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I WAS A TEENAGE GOVERNOR: GETTING READY FOR PUPIL
GOVERNORSHIP

PROJECT REPORT PHASE 2 - PUPIL GOVERNORSHIP: INITIAL
PREPARATION AND EXPERIENCE IN THE PROJECT SCHOOLS

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1 Introduction – The evolving context

This report covers Phase 2 of the I Was a Teenage Governor Project from January to August 2004. The background to the project has been dealt with fully in the previously published Phase 1 report (Hallgarten, Breslin and Hannam, 2004) and will not be repeated here.

Funding for Phase 2 was entirely provided by The Carnegie UK Trust. In the absence of matched funding from other sources and with the departure of Joe Hallgarten from ippr in December 2003 and Derry Hannam from the Phoenix Education Trust in February 2004 the decision was taken to continue with the project albeit on a somewhat reduced scale. Derry Hannam took on the monitoring and developmental role with the title of project manager as an independent consultant working with Zoe Khor of ippr, the fundholders, under the general supervision of Peter Robinson. Tony Breslin, chief executive of the Citizenship Foundation, provided critical professional support and guidance.

By March 2004 some of the schools that had originally indicated enthusiasm for the project decided not to continue while others firmed up with written commitment from head teachers and chairs of governors and yet others indicated interest in joining. Partly due to financial constraints such as lack of funding to support travel costs and cover for teachers absence the final group of 13 participant schools are all located in six LEA's in London and the South-East. During the course of Phase 2 several additional schools expressed individual interest and one LEA made a collective enquiry on behalf of a cluster of its schools.

Although budget constraints somewhat limited the scale of Phase 2 the general shape set out in the Phase 1 report (ibid.) has been broadly adhered to. The extent to which the planned activities were carried out and outcomes achieved are noted in brackets at the end of each point namely –

Phase 2 (preparation and induction) will involve the following activities:

- *Local research into schools' needs and history of pupil participation;* (Done)
- *Participating schools and LEAs, with support from the project team, will detail their approach to associate pupil governorship in action plans;* (Detailed approaches developed – not all with action plans)
- *Developing frameworks for choosing pupil governors in each school;* (Done)
- *Planning, design and delivery of training within local LEA clusters for young people interested in become associated governors;* (Conducted at school level)
- *Pupil governors will be elected (or otherwise selected);* (Done)
- *Planning, design and delivery of induction programme for new pupil governors and existing adult governors within an LEA cluster;* (Conducted at school level)
- *Development of an independent evaluation framework by an external consultant;* (Done)
- *Writing a report to disseminate the experiences of Phase 2.* (Completed)

The intended outcomes of Phase 2 are:

- *The project will form part of each schools SDP for 2004-2006* (Now in some school SDPs, intention to include in next draft in others)
- *Models for the selection/election of pupil governors;* (These have emerged)
- *Young people in up to 5 LEAs, trained in the procedure and skills of pupil governorship;* (Training carried out informally at school level)
- *A cohort of pupil governors, (s)elected and inducted to take on their responsibilities from September 2004;* (In place in nearly all schools)
- *Evaluation Framework in place;* (Yes – in outline – awaiting Phase 3 funding)
- *Publication of Getting Ready for Pupil Governorship on the ippr and Citizenship Foundation websites.* (This report will form the basis for this)
- *Funding secured for Phases 3-4 of the project;*(Expressions of interest and intent – need to be firmed up by Citizenship Foundation)

The initial task was to establish an effective electronic network of communication to link the project manager, identified link staff members and/or governors in the project schools, and key contacts in governors services departments of the LEA's. This sounds simple enough but in reality proved complex and time consuming. Some schools are more advanced than others in such basics as e-mailing and in several cases private e-mail addresses, even of spouses, had to be used as school networks could not be relied upon.

While this was being done a literature review was conducted. This was almost entirely unproductive with regard to the United Kingdom where clearly the issue of student participation in school governance has been too limited and ad hoc, illegal even, to attract the attention of researchers into student participation or school governance apart from brief references in earlier work by the author (Hannam, 2001). Of interest were the study conducted for the DfES into barriers to participation for under represented groups in school governance which refers to young people, though not school students, (Ellis et al, 2003) and a somewhat unenthusiastic and cautious paper considering student participation prepared for the Nation Association of Governors and Managers (NAGM, 2003). Some information emerged with regard to more developed practice in other European countries (OBESSU, 2000; Davies and Kirkpatrick, 2002), Switzerland (Hannam 2004), Australia (Holdsworth, 2004), Canada (Critchley, 2003), the United States (Burmester, 2003; Joiner, 2003; Webb, 2003; Battistoni, 2004). This international work while always interesting contained little that could be described as research data that might offer pointers for the English project. Most of it is descriptive and/or involves advocacy with the exception of Rick Battistoni's encouraging account of Project 540 in which students in some 240 US high schools have been encouraged to participate in school governance. Unfortunately the author only received an advance copy at the time of writing (August), too late to be of any value to Phase 2.

Where Ofsted reports were sufficiently recent to be of value (ie no more than three years old) , these were read prior to the visit to the school. This applied in eight cases and showed considerable variety in the extent to which inspection teams were attuned to the existence and significance of student voice and participation issues in general and the involvement of governors in particular. It is perhaps encouraging that the more recent the report the higher the profile given to these issues appeared to be. One report was especially impressive in its grasp of the power of utilising participation and students' voice as a central strategy for lifting a school out of special measures. Most of the project schools had never been in this situation and were

unlikely to ever get into it though all were consciously harnessing student participation in their search for improvement.

Funding only allowed for one visit of the project manager to each school during Phase 2 and eventually ten were carried out. As five of the 13 schools had already gained some experience of student participation in governance processes these were prioritised. Interviews were conducted with senior managers, link teachers, governor representatives and students who had attended meetings of governor's committees and/or full governors meetings. These interviews were semi-structured and recorded on mini-disc (see appendix 2 for example schedules). At the same time an electronic questionnaire was sent to all schools and LEA's to enable a baseline of experience and intentions to be compiled. Replies were eventually secured from all participants though again making the electronic network function and actually obtaining replies took a surprising amount of time, often involving several additional phone calls and the identification of key administrative staff in school offices to ensure that e-mails arrived at the right in-box and actually got downloaded and read. A baseline summary was compiled from the replies and circulated to project participants in April. A well attended and very successful day to exchange information amongst school link staff, governor representatives and LEA representatives was held at ippr in London in May. Following this the schools that had not yet decided how to proceed began serious planning for September while those which had already gained some experience reviewed it in the light of what they had learned from the practice of other schools and began to plan revisions and developments to their existing practice. Several schools expanded the scale of their planning in the light of what they heard from the pioneers.

It had originally been intended to hold a second central day to include students in July but the consensus at the May event was that training and induction of students was best organised at the school level initially. This was supported by initial interviews with students who had had experience of governors meetings. Their feeling was that too much formal prior instruction could be intimidating and counter-productive. A date for a students event was fixed for November by which time students will have been selected/elected and will have had some experience of attending either committee or full governors meetings in all participant schools. The intention is for this day to be substantially student-driven.

