ hypothesis for this level but is less dramatic than the high degree of ‘better than expected’ performance seen at 5A*-G grades.

Average Point Score (APS)

	1998	1999	2000
School A	B	D	C
School B	B	C	D
School C	A	C	A
School D	C	C	B
School E	E	E	E
School F	C	B	B
School G	A	C	A
School H	C	A	C
School I	C	C	C
School J	C	B	A
School K	C	A	A
School L	A	A	A*

The proportion of schools expected to be judged as C and above is 60% in any year. In the sample 12 schools the figure is 92% for 1998, and 83% for 2000.

The proportion of schools expected to be judged as B or better is 40% in any year. In the sample 12 schools the figure is 42% for 1998 and 1999, and 58% for 2000.

The proportion of schools expected to be judged as A or better is 25% in any year. In the sample 12 schools the figure is 25% for 1998 and 1999, and 42% for 2000.

The sample 12 schools have collectively shown attainment in GCSE average point scores (APS) that is significantly better than would be expected. This is consistently the case at average and above levels with marked improvements in the above average and well above average categories in the year 2000

The 'Hannam' hypothesis did not make predictions for APS figures as there is no way of knowing whether the improvements are spread evenly across the full range of ability, but the pattern that has emerged is consistent with the 'better than expected' picture for GCSE Grades at 5 A-C, 5A*-G, and 1 A*-G.*

The Ofsted judgement

Ofsted originally supplied data on 16 schools. One failed to respond to the invitation to participate, and three that agreed to participate failed to supply data.

The Ofsted judgement on the overall GCSE performance of the sample when it consisted of 16 schools was '...that when compared with similar schools these sixteen are performing consistently better than expected.'

The reduction in sample size to 12 schools slightly enhances this effect and thus the Ofsted judgement is entirely consistent with the author's judgements.

CONCLUSIONS

The Schools

The totality of evidence gathered during the study, including the scrutiny of Ofsted reports, supports the judgement that the 12 selected schools are becoming significantly 'student participative' and that they are more than usually determined to become more so.

The Outcomes

1. The Impact of the Participative Activities on the Students

The headteachers' perspective

The overwhelming view of headteachers and other senior managers in the 12 schools is that 'student participation' impacts beneficially on self-esteem, motivation, sense of ownership and empowerment and that this in turn enhances attainment. However, at present, the evidence is largely impressionistic and anecdotal, and therefore to some extent open to question. All the headteachers interviewed want to see this evidence gathered in a more systematic way and thus welcomed this investigation into their schools.

The teachers' perspective

The overwhelming view of the teachers interviewed in all the schools visited was that the participative activities were of great benefit to all students whatever their gender, academic ability or social background, and that working with these students, although adding to their workload as teachers in many cases, was a major source of their job satisfaction. They commented upon improved attendance, enhanced self-esteem, motivation to learn, engagement with learning, and attainment though their evidence was anecdotal rather than systematically gathered and quantified.

Examples emerged from the 9 visited schools where such participation had had a 'transforming' impact on individual students.

It is evident that the vision and commitment of the Headteacher and other key senior and middle managers is crucial to the process of developing effective student participation and that this vision is usually most effective when formulated in collectively developed policy that is consistently documented and against which progress is evaluated.

The students' perspective

The overwhelming view of the students interviewed in all the schools visited was that the participative activities were of great benefit to them in a wide variety of ways. Care was taken to ensure that a balance of boys and girls from the full range of secondary age, ability and social background were interviewed.

The cluster of questions in the students' questionnaire that received 90% or more positive responses strongly suggests a 'benign circle' or cycle at work. The activity, because it is 'participative' and requires student initiative and decision making, generates motivation, ownership, a sense of being independent, trusted and responsible, which in turn support the generation of communication and collaboration skills, which in turn create quality results which both intrinsically and through recognition from others lead to enhanced self-esteem, which in turn leads to an overall sense of personal and social 'efficacy' - which is the sine qua non for the development of political 'efficacy,' a major aim of the Citizenship Education Project.

Involvement in student, participative activities brings real benefits to relationships between students and teachers, which in turn enhances attainment.

In the perception of students involvement in participatory activities enhances learning across the curriculum - sometimes in unexpected and unpredictable ways.

In the perception of students there is little or no evidence that involvement in participatory activities has any adverse effects on attainment, in fact there is considerable evidence to the contrary. In many cases students described the development of important organisational and time-management skills in order to ensure that the participatory activities had no adverse effect on their 'regular' schoolwork. Students who were missing all or parts of lessons as a result of participatory activities spoke of developing greater powers of concentration in order to squeeze the maximum benefit from the time when they were in lessons in order to avoid having to do extensive 'catching up.'

