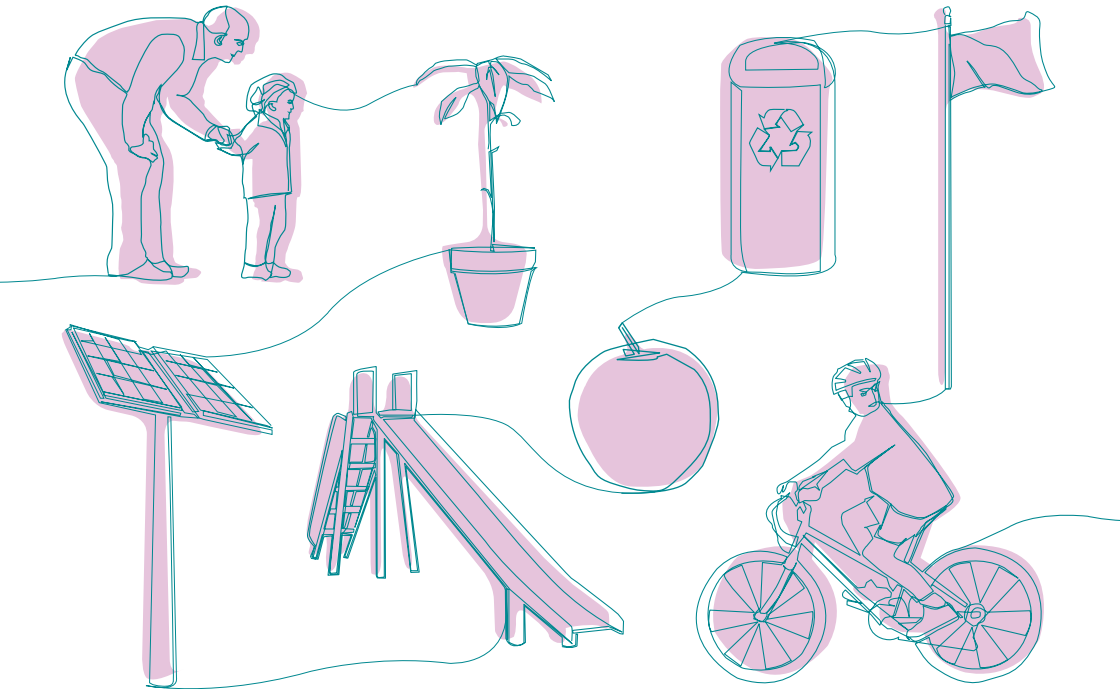


Leading sustainable schools



Leading sustainable schools

Author

Alma Harris

Audience

It is hoped that this publication will be of value to headteachers, senior leadership teams and governors of specialist schools and all those responsible for driving forward the development of sustainable schools.

Mission of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust
The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust works to give practical support to the transformation of secondary education in England by building and enabling a world-class network of innovative, high performing secondary schools in partnership with business and the wider community.

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Foreword

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) believes that schools and practitioners can be enabled to take the appropriate steps to become a sustainable school through a dedicated school-led network of professional learning, mutual support, challenge, innovation and dissemination. The SSAT is developing a programme that will allow schools to become system leaders – to reorient the education system, as they develop, implement and share outcomes to encourage, empower and support others to meet the expectations of the National Framework for Sustainable Schools.

The underlying vision for this programme is to create a powerful strategic partnership encompassing schools, non-government organisations and industry that will:

- Enable and encourage schools to become models of sustainable best practice;
- Enhance teaching and learning through active and inclusive approaches to education for sustainability; and
- Equip young people and local communities with the drive and capability to safeguard the future

The SSAT has recently published an occasional paper *Raising Standards: making sense of the sustainable schools agenda* in which Professor William Scott (University of Bath) offers a rigorous intellectual framework to help schools understand the sustainable schools agenda and which provides a rationale for sustainable development as a core component of whole school improvement.

Now, this new pamphlet from Professor Alma Harris (Associate Director, SSAT) takes the programme an important step further. It builds upon the intellectual framework set out in *Raising Standards: making sense of the sustainable schools agenda* by Professor Bill Scott's and suggests a series of key questions for all schools.

- What priority is placed on sustainable development in your school?

- How far is sustainable development a whole school and community focus?
- Who are your community partners? How are you currently involving them in this work?
- What needs to be done to move your school towards the sustainable school or to maintain it as a sustainable school?

