



## East Ayrshire Council

# Additional Support for Learning: Consultation with children and young people

### **1. Introduction**

Common Ground Mediation (CGM) provides independent mediation services to East Ayrshire Council and a number of other Scottish local authorities, as required by the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004/2009. As part of the 2009 – 2010 Service Level Agreement between CGM and East Ayrshire Council, it was agreed to carry out a consultation exercise with children and young people with additional support for learning needs (ASL) across East Ayrshire to gather their views on their educational experience.

Children and young people have a right to participate in decision-making about their own education and their own schools. This right is enshrined in Scotland's education laws, in our government's efforts to promote good citizenship and in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. East Ayrshire's Children's Charter also includes the right for all children and young people to be listened to, to be taken seriously, to be involved in decisions made about them, and to have their say in matters that affect them.

## 2. Key Findings

- We spoke to 59 children and young people with a wide range of additional support for learning needs in 6 schools in East Ayrshire. Their ages range from 5 to 18 years.
- We adapted our questions to meet the needs of the children and young people. We spent some time getting to know the pupils, but this report remains a snap shot of views collated over a small number of days.
- The majority of comments made by pupils were extremely positive about their schools and their educational experience. In particular, pupils were often full of praise for the learning support they receive and the helpfulness and approachability of their teachers and others in schools.
- All of the schools that we visited had developed strategies to actively involve their pupils in having their say and making decisions at a school level. The children and young people we met were all accustomed to having their opinions sought.
- In addition to highlighting the agreeable comments and noting what is working well, we have included various concerns and issues raised by some pupils. These concerns should be considered in the context of the overall positive feedback described above.
- Bullying and the perceived stigma of receiving additional support or 'being different' was an issue for some pupils, particularly those of secondary school age in mainstream settings. This was despite schools already using a range of initiatives to try to counter this problem.
- Children and young people found it much easier to tell us about what they enjoy at school than what they don't enjoy. There could be a variety of reasons for this.
- Pupils with the capacity to understand about IEPs and target setting feel fully involved in the planning and fulfillment of these.
- Pupils with the capacity to understand the concepts of future planning and moving on to the next stage in their education are involved in the decision making.

### **3. Overview of task**

The aims of the consultation exercise were agreed, and a list of potential questions was identified.

#### **Aims:**

- To collate views of children and young people who require additional support to meet their learning needs about educational services and their experience of school in East Ayrshire
- To give these children and young people an opportunity to share their views in a safe and relaxed environment
- To feed back the views of these children and young people to East Ayrshire Educational Services and encourage implementation of any recommendations as far as possible, with a view to continuing to improve services

#### **Questions for children and young people:**

1. What do you like most/least about school and why?
2. How friendly and welcoming are the adults in your school?
3. If you need help/support with your learning at school, who helps you?
4. What kind of help/support do you get in the classroom?
5. If you have a problem at school who do you approach?
6. Are there things you need help with which you don't get?
7. Do you go to meetings at school and if not, why not?
8. Do you know if your parents are invited to meetings at school and if not, why not?
9. Do you know if you have an IEP (Individualised Educational Programme) or another education plan?
10. If you have an IEP or other plan, are your views/ideas about your education included in the plan? How?
11. When this school session finishes (summer 2010) what is the plan for the next step in your education?
12. Do you know that Enquire, the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning, has information especially for children and young people?

13 Have you any suggestions for East Ayrshire Council about how your education could be better?

It was agreed that the questions would be adapted depending on the age and ability of the children and young people involved, using different formats, games and activities. It was acknowledged that some of the questions may not have meaning for some children and young people. However, we would endeavour to gather as much information and as many different views as possible.

**Schools to be visited**

A priority list was drawn up of East Ayrshire schools to be consulted, including special schools, communication centres, supported learning centres, and mainstream schools with learning support departments.

#### **4. Scope of report**

Due to limitations on time and resources, a decision was made to consult with pupils at the following schools in the first instance:

Park School (special school sharing a campus with Grange Academy and Annanhill Primary School)

Witchhill School

Woodstock School

Hillside School

Crosshouse Primary School Communication Centre

Loudoun Academy Communication Centre

It was acknowledged that pupils at these schools have a wide range of support for learning needs, and some have communication difficulties that make expressing their views and participating in decision making more challenging. It was precisely for this reason that we began with these particular schools, to ensure that the voices of **all** children and young people with ASL in East Ayrshire are heard.