In the perception of students there is very little evidence that the time they devote to their involvement in participatory activities causes any anxieties to their parents or teachers. In fact there is significant evidence to the contrary.

Gender differences in the students' perspective

There appears to be a tendency for girls to have stronger perceptions than boys of the benefits of participatory activities for their confidence, collaborative skills, communication skills and sense of efficacy. This was consistent across all the schools. There is absolutely no gender difference in the extent to which these activities make students feel 'more independent, trusted and responsible.' The impression was gained in the student interviews that some boys judged being too enthusiastic as 'uncool' and this might have affected the result. However, when the two positive responses of 'a

lot' and 'quite a lot' are considered in total the gender differences substantially disappear.

There is a tendency for more girls to become involved in participatory activities than boys. In the 11 mixed schools in the sample, the ratio was approximately 4.0-4.5 boys/5.5-6.0 girls. This was indicated by the imbalance in questionnaire returns from students and the returns on activities provided by headteachers. There is also a bias towards girls in overall attainment at GCSE in most of the 11 mixed schools in the study. Although the necessary data has been gathered there has not been time to examine whether there is an association between the extent of the gender imbalance in participation and the extent of the gender imbalance in GCSE results on a school-by-school basis. If such an association exists it might shed interesting light on the issue of the weaker performance of boys nationally at GCSE and what action might be taken to remedy it.

The impact of the structures for student democracy common to all 12 schools

School, Year or House and 6th Form Councils provide effective opportunities for student participation in the 12 schools but, in some schools, more work needs to be done to ensure that these opportunities are extended to all students through effective tutor group discussions. These schools need to give more attention to staff development of this aspect of the role of the tutor and to allow more time for such discussions to take place.

The impact of especially large-scale, whole-year or whole-school programmes in 3 schools

The 'Electives' programme at School E exemplifies one possible model whereby all students can become involved in participative activities. It works successfully and in a mutually reinforcing way with the parallel structure of student democracy that includes effective School, Year and 6th Form Councils supported by effective meetings in most, though not all, tutor groups.

The Students as Researchers Programme at School G provides significant numbers of students, though not all, with rich and effective experience of student participation which combines enhanced individual learning with overall school improvement.

The Changemakers Project in School C is an effective example of how a whole year group can take part in a student participative programme, thus providing an opportunity for all students to benefit from the experience at at least one stage in their school career.

2. Exclusions

The overall rate of permanent exclusions from the 12 'student participative' schools is significantly lower than for 'schools in similar circumstances' (using the QCA/OFSTED free school meal bands)

3. Attendance

Attendance is slightly higher in the 12 ‘student participative’ schools than in ‘schools in similar circumstances’ (using the QCA/OFSTED free school meal bands) when the schools are considered collectively. However, there is consistent variation between schools that needs further investigation. There is strong anecdotal and some systematic evidence that the attendance of less academic and potentially alienated students, particularly boys, is improved through involvement in participative activities.

4. GCSE results

It was not possible in an investigation working to the timescale of this study to seek direct connections between the engagements of identified individual students or groups of students in ‘participatory activities’ and their GCSE performance.

However, when compared to similar schools, higher than expected levels of attainment at GCSE were found in the 12 ‘significantly student participative’ schools when viewed collectively. This judgement is supported by the judgement of Ofsted. Further the gap in attainment between the 12 sample schools, when viewed collectively, and ‘similar schools’ is tending to increase year on year.

The 12 ‘student participative’ schools have collectively consistently shown attainment at **5 A*-C** Grades at GCSE that is significantly better than would be expected in ‘schools in similar circumstances’ and are improving on this year on year in the ‘above average’ and ‘well above average’ categories, most markedly in the ‘well above average’ categories. This exceeds the prediction of the ‘Hannam’ hypothesis for this level.

The sample 12 schools have collectively consistently shown attainment at **5 A*-G** Grades that is significantly better than would be expected in ‘schools in similar circumstances.’ Further, over the 3 years for which data is available they have improved in all ‘average and above’ categories, most remarkably when the ‘average and above’ categories are seen as a whole for the year 2000 when only 1 of the 12 schools had results that were worse than average. This school is known to have a downward ‘skew’ on its judgement grades, which if corrected, would bring it into the ‘average’ category or above.

This is absolutely in line with the prediction of the ‘Hannam’ hypothesis for this level, which reflects the attainment of students of a wide range of academic ability in the 12 participatory schools.