Professor Harris argues that in all school development and change, leadership plays a crucial role. But what does leadership for sustainable schools look like? The pamphlet provides a series of case studies that offer examples of leadership for sustainability, where there has been concerted and deliberate attention on generating leadership that will promote and deliver the sustainable development agenda. It identifies the sustainability challenges facing school leaders and reviews practically the skills, abilities, knowledge and understanding required. It argues that leadership for sustainability requires leaders to think and act in a different way.

Mike Goodfellow

Head of Community Development, Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

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1 Why sustainable development?

Introduction

‘Sustainable development will not just be a subject in the classroom; it will be in its bricks and mortar and in the way the school uses and even generates its own power. Our students won’t just be told about sustainable development, they will see and work within it: a living, learning place in which to explore what a sustainable lifestyle means.’

Tony Blair, September 2004

In an educational world fond of new labels and initiatives the idea of sustainable schools could be viewed as just the latest fad or fashion. Sustainable development could easily be seen as one of a growing number of trends that are quickly supplanted by the next new or important idea. Many schools will recognise this familiar pattern but in the case of sustainability, it is more than just a passing trend. Unlike other initiatives or policy imperatives, the consequences are greater and the stakes are higher, much higher. In the past decade there has been a growing realisation that our modern ways of living are damaging the environment and that our current modes of development are ultimately unsustainable. In other words, we are living beyond our means. From the loss of biodiversity with the felling of rainforests to the negative consequences of our consumption patterns – all these actions are having a profoundly negative impact on the environment and the climate. In short, our way of life is placing an increasing burden on the planet.

In *Raising standards: making sense of the sustainable schools agenda*, Professor Bill Scott outlines the challenges facing schools and society to secure a sustainable future. He makes a compelling case for sustainable development highlighting both the urgency and necessity of immediate action. He points out ‘from over fishing to global warming our way of life is placing an increasing burden on the planet which cannot be sustained. Things that were once taken for granted such as a secure supply of energy

or a stable climate do not look so permanent now. If our prosperity is tied to the health of the planet, then no one's well being is secure unless the environment is protected (7).

It is clear that the added stress we are placing on resources and environmental systems such as water, land and air cannot go on forever. As the world's population continues to increase, the poverty gap also increases. This gap not only reflects increasing differences in wealth between the rich and the poor but also a widening division in the educational achievements and aspirations of those living in our most impoverished countries. Over a billion people currently live on less than a dollar a day and the population of third world countries is increasing. Globally we are not even near to meeting the needs of the present population let alone considering or indeed sustaining the needs of future generations.

What is sustainable development?

If we are serious about sustainability, what exactly do we mean? A widely-used and accepted international definition of sustainable development is:

'Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (DfES, 2006)

'Sustainable development is essentially about safeguarding the future and ensuring that we don't harm its most precious resource-the planet'
(Scott, 2007:7)

Sustainable development is not only concerned with environmental issues. More broadly, sustainable development policies encompass three general policy areas: economic, environmental and social. In support of this, several United Nations texts, in particular the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, refer to the 'interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars' of sustainable development as economic development, social development, and environmental protection.

Proponents of sustainable development argue that it provides a context in which to improve overall sustainability and that progress can be measured using certain indicators. Measurement of sustainable development includes indicators which signal:

1. The pressure that society puts on the environment (In the form of pollution and resource depletion)
2. The resulting state of the environment (especially the incurred changes) compared to desirable (sustainable) states and
3. The response by human activity mainly in the form of political and societal decision, measures and policies

Sustainable development implies a broad view of human welfare, a long term perspective about the consequences of today's activities, and global co-operation to reach viable solutions. The key question is how can we meet the needs of today without diminishing the capacity of future generations to meet theirs?

What does sustainable development have to do with schools?

Sustainable development is basically concerned with developing and preserving what matters, spreads and lasts in ways that create positive connections and development among people and do no harm to others in the present or in the future (Hargreaves and Fink, 2006: 17). Unless we start to make real progress toward reconciling some of the environmental crises of our own making, we face a future that is less certain and less secure.

Unlike other initiatives, policy imperatives or innovations sustainability is inherently and primarily a moral issue. This is why schools have a fundamental role to play. Michael Fullan (2005) defines educational sustainability as the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) offer a similar interpretation:

Sustainable educational leadership and improvement preserves and develops deep learning for all that spreads and lasts, in ways that do

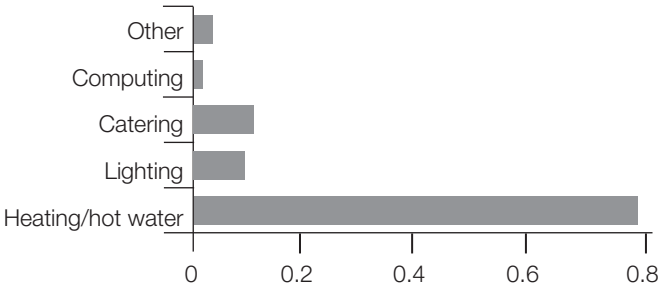
no harm to and indeed create positive benefit for others around us now and in the future.