We made contact with the head teachers at each school and asked them to identify a group or groups of children and young people who would be willing to meet with CGM and answer some of our questions. In order to make some meaningful contact with the children and young people, it was agreed to make two visits to each school, the first to introduce ourselves and the concept of the consultation exercise, and to get to know the preferred communication methods used; and the second visit to ask the questions and gather responses. For a number of reasons we were only able to make one visit to Hillside School but we spent nearly an entire day there.

We set aside up to an hour for each session with each group of children and young people, but it became clear that some children would find it difficult to sustain meaningful communication and concentration over that period of time. Therefore we took our lead from the school staff who know the children and young people best, and had shorter meetings when appropriate. We explained in every school that we had no wish to disrupt on-going school activities or daily routines that are very important to many children and young people.

#### **Number of children and young people interviewed**

CGM met a total of 59 children and young people with additional support needs. A breakdown of the numbers we met at each school follows:

12 representatives from the Pupil Council at Park School

6 pupils at Witchhill School

14 pupils at Woodstock School

13 pupils at Hillside School

8 pupils at Crosshouse PS Communication Centre

6 pupils at Loudoun Academy Communication Centre

None of the pupils we met had a split placement between schools, but the special schools all had arrangements to use facilities in other East Ayrshire Council schools and establishments where appropriate, for example swimming pool, PE hall, science and technical facilities, etc.

### **Age range**

The ages of the pupils we met ranged from 5 up to 18 years.

### **Additional Support Needs**

The pupils we met have a very diverse range of support needs. The Communication Centre at Loudoun Academy, for example, supports secondary age pupils with a communication disorder on the autism spectrum of the Asperger syndrome type. Some of these pupils are able to join up to 80% of their classes in mainstream, and those we met were able to engage with us well and give us their views on different topics. On the other hand, pupils at Witchhill have complex learning needs and multiple impairments, and most require significant medical support to enable them to attend school regularly. We spent time with 6 pupils at Witchhill observing and interacting with them, and adapted our questions creatively to meet their needs. Although this group of pupils are unable to use words and language to express themselves, we were able to get a sizeable amount of helpful feedback from them, detailed in Section 6 Findings

## 5. Methodology

We used various methods to adapt the questions to meet the needs of the children and young people. To help with question 1: *What do you like most/least about school and why?* we used pictures to prompt responses with some groups. At Witchhill School we used a graph with a sliding scale and measured how much an individual pupil enjoyed an individual activity, noting down clear evidence to show how we reached our conclusion (see appendix 1 for an example.)

At Crosshouse Primary School Communication Centre and with one group of younger children at Park School we used a 'talking stick' decorated with pink feathers and flowers to capture the children's attention and to encourage turn taking to allow one person to speak at a time. We also used the stick as a 'magic wand' and asked the younger children if there was one thing that the magic fairy (or Ben 10 with his super powers) could change about their school, what would that be?

We also used a red felt star as the 'hotspot' to encourage one person to speak at a time. The hotspot was placed in the middle of the table and children and young people were asked to touch it when they had something important to say. This method worked particularly well with the group at Loudoun Academy Communication Centre. They understood the concept of listening to each other without interrupting, while at the same time getting the opportunity to respond or disagree in due course to ensure that no contribution was missed or excluded.

At Woodstock School we used the school's cards with pictures and symbols of activities, as these were already familiar to all the pupils. Two pupils used their Go Talk communication aids to let us know about what they liked and disliked at school, and signing was also used as a method of communication.

A variety of different augmentative communication aids are used in Hillside School, and one pupil used their Step By Step Mac switches to tell us about their school. Hillside School also use cards with pictures and symbols of activities, and we used these with the younger pupils together with simple graphic symbols for 'yes' and 'no' to find out what they liked at school.

To help with questions 3,4 and 5:

*If you need help/support with your learning at school, who helps you?*

*What kind of help/support do you get in the classroom?*

*If you have a problem at school who do you approach?*

We used a worksheet with pictures (see appendix 2 Who helps me?) with some groups of children. They used this to graphically indicate the source of help or to prompt conversation.