Having visited the 'experienced' schools prior to the May event visits were then made to five of the remaining eight schools in June/July. These visits proved to have the dual function of research data collection and assessment of the specific context of the schools together with a 'pollinating' developmental function, spreading the news from school to school and being a 'critical friend' to the planning process. Throughout the project manager attempted to encourage networks within and between schools in individual and adjacent LEA's to develop and for whole project lateral communication and 'idea sharing' to emerge, though with limited success. However two of the 'experienced' schools emerged as actively willing to share practice through head teacher visits in one case and hosting training for students in another.

During the course of Phase 2 the author spoke about the project at conferences for governors in two of the project LEAs. The interest was considerable at both.

The advice of a well established evaluator of participative projects in educational and other arenas, Perpetua Kirby of PK Associates, was sought to draw up a framework for the evaluation of Phases 3 and 4. This is set out in Appendix 2. She was satisfied that despite budget and time limitations the way in which Phase 2 was being conducted would provide an adequate baseline for such an evaluation.

It was obvious from the outset that any attempt by project staff to press participant schools into any particular model for implementation of the project goals would be inappropriate and counter-productive. The participant schools share the desire and commitment to involve students in school governance but have very different histories of experience of student participation and of staff and governor attitudes towards it. A high-profile rapid advance on all fronts may be appropriate for one school whereas a more cautious 'softly-softly' approach may be more productive in another. It would also have been an extraordinarily arrogant thing to attempt as new knowledge as to what is possible is being created in the schools to which the project management had no magical prior access, added to which there was no money to offer as incentives to obedience to central direction anyway! The learning was to be lateral and/or bottom up with the project co-ordinator functioning as researcher, disseminator and questioning critical friend. Models have emerged rather than been prescribed and with the circulation of the baseline data and the learning from the London May meeting one began to hear reference to the 'xxxxx school model' or the 'xxxxxx school approach' during visits to schools.

2 The baseline in the schools - March 2004

The thirteen project schools were made up of four in Essex, two in Thurrock, two each from Portsmouth and Brighton & Hove, and one each from West Sussex, East Sussex and Newham. A third Thurrock school expressed interest but being in the process of amalgamation has remained inactive in the project through phase 2. LEA representatives from Essex, East Sussex/Brighton & Hove, Portsmouth, Thurrock and West Sussex joined the electronic network.

All the schools were comprehensive. All but one were mixed, with one girls school. Eleven were 11-16, one 12-16, and one 11-18. Three of the 11-16 schools were new and did not yet have the full age range. There were two faith schools, one Anglican and one Roman Catholic.

Baseline information was eventually received from twelve schools of which five were visited prior to its collation and a summary circulated to all schools prior to the May event.

Preliminary experience of student participation in governance prior to Phase 3 of the project

Five project schools had gained some experience of student participation in governance prior to or during phase 2.

Two schools (schools A and B) had had students attending full governing body meetings and certain governors' committees since September 2003. Students were thus able to follow issues from committee to full governing body. Both schools had reconstituted their governing bodies. School A has arts specialist status and school B technology status though both have placed a strong emphasis on creativity in general and the central importance of the performing arts curriculum in particular. School B had reduced the time allocated to core subjects in order to extend the arts curriculum for all students and School A gives the arts have an unusual cross curricular impact – for example the use of music in mathematics or drama in modern foreign languages, history and R.E . with dance taught to all lower school students. Both schools see the high profile for the arts as being a significant factor in the creation of a listening and participating school where the students' voice is well articulated and heard. Both schools have attainment that is described as being 'well above average for similar schools' by Ofsted and both have seen major recent improvements in conventional outcome measures.

At School A the head boy and head girl (both ex-officio Year 11 members of the school council) had attended full governing body meetings together with the curriculum and premises committees. It had been explained to them prior to their appointment that attendance at governors and school council meetings would constitute an important part of their responsibilities. They had not attended finance and personnel committees (but towards the end of phase 2 began to do so). Their attendance at meetings had been 100%. It was possible for them to have issues that had been raised at school council put on the agendas of full governing body or

committee meetings and they had done so with effect. For example their advocacy of the need for more musical instruments for the music department secured significant additional funding for that department. (The significance of this had been noted by other heads of department!) Student associate members were provided with agendas and minutes. There had been little formal training. Students had observed at their first meeting followed by discussion and de-briefing with the head teacher and had quickly moved on to full participation. The head teacher, governors, the students and their parents were all pleased by the outcomes.

At School B several Year 11 students (some also being school council members) had attended full governing body meetings and had individually attended all committees except human resources. A start has been made to create a structure of school council committees that to some extent matched and shadowed governors' committees. Students had not yet brought their own issues to the governing body but had begun to significantly affect decision making. For example in one case a student associate governor was instrumental in persuading governors to change a senior management proposal for an aspect of curriculum reorganisation, demonstrating considerable political acuity and literacy in so doing. (An interesting test for senior management's commitment to student participation but also a vindication of a process that is not tokenistic and manipulative of student opinion and its expression.) A governor who is very supportive of student participation had provided preparation and de-briefing for students. In evaluating the first year of student participation in governance the school felt that the development had been very worthwhile but that some Year 11 students had been less willing than others to sustain commitment. In future the school intends to develop capacity building work with younger students in addition to representation by older students.

Three schools had students attending one or more governor's committee but not yet attending full governors' meetings. In two cases the students were members of the school council or its equivalent and reported back to it. This feedback then flowed back to tutor groups through year councils though this had not always been as effective as it might be in every case and other means of communication were being explored such as notice boards and assemblies. In the third school the student associate governors were appointed directly by the head teacher.

Two of the three schools had not yet reconstituted. The process had begun at the third. In one school one of the student associates had been attending the governors curriculum and students committee since year 7 when he had been nominated from the school council. He then left the school council but continued to attend until rejoining the school council in year 9

At School C, which has specialist sports status, one student from KS3 and one from KS4 have attended the Curriculum and Students Standing Committee for several years. Their input to discussion has been greatly valued by governors and their opinions have been actively sought. These students developed impressive presentation and communication skills. (Several School C students gave a presentation to the launch meeting at the BBC Media Centre in September 2003.) Students had been provided with agendas, reports and minutes to enable them to prepare for meetings. Training had been informal though the importance of confidentiality had been stressed. The school hopes to take the next step towards student participation in full governors' meetings in Phase 3 and envisaged somewhat more formal training into the roles and responsibilities of governors being required in preparation.

School D had recently evolved a new structure for student participation with representative year forums which send representatives to STEAM (school council). From STEAM two students, a Y8 boy and a Y11 girl, had volunteered to attend the governors' curriculum committee. Both were enthusiastic about the experience. The governors were keen to incorporate the student voice and appeared to have quickly put the students at their ease. They had an initial informal briefing from the head teacher before the meeting and a subsequent de-briefing. These students both felt that this was for the best and that if they had had anything too formal in preparation it would have increased their pre-meeting anxiety rather than reduced it. When interviewed the Y8 student appeared equally confident and keen to attend future meetings as did the very articulate and capable Y11 student. The students valued the age difference and felt that it allowed them to represent a wider range of student opinion. Some schools regarded the student associate governor role as most suitable for older students yet this year 8 student later worked with the author to co-facilitate an LEA training workshop for teachers with great aplomb and effect.

