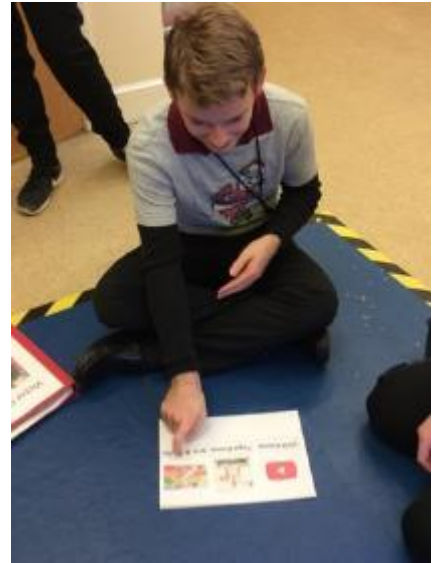


Pupil Voice at Step by Step School



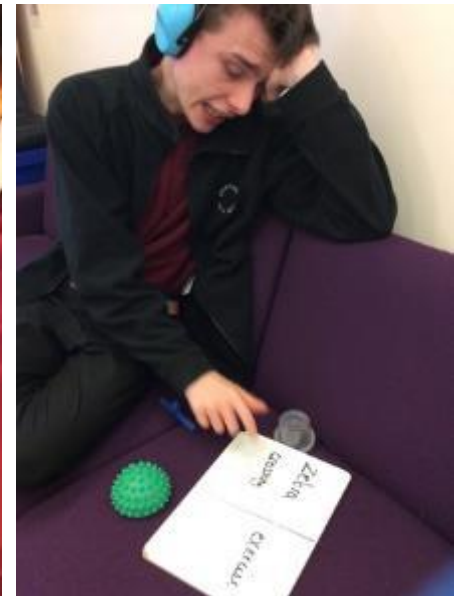
Importance of pupil voice

- At Step by Step School we value the importance of pupil voice. Our pupils all have varying levels of communication, and it is important to us that every pupil has the opportunity to express their thoughts, wishes, feelings, opinions, emotions and choices in a safe environment.
- We pride ourselves on teaching and promoting pupil voice, at every opportunity, as much as possible throughout the school day, and making sure the pupils have a say in what happens in their school life.
- Thus, there is a heavy focus on teaching functional communication, such as learning how to request for items, express opinions and choice making.



Opportunities to promote pupil voice: choosing work activities

At Step by Step, pupil voice is promoted throughout many different situations.



These include choosing which work target or subject to work on. Here, the pupils are making these choices using visual or textual support.



Ways we promote and teach pupils to make choices, and express their preferences, opinions and emotions

Verbally

Requesting preferred items and activities, and expressing their views and feelings using speech.



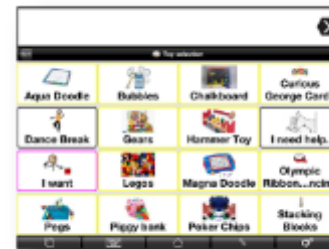
PECS

That's Picture Exchange Communication System. Pupils learn to give another person a photo or symbol of a desired item, in exchange for that item.



Proloquo2go

A communication app used on iPads, iPods and iPhones, providing a text-to-speech database for those who have difficulty speaking. The pupil can click on a picture to make a request or express a view, and the voice output says the word.



Signalong

A key-word signing system based on British Sign Language. Pupils are taught the signalong hand symbol of key-words used in their vocabulary, to request preferred items and express their views and feelings.



Opportunities to promote pupil voice: choosing leisure activities



Here, the pupils have chosen leisure activities to take part in, after being presented with various choices, including toys and books.



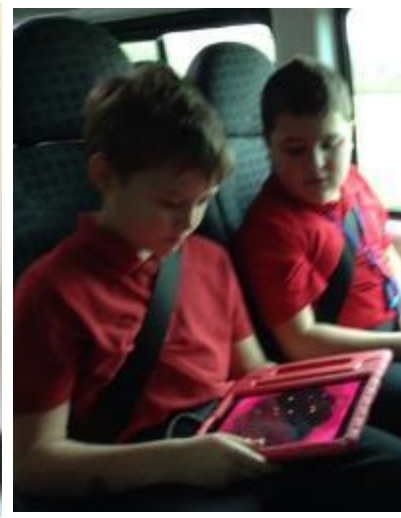
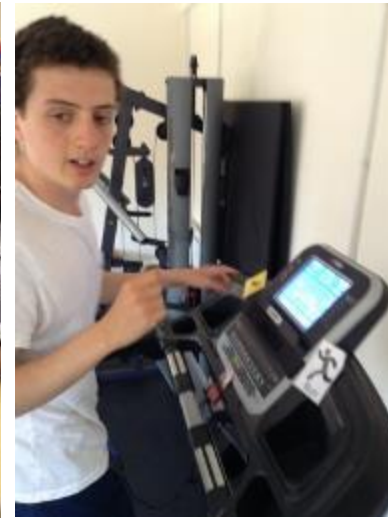
Opportunities to promote pupil voice: choosing reinforcements to work for



Step by Step is an ABA school. An important characteristic of an ABA programme is that reinforcement is provided immediately after the learner has displayed the target behaviour. It is important that our pupils have a choice in what their reinforcement will be. Pictured here, the pupils are choosing what activities they would like to do once they have completed their work. The choices are presented visually as a reminder of what is available. Some learners may not require the choices to be presented visually, but always have the opportunity to choose what reinforcement they would like to work for, via whichever method of communication they use (speech, Signalong, Proloquo2go or PECs).