Sustainability is essentially concerned with sound environmental management that requires a change in thinking and practice. Such changes require understanding, commitment and some modeling of an alternative future. Schools have a key role to play in modeling that alternative future. They are best placed to raise awareness, generate knowledge and create understanding of the sustainability issues facing future generations.

Schools also need to think about their own environmental responsibilities. Just think about the number of school sites. Currently there are over 30,000 schools and further education colleges in the UK, making it the largest estate in the public sector. The sector comprises sites educating young people from 3–19 years of age. Many school sites have sports facilities and have some extended community use outside normal school hours.

The cost of energy used within all UK schools is around £350M per annum and rising despite reduction targets set at the Local Authority level. Schools emit over five million tonnes of CO₂/year, which is around 15% of total public sector emissions. It is estimated that savings of 5% across the sector can be achieved at no cost, saving over £20 million and 300,000 tonnes of CO₂. A typical breakdown of energy use is shown in the chart below. The biggest areas of energy saving potential are heating, lighting and ICT.

Energy use breakdown for schools



(Source: Carbon Trust)

Therefore saving energy is not only important but it brings the following advantages to schools:

- Reduced utility costs, which allows more money to be directed to other school activities.
- Improved internal environments, which can help with teaching and morale of pupils and staff
- Energy use and savings can be used as a real world experience for pupils, improving learning and engendering a sense of citizenship and stewardship of finite resources
- Allows school to reduce environmental damage and impact

There is however a tension here, a fine balance between efficiency and effectiveness that schools need to consider and to actively manage. It is possible that energy saving could result in more funds being available for other purposes but opportunity cost and real costs need to be carefully judged by schools.

In most schools, the efficiency versus effectiveness issue is being taken seriously. Many head-teachers, governors and other staff have looked critically at energy consumption and costs with benchmarks. Many have produced action plans involving the whole school and identified possible sources of external help and funding. A growing number of schools are also monitoring energy consumption and plotting consumption patterns, thus indicating the efficiency of systems and controls, and the adequacy of building insulation, while taking into account the effects of climate and extended hours of use.

Who benefits?

The goals of a sustainable community are not only important to schools but also fundamentally important to parents and the wider community they serve. These goals provide a focus for meaningful parental involvement and community engagement with the school. Sustainable schools will not only be beacons of public-spirited behaviour but also energy efficient, high-performing institutions, respected by the communities that they serve. Schools will essentially model those practices and behaviours that are

consistent with sustainable development. They will benefit those within schools, the community and the locality.

There are clear opportunities and benefits for schools from a partnership with the community focused on sustainable development. Some of these are outlined as follows:

Community	(wider influence and partnerships)
Trust	Working with the local community on shared concerns like diet, obesity, litter, drugs, teenage pregnancy, congestion, safety and respect, demonstrates a school's commitment to its community and builds trust.
Parent Engagement	Projects addressing environmental, community or global concerns provide opportunities to engage parents and other stakeholders in school improvement, tapping into their time, energy and expertise.
Local influence	A green image improves the school's reputation in a sector increasingly influenced by parental choice, it helps attract pupils, it supports development/expansion plans, and it has an influence on local affairs.

(Source: Teachernet)

It is clear that schools have much to give in terms of their facilities and hosting of local services plus their influence on local affairs. With *Every Child Matters*, *Extended Schools* and the *The Children's Plan* schools have to be fully integrated with the community and play a key role in establishing and maintaining multi-agency working. They also provide facilities, resources and expertise to the wider community as well as taking the lead in modeling new practices such as sustainable development.

Professor Bill Scott (2007:9) highlights two key ideas about community involvement in sustainable development:

- i. The connection between action and learning; between what the school does, as a community and what the people in it, students, staff, governors can learn and

- ii. The way that schools can model sustainable ways of working for the wider community. This links directly to the Every Child Matters agenda through the principle that every child should have the opportunity to positively shape society, and their own future, are clear and central.