At School E, a specialist technology college, two year 10 students had attended the premises committee since Easter 2003. Their presence at meetings had been welcomed and their input valued by the committee chair. They had had a positive impact on decision making. For example when a plan was presented to governors for the renovation of the school swimming pool a student associate member pointed out that the proposed shower arrangements would have had a serious effect on the motivation of girls to participate in swimming. When it was explained that this was a question of cost she identified another aspect of the scheme where savings could be made. Her proposals have been incorporated into a revised plan. Again the emphasis had been on observation for the first meeting followed by de-briefing, explanation of issues and support from the head teacher rather than formal preparatory training in governance processes and procedures.

The five schools that had already gained some experience of student participation in governance were all encouraged by what had happened so far and were keen to develop the practice further. This had a stimulating effect on the other schools whose representatives came to the May information exchange keen to learn and generally left it more ambitious in their thinking.

Some other project schools had had some links between between students and governors though as yet no formal student participation in the general business of the meetings. At School F, also a sports college, governors attend school council meetings where they have gained a positive impression of the potential of the students for associate governorship and are keen to take this step in the next academic year. At School G school students had made presentations at the beginning of every full governors' meeting and had taken the minutes at the AGM of Parents. At School H the Y11 student chair of the College Council together with other Y11 students had given a report on the council's activities to each full governor's meeting. This had produced the mutual benefit of making the work of the governors better known to the students and raising the profile of the College Council with both the governing body and the majority of other students, thus preparing the way for associate membership. Several schools were already in the process of identifying students for participation in governance for Phase 3 from September 2004.

All twelve of the schools that had provided baseline information had active, representative and democratically elected school councils that either already were or were in the process of becoming effective. Interestingly the school council equivalent at School N was actually called the Junior Governing Body.

Some issues that emerged from the baseline information

Recruitment of associate members – what is the right balance between election, selection and volunteering?

Desirable age of associate members – development of capacity in younger students or emphasis on more experienced older students – or both?

Student participation in governors' committees as a useful first step towards participation in full governors' meetings – or straight into both?

Training/Preparation - how formal and intensive does this need to be prior to attendance at first meeting?

Length of Service - how to balance the need for continuity and efficiency with the need to maximise opportunity for as many students as possible?

How to manage effective communication/feedback with the student body as a whole – the need for a variety of routes and for really effective and well-oiled school council procedures.

How to sustain commitment from students who may well be those having most other commitments elsewhere in and out of school.

The need for an overall strategy for the development of the student voice, of which participation in governance is a part - should this have a high profile in the school development/improvement plan?

The role of the LEAs - could the process benefit from LEA provision, perhaps through the facilitation of collaboration within clusters of schools and/or the provision of training/preparation?

Issues that might have been expected but did not emerge -

The barriers identified in the recent report to the DfES on barriers to participation in governance (Ellis et al, 2003) did not appear to have significantly inhibited progress in the five 'pioneer' schools. These included -

- excessive time demands
- cost of travel to attend meetings
- stereotyping of young people by older governors
- inaccessibility of language/documentation due to jargon etc
- inhibition caused by electoral process

Three anxieties had been expressed by the National Association of Governors and Managers with regard to the involvement of students in governance processes (NAGM 2003). One concerned the management of confidential issues, another the

alienation that might be produced when governors had to resist potentially impossible demands from student associate members, and the third involved fears that students would feel 'singled-out' if asked to withdraw for certain agenda items. There has been no evidence of difficulty in any of these areas so far and in fact the suggestions produced sharp responses from existing and prospective student associate governors! (See section 4).

The baseline study revealed that In the experience of the five project 'pioneer' schools the advantages of student participation in governance overwhelmingly outweighed the real or feared disadvantages. The schools were proceeding with a combined set of motives that included the desire for school improvement through hearing the student voice, the provision of powerful learning opportunities that relate to enterprise and citizenship education (analogies were offered that compared the exercise to both providing proper customer care in developing a successful business and the need to model democratic procedures for the education of future citizens of a democratic society), and a recognition that young people have a right to be heard. Benefits were identified for the student participants, the governing body and the school as a whole.

3 The May 2004 information exchange at ipp

Given the difficulties that had been experienced in developing a functioning project network it was very pleasing that this event was attended by teacher and governor representatives from all but one of the schools and officers from all the governor services departments of the LEAs. It proved to be seminal in moving the project forward.

Some participants were a little unnerved to hear that the project was at the 'cutting edge creating new knowledge' and that there was effectively no UK literature to look to for insights and guidance. The project was pushing the current trend for the 'reculturing' of schools to become places that give serious value to the insights and understandings of their students into new territory. There was no record of experience to turn to. It was agreed that participants should learn from each other with no 'correct model' being prescribed from the centre. Diversity was not only inevitable but probably desirable. Participants were exhorted to keep a record of what was happening in their schools, involving students and governors in the process, as evaluation would become more high profile once funding for phase 3 was secure. Subsequent school visits revealed that workload was preventing this from happening in most schools.

The schools which had already gained experience of student attendance at full governing body meetings and/or governor's committees described what they had done so far and why, followed by lively discussions on the issues arising.

The head teacher of School A explained that the school had had two year 11 students, head boy and girl who are ex-officio school council members, attending curriculum and premises committees and full governing body meetings. Their attendance had been 100% and that since the baseline study had begun to attend finance committee meetings as well. They have coped well and have begun to have an impact on decision making including the allocation of budgets to subject departments. The school has seen a dramatic rise in conventional attainment measures over a five-year period (with only one permanent exclusion) which it associates with the systematic implementation of student participation in decision making. Ideally the school would like to see the involvement of more and younger students in governance processes with a change in the law to permit full voting rights. The school envisages even more participation by students in order to continue to develop from what could otherwise prove to be an attainment plateau. Having decided to move to a two year KS3 with a more vertical approach to KS4 Y 8 and Y10 students were becoming closely involved in detailed curriculum planning. Student participation in governance had positively affected the staff view of the potential role for the students' voice. 'Staff have become more willing to listen to and to initiate consultation with students over how to raise the quality of teaching and how to develop more independent and personalised learning.'

The deputy head and governor responsible for links with students from School B explained that the school had created a school council structure that aimed to shadow the organisation of the governing body and its committees. The student chairs of the shadow committees had then attended the appropriate governors committee and followed the business through to full GB meetings. Forward thinking

and training has been provided by this governor. There has already been impact on key issues such as curriculum development and the students had effectively challenged poor performance by the PFI contractor. Where students had been able to sustain their commitment there had been personal benefits, benefits to the profile and effectiveness of the student council, and benefits to effective governance. The school is learning to 'be smarter at identifying appropriate students' and the structure of the students council continues to evolve so that it can draw more effectively on the skills and potential of younger students, including those who arrive in Y7 with good experience from their primary schools. Blocks to progress have been identified around the need for all governors to become comfortable with a forthright student input and for student associates to be properly provided with appropriate documentation. The presenters reflected that they had not yet given such a presentation to key stakeholder groups at school – teaching staff, governors, parents – and that it would be a good idea to do so. In discussion the point was made that where a school student council is still functioning at the 'toilets, chips and litter' level there is a wide gulf between the discussions students will be familiar with and the strategic level of governors meetings. It was suggested that students could be invited to attend senior management meetings as a way to bridge this 'issue gulf'.