Opportunities to promote pupil voice: making choices within activities

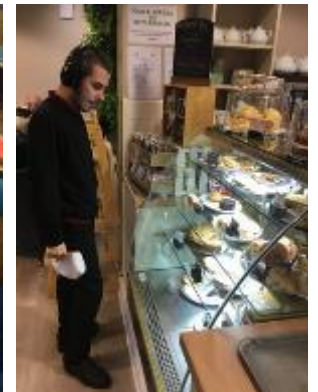


Making choices is not limited to choosing what to do. We also encourage pupils to make choices about how they do their activities. For example, pupils pictured here are choosing which character to play on Mario Kart, what toppings to put on their pizza in cooking group, which coloured paint to use in art, whether to run or walk on the treadmill in the gym, who to sit next to on the bus during a trip out, and the price of goods in an imaginative shopping game!



Opportunities to promote pupil voice: in the community

- Our pupils all have the opportunity to visit various locations in the community, such as supermarkets, libraries and parks, as well as taking part in recreational activities such as bowling, swimming, trampolining, horse-riding and work experience. Through these community outings, our pupils are given the opportunity to build up and practise life skills, which includes making the choices that everybody makes when they are out and about.
- For example, Sixth Form have been going to the supermarket and have been able to choose which supermarket they go to, write a shopping list of items they would like to buy before they go, and choose items they would like to buy when they are there. Other community outings include trips to the café where the pupils can choose a cake or drink to order!



Opportunities to promote pupil voice: group activities

During group activities such as DVD groups and story groups, each pupil chooses a video to watch or story to read. This means the pupils have a choice over what happens in the group, whilst also practising turn-taking, as well as tolerating and respecting each other's choices. Some pupils may verbally choose a video to watch or story to read, whilst others might be presented with visuals to choose from.



Opportunities to promote pupil voice: group activities

As a school, we have a responsibility to promote British values such as democracy and rule of law.

These can be seen through many examples of pupil voice. As well as individual pupils choosing what to watch and taking turns within group settings, sometimes the class vote for one video to watch or one book to read, and the majority vote is then carried out. For example, the pupils voted for which story would be used in story group for World Book Day!



Opportunities to promote democracy and rule of law in pupil voice

Pupils have also voted on what location to go to on community outings, as well as voting for a Wii game to purchase for their class. Each pupil in the class put their vote into a hat, and one of the pupils counted the votes. The game voted for by the majority was then purchased, meaning the pupils had a say in school matters such as what their class budget is spent on.



Opportunities to promote democracy and rule of law in pupil voice

All pupils follow class and school rules, and where appropriate, the pupils help to create the rules and discuss these as a class during group sessions.



Expressing opinions and expanding conversation skills

- Every pupil has the right to express their opinions, thoughts and feelings. Our pupils all have varying communication levels and needs. However, we aim for each pupil to be able to communicate and express themselves to the best of their ability. We aim to increase functional communication for all pupils throughout their school career. This is taught and implemented through Speech and Language sessions and in day to day teaching.
- Expressing opinions can be taught and practised in various ways. This process usually starts with “talking mats”.
- Talking mats involves visuals being used for pupils to sort items into “I like it” or “I don’t like it”.



Expressing opinions and expanding conversation skills

- These skills will help our pupils progress towards increasing social and conversational skills, expanding conversation topics and the ability to express their thoughts, opinions, feelings and views to other people.
- Talking mats can be used for expressing opinions about specific topics - such as food, sports, subjects at school or games – and can be used to express opinions about parts of a routine, such as hair washing (for example, I like having my hair washed but do not like having it blow-dried).



Pupil voice and our school mission

Our mission:

To maximise the potential of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) through evidence-based, individually tailored outstanding teaching, to enable them to thrive and live happy, confident lives.



How our mission links to pupil voice

"enable them to thrive and live happy, confident lives"

We provide our students with the opportunity to make decisions about their learning, and make choices within their day.

This will support our students to thrive and build self-confidence. These are skills which will be crucial later in life.

Pupil voice and our values

- Our values (LEARNs):

Shared values guide our day to day actions:-

Laughter – fun, motivating learning that builds confidence.

Evidence – Evidence-based practice for effective learning and progress.

Aspire – for all stakeholders to achieve their full potential, through realistic, ambitious targets tailored to the individual.

Respect – for every person to be treated with dignity.

Nurture – every success is recognised, praised and celebrated.

Safe – an environment where the pupils and staff feel safe and supported.

How our values link to pupil voice

- **Laughter:** By including students in their learning and supporting them to make decisions, we build **confidence**. This puts our students at the centre of their learning.
- **Aspire:** providing our students with means, through methods of communication (verbal or non-verbal), to achieve their full potential.
- **Respect:** Pupil voice allows all our students to be heard, regardless of their communication method or abilities.
- **Safe:** Pupil voice supports finding alternative ways for students to communicate likes/dislikes, opinions and choices. This can help to support their vulnerabilities.

Pupil voice at Step by Step

As a school, we will continue to find ways of providing our students with a voice, and to create opportunities to do this throughout their learning.

