

Civil rights in schools

What do children know about their civil rights and what practical relevance do these rights have in schools? The *Civil Rights in Schools Project* asked pupils, aged 7-17, and their teachers for their views about children's civil rights. Questions were based on the United Nations (UN) 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the research took place in Britain and Northern Ireland.

* Of the 2,272 pupils in the survey, over 75% said they had not heard about the CRC. Almost all the rest had heard only "a bit about it".

* Children's civil rights are often dismissed with assertions that children cannot understand about rights, and therefore they cannot claim rights or exercise them responsibly. Yet 40% of pupils (and 11% of teachers) said pupils have too few rights at school. Many want to contribute more to their school community, and be recognised as responsible, competent people.

* Students described how teachers do not have to explain or justify detentions and other punishments - and how many students felt there was a climate of dismissing and mistrusting pupils' views.

* School councils are the key practical and symbolic indicator of democracy in a school. Half the students said they had a school council. About one fifth thought they had an effective council. Even the youngest children could distinguish between a democratic and a token council.

* Students wanted a better balance between education 'delivered' by knowledgeable adults, and opportunities for students to contribute, be creative, imaginative and critically aware, and to exchange ideas with one another.

* Students completed a long questionnaire in a serious and thoughtful way and welcomed the opportunity to talk in group discussions about their views, many saying they were not used to adults listening to them.

Knowledge about children's rights

The United Nations (UN) 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is an internationally agreed, legally-binding treaty. The British Government ratified the CRC in 1991, and so promised to implement the CRC in law, policy and practice in all matters affecting the child. This includes a responsibility to make the CRC "well known to adults and children alike" (article 42), and to report regularly to the UN on progress in

implementing children's rights (article 44).

Less than 5% of pupils in the survey had heard more than "a bit" about the CRC, and schools' lack of interest in children's rights is suggested by the low response rate from schools. Of 250 schools invited to take part

in the survey, only 49 agreed to do so. Some teachers said they wanted to help, but their head teachers had

refused permission. They seemed not to know that the government has promised to respect children's rights set out in the CRC, including in schools.

As children's rights are so little understood, the survey booklet included an explanation:

"There are three main kinds of rights: Rights to things you need, such as a Here is a list of the rights in the survey.

Your right: to respect for your worth and dignity; to express yourself, and to develop your skills and talents fully.

Your right: to be heard, to have your views taken seriously in matters that affect you; to share in making decisions about your life.

The right: to hold your own beliefs, and to have all kinds of useful information and ideas; to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; to learn to live in peace, tolerance, equality and friendship, and with respect for nature.

The right: to go to peaceful meetings; your right to privacy and respect, and to fair discipline.

Your right to be kept safe from harm.

Working together for rights, and how these are shared in your school."

Why do children's civil rights matter?

Adults in democracies can take their human or civil rights for granted, though children cannot. All rights are qualified by respect for safety, morals, law and order. Children's rights are also qualified by their age and ability and by their parents' rights and responsibilities.

As the CRC states, civil rights are about mutual respect and social progress. Peace and justice in the

home, food, places to play and to learn.

Rights to be kept safe from harm.

And human rights to share in deciding about how you live your life.

This survey is mainly about the third kind: human rights at school.

future depend on children learning to respect one another's equal rights, their worth and dignity.

"I think that children need to be treated like adults more, because it is only the age that is different. Everyone still has opinions whether they are 10 or 40, it doesn't matter. Everyone still has rights to say what they believe. If we live in a free country then we should have the opportunity. However old you are, you still matter." (Quotes are from the group discussions)

People's rights to express a view, and to influence decisions which affect them, enable more informed decisions to be made. Discussion groups described how, when teachers and students try to solve problems together, they can draw on a wider range of insights. When they agree on solutions, these are more likely to be acted on, and to be supported with less resistance or apathy. When children's rights are ignored or denied, they are taught a powerful example of disrespect and discouragement. Students gave vivid examples of their own views and of school council decisions being ignored by adults.

Fair treatment and respect

Civil rights include vital protections from arbitrary detention and assault. Teachers can 'give' detentions and other punishments without having to

explain or justify them. Physical punishment is no longer allowed in schools. Yet teachers now involve parents much more in controlling children's behaviour at school than they did a decade ago, and parents can legally hit children. In the group discussions, younger children talked about their fear of angry parents being summoned to the school, and their concern for some children with violent parents.

Fair discipline, at any age, includes the right to a fair hearing. It is hard for children to explain their case to rushed and stressed teachers and to parents who have not witnessed the Respect for privacy was highly valued. Pupils would often say: "This boy/ girl/ teacher - I won't say their name - they said ..." and *"The thing I liked most was when the [questionnaire] book said that the teachers won't look at what you have said, and you don't need to put your name on the book, so we could say what we liked."*

In a few primary schools in the survey, staff and students worked closely together on solving behaviour problems, and on ensuring that their school was welcoming and inclusive to profoundly disabled pupils, or asylum seekers. OFSTED reports of these schools (some of which were very disadvantaged record the children's maturity. The students talked about how much more they respected teachers who respected them. Their comments showed how when adults respect children as morally responsible people, it is easier for children to respect the adults and one another.

Members of the school community

The literature on improving schools

events. In law, teachers do not have to listen or explain to students, even in such serious cases as statementing pupils for special educational need, or excluding pupils from school.

Pupils had generally low expectations of receiving fair treatment at school. Only a quarter said yes, they thought their teachers believe what they say, another half said this varies. About a third would trust teachers to keep a secret, and thought that teachers are careful to be fair before talking about pupils, and that they listen before deciding if someone is at fault.

and the many detailed government policies on curriculum and school management tend to be 'top down', stressing adult expertise. Examples of improvements in the schools visited during the project showed the vital importance of the students playing an active part in planning and helping to raise standards.

As an indicator of democracy in schools, the Project looked at how many had a school council. Half the students (52%) said they had a school council; 20% thought their council was effective and 28% said theirs was ineffective. Pupils saw councils as a potentially democratic forum for negotiating school rules and conditions.

Many teachers insisted on minor rules being kept, believing this to be an essential protection against the breaking of important rules. Yet many students agreed with keeping important rules but felt that petty rules created unnecessary disruption and bad feeling, undermining rather than protecting respect for school rules.

Students were asked to name their main likes and dislikes at school. The top likes (named lessons, sports, friends, breaks, art) link to their teachers and peers. Although many reports on problems in schools stress problems caused by pupils (bullying, disruption) the top dislikes named in the survey could all be seen as relating to conditions created by adults, not by young people (certain lessons, teachers, rules, too much work, physical conditions in the school).

Effective councils can make some spending choices using students' expertise. One from many examples of need, is that 47% of students said they had nowhere safe to keep coats and bags, a form of disrespect which adults would not accept for themselves and which undermines general respect in the school for people's property and comfort.

"It's so boring when they keep telling you that making the world a better place means picking up litter and not killing whales."

Assemblies can increase or undermine enthusiasm and solidarity in schools. Some assemblies were cheerful celebrations, others were dull or acrimonious: 16 % of students said they liked assemblies, 41% did not like them, and others gave qualified replies, 55 % thought they should be able to choose whether to attend.

Parents can opt their children into or out of assembly and lessons on religion. Yet some students had strong ideas about freedom of conscience and religion, linked to respect for their own honesty and integrity.

Even 8-year-olds distinguished between democratic and token councils, and said:

"The council meetings aren't much good because we have to write the newsletter then, and we can't discuss things."

There was cynicism or anger about token councils. Effective councils need time for proper reporting between classes and council, which children aged from 8-years (and maybe younger) could do.

Thought, conscience and religion

In the group discussions, students recounted how teachers avoided having practical sessions on children's civil rights. Instead they stress children's protection rights and duties, adults' liberties, dull rules about democracy, and remote ideas about justice and peace. As one 8-year-old said:

"I know it's a government thing, [compulsory assemblies] but I think we should have the option about assemblies, because...I don't believe in UFOs, I don't believe in God or anything, and I still have to go into assemblies. It's a pointless exercise." "Religious studies is a bad lesson, they don't let you have your own views, which they should because it's moral...it's [made] like in an exam, true or false...they don't want to know what you think ...but if you write what they want to hear you get full marks."

Students tended to welcome opportunities to be creative and to attend student-led assemblies.

"I did an assembly and you are given a book and you find a bit and read it out. It's not what you believe in, or that you can choose your own issue. We're not allowed to just sit down

and write our own ones, we have to get them out of books."

This point was made many times over on many topics. Students wanted more opportunities to express their own views, to contribute and to debate amongst themselves.

Listening to young people

Recent policies have much reduced students' control over their learning and have cut their break times. Academic benefits are gained at a high social cost for students who have little time with friends at school or after school because of lack of transport or stranger-danger and traffic fears. Yet young people showed how greatly they valued both academic and social opportunities. They were asked to ring the main purposes of school for them. The top choices were:

- good teaching to help me to pass tests and exams
85%
- time to be with friends
82%
- good teaching to help me to get the job/career I want to do
80%
- learning about the real world, such as that I might be

"We are never actually asked anything, we are just told we have got to do this, we have got to do that. It was nice [with the survey] to actually think that somebody was taking into consideration what you thought or wanted to say." The large gaps in current knowledge about young people's views on many important issues could be filled partly by similar detailed, large-scale surveys.

About the research

During 1996-1998, 2,272 people

- unemployed
62%
- getting ideas about interesting new things I could try
61%
- learning to be part of a group and to get on with people
60%

Children and teenagers showed that they care deeply about being heard and respected. The many serious, thoughtful responses showed:

- * how greatly schools could improve, and disaffection be reduced, if students were more formally involved at every level of planning in the education services;
- * how (contrary to received wisdom) children *can* complete long questionnaires provided they are designed with children in mind and are clearly worded in consultation with children themselves.