The project link teacher at School C explained that a small number of initially quite young students had begun to get involved with first one and now two governors' committees and that so far continuity had been given priority over maximising opportunity. Student associates had become ex-officio members of the student council. There were plans to extend representation next year into attendance at full governing body meetings. The school is larger than average and like School A is also planning a reorganisation towards a more vertical school-within-a-school structure and is attempting to maximise the inclusiveness of student participation in the decision making processes. The school has concluded that students need some assistance in learning the 'language of decision making' and that school council training can be helpful in this with perhaps further preparation for associate governors, which they had not yet delivered. The idea of a 'language of decision making' that could perhaps be taught and the question of the tension between continuity of membership and maximising opportunity were explored in discussion.

School E explained that up to then student associate governors had been selected by the head teacher and had not been officers of the student council. This stimulated lengthy debate with regard to desirable and effective processes for the selection/election of student associate governors. It did not appear that 'jargon' and unintelligibility had been an especial problem for student associates any more than it is for lay parent governors. There was widespread agreement that any sense of 'talking down' to the students should be avoided at all costs and that there was a need for good plain English for the benefit of all governors and not just the students. Experience showed that the presence of students at meetings could not only 'lighten' the tone of what can otherwise become dull and tedious affairs but also lead to a dramatic reduction in the inappropriate use of jargon and endless acronyms that few like to admit to not understanding.

Tony Breslin from the citizenship foundation, the professional adviser to the project, posed four questions. –

- Does participation in governance put students off democracy or change it?
- To what extent does the inclusion of students in governance send signals about the status of learners in the school?

- Is student participation liberating or threatening? (Or both?)
- What is the relationship between student participation in governance and representative democracy?

Having heard from the experienced schools, the project manager and the professional adviser the participants identified several issues for further debate to assist all the schools in developing their thinking and planning.

(a) ‘What do we believe the aims of the project to be?’

The Group started from the project aim set out in the Phase 1 Report (p18) which states that ‘the aim is to evaluate associate governorship as a pupil participation strategy and notably its effect on school decision making.’ The group considered the impression that the author had gained from his visits to schools that their individual school aims were a mix of what he called Instrumental (general school improvement), Educational (for the participants) and Rights Based (that the student voice should be expressed, heard and acted upon – described by Tony Breslin as the Ethical Aim). This order of priority was firmly challenged and reversed by acclaim!

After much deliberation the following emerged –

The central aim of the project is to improve the quality of education and raise standards by :

- **Respecting the rights of young people to have a voice that is heard**
- **Incorporating associate members into the decision making process through active participation on the governing body**

A third aim had been proposed and deleted after debate – ‘changing positively the perceptions of student potential/capability’.

Members of the group agreed to continue the debate by e-mail with Schools A and B discussing their draft with students whose views were to be incorporated into the final draft. As with other inter-school lateral intentions such as a proposal for a video conference between those schools having the appropriate technology, this on-going debate did not materialise.

(b) The selection and term of service of student associate governors.

While it was agreed that schools should find the model that fits their circumstances participants felt the need for a ‘role profile’ for student associates which would reflect the need for consistent time commitment, communication skills, and willingness to take responsibility. However they recognised that adult perceptions of who had a ‘best fit’ might well differ from student perceptions and that both should be taken into account . All procedures should possess clarity/transparency, inclusion and democracy.

Participants wrestled with the issue of continuity vs. giving maximum numbers a chance agreeing that inclusion and maximising opportunity were very important issues. On the other hand it was felt that 2 years might be the right length of service. If possible all years should be represented or at least both key stages. It was felt that

students should never be expected to attend meetings alone and that attendance at committees in pairs seemed to be ideal.

(c) Communication between student associate governors and the student body as a whole.

Participants felt that this should also be open and democratic using the structures of student representation such as school and year councils. None felt that this was sufficient however. Some felt strongly that the issues were an important aspect of citizenship education and that curriculum time should be available for their discussion by all students in their classes/tutor groups. The use of assemblies, notice boards, newsletters, school councillor 'clinics', assemblies and websites were also recommended.

(d) Whether the first step should be to governors committees or to full governing body meetings.

The 'experienced' schools were split on this issue as were the participants as a whole. The experienced schools felt that what they had done had been 'best for them' and after much discussion it was agreed that there were good arguments for each approach and that each school should find its own way forward. What mattered was that student and governor stakeholders felt comfortable with whatever was decided and that the experience was successful for all concerned. Most schools felt that it was also very important that staff were wholly supportive of the development though the head of one very successful school was sharply divergent on this. He felt that it was desirable that the initiative should have staff support but if it was not forthcoming from all quarters this should not be allowed to block student participation. The development was too important and that in the last resort it might be necessary to point out to staff that '...they are employees of the organisation.'

(e) The proposed training day for students on July 1st, 2004

It was reported that from interviewing current student associate members the author had gained the impression that they were not keen on anything that felt too 'heavy' by way of pre-first meeting training. They had all been prepared fairly informally by a governor, head teacher or other senior teacher before their first governors' meeting. They had been told that it would be quite acceptable to just observe at first and in every case governors had given careful thought to making them feel comfortable. More extensive de-briefing, explanations of procedure and close support for future involvement was provided after the first experience. This appeared to have been generally very successful. It was agreed that the planned induction/training day for students on July 1st should therefore be delayed until November 17th. This would allow for student associates to have attended at least one full governors' or committee meeting and also for them to be involved in the preparations for the event.

(f) The role of the LEAs

The possibility of something less formal being provided during Phase 2 by LEAs in collaboration with local schools was explored. There was general enthusiasm for this but in the event it did not happen in any of the LEAs.

4 Developments during Phase 2 – hypotheses, pitfalls and progress, the voices of the participants

Hypotheses

Eight hypotheses were set out in the phase 1 report for testing by the project (Hallgarten et al 2004, pp10-11). The extent to which phase 2 data has enabled the process to begin will now be considered, and illuminated with contributions from staff, student and governor participants.

Without being evangelical about pupil governors, the project aims to test the following hypotheses:

- ***That school governing bodies, for all their faults, still retain radical potential as spaces to change policies and practices in schools;***

The governing bodies in all the project schools appear to be self-confident and to understand the implications of their strategic responsibilities. Most governors, and in most schools all, saw the participation of students as an important contribution to improved decision making. In some schools the initiative to involve students had been a joint one not totally emanating from senior management.

A governor at school B ‘...when I joined as a parent governor I was asked to chair the student management committee...my business background gave me a respect for the customers...I felt I would learn most about the school by listening to the students...I thought hang about the head teachers’s vision is high level, there is a serious intent by the school to involve the students...so I spent a lot of time talking with the student about how to plan a meeting, what an agenda looked like...my motive is both school improvement and children’s rights, children’s voice is paramount for the survival of society.’

- ***That the arguments put forward to justify as to why pupils should not be on governing bodies (that they are too complicated, that they offer a demoralising version of democracy in action, that the issues are too sensitive) are the same as those that were advanced against the involvement of parent governors two decades ago and, as such, are false;***

The evidence so far suggests that this is overwhelmingly the case, especially when chairpersons and clerks make some effort to welcome and encourage the students, as was overwhelmingly the case in the ‘experienced’ schools. Experienced adult governors also had difficulty with jargon and acronyms at times.