The sample 12 schools have collectively consistently shown attainment at **1 A*-G** Grades at GCSE that is better than would be expected in ‘schools in similar circumstances’, significantly better at ‘above average or better’ levels and with steady year on year improvement in the ‘well above average’ category.

This is also in line with the prediction of the ‘Hannam’ hypothesis for this level but is less dramatic than the high degree of ‘better than expected’ performance seen at 5A*-G grades.

The sample 12 schools have collectively shown attainment in GCSE **average point scores (APS)** that is significantly better than would be expected in ‘similar schools.’ This is consistently the case at ‘average and above’ levels with marked improvements in the ‘above average’ and ‘well above average’ categories in the year 2000.

The ‘Hannam’ hypothesis did not make predictions for APS figures as there is no way of knowing whether the improvements are spread evenly across the full range of ability, but the pattern that has emerged is consistent with the ‘better than expected’ picture for GCSE Grades at 5 A*-C, 5 A*-G, and 1 A*-G.

The Ofsted judgement

Ofsted originally supplied data on 16 schools. One failed to respond to the invitation to participate and three that agreed to participate failed to supply data.

The Ofsted judgement on the overall GCSE performance of the sample when it consisted of 16 schools was ‘...*that when compared with similar schools these sixteen are performing consistently better than expected.*’

The reduction in sample size to 12 schools slightly enhances this effect and thus the Ofsted judgement is entirely consistent with the author’s judgements

The last word

Within the limitations of this investigation, the original hypothesis that ‘in schools that are already taking the ‘participation and responsible action’ elements of the Citizenship Order seriously for significant numbers of students of the full range of academic ability, an improvement in attainment would be found across the full range of GCSE results though not necessarily mainly at the higher grades’ has been found to be true when a sample of 12 such schools is compared to other ‘schools in similar circumstances’ (using the Ofsted/QCA free school meal bandings).

In fact, the improvement in attainment was found in the higher GCSE grades as well as the lower and average point scores.

Over the period for which adequate data has been available, the gap between the sample schools regarded collectively and ‘similar schools’ is tending to become wider.

The hypothesis continued ‘If the hypothesis proves to be accurate, this might well be, in part at least, a consequence of higher self-esteem and a greater sense of ownership and empowerment of students leading to greater motivation to ‘engage’ with learning across the curriculum.’ This investigation has found that these desirable qualities do indeed develop through student ‘participation and responsible action’ of the kind envisaged in the Citizenship Order.

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Recommendations for Further Research

NB This section is written in informal style and in haste. It is not intended to constitute a formal section of the report and should not be regarded as such. It will be re-written in more considered fashion as time permits

Having just surfaced from two weeks total immersion in the data collected for this study there are very many ideas for further research and investigation buzzing around my mind. Those that are best formulated so far are set out in the four sections that follow. There will be more. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these with DfEE staff in more detail.

1 It would be very interesting to seek out a further 12 'student participative' schools and see if the findings from this study were replicated in student attitudes and GCSE results - especially as the effect at 5 A*-G GCSE grades seems to be so powerful in this study. With more time, it ought to be possible to probe in much more detail and depth into the value added effect on individual students as they become engaged in the participative work using data that some of the schools already hold in an easily accessed format. Furthermore it would be interesting to see how often the experiences need to be repeated for the attitudes and skills not to be lost. The anecdotal evidence from this study pointed in both directions - especially for troublesome boys. Some were described as 'slipping back' by teachers as time passed after the closure of the activity. Others spoke of 'road to Damascus' type transformations that seemed to have lasting effect. I, for one, want to know more about this. It has real implications for exclusion and youth crime.

2. One problem perceived by headteachers trying to work out how to implement the Citizenship Order is how to provide effective and meaningful opportunities for all students to learn 'participation and action skills'. This is why I focused some attention on the ways in which some schools in the study tried to incorporate large numbers in their processes in different ways. It was quite obvious to the author, and to many of the heads, that the curriculum is still very overloaded. This combined with lack of sufficiently widespread training for tutors seems to be why even in schools that try hard to achieve it getting high quality debate in tutor groups about School and Year Council issues is difficult. Not one of the 12 schools felt that it was entirely successful in this (though in my judgement, Schools B, G and L were nearly there). Yet, clearly this is the only way that all can experience the 'student democracy' structures unless some sort of house or year parliament in which all have a seat is attempted. I do know of one school that used house assemblies with exactly this meaning of the word 'assembly' but, again, it takes time and is very unusual in the UK outside small independent schools like Summerhill or Sands.