To help with questions 9 and 10:

*Do you know if you have an IEP (Individualised Educational Programme) or another education plan?*

*If you have an IEP or other plan, are your views/ideas about your education included in the plan? How?*

We used East Ayrshire Council's templates for IEPs and target setting with groups at Park School and Loudoun Academy Communication Centre to find out how familiar the young people were with these documents. (Appendix 3 and Appendix 4)

## 6. Findings

### Question 1

#### ***What do you like most/least about school and why?***

All the children and young people we met gave us answers to this question. As well as telling us about their favourite subjects and parts of the school curriculum, they told us what else they liked about school. The swimming pool and PE hall are very popular at Park School, and for some pupils the best thing about Park School is talking to their friends. The general agreement was that there are many good things about Park School:

*'This school is absolutely brilliant!'*

*'I like the whole school and the things that happen in it.'*

At Park School two S5 students told us that they particularly enjoyed their work experience placements. They were also positive about the work they do in Café 56 – the community café. The activities include cooking, washing up, and ironing.

Some discussion took place about the fact that the smaller number of pupils (and teachers) at Park School affects the range of choice of subjects, particularly for those of secondary school age. One young person with experience of mainstream school said that he would welcome more choice in the timetable and more say in picking his subjects. This had already been discussed at some length in the school with his teachers.

He also expressed mild frustration about just getting a general idea of some subjects like science, history or geography, and described this as a *'broad-brush approach'*.

*'The nearest we get to a bunsen burner is a picture of one on a computer screen'* – this seemed to be a particular frustration because there was no formal arrangement for Park School to get access to Grange Academy's science labs or technology department.

*'Annanhill Primary School get the use of a lab but we don't.'*

Some pupils from Grange Academy join classes in Park School, for example ICT or Café 56 because these activities suit their learning needs. However, it was stated that this is not reciprocated by Grange Academy. Some Park School students could benefit from joining some Grange classes but this doesn't happen.

S5 student: *'I've never been to the school library because it's part of Grange.'*

Children at Crosshouse PS Communication Centre talked about seeing their friends, both those who attend the centre and others in the main school. One pupil explained that he particularly likes the quiet atmosphere in the centre which allows him to get on with his work. He also told us that he doesn't like loud noise in other parts of the school.

Another pupil said that what he likes least is when other children sometimes annoy him. When asked what they liked least about school, some Crosshouse Communication Centre pupils mentioned the whole school assembly because it can be too noisy, particularly when the 'wee ones' sing the 'well done' song, because they shout and scream. However, the pupils have learned strategies to deal with this – they explained that they put their hands over their ears to cut out the loud noise.

At Loudoun Academy Communication Centre the discussion focused on the school curriculum and future plans, with the majority of the young people talking about getting through their exams, and staying on at school for S5 and S6, with the aim of moving on to college or university. There was general acknowledgement of and praise for the academic opportunities available at Loudoun Academy:

*'This school is good for sport and academic results but not for social things.'*

When asked about this statement a number of the young people said that there are difficulties with some of the other students who attend Loudoun Academy. A small number: *'say nasty things and are not nice to people who are different.'* These pupils were described as *'a bunch of neds'* and *'a big group of idiots'*.

The young people described how some teachers help them with suggestions and strategies about how to deal with this kind of behaviour, and some of them had developed their own strategies which are working well. However, there was a request for *'more effective disciplinary action'* from teachers, as sometimes detention is threatened but is not followed through.

The group also said that the corridors in Loudoun Academy are rather narrow for the crowds of pupils (school roll is over 1,000). The school rule is to keep to the left but many students do not keep this rule, and the group would like to see it enforced more strongly.

Another comment was that some teachers shout too much, but interestingly: *'some of them look quite scary and stern but they're actually quite nice.'*

At Woodstock School the Post 14 class told us about their favourite activities at school, which are many, as they have a very busy and broad curriculum. The list of favourites includes: science, reading and listening, art work, woodwork and metal work at Kilmarnock Academy, computers and technology, cooking lunch and preparing snacks, music, drama, and work experience. Outings of all kinds are popular, with one young man particularly keen on a local cafe:

*'They have good cakes, fairy cakes with shiny sprinkles, but they're expensive.'*

Another popular activity is the video club and the young people had taken some film footage of the site of the new special school being built. They expressed their disappointment at the slow progress:

*'There's nothing there, just a pile of rubble.'*

All pupils have been involved in discussions about the name for the new school.

It was more difficult for this group to say what they liked least about school, but there was general agreement that brushing their teeth after snacks and meals was not enjoyable. It was also difficult to think of anything they would like to change about the school, but one suggestion was that some pupils would welcome the opportunity to do some cycling at school.