Equally important, perhaps, was the finding that the children welcomed the opportunity to take part: the youngest group was most likely to say they found the 24-page questionnaire interesting or very interesting (88%). Many students said they enjoyed the survey partly because they are seldom listened to.

aged 7-17 took part in a postal questionnaire survey in 49 schools in Britain and Northern Ireland. The 24-page question booklet had a cover with details about the CRC for each person to keep. In 16 schools, 34 open-ended, tape-recorded small group discussions were held. Replies were analysed by spss.pc and qualitatively by themes. Each school was sent a short report of their replies, set out as a wall display. Linked research examined and reported in detail how staff and students in certain schools work together, or in opposition, in efforts

to improve standards of behaviour.

The research is reported in papers submitted to four research/practice journals, and in three related books.

* Highfield School (ed. Alderson P) 1997 *Changing our school: promoting positive behaviour*. Plymouth: Highfield School.

* Cleves School (ed. Alderson P) 1999 *Learning and inclusion: the Cleves School experience*. London: David Fulton.

* Alderson P, Goodey C 1998 *Enabling education: experiences in special and ordinary schools*. London: Tufnell Press/Turnaround Unit 3 Olympia Trading Estate Cobury Road London N22 6TZ, £13.99 inc p+p.

How to get further information

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The research reported in this Briefing is part of the Economic and Social Research Council's *Children 5-16 Research Programme*, which consists of twenty-two linked research projects looking at different aspects of children's lives in contemporary society. The central theme of the Programme is to look at children as 'social actors' - who make an active contribution to their families and communities and to society. For further information, including other briefings in this series, contact the Programme Office at the address below.

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Civil Rights in Schools 1996-1998

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Civil Rights in Schools 1996-1998

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1. Background

Children's civil rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989

The research revealed widespread unawareness about real meanings of children's rights and considerable hostility towards them among adults. This introduction therefore explains some of the multi-disciplinary background to concepts of children's agency and to children's civil rights and the CRC.

Commonly given reasons for dismissing children's civil rights are that children cannot understand rights, and therefore cannot claim or say they want to have rights, or exercise rights responsibly. However, the Civil Rights in Schools research project reports:

- * new *findings* about the thoughtful and responsible understanding and deep concern about civil rights expressed by people aged from 7 to 17 years, and evidence of ways in which active respect for rights can help to make schools more civilised places for young people and for adults;
- * analysis of *theories* of childhood, of teaching and learning, of the active contributing pupil or alternatively of the more passive model of the developing, inadequate pupil to whom the curriculum is "delivered", theories which powerfully shape positive or negative relations between staff and students and encourage or prevent mutual respect for their rights;
- * new *methods* of collecting the detailed views of large numbers of young people, relatively quickly and cost-effectively, even on quite abstract topics such as civil rights, when these are set out in child-friendly booklet questionnaires, clearly worded and designed, with practical questions of direct interest to young people and selected with their help; and
- * other evidence which is relevant to academics studying children and teenagers, rights, citizenship and education, as well as to policy makers and practitioners concerned about young people's education and welfare. Reports from this project include examples of good practice which promote children's rights in imaginative and positive ways.

The research was designed to examine young people's own views about how they are treated as pupils, and about their actual and potential contribution to their school, as moral agents in their own right. Too often, adults discuss passive education for citizenship about future possibilities, instead of active citizenship education concerned with present realities and concerns - such as pupils confronting bullying, or organising their own meetings, or their sense of belonging, or not belonging, to the school community. The intention was to expand knowledge about children's lives, perspectives, actions and influence in the context of school, treating 'children' as the primary unit of analysis, instead of 'schools' - which so often actually means the adult members only.

Check for repeats here

The research aimed to support the ESRC Children 5-16 Programme objectives by:

- * contributing knowledge about the changing conditions of children's everyday life at school;
- * advancing theoretical study of children's views and activities relating to justice, respect and citizenship as members of their school communities;
- * developing sensitive, detailed, reliable and cost effective methods for large-scale surveys of children's views;

- * advancing multi-disciplinary research and analysis which draws on international politics of human rights, philosophy, law, psychology and child development, education, and the sociology, history and anthropology of childhood;
- * contributing to public policy debates and engaging children in these debates about their status and competence as active users of and contributors to education services;
- * meeting the express needs of users of research - pupils, practitioners, professional and policy organisations - by collaborating with them through the research.

Aim 5, extra curricular materials about rights produced with children has mainly taken the form of two books by children and staff in primary schools on how the children are involved in organising the school and the positive relationships. Rather than explicitly explaining the CRC, the books describe the benefits to all in the school of respecting CRC principles and how this can be done. We originally put “extra-curricular” because there are already curricular materials on the CRC. However, few of these address children’s civil rights in schools. There is a need for more materials linking CRC aspects of formal teaching and whole school activities, and showing the pedagogical problems that arise when there is conflict between rhetoric and reality about rights in schools. The materials need to address three levels:

- reasons for adults’ resistance to the CRC, and how these are mistaken, in order to change beliefs and attitudes;
- ideas for the content and teaching about the CRC during and around formal classes;
- practical reports of how the CRC principles are benefitting schools.

Longer term aims of this project included:

- To increase awareness among children and adults of the CRC and its practical relevance to effective schools;
- to increase further the use of reliable and sensitive research methods with children of widely ranging abilities, and thereby to add to the growing public and professional understanding of and respect for children;
- to make closer links between the valuable theories and empirical data derived from social science study of children and the policies and practices that prevail in schools;
- to disseminate and promote imaginative and practical ideas about how to respond to pupils as moral agents with rights and responsibilities who share in running their schools.

The research supports ESRC's Children 5-16 Programme objectives by:

- * making a significant contribution to knowledge of the changing conditions of children's everyday life at school;
- * advancing theoretical study of a range of children as moral agents, their consciousness of their ability or inability to negotiate and to further their collective interests, and their views on their roles as current and future citizens;
- * developing sensitive, detailed, reliable and cost effective methods, with a user-friendly questionnaire involving concrete treatment of abstract concepts, to elicit the views of large numbers of children;
- * advancing multi-disciplinary research and analysis which draws on international politics of human rights, philosophy, law, psychology and child development, education, and the sociology, history and anthropology of childhood;
- * establishing the basis for cross-national comparisons through collaborative use of the questionnaire;
- * contributing to public policy debates and engaging children in these debates about their status

and competence as users of education services - civil rights are particularly about right-holders furthering their collective rights, interests and responsibilities, in contrast to children's more passive role in relation to their rights to resources and to protection;

* meeting the express needs of users of research - pupils, practitioners, professional and policy organisations - by collaborating with them at the design, data collection and analysis, report writing and dissemination stages of the research.

The main theoretical, practical and policy work on which the research draws

The research draws on several disciplines: international politics of human rights; philosophy of autonomy and rights; law; psychology and child development; education; sociology, history and anthropology of childhood. Contributions under each of these headings will briefly be reviewed.

The CRC was drafted from 1979 to 1989, and adapts centuries of declarations of adults' rights into terms which apply to children. Frequently, there is concern that participation rights expose children to risks of harm and neglect. However, all rights are relative, not absolute, and are subject to safeguards. The Convention repeatedly states that 'the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration' (1,3,21). Rights in the Convention are affected by the 'evolving capacities of the child', the 'responsibilities, rights and duties of parents'(5) and the national law (31). Rights cannot be exercised in ways which would harm the child or other people. They must 'respect the rights and reputations of others', as well as 'national security and public order, health and morals' (13). The Convention sees rights not as endorsing selfish greedy individualism, but as increasing mutual respect. Any individual's claim to a right also confirms respect for everyone else's equal claim, dignity and worth; rights are collective and not individual concepts. The Convention includes aspiration rights as a means of furthering children's interests and concern for them, besides promoting 'social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity' (preamble). Inadequacies in the British government's record on implementing and publicising the CRC have been extensively reviewed (Lansdown and Newell 1994) and criticised by the United Nations (UN 1995). Although the Government is making far more effort to consult adults and children in compiling its report to the UN for 2000, many of the criticisms about education services which contravene the CRC stand, and some now carry greater weight.

When philosophers originally conceptualised civil rights, these were denied to women and children on the grounds that they could not be competent or autonomous (Locke, Kant, Paine). Critiques of Enlightenment concepts of rationality and competence, and richer meanings of autonomy developed mainly by feminist philosophers (Benhabib, Cornell, Grimshaw, Kennedy, Mendus), with postmodern analyses (e.g. Foucault, Donzelot, Kristeva) can be applied to de/reconstructing concepts of childhood autonomy (e.g. Griffiths and Smith 1989). Responses to the survey and group discussion have been analysed in the light of philosophical concepts of autonomy, altruism and moral competence.

English law is mainly concerned to protect rather than to respect children. However, the 1989 Children Act, with article 12 of the CRC, commits adults to listening to all children; the 1985 Gillick ruling enshrined respect for the decisions of competent children of any age. Yet recent court cases have retreated from Gillick (Alderson and Montgomery 1996), and there is much confusion about respect for children's rights (Franklin 1995). Education law continues to ignore children's civil rights which include *procedural rights*, such as that children should be informed and listened to by professionals who make decisions which affect them (Alderson 1992b). Children who are excluded from school, for example, and their parents, have no formal means for

appeal or for their views to be heard.