There are at least three issues for investigation.

(a) Why is it that some schools are more successful than others in making the experience of the 'student democratic structures' a real one for all or most students? (School L was outstandingly successful in this regard).

(b) Exactly what skills are needed by teachers/form tutors to work in a 'participative' 'democratic' way and what kind of in-service training is required for their acquisition. (This, I feel, is a big issue and it was often brought to my attention by teachers in the schools - those who were most successful in this mode knew that they had learned skills of which teachers are generally unfamiliar. They are quite different from the conventional behaviour management 'control' skills. One teacher in School G described his work as being transformed by them.)

(c) How can extended periods of time be found for participative methods to be effective for all students? There is no doubt that, like all other skills, those of participation and responsible action require time to be learned. Teachers complain of the irresponsibility of some students who have had no opportunity to learn them - yet we do not complain that children cannot do sums that they have had no opportunity to practise! The Changemakers approach for the whole of Year 7 in School B is one way, though it would need to be repeated in each Year for progression to be achieved. Many of the children complained that they had insufficient time to achieve their goals. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that they have not acquired the skills. The 'Electives' approach in School E seems promising and would merit much closer and more extended study as this really does offer a model that provides opportunity for continuity and progression.

3. I was surprised given the innovatory nature of so many of the 12 schools that little serious progress had been made to develop a cluster approach to participation with feeder schools - several students raised the issue with me in Schools C, G, and L. In G and L the students are so accustomed, both to being heard and to taking initiatives, that they might well precipitate such developments themselves. We have the model of the Lipsom cluster in Plymouth. It would be interesting to find more and see how effective a vertical cross-phase approach to the learning of participation and action skills can be. The Healthy Schools initiative might well bring this about as students from both phases were sitting on some steering groups.

4. It would be interesting to do more work on the connection between school participation, school efficacy, civic efficacy and political efficacy. This could involve some baseline work immediately to be pursued longitudinally with follow up studies at regular intervals, perhaps along the lines of the High-Scope Schweinhart and Weikart work. From the point of view of effective citizenship education, we really know very little about the potential transfer of 'school efficacy', into 'civic' or 'political' efficacy' unless a lot of new knowledge has emerged from the second phase of the IEA study. I have only seen the brief synopsis that NFER has released. David will know much more about this but as the IEA work is not longitudinal the evidence is probably not there.

It does appear to indicate a positive association between student democracy and 'civic knowledge', which is perhaps a start towards political efficacy. Probably not many of the English IEA cohorts were attending highly 'student participative' schools unless there are more of them than I think there are - we had trouble finding our 12! I was surprised that the promoting civic knowledge and engagement' but that 'an open and participatory approach to citizenship education is not common in most countries or for many students.' Presumably this is true for England. Were many such schools identified in England by the IEA team? My own conversations with Judith Torney-Purta a couple of years ago indicated that she certainly felt more work needed to be done on this transfer of efficacy issue. The work of John Annette is pertinent here. He believes that 'service learning' has most effect when there are 'strong links between course content and service experience.' Also relevant is the work of Fritz Oser from Switzerland and Francois Audigier from France for the Council of Europe Education for Democratic Citizenship Project summary said that just under one-fifth of English students identified had had experience of a school council. My IEA summary (did David write it?) states that 'schools that model democratic practices are most effective in the depressing work of Carol Hahn which found very different levels of civic 'efficacy' between state comprehensive school students and students in public schools (much higher there of course) should also be taken seriously in this connection. In my little 12 school study I was surprised at how many students, some quite young, mentioned a new interest in politics as a result of the 'participative' experiences - and not just those who had sat on committees with ministers or interviewed them on TV as was the case for students from School F. It would be fascinating to rerun the IEA questionnaire/instruments in schools identified as 'more than usually student participative' and compare the results with the IEA English cohort results as a whole.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire for Headteachers

Q1. Statistical data

N.B. Where data is already known to us we have included it. If any figures are inaccurate please correct them. Questions 1.1-1.3 refer to results at Key Stage 4 in the formulation used in government performance tables.