On the question of complexity -

Student (Y11 M) in school A ‘...the clerk prepared a list of abbreviations and what they meant to help us understand the meetings...it was a big help.’

Student (Y9 M) in school C ‘...we didn’t have any training as such but explained about how the governors worked...if I didn’t understand anything I just said...there’s no point in pretending you understand if you don’t!’

Students (Y11 F and Y8 M) in school E ‘...It is difficult for them to include us without being patronising or changing the way they do things...I didn’t feel uncomfortable about any of the things they were saying (in a presentation by the LEA)...though there was a couple of big words wasn’t there?’ ‘...yeah even Miss X (teacher governor) didn’t understand them...’, ‘...like meg-cognitive or something...people were like ‘Sorry. What’s that?’, ‘...cos we weren’t the only ones who didn’t know.’

Head teacher of school A ‘My governors are not shy in saying ‘look, will you not use jargon’...we have to speak in plain English.’

On the question of sensitivity and confidentiality, also an anxiety expressed in the NAGM document (NAGM 2003), -

Student (Y11 F) in school A ‘...before we went into the first meeting we were told what confidentiality was and that there was trust in us to be there and because of this it has never been a problem.’

Students (Y8 F and Y10 M) in school J ‘...if we accidentally found out something we shouldn’t know we would just keep it to ourselves...’, ‘I would feel a moral obligation to keep it quiet...it’s something I feel I should do to keep it to myself.’

Student (Y10 F) in school E ‘There have been a few things where the chair has said ‘don’t talk to your friends about it’ or they have left it to the end of the meeting and said ‘thank you, you can go now.’ I don’t resent it. Not at all.’

As yet no student associate governors in the ‘experienced’ schools have attended personnel committees which might partially explain why confidentiality has not surfaced as a problem so far. However school A intends that they should from September as does school J where the committee structure is being rationalised from four to two.

On the question of an ‘anti-citizenship’ lesson from a demoralising model of democracy, (something which we know can be valid in the context of ineffective school councils – see Alderson, 1999; Baginsky and Hannam, 1999; Hannam, 2004 and 2004 forthcoming; Ofsted, 2002; Kerr et al 2004) –

Student (Y11 M) in school B ‘...I am a lot more confident than when I started out and I have a much greater understanding of how schools and other organisations work...it is easy to blame...working with them has been good and it has removed stereotypes of students for governors...’

Student (Y10 F) in school E ‘It’s interesting to see what happens to the money...lots of noughts on the end...it’s annoying and distressing when things get vandalised...it would definitely stop me from being a vandal.’

- ***That the involvement of pupils on governing bodies, school councils, pupils-as-researcher projects, community forums and interview panels could have a positive impact on the school’s culture and ethos***

This is a relatively uninvestigated field though there are some positive pointers in studies such as Hannam (2001) with regard to student participation as a whole,

Fielding and Bragg (2003) for students-as-researchers, Alderson (1998), Baginsky and Hannam (1999) and the study currently being carried out by Lynn Davies at the University of Birmingham as far as school councils are concerned.

As far as Phase 2 of this project is concerned there is little evidence that the participation of students in governance alone has had significant impact on the school culture and ethos of the 'experienced' schools yet, though several staff and students mentioned that they thought it had raised the profile of the school council. In school A where student intervention at full governors meeting had led to increased funding for the music department, the effect of student participation had rapidly raised its profile with middle management. The head teacher commented '...when heads of department learned of student influence on governing body finance decisions their ears certainly did prick up at that one I can tell you!'

What is clearer is that the students involvement with governors has been a success in the 'experienced' schools because it has been set in a student participative 'listening' context. This came through strongly during the visits and from some of the Ofsted reports. The point was well expressed by the vice-chair of governors in school A:

'...although the initial reaction was hang on what are we doing because the natural reaction is you want to protect confidentiality and it is just something that hasn't been done before but when you think about it...5 seconds later...there could be great benefits...and we have seen xxxx (the head) involve the students...in the Ofsted for example...the school got a One for listening to the student voice...it makes the pupils feel more attached to what's going on...and more importantly that they can influence. The idea is in the workplace...have a dialogue with the people around you...create a voice and don't just do things because that is the way it has always been done...a lot of forward thinking companies are doing it...it works there and we need to bring it into schools...we know the school is performing well...so perhaps the impact is less here as we already see the value of making students feel important. Working with students is part of our culture. **It's 'in the air' here.**

The head teacher of school A told other participants at the May event how increased student participation in school decision making had changed the attitude of teachers towards listening to students - . 'Staff have become more willing to listen to and to initiate consultation with students over how to raise the quality of teaching and how to develop more independent and personalised learning.' Both crucial issues central to government policy for raising standards.

- ***That there could be a positive impact on the learning of those individual pupils who become involved as governors or who participate in other ways;***

There is already evidence from phase 2 that students who participate in governance procedures learn a lot about school governance and some participation skills in a short space of time. 'I'm definitely more confident about expressing my ideas to adults...' (Y11F Student at school A) There is some evidence that these participation skills are transferable – from school council to governors meeting and vice-versa. There is little or no evidence yet for benefit to wider learning though all participant students referred to increased self-confidence. Hannam (2001) made a first attempt at examining this issue and hopefully the evaluation of phases 3 and 4 can add to this. There is certainly anecdotal evidence that the time given to participation in governance does no harm to learning elsewhere.

Head teacher of school A, where the student associate governors attend several committees as well as the full governing body, ‘...their parents are very proud of the positions they hold, but I am very sensitive to the question of time management for students, staff and indeed governors themselves. I don’t believe in overburdening them.’

Governor of school A ‘...the time management skills of the student members is so much better than mine...they have coped with the pace of the meetings...it is more natural for them to come to a meeting here than for governors like me out there running a business.’

Student (Y11 F) in school A ‘...they (the meetings) are not all in one week. And we live local and it’s only 2 or 3 hours in the evening.’

- ***That the involvement of students at the summit of decision making within the school could both symbolically and practically add weight and status to the structure of pupil democracy in the school (such as school, year, house and class councils) thereby reducing the likelihood of this structure being dismissed as tokenistic by the majority of pupils;***

Evidence is emerging that student participation in governance in the ‘experienced’ schools is raising the status and profile of their student councils though evidence from the visits and from some Ofsted reports suggests that these schools tended to have councils that were relatively effective, well regarded by students, and non-tokenistic anyway. This is also the case in most of the other schools planning to launch student participation in governance in phase 3.

A student in school E contrasted the ‘kids stuff’ of the school council with her work as a student associate governor – ‘...I never feel that my ideas are not listened to (at governors premises committee meetings)...I always make my points strongly...they asked me about the new government guidelines on drugs policy...were they good...but I have never been too keen on doing the school council because I feel it is silly petty things that are raised.’ If governing bodies take the opportunity to refer questions back to school councils, as is beginning to happen, this could have the effect of lifting the level and quality of debate at school councils and thus in turn raise their status in the eyes of the students as a whole.

- ***That the involvement of pupils in school decision-making is a positive way of underpinning the delivery of Citizenship as part of the National Curriculum, whether this be through contributing to Citizenship modules within a PSHE programme, a GCSE Short Course in Citizenship Studies, an ASDAN Youth Award programme or within, following Tomlinson’s initial recommendations, a 14-19 Diploma framework;***

There was evidence from several of the project schools that students were beginning to participate in the design of PSHE courses, though not directly through their involvement in governance.