In summary, the sustainable development agenda not only links significant policy directives and frameworks together but also comes at a time when there is huge interest in raising achievement in schools via multi-agency work. To fulfill the promises of *Every Child Matters*, *Extended Schools*, and *The Children's Plan* requires broad based community involvement and multi-professional support. Teaching based on sustainable development will be richer, more relevant teaching. It will provide contextually rich learning opportunities for all pupils with a clear focus on raising awareness about the challenges of sustainability as well as the opportunities.

There are certainly major opportunities for schools to make a difference to sustainable development but there are also serious responsibilities.

Key questions:

1. What priority is placed on sustainable development in your school?
2. How far is sustainable development a whole school and community focus?
3. Who are your community partners? How are you currently involving them in this work?

But what does a sustainable school actually look like?

2 What is a sustainable school?

What is a sustainable school?

'I have come to believe that the real hope for deep and enduring processes of evolution in schools lies with the students. They have a deep passion for making schools work. They are connected to the future in ways that no adult is. They have imagination and ways of seeing things that have not yet been shaped by the formal education process. And they are crying out wanting to be involved, to become more responsible for their environment.'

Senge, P (2003:16)

Sustainable schools and sustainable leadership both begin with a clear moral purpose. This moral purpose aligns to the need to preserve, protect and support the environment, as a living system, from the damage caused by modern living. Sustainable schools combine deep moral purpose with a central focus on learning. Sustainable schools put learning first but locate this learning within a sustainable development framework (Hargreaves and Fink, 2006: 266). This means preparing young people for a lifetime of sustainable living, through their teaching, their fabric and through the modelling of sustainable development practices.

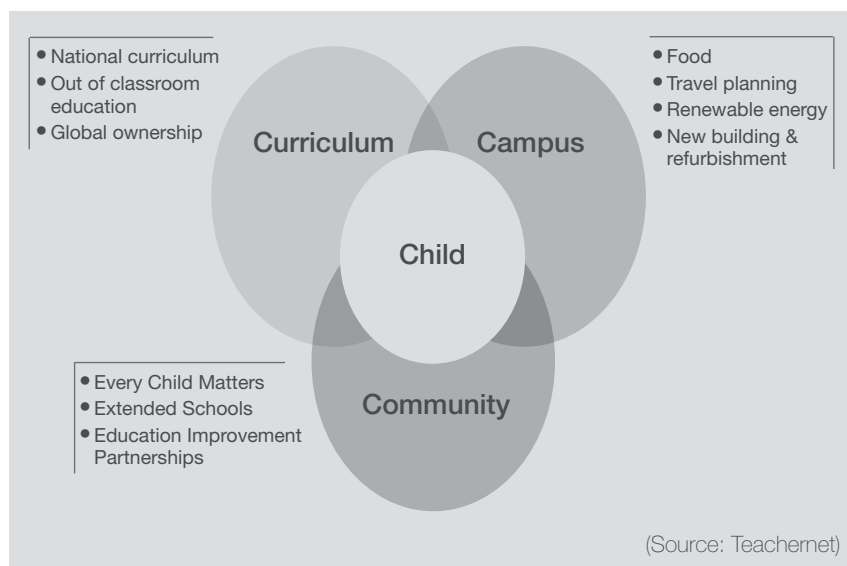
A school built on the core principles of sustainable development will encourage care:

- Care for oneself – our health and well-being
- Care for each other – across cultures, distances and generations
- Care for the environment – near and far

(Source: Teachernet)

A sustainable school puts an emphasis on the well-being of its pupils and the school environment. In sustainable schools, classrooms are welcoming, clean and reassuring places to learn. There is a zero-tolerance approach to litter, graffiti and bullying which is reinforced by staff demonstrating positive, caring,

responsible behaviours. There is a relentless focus on finding ways to save energy and resources that benefit the school and the wider community. In a sustainable school there is a clear focus on the child via three important lenses; the campus, curriculum and community.



In terms of the **campus**, schools can review the impact of their food and drink choices on human health, the environment, the local economy and animal welfare. They can work with suppliers to identify produce that meet the highest standards. Schools can consider more efficient travel arrangements and efficient management of school buildings can help reduce costs and save energy. A whole school approach to school grounds can be a way of involving young people in the design of new school areas and has the potential to stop vandalism, graffiti and other damage to school property. In some schools rainwater is collected for maintenance of the school grounds, water is preserved by efficient flush mechanisms and taps with sensors, paper towels are recycled and only cleaning agents that do not harm the environment are used.

Focusing on the **community**, schools can use their communications, services, contracts and partnerships to promote awareness of travel

decisions, building decisions or location decisions. They can promote awareness of sustainable consumption and waste minimisation among their stakeholders. They can work with their partners to implement more sustainable energy and water use. The potential and the possibilities are very wide ranging.