Confusion about children's rights tends to be compounded when 'experts', who influence legal and public opinion, academic research and professional policy and practice, work in traditions of child psychology and development founded by Locke, Kant, Freud and Piaget. When children are assumed to be only partly developed towards the endpoint of adulthood, they are implicitly seen as too passive, ignorant and irrational to be capable of autonomy. Protection to the point of coercion is endorsed, rather than respect, so that children are told that they have the 'right' to submit to interventions which they wish to refuse (Alderson and Goodwin 1994).

The ensuing contradictions are especially apparent in almost all recent literature on education which portrays parents as the consumers, teachers as the agents, and children as the products of the system (Jeffs 1995; CRDU 1994). Education is discussed mainly in terms of passively being taught, instead of actively learning, so that the literature on education for citizenship assumes that children should be informed in dry abstractions about adults' theories and activities (Carr 1991 is one of numerous examples). There is little appeal to personal involvement through what Dahrendorf has called the 'glands' of political involvement: fear, greed and altruism. Current education for citizenship does not appear to encourage young people to become politically active (Demos 1995).

Examples such as of children tackling bullying (Tattum 1993; Sharp and Smith 1994), however, implicitly raise new theories of children as citizens in the political society of the school. Disadvantaged children can especially benefit when all pupils are encouraged to learn through active involvement (NCE 1995), such as by exercising their rights in responsible and imaginative ways. The study examined how children believe that their rights can be promoted, within a compulsory system of education, in ways which enhance their collective wellbeing and learning. Children's views on their moral agency, and communal, mutually beneficial, rather than individualistic, theories of participation rights were explored (Lansdown 1995).

The sociology, history and anthropology of childhood (as in edited collections by Richards and Light 1986, James and Prout 1990, Corr and Jamieson 1990, Qvortrup et al 1994, and Mayall 1994) provide valuable theoretical analysis and empirical evidence of children as social actors and moral agents, to develop in the proposed research. This literature also emphasises how little is known about children's views and experiences. The rather abstract terms in which participation rights are framed might have made it harder to discuss these with children. However, research by social scientists demonstrates that children can discuss these issues in practical vivid ways, and indeed many children are deeply interested in them (Alderson 1993, 1997, 1999; Kelley, Hood and Mayall, 1996; NSPCC 1995; ACE 1995). For example, a request for 250 responses to a survey with 8- to 15-year olds about their personal decision making, elicited almost 900 completed questionnaires (Alderson 1992a).

The original research questions

How do children perceive their civil rights, their ability to exercise them, and the ways in which schools do or could respect these rights?

How do children's responses to the above questions vary with age, gender, ability, 'race'/ethnicity, and the setting and type of school?

How do schools respect children's civil rights in such matters as discipline, assemblies, school

councils, relations fostered between staff and pupils and between pupils, and extra-curricular activities?

How can awareness among children and adults of the UN CRC 1989 and its practical relevance to effective schools be increased?

How can new theoretical and empirical understandings that are emerging from the study of childhood be used to inform policy and practice in schools?

What examples of good practice linked to the CRC in schools in Britain and abroad would it be helpful to publicise and promote?

How can relatively fast and inexpensive survey methods be developed with children, which are also reliable, sensitive and detailed, in order reduce the current huge gaps in knowledge about children's views?

How can large-scale questionnaires on the complex and partly abstract topic of rights be efficiently complemented by in-depth discussion with small samples of children?

How can children be more fully involved in research from the design stages through to developing and implementing the recommendations?

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was agreed by the United Nations (UN) in 1989, and ratified by the British Government in 1991. The CRC is by far the most widely agreed international treaty, having been ratified by every Government in the world except for two, Somalia which has no government and the United States which never ratifies such treaties. Ratification means that Governments undertake to report regularly to the UN on progress in how they “give effect to the rights” in the CRC (44)¹ in law, policy and practice though “state parties”; in this report, these parties are mainly schools, teachers, school governors, local authorities, the Department for Education and Employment, and parents when they share responsibilities for their child’s formal education.

The cover to the questionnaire for this project briefly explains that:

¹ Numbers in brackets denote the relevant article in the CRC.

Human rights are about being able to do and say what you want to, as long as you do not break the law or hurt anyone.

Many people think that rights are about being selfish, grabbing what you can get and not caring about any one else. Yet human rights are about respect for everyone.

In 1989, everyone in the world was asked to support rights for children. How much do you think your school respects children's rights? And what do you think about your own rights?

It would be very helpful if you would tell us what you think. There are no right or wrong answers; it is your views which matter.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
is about rights for every child in the world.

There are three main kinds of rights:

1. Rights to things you need, such as a home, food, places to play and to learn.
2. Rights to be kept safe from harm.
3. And human rights to share in deciding about how you live your life.

This survey is mainly about the third kind: human rights at school
Here is a list of the rights in the survey.

1. Your right: to respect for your worth and dignity; to express yourself, and to develop your skills and talents fully.
2. Your right: to be heard, to have your views taken seriously in matters that affect you; to share in making decisions about your life.
3. The right: to hold your own beliefs, and to have all kinds of useful information and ideas; to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; to learn to live in peace, tolerance, equality and friendship, and with respect for nature.
4. The right: to go to peaceful meetings;
Your right to privacy and respect, and to fair discipline.
5. Your right to be kept safe from harm.
6. Working together for rights, and how these are shared in your school.

The list condenses many articles from the CRC:

- no. 1. refers to the preamble and articles 2, 3, 4, 6, 13, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 41, 42
2. Article 12 primarily
3. Articles 13, 14
4. Articles 15, 16, 17, 19, 37, 40

5. Articles 19, 37, 39, 40
6. Articles 12, 13, 15, 29, 42.

Article 12 is so central to this project and to the whole Children 5-16 Programme that it is quoted here in full.

1. State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the rights to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
 - . For this purpose the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

Although the CRC has had relatively little impact on the British government and services so far, it has influenced non-governmental organisations such as Save the Children and the Children's Society and Barnardo's who have sponsored research about consulting children, listening to their views and involving them as co-researchers. The CRC might be said to have had more influence in research about and with children than on services for them (for overviews of numerous projects with children see Alderson 1999a, 1990b).

2. Aims, how these have been achieved or not, difficulties during the project, suggested solutions

The aims have been achieved as reported in the methods section.

1. To conduct an information giving and gathering exercise on the CRC in a survey designed to publicise the CRC as well to investigate children's views on their civil rights and responsibilities.
2. To use a long but pupil-friendly questionnaire with respondents who are aged 8 to 16 and who have a wide range of abilities.
3. To develop theoretical analysis of school children's moral and social competence and its relevance to effective education.
4. To collect examples of good practice and to publicise these ways of helping teachers and children to promote children's rights in imaginative and positive ways.
5. To create extra-curricular educational materials about civil rights, drawing on data from the survey and involving children and other users in the production, to assist schools who use the CRC to inform their policy and practice.

Aim 5, extra curricular materials about rights produced with children has mainly taken the form of two books by children and staff in primary schools on how the children are involved in organising the school and the positive relationships. Rather than explicitly explaining the CRC, the books describe the benefits to all in the school of respecting CRC principles and how this can be done. We originally put "extra-curricular" because there are already curricular materials on the CRC. However, few of these address children's civil rights in schools. There is a need for more

materials linking CRC aspects of formal teaching and whole school activities, and showing the pedagogical problems that arise when there is conflict between rhetoric and reality about rights in schools. The materials need to address three levels:

reasons for adults' resistance to the CRC, and how these are mistaken, in order to change beliefs and attitudes;

ideas for the content and teaching about the CRC during and around formal classes;

practical reports of how the CRC principles are benefitting schools.

Longer term aims of this project included:

To increase awareness among children and adults of the CRC and its practical relevance to effective schools;

to increase further the use of reliable and sensitive research methods with children of widely ranging abilities, and thereby to add to the growing public and professional understanding of and respect for children;

to make closer links between the valuable theories and empirical data derived from social science study of children and the policies and practices that prevail in schools;

to disseminate and promote imaginative and practical ideas about how to respond to pupils as moral agents with rights and responsibilities who share in running their schools.

Difficulties and changes

1. The main difficulty was gaining access to only 49 instead of 100 schools among the 250 we contacted, though the 49 schools returned more than the planned 30 questionnaires per school.

Some teachers said they were keen to take part but their head teacher refused permission.

2. Waiting for two schools in Northern Ireland to reply delayed the final survey data analysis for 12 months, until after Sean Arnold whose main task was administering and computing the survey had left the project, as planned. Priscilla Alderson had to spend more time on computing, with some extra paid help, with less time left for qualitative analysis. Fortunately, some delays, though not as many as occurred, had been anticipated, and a longer-term, part time staffed project had been planned instead of a shorter full-time one.

3. The survey and discussion group provided so much material, that more time should have been planned for analysing and reporting it.

4. Interviews were intended with 6 LEA officers. After 3 days spent almost continuously trying to contact officers in 9 LEAs, efforts to arrange interviews with these busy people were given up.

5. The aim was to convene a young people's conference in autumn 1998, to report and discuss the research with them, and to write a conference report. Since the survey was mainly completed early in 1997, it was unclear how to involve those respondents late in 1998. In April 1998, PEG the Participation and Education Group run for and by young people in Newcastle upon Tyne began to plan a London conference on democracy and to look for adults to work as partners with them. We held a joint planning meeting in June 1998 which was arranged and chaired by young members of PEG. Eventually, PEG decided to have two 2-day events at the Institute of Education in London, in February 1999 a planning event, and in July 1999 an open public conference to present and discuss democracy in different dramatic ways to an invited audience of senior educationalist and policy makers. This conference work will continue until August 1999. The delays mean more thorough preparation for a major event.