- ***That the experience of participation in school governance will encourage pupils to go on to participate in the growing number of ‘citizen governor’ roles after they leave school thus fulfilling part of the wider and long-term***

goals of the Citizenship Curriculum. This could of course include becoming adult school governors;

Obviously too soon to have any evidence though several student associate governors felt that the experience had given them a taste for participating in this kind of decision making. Two year 11 students in 11-16 schools said that they would like to play a similar role in their Further Education colleges after transfer.

- ***That the participation of pupils as governors could improve the quality of governing bodies and of school governance itself.***

Several governors indicated that this is indeed already the case in the schools where students have begun to attend governor's meetings.

Chair of premises committee at school E - 'I used to be able to bounce ideas off my own children until they left the school but this not available to all governors and now my children have left...you don't always have the view of the coalface...interaction with the pupils keeps our feet firmly on the ground...and gives another view of how the tasks that we do whether they are successful or not because ...you need a reality check every now and again...it brings an extra dimension in there really...I think it's a brilliant idea.'

Vice-chair of governors at school A – 'I think that the students associate members have raised the profile of the governors with the other students and the parents...even parents don't know what governors really do...its been a good educating and marketing exercise...they can taste it for themselves...it feeds back to parents It would be really really interesting if some of our student associates eventually became full governors.'

Chair of curriculum and student management committee at school C – 'Well I was quite shocked at first...it was an idea that was totally new to me to find a student on the committee. But in fact it works very well...the students bring a different viewpoint...particularly where we have been reviewing so many policies lately...although there are a lot of adults there's always something from the students that we would not have thought of. We are making more informed decisions so they must be better decisions.'

Potential Pitfalls

The following potential pitfalls were identified by the project team in the Phase 1 report.

- **Will participation in often-dull governing body meetings put pupils off democracy for life?**

This not happening so far. In fact there is evidence that the presence of students has a 'lightening' effect upon meetings making them more enjoyable and interesting for all participants.

Students (Y11 F and Y8 M) from school D – 'It isn't at all boring. I love doing things for the school...', 'I know it might sound boring to other people like...', 'Cheesy!', 'Yeah Boffin –but I really enjoy it...I thought it was going to be like we are just going

to be sitting there watching, but when we got the hang of it we started contributing...putting our ideas in.'

Student (Y10 F) school D – 'Actually I don't find the meetings boring. Personally I think it's because I'm nosey!'

Student (Y11 F) school A – 'It's interesting because the meetings go quiet and they just listen to us...we just sit down and talk to adults like adults...just explain what we want...'

Student (Y9 M) school C – 'I've been on the curriculum committee since year 7...and finance committee would be something that would really interest me too...'

Chair of premises committee school E – 'We smile more at meetings when the students are there. I think it lightens a meeting because it can get very 'down' with all adults...'

Chair of curriculum committee school C – '...the meetings have got to be conducive and relaxed so that the students feel that they can make a contribution. They do not have to be too formal and there is quite a lot of laughter in our meetings...', 'Yeah!!' (Y9 M student)

- **How will confidential matters be dealt with?**

Covered above. This has not emerged as a problem so far.

- **Will the 'usual suspects' (bright, normally middle class pupils) be involved to the (further) exclusion of other pupils?**

There is a danger that this could happen that is also recognised by some students who have so far had experience of governors meetings. A year 11 boy at school B responded to a question about inclusion with 'It's a shame but I would have to agree with that.' However it is not the whole picture. At school J the year 10 boy chair of the school council who had just attended his first governors' meeting at the end of term in July where he made a strongly positive impression came from a very disadvantaged background which included being in care. Staff and governors from all the schools made a strong commitment to inclusion at the May event but it is easier said than done. In a study of 12 highly student participative schools (Hannam 2001) exclusion rates were found to be lower than average for similar schools and this was the impression obtained from Ofsted reports on the project schools.

- **Could the Pupils as Associate Members initiative undermine some of the other emerging mechanisms for pupil voice, in particular schools councils?**

In general the evidence appears to be that opportunities for student participation are mutually reinforcing. There were signs of a raised profile for school councils where students were attending governing bodies and feeding back to school councils. However in a study involving 4 schools with strong students-as-researchers programmes (Hannam, 2004) some creative rivalry between the researchers and school council members was observed. One student governor in school D did comment that the school council dealt with 'kids stuff' by comparison with the governors.

- **What will happen if demands from pupil governors can't or won't be met? In particular if they begin to actively participate in the 'accountability' function of the governing body could this create unmanageable tensions that may have adverse outcomes for the individual students concerned?**

The students, whether they had attended governors meetings or not, responded sharply to the suggestion that they would be discouraged and give up if they asked for the 'moon' and did not immediately get it.

Student (Y11 F) school N – 'I think that just shows ignorance about the maturity of the pupils who would want to be associate governors.'

Student (Y9 M) school C – 'We realise that some things the students want are just out of the question...we realise that just because you say something does not mean it is going to happen...'

Student (Y10 F) school E – 'Sometimes at school council students did ask for impossible things...I thought it was silly...I learned from that experience that it was important for my ideas to be really practical if I wanted to be listened to by governors.'

In three schools students have significantly affected governor decisions. The swimming pool issue at school E, the extra money for the music department in school A and the rejection of senior management curriculum proposals for a reduction in time for religious education in school B. In all these cases supportive senior management were delighted to see student influence being successfully exerted, even when they lost some of their curriculum flexibility as a result. However it is easy to imagine scenarios where student influence might be detrimental to the perceived goals of some staff who may lack the broader vision shown by supportive senior managers, and that this might create difficult tensions for the students involved. Schools are traditionally authoritarian and hierarchical institutions and staff within them have been known to abuse their power. This will need to be monitored with care as the project unfolds though it must be said that the ethos of the project schools with their enthusiasm for the development of the student voice would mitigate the likelihood of such problems occurring.

- **Are established adult school governors ready to change the content and style of governing body reports and meetings to meet the needs of pupil members?**

The answer to this as far as the experience of the project schools so far is concerned is a resounding 'yes'. They appear to have a good grasp of the needs of the students and are willing to make considerable efforts to meet them.

In only one case has a governor expressed concerns about the proposal to involve students where senior management, the chair of governors and probably the rest of the governing body, though it has not yet come to a vote, are very supportive of the idea. The governor concerned is a teacher governor and may speak for a portion of the teaching body. This has created a delicate situation because two students have attended a governors meeting to discuss their representation where they were well received and left very keen to participate. This governor believes that although the development might be appropriate in more academic and middle class schools it was probably not suitable for their students in a relatively impoverished area. This governor has made an alternative proposal that governors should begin to attend

school council meetings instead. The issue is to be presented to the whole staff. Having interviewed the students concerned the author found them to be as impressive in their capabilities and grasp of the issues as any of the student associates in the 'experienced' schools – though they were clearly not as middle class as some and might possibly have had a more limited vocabulary. Their potential gain from the experience of participation in governance would seem to be all the greater! The most recent Ofsted report for this school described the schools' attempts to redress social disadvantage in exemplary and glowing terms and highlights its development of student voice as a major achievement and explanation for escaping from special measures.