The Senior Group at Woodstock told us about a lot of things they enjoy at school including drama, PE, assembly, library, swimming, yoga, music, going out on the bus, social studies and health. Everyone in the group particularly enjoy 'hard work', and staff explained that this may be because they like the structure of the activities. Or it may be because they are conscientious students! One boy explained that he sometimes doesn't like PE but he enjoys swimming. Two pupils told us that they don't like taking off their jumpers. One pupil likes everything about the school apart from going out of the building for activities such as swimming, drama and PE. He particularly likes having a shower at school.

A group of younger children at Woodstock also told us about the many activities they enjoy at school including science, PE, yoga, outings, hard work, playtime and drama. One pupil used her Go Talk communication aid to tell us that she didn't enjoy any activities at all – but clearly this was connected with her general mood that day. This raises an important point: our conversations with the children and young people can only provide a 'snap shot' view of their views on one particular day. It would be necessary to spend a longer time getting to know the children and young people to get a more rounded picture of their views.

Pupils at Hillside School were very positive about their school:

*'This is a brilliant school.'*

*'This is a beautiful school.'*

*'All the teachers here make me laugh.'*

*'I wouldn't change anything about this school.'*

We met a group of primary age children who told us about all their favourite activities including: drama, dressing up, soft play and the ball pool, swimming, Snoezelen (multisensory) room, trampoline, art and painting, plasma screen, music and singing (party songs were a particular favourite with one pupil.)

It was more difficult to tell us about what they don't like, but one pupil said she doesn't like loud noises, for example using the food mixer for cooking. Another pupil doesn't enjoy messy activities. Staff explained that they encourage these children to continue to participate in these activities to increase their tolerance and confidence.

The Post 14 class and Post 16 class at Hillside told us about their favourite activities including: going to college, cookery (and then doing the dishes), PE, going out on trips, shopping, going outside to the garden, music, social skills group with speech and language therapist, and assembly with the minister. Two young men explained how they have duties to do which they particularly enjoy: taking round the school milk and registers, recycling and emptying the bins, and helping the janitor, for example putting out chairs.

*'I like being busy.'*

*'Men like doing everything.'*

Another senior pupil told us that she doesn't like walking into town but she enjoys going to the café when she gets there, for coffee, tea and cakes: *'I shared my cake with (the janitor).'*

When asked if there was anything that they didn't like so much, one student told us how he doesn't like taking off his socks in the Snoezelen room. With a big grin on his face another complained about too much hard work:

*'Sometimes (the teacher) makes us work, work, work!'*

This student would prefer to have more time for computer games, but two others said they would prefer more time in the swimming pool.

We used the 'magic wand' to ask the children and young people what they would like to change or improve about their school if they could. At Park School one wish was for more outdoor education such as rock climbing. Another was for more equipment in the school playground, but it was acknowledged that this could get damaged or disappear – currently a lot of balls are kicked up on to the roof. One or two young people said that they would prefer if Park went back to being a separate school – playground encounters with some Grange Academy pupils seemed to be an area of difficulty.

At Crosshouse PS Communication Centre, some ideas for the wish list were very practical, and some were very imaginative!

*'Instead of writing homework I would like to do it on the computer.'*

*'A drinks machine because we only have water just now.'*

*'Two staircases – one for going up and the other for going down.'*

*'A bigger building, the biggest school in town with lots of different classes and a big playground with lots of different things to do.'*

*'A big library with a very big TV.'*

*'A new classroom all to ourselves.'*

*'A computer for everyone.'*

*'A big whiteboard with lots of pens and a big table for everyone to sit at.'*

*'A new dinner hall with more space.'*

*'Books with pages that turn themselves.'*

*'A machine that could make you invisible.'*

*'I would like the playground to change into a big swampy pool with lots of sharks and crocodiles.'*

As already mentioned the approach at Witchhill School was rather different. We used the What I like/dislike template (Appendix 1) to record our observations and information staff could give us based on their knowledge and relationship with the pupils. In a similar way to the other special schools we visited, Witchhill School offers an enhanced and adapted curriculum so that its pupils can achieve and develop their full potential. In this way the specially designed activities are not only therapeutically beneficial and teaching skills such as turn taking, but they can also be good fun.

A group art work activity was enjoyed by all involved, and we knew this from observing the pupils engaging with the activity, touching the differently textured art materials,

reaching out with an open hand to hold the glitter tube in response to the question 'do you want to hold this?', smiling, vocalising and eye pointing.

We watched two younger children enjoy making music with the Air Synth. They both took turns and listened attentively to the sounds they were making. They showed their enjoyment in various ways: smiling, banging the table, and one shook his head to show enjoyment. In response to the question 'do you want more?' there was a nod of the head. When they felt they had had enough, they pushed the Air Synth away across the table.