Possible solutions to problems

Teachers and LEA staff are pressured, but children's rights appear to be a very low priority for

many, and to attract some hostility. Educationalist appear to be unaware of the profound implications for their work of the Government's having ratified the Convention. The difficulties of access show the importance of this timely research, and the value of publishing reports about this project in their journals to help to inform practitioners and policy makers. .

3. Methods, survey design, ethics, analysis of results

Survey design

Sampling We wrote to all 165 LEAs asking for their help with selecting schools, and we used the lists of schools on the Internet. We selected 250 schools balanced, as far as we could tell, for types of schools around Britain and Northern Ireland, in rural, urban and inner city areas, state, voluntary and private, mainstream and special, coeducational and single sex, selective and mixed ability schools. A random sample would produce the most representative replies, and be more reliable as a measure of British children's views in 1996 to use for international and chronological comparisons. However, we chose 80% of the schools, in order to ensure a fairly even geographical spread of the many different kinds of schools and, by using the recommendations of our advisers in LEAs, professional networks and universities, we approached teachers who were likely to be willing to help with the survey, in the hope of obtaining a high response rate and thereby saving time and costs. This decision seems to have been appropriate in view of the low response rate from teachers, just over 20%.

Access We wrote to the schools explaining the project, and asking if a teacher (deputy heads in primary schools, PHSE specialists in secondary schools) would administer the questionnaire and reply to a few questions about school demography and their views on rights (appendix 4). Fifty-eight teachers replied, and 49 agreed to administer the survey involving 2,272 students aged 8-16 and including a few 7 and 17-year-olds. We worked hard on making the survey as quick and simple as possible for teachers to administer, and offered to send them ideas on teaching about rights with a short report of the results for each school that took part.

Questionnaire The questionnaire was designed with much help from adult members of the Children's Rights Development Unit's Education Group and from pupils in special and ordinary schools. It went through several drafts during 1993-1996, before the ESRC funds were granted. A 12-page A5 booklet was planned and this grew into a 24-page booklet. The shiny green cover gave brief information about children rights and the research and was designed for each respondent to detach and keep. There was an instruction sheet for teachers on administering the questionnaire (appendix 3). Research had shown that design rather than length is crucial in determining response rates (Thompson 1983; Alderson 1990). Use of the carefully designed questionnaire was intended to demonstrate how children can respond to a lengthy detailed survey, as long as complex issues are clearly expressed. One aim was to expand ways of involving younger children effectively in research. Different versions of the questionnaire for younger and older age groups were considered. But in order to include people across a wide ability range in each age group, and to obtain more complete results, it was decided to try using one version only, designed to be clear enough for 8-year-olds but not too simple for 16-year-olds. The questionnaire was piloted in two schools in New Zealand, as well as by individual, critical, young advisers in

England.

Timing We aimed to complete the survey by April-May 1997, in order to be able to collate and analyse the replies by spsss.pc before July 1997. We aimed to post a short report to each school, comparing a few of their replies with the total replies, before the end of the summer term when pupils left school or moved on to other classes. The pack to schools included further details about rights and the CRC, and suggestions on teaching about them. This was done for most schools, but there was a year's delay before the final replies were received.

Other methods We visited 16 schools and had discussions with 34 small mixed groups of six students.

We were in contact with many user groups (appendix 1).

The conferences with young people on democracy are being held in February and July 1999, at the Institute of Education.

New methods

1. Innovative use of a long questionnaire with children aged from 8 years.
2. Use of a single questionnaire for a wide range of ages and abilities.
3. Working with young people aged from 8-years to hold two national conferences.
4. In two concurrent and related studies, Priscilla Alderson has worked as a writer in residence in two innovative primary schools, editing a book with each school in the words of the children and staff. The first book is published by the school and has been reprinted twice, since 1997. The second book was written with a writing committee composed of pupils and staff and is published by a leading education publishers.

International collaboration Before the project began we established contacts with: John Bennett, UNESCO, Paris; Dr Per Miljeteig, Children International, the cybernet children's house, Oslo; Dr Leena Alanen, Jyvaskyla, Finland; Dr Kenneth Hultqvist, Stockholm; Alvaro Marchesi Ullastres, Minister of Education, Madrid; Heather McKirdy, Timara, New Zealand. They expressed interest in encouraging collaborative surveys in their own country but have not had time or opportunity to do so. In this decade of education on the 1989 UN CRC, UNESCO is working on internationally agreed 'harmonious statements' on how the CRC might be applied in schools, and its relevance to the whole school curriculum and to juvenile justice, as the staff discussed when I visited them in Paris in autumn 1998.

Problems We anticipated and hoped to prevent problems in the following ways which worked well.

To allow spare copies for varied class sizes, non-returns and other problems, and for copies to send to enquirers, 4,000 questionnaires were printed, and have been useful in publicising the project and responding to enquiries.

Care was taken to produce clear, concise and comprehensive teachers' notes and questionnaire covers, to help to reduce demands on teachers' time, and to reduce undue variation in teachers' administration of the survey. We aimed to present the complex topics in terms which many pupils will readily understand, younger and less able pupils needed some help. The pilot work looked at which sections were associated with the most difficulty, and how teachers could best be advised to provide standardised help.

With an information giving and gathering survey on a topic which few people knew much about like the CRC, there was the danger of classes having a long session about the CRC. which might

strongly influence their responses. On the other hand, if they had too little explanation, their responses might be so ignorant or impromptu as to be of little use, or they might misleadingly show too much ignorance and low aspirations. However, this does not seem to have been a problem, probably, because although all questions were grouped under a simple summary of the relevant CRC article, the questions were about practical aspects of young people's daily lives. It was not essential to know about the links with the CRC in order to answer the questions.

Ethics

The project involved the usual responsibility to respect potential respondents' informed, voluntary consent, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. Teachers' and pupils' rights as research subjects were explained on the questionnaires and during focus groups. Information about consent, in the teacher's notes and on the questionnaire cover was designed to avoid unwilling pupils being forced to complete questionnaires. Teachers were asked to assure pupils that the replies were private and anonymous and would not be read by their teachers, partly in order to reduce the problem of over-cautious replies. Pupils were assured that there are no right or wrong answers, it is their own views which matter.

The research topics overlapped with personal and social education concerns; so they were unlikely to be felt as intrusive, and teachers did not consider it necessary to request parents' consent. Pupils' consent or refusal was carefully respected for the group sessions and, as far as we could ensure through the written instructions, with the questionnaires also.

The BSA 1992 Guidelines were attached to the original ESRC application, though they say nothing about children. A checklist of questions on the ethics of research, designed in a Barnardo's project, has also been used (Alderson 1995). This includes considering the impact on children who take part in the research and also on all children in similar groups who might be affected by the findings and publicity. The checklist questions researchers' reflexive, critical discussion of their own beliefs, their efforts to report children's own views as nearly as possible, to avoid imposing our own conclusions but rather to draw them from the evidence, to use positive non-discriminatory terms in reports, and to balance impartial research with respect for children's worth and dignity. We aimed to respect these standards.

There is a risk that the survey results might misleadingly encourage either undue complacency or undue pessimism about children's rights in schools. The focus groups were partly used as a check on the questionnaire returns and the student's views about the survey.

Analysis

All questionnaire data were entered and analysed by spss.pc by frequencies, and variables of age and sex of pupils, and size, ethnicity, religion and setting of schools, as well as pupils' views on whether they had a school council and whether they thought it was effective. The group discussions were selectively transcribed and have mainly been analysed and used in reports so far for how they illustrate and expand responses to the questionnaires. Caution is required in interpreting and generalising from the findings, about current familiarity with, and use of, the CRC. Over the next few years, public respect for the CRC is likely to increase as it becomes better known. Responses are also being analysed in relation to theories of the social construction of childhood, and the ways in which respondents' values and expectations are shaped by their time and place, and by currently accepted relations between children and adults.

4. Results and analysis to date

Of the 168 LEAs contacted, 34 replied and 14 named schools thought to be interested in rights. Of the 250 schools contacted, the 58 teachers who replied were in schools which varied from having 3 pupils on roll to 1650. Fifty schools were mixed, 4 were for girls and 2 for boys only; 6 were special schools, 11 schools were formally linked to a religion; 6 schools were grant maintained, 48 were LEA maintained and 3 were in the voluntary sector. On the settings of the school, 9 were rural, 19 in towns, 17 in city suburbs, 8 in inner cities, and 3 in a combination, such as when many pupils travel in to a town or suburban school from villages. Pupils in 41 schools were mainly white, mainly ethnic minority in 3 schools, and mainly from mixed backgrounds in 13. Finally, on socio-economic background, the respondents said that the families were mainly middle class in 5 schools, working class in 5, working class or unemployed in 6, unemployed or very low income in 7, and a mixture of these in 33.