- **Will pupil governors have unique training needs that will have to be met, either by the school or by the LEA?**

They certainly have needs but so far there appears to have been no problem in meeting them 'in-house' in the schools. Staff, students and governors were agreed that a fairly low-key informal approach was best and had already proved effective in the 'experienced' schools. Too much emphasis on formal preparation and training could well be counter-productive. However all were equally agreed that it would be very useful for students to have the opportunity to meet up with students from other schools to share ideas and experiences. Hence the planned day in November 2004.

5 Conclusion - emerging issues for Phase 3 – and the question of voting

At the time of writing the five 'experienced' schools had reviewed their plans for phase 3 in the light of their experience and the other schools had firmed up their arrangements having learned from the five. Most have selected/elected their student associate governors and have begun to prepare them for their first meetings from September on. Some plan to do so in the first weeks of September (2004). No two schools have adopted precisely the same model.

Four of the five experienced schools have decided to increase the number of participating students. Three of the five intend to involve younger students in training roles in addition to existing senior students. The number planning to include students at full governing body meetings as well as committees increases from two to four and four schools propose to add further committees to those already attended. Four of the five schools will now include the issue in their school development or improvement plans.

A number of axes have emerged along which each school sits at a different point -

Number of students. This varies from possibly as many as ten students (Two for each committee and two for full governors meetings) at school J to two students at school D.

Age of students. Some schools are choosing to stick with senior students, year 10 or 11 in the case of the 11-16 schools, and including year 12 in the one 11-18 school. Others are choosing to involve younger students either through making it possible for them to volunteer as at school H or through age specific recruitment as at school B where they are keen to learn from the evidence of capacity building demonstrated by the previous practice at school C.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities. An almost perfect gender balance was observed in participating schools and ethnic groups were well represented in those schools that served them. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds, from which a higher proportion of students are usually alienated from school, were represented in schools that had a high proportion of such students, though possibly they were less visible in schools where they were fewer in number.

Length of service. Schools are dealing with the dilemma of building capacity/experience against maximising the opportunity for as many students as possible in a variety of ways. The most common term of service is to be two years but various more flexible proposals exist in some schools and of course two years is not possible for students starting their term of service in year 11 of an 11-16 school. Few schools wish to exclude year 11 for this reason or because of GCSE pressures though school F has decided to do so.

Meetings attended. This ranges from full governing body and all committees at school A to just one committee at school D. Numbers are equally divided between those choosing to send students straight to full governors meetings and those intending to commence with one or more committee. Where one committee has been chosen premises and curriculum are the most popular. Three schools are intending that students should attend finance committee but only one proposes student

membership of the personnel committee. In all cases schools propose to send students to meetings in at least pairs. Several schools are intending mixed age and gender pairing.

Means of selection/election. This ranges from wholly adult selected and independent from the school council at School E, to adult selected but ex-officio members of school council at school A, through a variety of methods whereby adults and students both have an input, through elected by peers from school council members at school F, to wholly elected by all students from an open panel of volunteers independent from the school council at school H.

Links with students' representative structures such as school councils. All the project schools appeared to have school councils that are relatively effective and well regarded by students compared to the many that research shows to be tokenistic. (Hannam 2004 and forthcoming). In nearly all cases schools are ensuring that student associate governors are either elected or appointed from student councils, or that they become ex-officio members of the council. The structure of year councils and constituent tutor groups is then used as a pathway for ideas and feedback. All schools find it difficult to ensure that this pathway is effective in all cases for all students due to varying degrees of tutor capability and willingness to facilitate effective discussions, and in some cases due to insufficient time being available for the most willing tutors to do so effectively. Thus schools are creating many additional means of communication such as assemblies, notice-boards, newsletters and newspapers, and clinics or surgeries. Most schools are making significant efforts to ensure that all staff understand the importance of the project and the need for effective communication and involvement for all students. The opposition that has surfaced in one school could be seen as partly a result of paying insufficient attention to this.

The question of students voting at governors committees has arisen at two schools where the head teachers and chairs of governors are keen to take this next step. Since the inception of the project the DfES has published the definitive Guides to the Law for School Governors (DfES, 2004) for various categories of school. All contain the following -

Annex 2, Statutory Instrument 2003 No 1377 The School Governance (Procedures)(England) Regulations 2003 Part 4 Committees of Governing Bodies (p11) para. 22 states -

(2) Subject to Paragraphs (3) and (4) of this regulation, an associate member shall have such voting rights in a committee to which he is appointed as shall be determined by the governing body at the date of his appointment

(3) An associate member may not vote on any resolution concerning

(a) admissions

(b) pupil discipline

(c) election or appointment of governors

(d) the budget and financial commitments of the governing body

(4) An associate member may not vote on any other business transacted by any committee unless he was aged 18 or over at the date of his appointment.
(my underlining)

This appears to single out 18 year-old student associate members in 11-18 schools who will almost certainly have been appointed before their 18th birthday and has caused some resentment. If they are 18 year-old community representatives with no previous experience of school governance they can vote but if they are 18 year-old school students with years of experience they cannot. This seems absurd and almost designed to undermine student governor confidence. One participant commented that 'As far as I can see there is nothing to prevent a Year 13 associate member resigning on the eve of their 18th birthday and being reappointed on their birthday and thus gaining voting rights should the governors want to award them.'

If phase 3 unfolds with anything like the enthusiasm that has been displayed in the project schools during phase 2 and if the voting age is reduced to 16 then perhaps government can be persuaded to give student associate governors full voting rights as their peers have in the Scandinavian school systems.

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Appendix 1 - the interview schedules – an example

I Was A Teenage Governor – SCHEDULE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS WHO HAVE ALREADY ATTENDED GOVERNORS MEETINGS

- 1. What type of meetings have you attended?**
- 2. How many have you attended and for how long?**
- 3. How were you chosen?**
- 4. What preparation/training were you given before the first meeting?
How useful was it? *Very/Fairly/Not Much/Useless***
- 5. What p/t have you received since?
How useful was it? *Very/Fairly/Not Much/Useless***
- 6. What preparation would you recommend for new associate members?**
- 7. Can you remember how you felt before the first meeting?**
- 8. What was it like at that meeting? Did you feel welcome, uncertain, unable to speak?**
- 9. Did you feel like dropping out? If so what stopped you?**
- 10. Do you receive agendas and minutes for meetings?
How are confidential issues dealt with?
Do you have to leave meetings? How do you feel about this?**
- 11. Is it possible to share these with other students before governors' meetings?**
- 12. How do you represent the views of other students?**
- 13. How do you feedback to the other students?**
- 14. Do you think you have had any impact on governors discussions and decisions?**
- 15. What have been the benefits of your presence for the governors, yourselves, and the school as a whole?**
- 16. What advice would you give a school that was thinking of involving students in governance? (Head, Governors, Students?)**
- 17. Are there any dangers – and how might they be avoided?**
- 18. Would you be willing to help prepare for student session on July 1st?**

Appendix 2 – a draft proposal for the evaluation of Phases 3 and 4

I Was a Teenage Governor Project – Comments from Perpetua Kirby, of PK Research Consultancy 4.3.04

Phase 2

You seem to have covered the sorts of things needed in phase 2

- Detailed information about current and past pupil participation within the schools and historical factors that have helped/hindered this development (this will be valuable base line information plus help to identify possible process issues that will aid/hinder the project in future)
- Training for young people - Evaluation of training of young people (simple quick evaluation at end of training/support events)
- Support/training for governors / teaching staff – evaluation from governors / teaching staff (simple quick evaluation at end of training/support events)
- Pupil (s)election – details of how and why different approaches chosen and feedback on how this worked from staff and students' perspectives (ideally, also from students that weren't standing as governors, but this might be too difficult to collect at this stage – possibly more appropriate for phase 3).