One boy spent some time in his Gait Trainer to allow him to move around the school. This is clearly a beneficial physical activity that allows him to make decisions about stopping and going and which direction he walks in. Staff explained although this is a regular activity sometimes it's more enjoyable than others, depending on how tired the boy may be or his general health or mood. We knew that he was enjoying the activity when we watched him start to run with a big grin in his face!

Some activities, while beneficial, are not so enjoyable for every pupil. One pupil does not like water play, despite staff encouragement. We observed how she pulled her hands out of the water, shouted and protested, and kept her shoulders tense. This is interesting because staff know she does like swimming, but when she is on dry land she prefers to touch hard things with her hands.

### **Questions 2 – 6**

***How friendly and welcoming are the adults in your school?***

***If you need help/support with your learning at school, who helps you?***

***What kind of help/support do you get in the classroom?***

***If you have a problem at school who do you approach?***

***Are there things you need help with which you don't get?***

We grouped these questions together for convenience. At Crosshouse PS Communication Centre all the children told us how the teacher and classroom assistant help them with their work when they need it. They told us that there are three adults who help in the playground. All the children were very clear that when things go wrong in the playground they can ask an adult for help. We asked what kind of problems happen in the playground and one answer was that some other children sometimes make funny faces.

*'If things go wrong, like an emergency, like bullying or shouting, I jump in to help, then I go and tell a teacher what has happened.'*

One group at Crosshouse PS Communication Centre also talked about getting help from other pupils in the school:

*'I think the boys and girls are very helpful indeed in this school.'*

At Park School the young people told us about help in the classroom. The teacher always helps with learning if that's needed, and there are other adults sometime in the

classroom who work with those who need a bit extra help. If someone was upset outside the classroom they would go to the nearest teacher or the head teacher. There are also helpers at lunch time - they wear purple T shirts so that they're easily spotted.

We asked how friendly the adults are and the young people said that all the Park School teachers know their names, but the Grange Academy staff don't know them.

*'I don't really talk to the Grange teachers or jannies.'*

There was some discussion about problems in the playground between Park and Grange Academy pupils. There have been bullying incidents in the past, but management at both schools have worked hard to address these issues. However, some students said that name calling and picking on people still goes on. Because Grange Academy is so big (school roll is about 1,200) it can be difficult to find out the names of pupils causing difficulties in the playground. Our group said that they feel these pupils get away with their behaviour and do it again. Examples of some of the language used is *'Park rejects'* and *'mongols'*. It was acknowledged that this negative behaviour is not one-sided – pupils at both schools have been involved.

*'Grange pupils think they own the whole school and Park pupils are just guests.'*

The pupils at Woodstock School told us that the class teacher, classroom assistant and school nurse all helped them at school. Two pupils also said that the head teacher helps them. Many said that their friends help them too. The speech and language therapist was mentioned as being a source of help with signing, and cleaning the hearing aids for one pupil.

Pupils at Hillside School told us about all the different people who help them, including: teachers, classroom assistants, janitor, school nurse, head teacher, physiotherapist, speech and language therapist, and people who come into school for specialist subjects such as drama and art.

*'Hunners of folk help in this school.'*

*'My friend and my mum help me.'*

*'I've got a new buddy now – we go shopping.'*

*'(The janitor)'s my pal.....he's everyone's pal.'*

### **Questions 7 & 8**

***Do you go to meetings at school and if not, why not?***

***Do you know if your parents are invited to meetings at school and if not, why not?***

Where appropriate, we asked the children and young people what a meeting is.

*'Where you talk to folk.'*

*'You get together and share information.'*

*'It's my mum and dad and lots of people talking.'*

At Hillside School one young man beat us to it and asked: *'Is this a meeting?'*

The young people at Loudoun Academy Communication Centre were familiar with review meetings, IEP meetings and meetings to discuss progress and improvements in school.

More recently some have been involved in planning for the future meetings. Some of the meetings were described as *'a bit formal'* or *'nerve wracking'* because of the number of adults that attend including parents and different teachers. However, there was agreement that all these different adults need to attend because they all have something to contribute.

One young person commented that he didn't go to most meetings because he finds them boring.

The children at Crosshouse PS Communication Centre told us about different meetings including parents' nights, IEP meetings and parents' workshops. One group talked at length about the school's Eco Committee and the Tuck Shop that was put on last year. This project involved a lot of different tasks including making the cakes, developing a marketing plan, designing signs, selling the cakes and counting the money.

