

**PRESS NOTICE – For release Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> September**

## **ADONIS GIVES STRONG SUPPORT TO SCHOOL COUNCILS**

Schools Minister Andrew Adonis today reiterated the Government's strong support for the growing number of school councils. He said that school councils, in both primary and secondary schools, can lead to better behaviour and help young people understand their rights and responsibilities.

Responding to a report to the Government, published today by Professor Geoff Whitty, Andrew Adonis said:

"School councils have a positive role to play in school life. Around 90% of schools now have a school council, giving pupils a say on issues like bullying and school meals. Today's report demonstrates the value of school councils and sets out some of the innovative ways schools are seeking the views of their pupils. At Forest Gate school in East London pupils train to become peer mediators, helping staff settle playground disputes.

"There is no hard and fast rule as to what schools should do to harness the views of their pupils. Individual schools know what works best for them.

The most important thing is that young people feel they are taken seriously and that their views can lead to tangible change.

"Ensuring young people play an active role in their education is part of our wider aim, through citizenship education, to ensure young people become responsible adults, accountable for their choices and behaviour."

Today's report *Real decision making? School councils in action* is the result of research commissioned by the Government to look at what schools are currently doing to harness the views of their pupils. The findings will inform revised guidance and support the work of School Councils UK (SCUK) in promoting school councils in both primary and secondary schools.

Andrew Adonis concluded:

"Around 90% of schools already have a school council, and while we will not be making it a legal requirement to have a school council, it is something all schools should consider.

"Today's booklet from The Innovation Unit contains examples of good practice and opportunities to share ideas online. I have also asked Geoff Whitty and his team to lead on updating and strengthening our *Working Together* guidance which will be available to schools early next year."

### **Notes to editors:**

- *Real decision making? School councils in action* will be published on the DCSF website at 09.30 Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> September. Further details on the report can be obtained from Helen Green at the Institute of Education on (0)20 7612 6459.
- The Innovation Unit's shortened version of the Whitty report aimed at teachers outlines research, emphasises the links between school councils, personalised learning and pupil voice and focuses on how different schools have made their school councils work effectively. It is available from The Innovation Unit [www.innovation-unit.co.uk](http://www.innovation-unit.co.uk).

School Councils UK (SCUK) is also publishing a report on the role of school councils at 09.30am on the 18<sup>th</sup> September; this can be found on their website at [www.schoolcouncils.org](http://www.schoolcouncils.org). For more information please call Matt Lent on 020 7482 8914