5. Activities - conferences, networks, contacts with users

Conference and seminar presentations

by Priscilla Alderson on the ESRC research
and on directly related research about rights and education

1996

* Children's rights and ethics in social research. *Seminar* at Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, London

* Responses to disturbed behaviour in special and mainstream schools. *Seminar*, Contact a Family, London

1997

* An overview of social research about children and their rights. *International course on children's rights*, Children's Rights Centre, Ghent

* Children and consent to research. *Seminar*, Centre for International Child Health, Institute of Child Health, London

* The invention of adolescence and its implications for research and services. *Seminar*, Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education. London

* Sad, bad or mad? Research with disturbed teenagers in schools. *Seminar*, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, London

* How do the UN Convention and the Children's Charter serve children's rights? Conference on *Children's rights in health care*, Institute of Child Health Ethics Forum, London

* Consent of adolescents, having a say. *Adolescence Symposium*, City Hospital, Nottingham

* Age-related criteria for ethical and legal decision making. University of North London, MSC module on *Health care values*, London

1998

* (by Gerison Lansdown) Report for the *ESRC Children 5-16 launch* at Church House, on the Civil rights in schools project, which was presented by Gerison Lansdown, London

* Autism, segregation and inclusion in schools, at the conference on *Childhood and Social Exclusion*, University of Hull

* Methods of research with visually impaired children, for the *INSET course* for teachers at the Psychology and Special Needs Department, Institute of Education, London

* Children's rights: law and ethics, for the *Course in law and ethics for paediatricians* at St George's Hospital Postgraduate Centre, University of London

* Plenary lecture on Listening to children and children's consent, at the *Sixtieth Jubilee Conference of the Association of British Paediatric Nurses*, Birmingham

* The rights of the baby and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, *British Council international study course for neonatal nurses*, Nottingham

* Rights and ethics in practice and research with children, *British Council international study course for neonatal nurses*, Nottingham

* Autism: purity, politics and paediatrics in the class room. *Medical Sociology Group*, London

* Human rights and democracy in schools, at the first meeting of the ESRC seminar series on *Democracy in schools*, School of Education, University of Birmingham

* Ethics and research with children, to the researchers on the *ESRC Children 5 to 16 programme*, (with report for the Children 5 to 16 web site) UMIST, University of Manchester

* Children as researchers, to the conference for doctoral students in childhood studies on *Research methods with children*, Centre for the Social Study of Childhood, University of Hull

* The invention of childhood and adolescence and its effects on schools. *Doctoral studies*

programme academic fora on the theme of childhood, Institute of Education, London

* Research on civil rights in schools in the UK and Northern Ireland, to the *Joint meeting of British and Norwegian Childhood Researchers*, Manchester

* Civil rights in schools, at the conference on *Linking child research and policy*. Childhood Research and Policy Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, London

* Methods of research with children, *seminar* at STAKES Research Institute, Helsinki

* Methods and ethics of research with children, *seminar* at the Department of Child Psychiatry, University Hospital, Turku, Finland

1999

* International rights of children: cultural imperialism or contextual reality? *Seminar* University of Brunel.

* Time, rights and democracy. *Conference on That's what we call democracy*. Two day national conference organised with young members of Participation Education Group, Institute of Education.

* Civil rights in schools. *Growing into the 21st century*, ESRC conference, London.

* In whose interests: child or researchers? *Symposium* University of Southampton Medical Group

* Response to Eugene Verhellen's paper on Children's rights and education, *ESRC seminar series on Human Rights and Democracy in Schools*, University of Birmingham.

* The powerful young child. *CARE seminar series*, University of East Anglia

* Disseminating research findings on children's rights and interests: how to, and to whom? *SSRU seminar*

* Preventing avoidable suffering in children. *Conference to honour Margaret Stacey*, University of Warwick.

* Plenary address on the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to the *World Congress of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, Jerusalem.

Unpublished reports

1997

* Annual report to the ESRC on the Civil rights in schools project.

* Reports to every school which took part in the civil rights survey comparing their responses with the overall responses, presented as wall charts, to display in the schools. The reports included suggestions and material for teachers on teaching about children's rights and the 1989 UN Convention

1998

* (With C Goodey) Response to the DfEE Green Paper, *Excellence for all*. (The book I wrote with Highfield School is quoted in the Green Paper *Excellence for all* as an example of good practice. DfEE, London)

* Letter to Professor Bernard Crick on introducing schools councils.

* Annual Report to the ESRC on the Civil Rights in Schools project.

Email and website network

The multi-disciplinary Childhood Research and Policy Centre was set up with colleagues in 1997, and runs regular conferences, an information exchange web page www.ioe.ac.uk, and an email network contacted through j.lee@ioe.ac.uk.

Contact with other users

Interest in children's rights is growing rapidly, and so far there is little social research about young

people's views about their rights. Many enquiries have been received from practitioners, researchers, policy makers and organisations, about the research methods, findings and background references. Contacts were made with LEAs and schools and about 24 organisations, professional, policy, voluntary and ones for young people. (List of contacts in appendix 1.)

6. Outputs - publications, other dissemination and data sets

Publications by Priscilla Alderson, and co-authors where they are mentioned, arising from the survey and from directly related concurrent research

1997

* An overview of social research about children and their rights. In Verhellen E (ed) *Understanding children's rights*. Ghent: Children's Rights Centre pp 151-156

* Quakers, teachers and disruptive pupils. *The Friend*, 21.2.97, pp 11-12

* (with Highfield School) *Changing our school: promoting positive behaviour*. London: Institute of Education/Plymouth: Highfield School (80 pp)

1998

* Let's write a book about our school. *Improving Schools* 1, 2:47-51

* Understanding, wisdom and rights: assessing children's competence. *Journal of Social Science (India)* 1998 pp 157-172

* (With C Goodey) *Enabling education: experiences in special and ordinary schools*. London: Tufnell Press (171 pp).

* (With C Goodey) Doctors, ethics and special education. *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 24:49-55. 1999

* Research with disturbed young people in schools: research for what? for whom? In Mayall B, Hood S, Oliver S (eds) *Critical issues in social research: power and prejudice*. Buckingham: Open University Press

* *Learning and inclusion; the Cleves School experience*. March 1999 London: David Fulton Publishers (93 pp)

* (With C Goodey) Autism in special and inclusive schools: 'there has to be a point to their being there'. *Disability & Society*, 4,2:249-61

Publications in press

* Democracy and human rights in schools, Submitted to *Childhood* September 1998

* School students' views on school councils and daily life at school, submitted to *Children and Society* October 1998

* Civil rights in schools: the implications for youth policy, submitted to *Youth and Policy* September 1998

* The rights of the baby, in Penn H (ed) *Theory, policy and practice in the early years*. Open University Press

* *The echoing voices of children aged from birth to 8 years: rights and obligations*. A report for Save the Children, to be published as a book in September 1999 (provisional title)

* Children as researchers. In Christensen P, James A *Conducting research with children*. Falmer Press

Publications in preparation

* Rights, responsibilities and citizenship: on pupils' views being heard and respected, in Rowe

D (ed) *Citizenship in schools*

- * A report on the teachers' survey that was linked to the ESRC pupils' survey
- * A paper comparing pupils' responses among different age groups in the ESRC survey, for the *International Journal of Children's Rights*.
- * Papers on the 34 small group discussions in the schools, and for teaching and teenage journals..

Broadcast

Contribution to the BBC Radio 4 *Analysis* programme on children's rights, 1 May 1997.

Data sets

- * Spss.pc frequencies of 2272 replies, and analysis by age and sex of pupils, and size, ethnicity, religion and setting of schools, and pupils' views on effectiveness of school council.
- * (With B Mayall) Bibliography of over 300 publications relating to the sociology of childhood, for the ESRC children 5-16 web site.
- * Notes on ethics and rights in research with children, for the ESRC Children 5-16 web site, April 1998.

7. Impacts - use of results and interest shown in them

The book written with Highfield School (1997) about their democratic school council is quoted as an example of good practice in the Government's Green Paper *Excellence in schools*, 1997, and in the Crick Report *Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools* (1998). David Blunkett telephoned the school to congratulate them on the book. This book and the one written with Cleves School (1997) have attracted interest because of the practical accounts of how the schools tackle problems which many schools face, given by the children and staff.

The survey results have not yet been published, though there have been many enquiries about them and requests for draft reports and conference/seminar presentations. One example is that Save the Children commissioned Priscilla Alderson to write an extensive over-view and policy document on respecting the rights of babies and young children (in press).

8. Future research priorities arising from the project

- * Further analysis and reporting of the survey and small group discussions.
- * Use of the civil rights questionnaire in more schools as an audit tool to inform staff and students and to help with policy making.
- * Use of the detailed long questionnaire format for other aspects of children's lives.
- * A longer teachers' survey to compare the views of staff and students.
- * Development and piloting with staff and students of practical curricular and extra-curricular teaching materials on rights in schools.
- * Research about effective and innovative school councils, why and how they work, with Derry Hannam, OFSTED inspector and ex-head teacher.
- * Research with children aged 3-8-years on their views about rights and responsibilities.

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Appendix 1. Contacts with potential research users outside the academic community

During the project, formal and informal contacts to exchange ideas and, in some cases, to plan joint work, included the following groups and individuals:

The teachers, pupils and LEA staff involved in the surveys and group discussions
National Union of Teachers (NUT) Group of Teachers working on the teaching of human rights in schools
Department for Education and Employment
Members and school governors in Newham LEA working on inclusive education
Members of the Advisory Group on Citizenship, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
OFSTED inspectors
Teachers who are also students at the Institute of Education
Children's Rights Office
PEG Participation Education Group run for and by young people in Newcastle
Child to Child Trust
Institute for Public Policy Research
Disability Rights Network
EPOCH, End Physical Punishment of Children
Children are Unbeatable Campaign
Quaker Peace and Service members who work on mediation in schools
CRIN Child Rights Information Network
Barnardo's
Institute for Public Policy Research
The Analysis team at BBC Radio 4 and many other enquiring journalists
School Councils UK
Save the Children UK and their Equality Learning Centre
Staff at UNESCO, Paris
Children's Rights Centre, Ghent
Special needs adviser at the Department for Education and Employment.
Re-membering Education, a teacher's network on affective education based in Brighton
Very many general enquiries from journalists, practitioners, policy makers and other people about the research project and issues relating to it.
Two networks have been useful in making contacts and developing ideas for this project. Although they have an academic base, they involve a wide range of other people:
the ESRC six part seminar series on Democracy in Schools, at the School of Education, University of Birmingham, 1998-1999;
and the Childhood Research and Policy Centre at the Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education.