Input on self-evaluation – if this is to be integrated into the project, it is best to start early. Ideally a session on what they may want to evaluate and how. This would need to be once the student governors were elected, so that they can play an active part in this. Even if a small introduction was done in phase 2, more could be done in phase 3.

If the evaluation framework is to be completed in phase 2, then it would be good to get student/governors etc feedback on the project hypothesis to be explored in the evaluation (see below) – ie whether they agree that your hypothesis are the priorities to be examined.

Phase 3

Self-evaluation

Workshop session on self-evaluation – perhaps with representatives (one student/one adult) from each governing body to attend a whole day session – they then go back to their school and implement. To be shared at your planned residentials in summer 2005 (and July 2006?). Perhaps refresher session mid spring term with the two representatives to encourage on-going self-evaluation. Self-evaluation techniques would have to be small-scale and imaginative to encourage staff and student commitment. If it becomes clear, however, that all or most schools do not have the time or resources to undertake self-evaluation during the school day, it would be particularly important for sessions at IWATG central meetings/residentials to be dedicated to reflecting on and recording learning.

Some of those who are interested in self-evaluation could possibly also act as advisers to the independent evaluation. It would be good to also involve some students who are not governors and teachers as advisers. Together with ippr, Derry Hannam, Citizenship Foundation and other partners. If the students/teachers were interested they could do some peer research on issues relevant to the evaluation.

Independent evaluation

Key principles of the evaluation

- *Child-centred approach*
- *Stakeholder advisory group*
- *Process and outcome evaluation*
- *Mixed-method (quantitative, qualitative and participatory) (eg interviews/surveys/focus groups with students; telephone interviews/focus groups with governors; interviews with key staff; peer interviews; observation)*
- *Involving views of different stakeholder groups*
- *Feedback (interim and end) to be discussed with all stakeholders*

Depending on the budget available for evaluation, it may be that most schools self-evaluate their work and the independent evaluation focuses on a few case studies (and / or collects minimal data from all schools)

Additional contextual information:

- Background information about each school – size, free school meals, SEN, sat scores, details about catchment area, etc.
- Make up and background information on governing body

Process evaluation

As well as looking at outcomes, it would be as important to examine how governing bodies involved young people, including how they supported the young people, governors and staff, and how this was linked to other participatory mechanisms in the school. This information could be collected in part by self-evaluation and school documentation (encouraging schools to keep visual records of what they do would really help this and be useful also for illustrating your planned publications) but also by independent evaluation interviews with young people, governors and teaching staff.

Outcomes

I have divided your hypothesis/pitfalls into their relation to different stakeholders (I did this primarily to help my own understanding and thinking). The independent evaluation would set out to examine these hypothesis. Other stakeholders should agree/amend this list of hypothesis and they should be prioritised. I have given a few examples of the types of data that could be collected (but not spent much time on this).

a) Students

Your initial hypothesis / possible pitfalls

- That the involvement of students at the summit of decision making within the school could both symbolically and practically add weight and status to the structure of pupil democracy in the school (such as school, year, house and class councils) thereby reducing the likelihood of this structure being dismissed as tokenistic by the majority of pupils;
- Will the 'usual suspects' (bright, normally middle class pupils) be involved to the (further) exclusion of other pupils?
- Will participation in often-dull governing body meetings put pupils off democracy for life?

Possible data collection

- Changes over time in all school students' and student governors' knowledge and perception of the governing bodies and other democratic school structures, including perceptions of student governors' selection and representation (pre and post comparison) (it would be great to involve the above group of students/governors in developing a short survey for a sample of students in each school – say one class per year group),
- Student governors' previous experience of other civil engagement (within and outside school), future aspirations/plans and experience of selection process/being a governor. (pre- and post-)

b) Student Governors

Your initial hypothesis / possible pitfalls

- That there could be a positive impact on the learning of those individual pupils who become involved as governors or who participate in other ways;
- Governing bodies offer students a demoralising version of democracy in action,
- That the experience of participation in school governance will encourage pupils to go on to participate in the growing number of 'citizen governor' roles after they leave school thus fulfilling part of the wider and long-term goals of the Citizenship Curriculum. This could of course include becoming adult school governors;
- What will happen if demands from pupil governors can't or won't be met? In particular if they begin to actively participate in the 'accountability' function of the governing body could this create unmanageable tensions that may have adverse outcomes for the individual students concerned?
- Will pupil governors have unique training needs that will have to be met, either by the school or by the LEA?

c) Governors

Your initial hypothesis / possible pitfalls

- Are established adult school governors ready to change the content and style of governing body reports and meetings to meet the needs of pupil members?
- That the involvement of students at the summit of decision making within the school could both symbolically and practically add weight and status to the structure of pupil democracy in the school (such as school, year, house and class councils)

Possible data collection

- Governors' knowledge and attitudes of pupil participation in school (pre and post)

d) Governing bodies

Your initial hypothesis / possible pitfalls

- That school governing bodies, for all their faults, still retain radical potential as spaces to change policies and practices in schools;
- Governing bodies are appropriate for a for young people: they are not too complicated, that the issues are too sensitive) are the same as those that were advanced against the involvement of parent governors two decades ago and, as such, are false;
- How will confidential matters be dealt with?
- That the participation of pupils as governors could improve the quality of governing bodies and of school governance itself.

e) The whole school community

Your initial hypothesis / possible pitfalls

- That the involvement of pupils on governing bodies, school councils, pupils-as-researcher projects, community forums and interview panels could have a positive impact on the school's culture and ethos
- Could the Pupils as Associate Members initiative undermine some of the other emerging mechanisms for pupil voice, in particular schools councils?
- That the involvement of students at the summit of decision making within the school could both symbolically and practically add weight and status to the structure of pupil democracy in the school (such as **school, year, house and class councils**)
- That the involvement of pupils in school decision-making is a positive way of underpinning the delivery of Citizenship as part of the National Curriculum, whether this be through contributing to Citizenship modules within a PSHE programme, a GCSE Short Course in Citizenship Studies, an ASDAN Youth Award programme or within, following Tomlinson's initial recommendations, a 14-19 Diploma framework;

Phase 4

Phase 4 is concerned with dissemination, so my only comments at this stage are as follows:

Think carefully about who is the audience of the evaluation and ensure that issues that will be important to them are included. Think about what external audiences may be interested and how you might best disseminate learning to them – both through written reports and other forums/meetings/conferences. Possibly invite an external 'potential audience' as an adviser.

As above, I suggest that you start collecting visual / photos of the work from the start to illustrate future publications.

Also, as people learn best by seeing (and doing) for themselves it might be worth considering videoing the project, in order to convince others of its possibility/value. This may have more impact on other governors/schools/funders together with an evaluation.