

# MAKING VOICE MATTER

**pARTicipatory activities to listen to what really matters to children, from ask-it baskets to wall-art activism**

We are a large Primary school on the outskirts of one of the bigger Northern cities in England. Approximately 700 pupils attend our school, 97% from black & minority-ethnic backgrounds and for many English is an additional language. Our whole school PSHE curriculum 'Living and Growing' is committed to learning together with our young people about the issues that they face in their lives. We encourage input from our young people as an integral and essential part of this process and we do so in a number of key ways.

## ASK IT BASKET

"Our 'Ask it basket' can help us to explore those issues that young people may not want to bring forward in person. Questions are written on a piece of paper and placed in the basket. Those questions are collected up and then via lessons, form time, the school council or perhaps a school assembly they are addressed." (School Nurse)



Guerrilla Girls use art activism and protest art to great effect you can find out about them [here](https://www.tate.org.uk).

### Activist Art

"Activist art is a term used to describe art that is grounded in the act of 'doing' and addresses political or social issues"

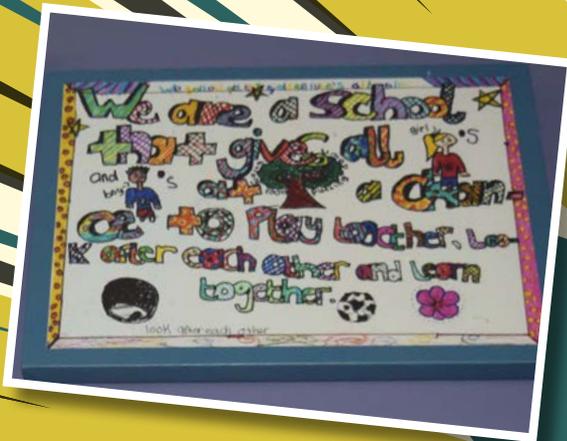
[www.tate.org.uk](https://www.tate.org.uk)

"We also operate a **NO TABOO** policy in our school. And this means that whatever the topic, no exceptions, we provide our young people with the information they want, drawn from national guidance, best practice and current research.

We recognise that in a media saturated society we can be a source of reliable and safe information for our young people. To do this effectively we have to listen to the questions they ask us"

(Assistant Head-teacher)





We maintain an ongoing dialogue with our young people. During form time young people can raise issues they feel they need information on with class teachers who feed forward to the school council.

With staff support in focus sessions the council members develop a resource, discussing ideas and gathering information before developing a lesson plan on the topic. The information is shared back to the form classes with peer training from school council members who deliver the session. This allows us to look at current topics from the media and our local communities and explore them with peer training in a way that feels comfortable and experience appropriate.

The minutes from the school council meetings are shared with the school governors and the parent's council keeping everyone informed of the work we are doing.



The school council room is filled with examples of the protest art that has been produced.

Councillors pick an issue that they want to highlight and work towards. These images on a broad range of topics reflect that the learning that happens in school is leading to a growing awareness of a range of social issues.

See some examples of very famous protest art [here](#).





**"One of our very successful strategies is taking 'Student Voice' seriously"**  
 (Assistant Head-teacher)



**"They know they can make a difference"**  
 (Parent council member)



Look at other examples of activist art  
 Find out more about children's rights  
 Learn more about the creative arts for health and wellbeing  
 Read about creative, art based protest

There are good **books on posters for change**

**The Tate on activist art**

**Activist artist Ai Wei Wei**

**Activism isn't just for adults and teens**

**Bristol based activist artist Katy Bauer introduces other popular activist artists**

Read more about critically engaging with student voice in our section, **"Making Voice Matter Differently"**.

To find out how this school works creatively on some of the more sensitive and challenging areas of RSE, see **NO TABOOS**.



**"Their voice is always heard"**  
 (Parent council member)



**"Our school council has been proactive and productive on a range of issues. They worked with a local university's graphic design department to produce an image-based school manifesto"**  
 (Assistant Head-teacher)

