

# Perceptions of **Pupil Voice** in Secondary Schools

## According to pupils across Wales

In 2023/24, we spoke with 98 secondary school pupils as part of our evaluation of the Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing and asked them about pupil voice activities in their school and their perceptions of how effective they were. This is a summary of what they said.

**There were a wide variety of Pupil Voice activities across all schools.** This included school parliaments and councils, eco groups, Welsh champions, wellbeing committees as well as communication groups. Secondary school pupils were aware of pupil voice groups within their schools and understood their remits, several pupils linked the purpose of these groups to promoting Children's Rights within schools.



**The functions of these groups were seen as multilevel** - some were aimed at making changes in the school, others were aimed at fundraising, or organising school events like Christmas parties.

**Some pupils were unsure whether suggestions made by the pupil voice groups were actually taken up by staff members in the school.**

Secondary pupils noted that several groups requested changes to how teaching and learning operated that were not ultimately acted upon by senior staff.



**Several pupils noted positive changes happening in their schools as a result of pupil voice activities,** such as changes to recycling and more playing equipment for the playground. Secondary pupils noted visibility of their activities throughout the school such as Welsh groups displays.

**Barriers to pupil voice effectiveness and reach** included a lack of funding to meet the diversity of pupils' ideas, and whether reported ideas matched the resources within the schools. Some pupils discussed perceptions that voting activities for pupil representatives could sometimes become 'popularity contests.'