**Appendix 2 Information leaflet about the project (to find also Qu to teachers)
and letters to teachers before the survey**

November 1997

Dear (Teacher's name)

Children's Rights in Schools

I am writing to ask whether you would consider taking part in the above research project. The main part of the project consists of a postal questionnaire, which we will send to approximately one hundred schools, for completion by one class in each school. In order to finalise the questionnaire, we want to pilot it in a small number of schools, and possibly carry out small discussion groups with pupils. Would you be prepared to help us with this work?

The completion of the questionnaire should take no more than around thirty minutes for pupils in years five or six. As we cannot be present at all of the schools, we will be supplying instructions for the administration of the questionnaire. Therefore, if you agree to take part in the pilot, we would want a class teacher to administer the questionnaire while one of us sits in. A discussion group would take up to one hour, and would be conducted by the research team. Completion of the questionnaire and participation in the discussion group would of course be entirely voluntary. In return for your help we can send you a set of teaching ideas on children's rights, as well as a summary of the results of the survey, and a summary of a preliminary survey investigating the views of teachers.

If you would like to help, please contact myself or Priscilla Alderson.

The enclosed leaflet gives more details about the project, and about the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Yours sincerely

Sean Arnold

Letter to teachers who agreed to help

February 1997

Dear

Survey about rights in schools

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in the survey and for returning details about your school.

Enclosed with this pack are:

- * the number of booklets you said you would need with 5 extra ones
- * a note about conducting the survey with your class
- * two information leaflets about the survey
- * prepaid envelopes in which to return the completed booklets
- * a short form to complete and return to us with the booklets
- * at the end of this letter, notes about using the questionnaire with your class.

We hope that you have all the information you require and that you and your class enjoy doing the survey. We would be pleased to send any further details if you need them.

Yours sincerely,

Priscilla Alderson and Sean Arnold

What do you think about rights at school?

A survey of the views of
3,000 school pupils aged 8 to 16 years

In 1991, the British Government ratified the United Nations 1989 **Convention on the Rights of the Child**. In doing so, they agreed to inform everyone about the rights in the Convention, and to promote them.

This leaflet is written for anyone who would like to know about the research, or to help with it.

Researchers: **Priscilla Alderson and Sean Arnold**
Social Science Research Unit
Institute of Education University of London
18 Woburn Square
London WC1H 0NS
email p.alderson@ioe.ac.uk s.arnold@ioe.ac.uk

Human rights are about being able to do and say what you want to, as long as you do not break the law or hurt anyone.

Many people think that rights are about being selfish, grabbing what you can get and not caring about any one else. Yet human rights are about respect for everyone. Most adults take these rights for granted.

When young people are old enough to understand their rights and responsibilities, a vital part of their education is to help them to do so.

In 1989 all nations were asked to support the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**. All but three nations have done so, It has far more support than any other of the UN's many conventions.

Yet little is known of what young people think about their rights and how far they think these are, and should be, respected.

The survey explores this fairly new area.

Aims of the research:

- * to send out details about the rights in the Convention;
- * to find out what people think about these rights in schools in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland;
- * to develop research methods for collecting the views of thousands of young people, which will be useful in other big surveys;
- * to create a user-friendly questionnaire booklet;
- * to collect ideas from schools about useful new ways of respecting pupils' rights and responsibilities;
- * to report the survey results and good practice ideas, in order to help people who are working to raise standards in schools.

We also hope that from 1997:

- * teachers around the world will use the survey in their schools;
- * we will then be able to compare the views of young people across the world;
- * and collect and report many more ideas about good practice.

Research plan October 1996 to September 1998

- 1996 Pilot work in schools in the UK and New Zealand.
Contact teachers in 300 schools.
- 1997 Survey 3,000 pupils in 100 schools in February.
Talk with groups of pupils in 20 of these schools.
Report survey results to the schools in June.
Contact people using the survey in other countries.
Write reports for teachers, pupils, parents, governors and people who plan and advise on education.
- 1998 Carry on writing reports.

All replies from pupils and teachers will be treated as anonymous and confidential. No actual names of people or of schools will be used in any reports.

- * There are no right or wrong answers; it is personal views which count.
- * The questions put rather abstract ideas into everyday terms which matter to many pupils.
- * The questions are aimed to be clear enough for 8 year olds but not too simple for older students.
- * They are also written for pupils with learning difficulties, or who do not speak much English.

Funding This is one of the 22 projects chosen, from 297 proposals, by the Economic and Social Research Council Programme: Children 5-16: Growing into the 21st Century.

**The United Nations
Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
is about rights for every child in the world.**

There are three main kinds of rights:

1. Rights to things you need, such as a home, food, places to play and to learn.
2. Rights to be kept safe from harm.
3. And human rights to share in deciding about how you live your life.

This survey is mainly about the rights:

1. To have respect for your worth and dignity; to express yourself, and to develop your skills and talents fully;
2. To be heard; to have your views taken seriously in matters that affect you; to share in making decisions about your life;
3. To hold your own beliefs; to have all kinds of useful information; to have freedom of thought, conscience and religion; to learn to live in peace, tolerance, equality and friendship, and with respect for nature;
4. To go to peaceful meetings; to have privacy and respect, and fair discipline;
5. To be kept safe from harm;
6. To work together to respect and share these rights.

Appendix 4

Instruction sheet for teachers on administering the questionnaire

Conducting the survey with your class or group

Notes for teachers

Spring 1997

1. Please would you go through page 2 with the class, and then through the back page of the booklet, about the Convention.

Although the questionnaire is based on the Convention, pupils do not need to know about it in order to answer the questions. These are all about their views about their own lives. If you think the sections on the Convention seem too confusing to (some of) the class it would be better to leave this part, rather than to spend a lot of time trying to explain it.

Ask the class not to discuss the Convention or their views on rights until after they have given in their completed booklets.

2. The survey is voluntary, and we ask teachers to set other work for pupils who do not wish to do the survey. If they wish, they might draw or write a story or an essay to do with rights, and if they are willing for their work to be sent to us, we would be very pleased to receive it, and perhaps use it in our reports.

For those who finish early or me, and would like to do drawings, stories or essays about rights, and to send them to us, we would be very pleased to see these. We might use them in reports and they may wish to put their names on any extra items.

3. Please emphasise that the survey is anonymous (end of page 3) and confidential, and that you will not look at the replies before sending them to us.

When they have finished, one pupil could go round the class with the reply envelope for everyone to put their booklet into.

4. Please ask the class to look at the first white page (page 3) on how to answer the questions.

With younger and less able pupils you could talk about the ice cream example and how some people like some but not all kinds of ice cream, to explain the 'varies' reply, and to check that they see how to ring their chosen reply.

If they do not yet clearly understand, it may help to go through the first three questions with them. Question 3 is unusual in being about ringing as many answers as apply. Most questions ask for one answer only.

One other point about working through the booklet is to tell the class, if your school does not have a school council, to miss out question numbers -- to --.

5. Please explain only as much as you think they need to know in order to fill in the questionnaire, and as briefly as possible. You may decide before they start to explain to younger or less able classes about the 'ozone layer' (question 26) and give an example they are more familiar with to illustrate the general point about topical events. Otherwise you could answer individual questions while the class is doing the survey, as briefly as possible, and if several people ask about one point explain it to the whole class.

6. When they have finished, ask them each to take off their own green cover to keep.
7. When we receive the completed booklets we will send you more details about the Convention with teaching ideas for junior and secondary schools. We will send a report about the replies to your school in June.

The main questions when we visit the 20 schools could include:

The survey

how did you find the survey - tone and style?

wording clear enough?

did it work for your age groups?

design and lay out?

topics? did we miss out important questions?
or go on too much about unimportant ones?

do you have any questions about the survey you would like to see answered in the booklet?

The Convention and human rights

views on the idea of the convention and governments supporting it?

how well does their country respect children's rights?
examples?

are children's rights the same around the world?

what rights are most important?

what are the benefits of respecting children's rights?

are there any risks disadvantages in children's rights?

Appendix 5

Booklet questionnaire for students

What do you think about your rights at school?

Questions for people aged 8 to 16 years
1997



**WE WOULD BE VERY GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD
HELP US WITH THIS SURVEY**

Human rights are about being able to do and say what you want to, as long as you do not break the law or hurt anyone.

Many people think that rights are about being selfish, grabbing what you can get and not caring about any one else. Yet human rights are about respect for everyone.

In 1989, everyone in the world was asked to support rights for children (see back cover).

How much do you think your school respects children's rights?

And what do you think about your own rights?

It would be very helpful if you would tell us what you think. There are no right or wrong answers; it is your views which matter.



How to answer the questions

We hope that you will answer all the questions, but if you don't want to answer some, just leave them out.

We hope the questions are clear enough for 8 year olds, but not too simple for 16 year olds.

You do not need to write your name, so no one will know how you have answered. We have asked teachers not to look at booklets after they collect them in to send to us.

Please put a ring round the number next to each comment that best explains what you think, for example:

Do you like ice cream?

yes 1

no 2

varies 3

I'm not sure 4



If you partly agree, or think 'it varies' or 'it depends' please ring the 'varies' number.

If you think 'I don't know' or 'it doesn't apply to me' please ring the 'not sure' number - or add your own answer if there is a line.