When asked what happens when parents come to school for a meeting, one response was: *'The teachers tell them there's good work going on and good listening.'*

At Park School the children and young people told us about Eco meetings, student council meetings, management meetings and parents' meetings. They were clear that could choose whether to attend or not:

*'I go to some meetings and say things, and I don't go to other meetings.'*

The Post 14 class at Woodstock School told us about review meetings. They can choose if they want to attend these meetings or not, and for how long. All the pupils we spoke to said that they attend the meetings. They can take pictures along to show the adults what they have been doing at school.

Senior pupils at Hillside School started to tell us about meetings in their school, including the Pupil Forum, but unfortunately we ran out of time, as they were going off to college. Our final question was *'What are you doing today at college?'*

The answer (so typical from many teenagers!) made us smile: *'The usual.'*

### **Questions 9 & 10**

***Do you know if you have an IEP (Individualised Educational Programme) or another education plan?***

***If you have an IEP or other plan, are your views/ideas about your education included in the plan? How?***

Everyone in the Post 14 class at Woodstock School told us that they have an IEP. They also told us all about targets, and showed us how they can be awarded stars for different activities. The pupils who gets the most stars is the star pupil of the week and is presented with a trophy to take home for the weekend in a special bag. There was clear enthusiasm for this method of recognition.

At Park School some pupils knew that they have an IEP. They were more familiar with the idea of targets for certain subjects or activities and they all recognised the East Ayrshire Council template for targets. (Appendix 4)

At Crosshouse PS Communication Centre nearly everyone in the group of older children knew that they had an IEP and that the letters stand for Individualised Educational Programme. They were very familiar with the idea of targets for their learning.

All the young people at Loudoun Academy Communication Centre that we spoke to have an IEP. Most of them recognized the East Ayrshire templates for IEPs and targets. They all agreed that they are consulted about the content of these documents, and they felt that their views are fully included.

**Question 11**

***When this school session finishes (summer 2010) what is the plan for the next step in your education?***

The group at Park School chose to concentrate on their plans for future careers when they leave school. These included policeman, doctor or nurse, and plans for a 2 year sound technician college course.

The older children at Crosshouse PS Communication Centre also had ideas about future careers including teacher, policeman, welder and classroom assistant. These children also told us about plans for the next step in their education when they leave primary school. It was clear that there are various options available: Grange Campus, Park School, Cumnock Academy and Loudoun Academy were all mentioned. One pupil had been to have a look at one secondary school this week. Another told us that his mum has been to visit all the different schools – she hasn't made her mind up yet, so he hasn't gone for a visit himself. The general feeling was that there was still a lot of time to think about this question, especially for those in P6.

Pupils at Loudoun Academy Communication Centre were unanimous that they would prefer to stay on at school for S5 and S6, and then move on to college or university. One young person was thinking of a career in marine biology, and another is interested in IT and computer game design.

**Question 12**

***Do you know that Enquire, the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning, has information especially for children and young people?***

None of the children and young people that we met had heard of Enquire. Where we felt it was appropriate, at Loudoun Academy Communication Centre and at Park School, we distributed some Enquire publications (Guides for young people) including:

- People who can help you in and out of school
- What's the plan? Your education and support
- Round the table – a guide to going to meetings
- What are additional support needs?

**Question 13**

***Have you any suggestions for East Ayrshire Council about how your education could be better?***

Despite the full discussions and many and varied comments above, we did not get any specific answers to this final question. However, several clear strands of thoughts and ideas were identified, and these are presented in Section 2 Key Findings. Finally, some recommendations or suggestions are listed below.

## **7. Summary of recommendations**

- This consultation exercise produced a great deal of information from children and young people, but from a limited number of East Ayrshire schools, due to time constraints. Consideration should be given to extending the consultation to other schools.
- In order for consultation with children and young people to be meaningful, consideration should be given to repeating this exercise on a regular basis, perhaps every two or three years.
- All the special schools we visited use, as a matter of course, a variety of methods to ensure that their pupils' views are included and heard. Consideration should be given to sharing this good practice across schools in East Ayrshire, with a focus on specific methods that work well for individual pupils.
- While acknowledging that much work has already taken place at Loudoun Academy and Grange Campus to combat unhelpful behaviour, consideration could be given to further activities with groups of pupils, eg a restorative practice approach to build and nurture relationships, or development of peer mediation skills where pupils learn how to better manage conflict.

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