1.1

% Students gaining no passes at any grade at GCSE/GNVQ	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Boys					
Girls					
Overall					

1.2

% Students gaining 5 A*-G at GCSE	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Boys					
Girls					
Overall					

1.3

% Students gaining 5 A*-C at GCSE	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Boys					
Girls					
Overall					

1.4

Permanent exclusions	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Boys					
Girls					
Total					

1.5

Fixed-period exclusions	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Boys					
Girls					
Total					

1.6

% Unauthorised absence	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Boys					
Girls					
Overall					

1.7

% Authorised absence	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996
Boys					
Girls					
Overall					

Q2 Participation/Action, Philosophy and Policy

(A working definition of student participation. For the purposes of this investigation, 'student participation' means a student having the opportunity, during their time at school to learn through experience the skills of participation and responsible action. In its fullest sense this would involve learning to collaborate with others (peers and/or adults), in the identification of needs, tasks, problems within the school or the wider community, to ask appropriate questions and gather appropriate information, to discuss and negotiate possible courses of action, to share in planning and decision making, to share the responsibility for implementing the plan, to evaluate/review outcomes and to communicate these to others.)

(2.1)

Does the development of student participation, whether this precise term is used or not, feature in any document that sets out the philosophy and/or whole school policies of the school, e.g. school prospectus, school mission statement, statement of school aims and objectives?

Please state which documents contain such references and, if possible, attach examples of appropriate extracts or whole documents.

(2.2)

Does the concept feature in the school development plan or similar documents dealing with the implementation of philosophy and policy?

Please state which documents contain such references and, if possible, attach examples of appropriate extracts or whole documents.

(2.3)

Is there any expectation that this approach might have a place in the range of teaching and learning styles of all or some subject departments?

Q3 Structures/processes/activities offering participation/action learning opportunities to students

(3.1)

Please list any particular subject departments that set out to offer participation/action learning experiences for students (e.g. PSHE) together with briefly described examples of how they do it. Please give an indication of age range, numbers and gender of those involved, together with approximate frequency of occurrence (e.g. frequently, regularly, occasionally) of the activity.

(3.2)

Please give details of participatory structures/processes/activities that are operating, or recently have operated, in the school that are cross-curricular or outside the work of individual subject departments. Please tick the appropriate boxes and give further details in the space below and/or by enclosing further supporting documents. Gender details would be helpful if the information is readily available and is likely to be consistent over time (e.g. Year Council consists of one boy and one girl from each tutor group). Please indicate whether the activity normally takes place in lesson time by underlining YES or NO as appropriate.

Numbers involved

Age-

Details of Meetings

	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>range</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Lesson-time</u>
School Council							YES/NO
Year (or House) Councils							YES/NO
Sixth Form Council/ Committee/Union							YES/NO
Class or Tutor Group meetings							YES/NO
Environment (or Eco) Committee							YES/NO
Changemakers							YES/NO
Barclays New Futures							YES/NO
Learning Through Landscapes							YES/NO
Youth Action/ Crime Concern							YES/NO
CSV - Lighthouse or Other CSV project							YES/NO
Students as Researchers							YES/NO
Peer Counselling/ Mediation/ Mentoring							YES/NO
Young Enterprise							YES/NO
Other activities (List here)							YES/NO

Please give further details of the above activities referring, if appropriate, to any initial or ongoing training provided for participant students and adults.

Please attach any supporting documents that you feel would illuminate our understanding, e.g. constitutions, examples of agendas and minutes etc.

3.3

Please give details of any opportunities for students to participate in school based self-evaluation or curriculum review procedures. Please include age range, numbers (with gender breakdown, if appropriate) and frequency of experience.

Q4 Evidence of outcomes

Do you have evidence of any of the following student outcomes that can reasonably be attributed, in part at least, to participation/action experiences?

Enhanced self-esteem	YES/NO
Enhanced motivation to learn	YES/NO
Enhanced engagement with learning	YES/NO
Enhanced attainment	YES/NO
Lower than expected examination performance due to time spent on participation/action	YES/NO

This evidence could be in the form of systematic evaluations previously conducted in the school or could be of a more anecdotal nature. Please give details and, if possible, include perceptions provided by students themselves.

Appendix 2**Questionnaire for students**

School -

Year Group -

Male/Female

Activity/Group -

Has your involvement with this activity affected you in any of the following ways? Please tick the box that best describes your feelings.

A lot	Quite a lot	Not much	Not at all
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Made school a more interesting place to be?

Helped you feel more confident in school?

Helped you to concentrate better in lessons?

Helped you to learn more in lessons?

Helped you to work with others?

Taken too much time from other learning?

Worried your parents about other schoolwork?

Made you feel proud of your achievements?

Helped you to get on better with teachers?

Caused teachers to say you are falling behind?

Made you more interested in the world generally?

Made you feel that you can improve things?

Helped you to express yourself more clearly?

Made you feel more independent, trusted and responsible?

Please use this space and over the page for any other comments that you would like to make following our discussion: -