1. How old are you? _____ years old

2. Are you

a girl 1 (please ring the right number)

a boy 2

The first questions are about:

**Your right to respect
for your worth and dignity
Your right to express yourself
and to develop your skills
and talents fully**

3. Please ring as many of these things
as you enjoy doing in or out of school:

sports and games 1

music 2

art/crafts 3

dance 4

drama 5

writing 6

computers 7

being with friends 8

making things (like model
railways, cooking) 9

outdoors things
(like caring for animals
or digging ponds) 10

other things (please add) _____



4. Do you do these things that you enjoy mainly while you are at school?

- | | |
|--------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| varies | 3 |

5. Do you think your school gives you enough chances to enjoy these things?

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| yes very much | 1 |
| quite a lot | 2 |
| it varies | 3 |
| not enough | 4 |
| hardly at all | 5 |
| I'm not sure | 6 |



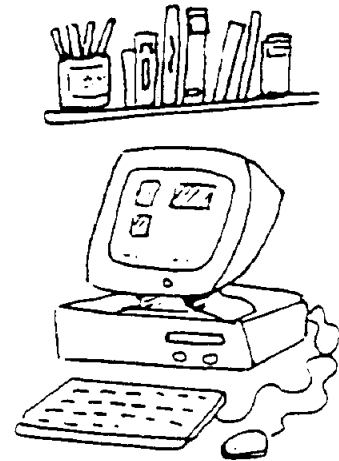
If you said 'yes' please go to no. 7.

6. If you would like to do more of these things at school, but you cannot, is this because the school needs:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| more money (such as for computers, sports) | 1 |
| more teachers | 2 |
| more time | 3 |
| I'm not sure | 4 |
| other reason (please add) | _____ |

7. People express themselves in how they look, in their clothes and hair style. What do you think about your school's rules about what you can wear and how you can look?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| all right | 1 |
| too strict | 2 |
| not strict enough | 3 |
| it varies | 4 |
| we don't have rules and I like that | 5 |
| we don't have rules but we need some | 6 |
| not sure | 7 |



The next questions are about:

**Your right to be heard
Your right to have your views taken seriously
in matters that affect you
Your right to share in making
decisions about your life**

8. On the whole, do your teachers listen to you:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| a lot | 1 |
| quite a lot | 2 |
| not much | 3 |
| it varies | 4 |
| not sure | 5 |

9. On the whole, do your teachers believe what you say and take you seriously?

- yes 1
- no 2
- varies 3
- not sure 4



10. Are most of your school's rules fair?

- yes 1
- no 2
- varies 3
- not sure 4

11. Can you choose whether you stay inside or go outside during break times?

- yes 1
- no 2
- varies 3

12. Do you think you should be allowed to choose whether you stay inside or go outside during break times?

- yes 1
- no 2
- not sure 3

13. Are you allowed to leave school (such as to go home or to the shops) at lunch time?

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| yes if my parents agree | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| not sure | 3 |

14. Do you think you should be allowed to leave school (such as to go home or to the shops) at lunch time?

- | | |
|----------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| not sure | 3 |

15. Do you think you should be allowed to choose which school you go to?

- | | |
|---|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| share choosing with my parents | 3 |
| there is only one school I can go to | 4 |
| not sure | 5 |



16. Would you rather be at another school?

- | | |
|----------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| not sure | 3 |

17. If you replied 'yes' could you say why you would rather be at another school?

18a. What do you enjoy most at your school?

18b. What do you least like about your school?

The next part is about

**Your right to
hold your own beliefs,
to have all kinds of useful information and ideas.
The right to freedom of thought,
conscience and religion.
To learn to live in peace, tolerance,
equality and friendship
and with respect for nature**

19. Do you like the school assemblies?

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| varies | 3 |
| not sure | 4 |
| I don't go to them | 5 |

20. Do you think girls and boys should be able to choose if they go to assemblies?

- | | |
|----------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| varies | 3 |
| not sure | 4 |

21. Do you think young people at school should be able to express their religion if they want to, such as boys wearing turbans, or girls wearing scarves ?

- | | |
|----------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| varies | 3 |
| not sure | 4 |

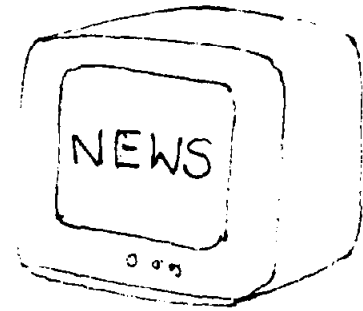


22. Do you think you should have lessons about religions around the world?

- | | |
|----------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| varies | 3 |
| not sure | 4 |

23. Do you think you should have lessons about events in the news like wars or elections?

- yes 1
- no 2
- varies 3
- not sure 4



24. Do you think you should have lessons about children's rights?

- yes 1
- no 2
- varies 3
- not sure 4

25. Do you think you should have lessons about the history of other countries, such as in Asia or Africa?

- yes 1
- no 2
- varies 3
- not sure 4

26. Do you think you should have lessons on caring for the world, such as saving tigers or the ozone layer?

- yes 1
- no 2
- varies 3
- not sure 4

27. Are there other things and beliefs you want to learn about in school?

(if so, please add)

The next part is about

| |
|---|
| The right to go to peaceful meetings |
|---|

28. Do you think you and your friends should be allowed to arrange meetings in school, such as to have a music group or plan an outing?

- yes 1
- no 2
- not sure 3



29. Can boys and girls arrange meetings in your school?

- | | |
|----------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| not sure | 3 |

30. If you can arrange meetings, who goes to them?

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| only pupils | 1 |
| pupils and teachers | 2 |
| varies | 3 |
| we can't arrange meetings | 4 |

The next part is about

| |
|---|
| The right to privacy and respect |
|---|

If you write or say anything, which you want to be kept private, people should keep your secret, unless they think someone might get hurt.

31. Do you trust your teachers to keep a secret if you tell them?

- | | |
|----------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| varies | 3 |
| not sure | 4 |

32. Do you think your teachers are careful to be fair when they talk about their pupils?

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| varies | 3 |
| I'm not sure | 4 |

The right to fair discipline

33. If the teachers think someone might have done something wrong, do they listen to that person's view, before they decide whose fault it was?

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| varies | 3 |
| I'm not sure | 4 |

34. Before anyone is punished, do the teachers first explain clearly to them how they will be punished and why?

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| varies | 3 |
| I'm not sure | 4 |

35. If it is serious, such as if someone is going to be suspended, does a teacher talk about this with the boy or girl first, and listen to their view?

- yes 1
- no 2
- varies 3
- I'm not sure 4

36. If a few people do something wrong, do the teachers ever punish the whole class?

- yes 1
- no 2
- varies 3
- I'm not sure 4

37. Do you think there is the right amount of discipline to keep your school running well?

- yes 1
- no, too much 2
- no, too little 3
- varies 4
- I'm not sure 5

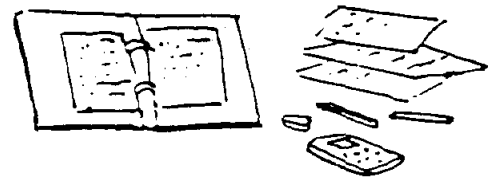
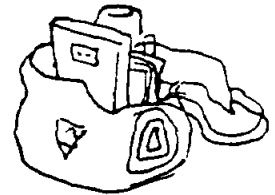


The next part is about

**The right to be kept
safe from harm**

38. Is there any bullying at your school?

- yes a lot 1
- some 2
- not much 3
- none 4
- varies 5
- I'm not sure 6



39. Do you have somewhere safe to keep your things? (like your coat or books?)

- yes 1
- no 2
- varies 3
- I'm not sure 4

40. At break and lunch times, are the adults ready to help anyone who needs them?

- yes 1
- no 2
- varies 3

The last part is about

**working together for rights
and how these are shared
in your school**

41. Does your school have a council, where pupils and teachers meet to decide about things that happen in the school?

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| I'm not sure | 3 |

**If your school does not have a council,
please go on to number 48.**

What do you think about your school council?

42. Can the school council talk about any topic?

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| I'm not sure | 3 |

43. Can the council only talk about things the teachers allow?

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| I'm not sure | 3 |

44. Can the pupils choose anyone they like to be on the council?

- yes 1
- no 2
- I'm not sure 3

45. Do the teachers choose boys and girls to be on the council?

- no 1
- yes, some of them 2
- yes, all of them 3
- I'm not sure 4

46. Is the school council good at sorting out problems?

- yes 1
- no 2
- varies 3
- I'm not sure 4

47. Does the council help to make the school a better place to be in?

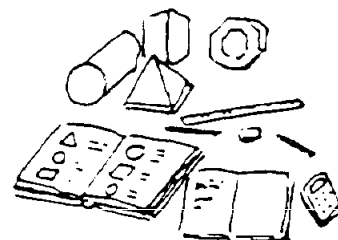
- yes 1
- no 2
- varies 3
- I'm not sure 4

51. Do you think that, on the whole, the pupils at your school have:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| too many rights | 1 |
| enough rights | 2 |
| too few rights | 3 |
| almost no rights | 4 |
| varies | 5 |
| I'm not sure | 6 |

52. Do you think that some people at your school have more rights than others? If so please show which groups you think these are.

