

Blairdardie Pupil Participation and Leadership Strategy



Last updated June 2026

Education Scotland defines pupil participation as: "...all of the ways in in which children and young people engage in practices and dialogue with educational staff, parents, carers, and community members to create positive outcomes and changes" (Education Scotland, 2018).

Our vision

At Blairdardie Primary School, our vision is that all pupils have regular opportunities to participate and lead throughout their time at primary school. Our vision is for effective pupil participation in the following areas: learning, teaching and assessment, opportunities for personal achievement, decision-making groups, and in making connections with the wider community.

Rationale

At Blairdardie Primary School, we understand and agree that opportunities for effective pupil participation and leadership are "core to a good education" (Education Scotland, 2018). Indeed, Education Scotland makes it clear that effective learner participation is necessary for Curriculum for Excellence's aims and purposes to be achieved across all contexts of learning (Education Scotland, 2018).

Furthermore, across multiple Quality Indicators in *How Good Is Our School?* 4, pupil participation and pupil leadership are integral to features of highly-effective practice. One example is Quality Indicator 2.3.

Scotland's Refreshed Curriculum Narrative makes clear that "opportunities for developing skills for learning, life, and work is a curriculum entitlement of all children and young people" (Education Scotland, 2023). Scotland's Developing the Young Workforce: Career Education Journey is pictured below (Education Scotland, 2015). According to Education Scotland one impact of effective pupil



participation is the development of life skills including teamwork, problem-solving and citizenship.

We at Blairdardie Primary School understand and agree with Education Scotland that the multiple positive impacts of effective pupil participation include: improved pupil-teacher, child-staff, and peer-to-peer relations, improved wellbeing, a better school ethos and greater sense of a shared community as well as improved learning and teaching, among many more.

How well are we doing and how do we know?

We conducted surveys with our staff, pupils and families in May 2023. We have used the feedback to develop this strategy and inform our next steps. Appendix 1 has detailed summary of the feedback.

What

To develop pupils' skills for life, learning and work, our pupils experience a range of application processes when applying for leadership roles within our school. Every year in Term 4, we hold elections for our Pupil Council, Eco Council, and Bright Sparks. Pupils get to experience casting a ballot to select their class representative. When our senior pupils seek to be elected as House and Vice Captains, they have to create and deliver presentations to encourage pupils to vote for them. Other groups, such as Play Leaders and Digital Ambassadors complete and submit application forms. They are then invited for group or individual interviews before being selected.

We have many opportunities for children to participate and lead in school, both short term and long term. These include Librarians and STEM Ambassadors.

Finally, our termly Masterclasses enable all children to participate effectively. Pupils choose a new Masterclass to take part in each term. Throughout each term, pupils develop identified skills weekly in a given area together with peers from

their floor, including knitting, film literacy, cooking and baking, meditation, and yoga, among many others. The intended impact: to develop a range of skills for learning, life, and skills for work as well as developing knowledge, skills, and attributes that help improve wellbeing.

Appendix 1

Pupils: Areas of strength identified:

- Almost all pupils agree that their views and ideas are listened to and acted on by adults in the school.
- Almost all pupils agree that they are given opportunities to participate in leadership roles in the life of the school.
- The majority of pupils named building their self-confidence, improving teamwork and extending their knowledge in specific areas as a benefit to participating in leadership roles within the life of the school.

Pupils: Areas for improvement identified:

- To increase the amount of councils and groups available to pupils including afterschool activities
- To have more pupil participation in creating whole school activities eg play zones and assemblies

Staff: Areas of strength identified:

- Almost all staff agree that we ensure all pupils have opportunities to take part in the life of the school.
- Almost all staff agree that we encourage pupil participation through weekly reflections and KWL grids for IDL.
- Majority of staff agree that our pupils have opportunities for personal achievement through Head Teacher awards and House Points.

Staff: Areas for improvement identified:

- More opportunities for Primary 1 to be involved in leadership groups.
- Time for children to share personal achievements outside of school.
- Time for councils and leaderships group to feedback to classes.

Parents and carers: Areas of strength identified:

- Almost all parents and carers think that the school values their child's ideas and opinions.
- Of those parents and carers whose child is involved in a group/council, almost all reported that their child enjoys this.
- Parents and carers reported that children who participate in a group/council or leadership experience in school develop confidence, communication skills, and social skills, among others.

Parents and carers: Areas for improvement identified:

- Improved communication regarding the how and what of pupil participation and leadership experiences.
- More children having opportunities for pupil participation and leadership experiences.