- | | |
|--|---|
| boys | 1 |
| girls | 2 |
| older pupils | 3 |
| clever ones | 4 |
| pupils who are stronger | 5 |
| pupils who are richer | 6 |
| any other group (please describe) _____ | |



I do not think any group has more rights 8

53. Do you think any groups in your school should have more rights than others?

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| yes | 1 |
| no | 2 |
| I'm not sure | 3 |

If you said 'yes' please say which groups should have more rights

54. Have you heard about the Convention on the Rights of the Child before today?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| yes, a lot about it | 1 |
| yes a bit about it | 2 |
| no, I've not heard about it | 3 |
| I'm not sure | 4 |



55. What are the main things you want from school?
(please ring all the things that matter most to you)

time to be with friends 1

good teaching to help me to
pass tests and exams 2

the feeling that I belong to
my class or to the school 3

good teaching to help me to get into
the job/career I will want to do 4

learning to be part of a group
and to get on with other people 5

learning about my rights 6

getting ideas about interesting
new things I could try 7

learning about the real world, such as
that I might be unemployed 8

other main things (please describe)

What do you think about this question booklet?

56. too long 1

too short 2

about the right length 3

57. very interesting 1

quite interesting 2

boring 3

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

*This cover is for you to keep.
Please give in all the middle pages
for your teacher to send back to us.*

We are sending this survey to 3,000 young people in Britain. We will send your school a summary of your school's replies, and a report of the whole survey by July.

Teachers in other countries around the world plan to use this survey. The aims are:

to compare what young people think in different schools and different countries:

to help them and their teachers to know more about the Convention, and to know more about rights in schools.



Priscilla Alderson and Sean Arnold
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illustrations by Samantha Read and Dan Williams

The United Nations
Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
is about rights for every child in the world.

There are three main kinds of rights:

1. Rights to things you need, such as a home, food, places to play and to learn.
2. Rights to be kept safe from harm.
3. And human rights to share in deciding about how you live your life.

This survey is mainly about the third kind:
human rights at school

Here is a list of the rights in the survey.

1. Your right: to respect for your worth and dignity; to express yourself, and to develop your skills and talents fully.
2. Your right: to be heard, to have your views taken seriously in matters that affect you; to share in making decisions about your life.
3. The right: to hold your own beliefs, and to have all kinds of useful information and ideas; to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; to learn to live in peace, tolerance, equality and friendship, and with respect for nature.
4. The right to go to peaceful meetings.
Your right to privacy and respect, and to fair discipline.
5. Your right to be kept safe from harm.
6. Working together for rights, and how these are shared in your school.

Appendix 6 Short report to each school which took part in the survey

letter to schools

3 July 1997

To everyone in the schools who helped with the survey on

Civil rights in schools

Here is a short report for you all to see before the end of term.
We are still waiting for replies from two more schools.

Your own school's results to a few questions are listed next to the total results so far.

Please would teachers or students put the report sheets up on a wall, so that all who are interested can see them? You might also like to make acetate copies to use for discussions.

We enclose some follow up ideas.

Over the next two years, we will be writing reports about the survey and the group discussions held in some of the schools. If you would like to be sent details about the reports when they are published, please let us know on the enclosed form.

Thank you to all the schools who helped with the survey and group work.

Priscilla Alderson PhD, Sean Arnold MA

Civil rights in schools

I would like to be sent details of the reports about the schools survey and group work when they are published.

Name _____

Address _____

Please return this form to
Priscilla Alderson

Civil rights in schools
Suggestions for follow up to the survey.

Short books about the Convention

Save the Children 1994 **A guide to rights by young people for young people on the UN Convention.**

Unicef 1995 **The Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

Practical activity books

Unicef, Save the Children 1993 **The whole child: a project to introduce the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to 8 to 13 year olds.** The Participation Articles.

Unicef, Save the Children 1993 **Teachers Handbook: teaching the UN Convention on the Right of the Child.** To go with the above book.

Susan Fountain 1993 **It's only right! A practical guide to learning about the Convention on the Rights of the Child.** Unicef. For people aged 13+.

Susan Fountain 1995 **Education for development: a teachers' resource for global learning.** Unicef/Hodder & Stoughton. For people aged 7 to 18 years.

Margot Brown (ed) 1996 **Our world, our rights: teaching about rights and responsibilities in the primary school.** Amnesty. For people aged 8 to 14.

UN Article 31 Action Pack: Children's rights and children's play. For 5 to 15 year olds from Playtrain 31 Farm Road Sparkbrook Birmingham B11 1LS 0121 766 8446.

Phil Treseder 1997 **Empowering children and young people: training manual.** Save the Children.

Contacts

Amnesty 99-119 Rosebery Avenue London EC1R 4RE. 0171 278 6000

Children's Rights Development Units

c/o John Pinkerton Dept. of Social Work Queens University Belfast BT7 1NN.
01232 245133

Lion Chambers 170 Hope Street Glasgow G2 2TU. 0141 353 0206

7 Cleave House Lambourne Crescent Cardiff CF4. 5GJ 01222 761177

Children's Rights Office 235 Shaftsbury Avenue London WC2H 8EL. 0171 240 4449

Save the Children 17 Grove Lane London SE5 8RD. 0171 703 5400

Unicef UK 55 Lincoln's Inn Fields London WC2A 3NB 0171 405 5592

Suggested discussion topics

The short survey report enclosed could be shown on an overhead projector.
What do the class or group think about the questions and the replies?

A summary of the 42 articles of the Convention is enclosed.

How do the rights fit under the 3 headings of **provision, protection** and **participation** rights?

Do some rights fit under 2 or 3 headings?

Classes could discuss these questions in groups, and make illustrated displays about the three kind of rights.

What kinds of rights do they think are most important and why?

What does the class think about the school council?

How might the council be more useful? - in the way it is run, or in the topics it deals with, or in the way it tries to overcome problems?

If the school does not have a council, how might a council be useful to the school?

During our group discussions, students talked about how at one school they tried to get a public phone put in the school. In another they tried to get the owner of an empty factory next door to demolish it so that they could have space to play.

After two years nothing had happened.

How do you think the school councils might work to achieve their aims?

Some useful ideas about school councils are reported in the book by Highfield School **Changing our school: promoting positive behaviour** (details enclosed).

The next part was set out in large print with illustrations for a wall display for each school. And with reminders about the research and the Convention from the questionnaire cover.

School no.

So far, 2,180 replies have been counted from

1177 girls and 973 boys.

In 30 booklets, the boy or girl box was not ticked.

Your school sent replies, from girls and boys
aged

The overall ages are:

3 people aged 7

126 people aged 9

352 aged 11

325 aged 13

314 aged 15

2 aged 17.

59 people aged 8

311 aged 10

231 aged 12

319 aged 14

122 aged 16

The top 3 things from 10 choices which most people say they enjoy doing in or out of school are:

| | all schools | your school |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| being with friends | 2002 | |
| sports and games | 1777 | |
| and using computers | 1561 | |

People express themselves in how they look, in their clothes and hair style. We asked, What do you think about your school's rules about what you can wear and how you can look?

| | all schools | your school |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| all right | 836 | |
| too strict | 836 | |
| not strict enough | 54 | |
| it varies | 218 | |
| we don't have rules and I like that | 126 | |
| we don't have rules but we need some | 19 | |
| not sure | 73 | |
| no reply | 18 | |

On the whole, do your teachers listen to you:

| | all schools | your school |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| a lot | 318 | |
| quite a lot | 852 | |
| not much | 564 | |
| it varies | 375 | |
| not sure | 59 | |
| no reply | 12 | |

On the whole, do your teachers believe what you say and take you seriously?

| | all schools | your school |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| yes | 530 | |
| no | 376 | |
| varies | 1051 | |
| not sure | 213 | |
| no reply | 10 | |

Do you think girls and boys should be able to choose if they go to assemblies?

| | all schools | your school |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| yes | 1202 | |
| no | 515 | |
| varies | 270 | |
| not sure | 176 | |
| no reply | 17 | |

Do you think you should have lessons about religions around the world?

| | all schools | your school |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| yes | 1011 | |
| no | 521 | |
| varies | 392 | |
| not sure | 236 | |
| no reply | 19 | |

Do you think you should have lessons about children's rights?

| | all schools | your school |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| yes | 1686 | |
| no | 128 | |
| varies | 185 | |
| not sure | 166 | |
| no reply | 15 | |

The right to privacy and respect.

Do you trust your teachers to keep a secret if you tell them?

| | all schools | your school |
|----------|-------------|-------------|
| yes | 749 | |
| no | 680 | |
| varies | 500 | |
| not sure | 239 | |
| no reply | 12 | |

Is there any bullying at your school?

| | all schools | your school |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| yes a lot | 443 | |
| some | 952 | |
| not much | 430 | |
| none | 69 | |
| varies | 87 | |
| I'm not sure | 187 | |
| no reply | 12 | |

Do you think that some people at your school have more rights than others?
If so please show which groups you think these are.

| | all schools | your school |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| clever ones - yes | 673 | |
| - no | 1485 | |
| older ones - yes | 827 | |
| - no | 1330 | |

Does the school council help to make the school a better place to be in?

| | all schools |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| yes | 449 |
| no | 270 |
| varies | 283 |
| not sure | 224 |
| we do not have a school council | 867 |

We do not have replies from the separate schools yet about the school council.

Have you heard about the Convention on the Rights of the Child
before today?

| | all schools | your school |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| yes, a lot about it | 101 | |
| yes a bit about it | 404 | |
| no, I've not heard about it | 1301 | |
| I'm not sure | 308 | |
| no reply | 66 | |

What are the main things you want from school?

From 8 choices the top 3 things that matter to most people are:

all schools

your school

good teaching to help me to

pass tests and exams 1853

time to be with friends 1778

good teaching to help me to get

the job/career I will want to do 1717

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