Schools can use the **curriculum** to cultivate the knowledge, values and skills needed to address sustainable consumption and waste issues; traffic issues, food issues and energy and water stewardship among many others. Sustainable schools are not just responsible, caring schools but they are also places where pupils enjoy learning about the environment and are committed to safeguarding it.

The sustainability development agenda is immediate, real and pressing for many young people. Therefore there are numerous rich and varied teaching and learning opportunities that arise from this agenda that schools can build upon. There are opportunities for cross curricular work and for pupils to develop self-esteem and reach high standards of achievement.

Ofsted's (2005) self-evaluation form covers five key improvement themes for schools. It is suggested that sustainable development can boost a schools performance in each one of these.

- 1. Views of learners, parents/carers and other stakeholders** – many parents are concerned about the well-being of their communities, the environment and the wider world and have much to contribute towards sustainable schools. Activities that enable them to get involved can provide opportunities for dialogue, fund raising and practical support for school improvement.
- 2. Achievement and standards** – there are two aspects to this: firstly, the increased concentration brought about by natural light and ventilation, good-quality food and drink, and higher levels of pupil fitness. Secondly, the potential to make learning more interesting and relevant to young people enabling them to become better engaged.
- 3. Personal development and well-being** – schools that cultivate the values of sustainable development understand the broad range of factors making

up children's well-being. They develop in young people the confidence to live safely and healthily while making a positive contribution to their family, community, job, environment, and to the wider world – all core goals of Every Child Matters.

4. **Quality of provision** – In order to prosper in the 21st century, pupils need to develop the values, skills and knowledge necessary to address the challenges of the real world. Schools can facilitate this by using their buildings and grounds, their surroundings and their local community as a learning resource. This will result in high-quality provision which is relevant to pupils' lives and serves to motivate.
5. **Leadership and management** – in business, sustainable practices are fast becoming acknowledged as best practices due to the raft of benefits they produce, and the quality of leadership and management that lies behind them. Building the capacity of teachers and staff to take forward sustainable development therefore goes hand-in-hand with their capacity to create a successful school.

Where the school estate and its local area is used as a learning resource, for engaging pupils with real issues, motivation and learning are likely to increase for two reasons. Firstly, issues that matter to young people are used as a context and backdrop for learning across the curriculum. Learning in school is therefore seen as more relevant to young people. Secondly, the school becomes a testing ground where pupils are able to think through the sustainability problems and opportunities, while studying the connections to larger, sometimes global, challenges. The sustainable school affords pupils the opportunity to refine, practice and rehearse certain behaviours that will make them more responsible citizens in their adult life.

Two options

Essentially schools have two options in terms of the sustainability agenda. They can approach sustainable development as

- A 'bolt on', peripheral activity that is a small part of the curriculum
- An integral, holistic, whole school development that shapes curriculum delivery, interpretation and implementation

It is only the latter of these two options that is likely to produce awareness raising, changes in behaviour and rich teaching and learning. The other option will inevitably result in piecemeal and fragmented delivery, partial attention to key issues and most probably, dissatisfied learners.

It is clear that schools can tick the sustainable development boxes quite easily. They can show that they are doing the right things and have a range of learning opportunities in place that clearly link to the community, curriculum or campus. However in terms of impact 'being seen to do the right things' may have little impact and may make little real difference. The sustainability agenda cannot be delivered with tokenism or superficial responses. The odds are too high, the implications are too great.

As the case studies that follow clearly illustrate, schools that are committed and genuine about sustainable development realise that this requires more than piecemeal activities or projects, however worthy or valuable. It requires a deep rooted investment in the curriculum that brings sustainability to the classroom in a meaningful way. In short, it is about teaching and learning that connects with sustainability issues and places this at the core rather than the periphery of classroom practice.

As Professor Bill Scott points out to be a sustainable school requires thinking and working in a profoundly different way; which is why education in general and school education in particular have long been seen as key to bringing about a sustainable future whether one starts from an environment or development perspective (2007:7) To be a sustainable school necessitates placing sustainability at the core of the educational process rather than on the sidelines.

To be a sustainable school also requires building the internal **capacity** and external capacity to fulfil the agenda. It also means giving sustainability the highest **priority** within school development. The combination of capacity and priority are fundamental if schools wish to become sustainable schools. The following typology outlines the outcomes of different combinations for schools.

A school sustainability typology

	High priority	Low priority
High capacity	Sustainable – investment and commitment to the sustainable development agenda	Unfocused – capacity to deliver but low priority means that efforts are wasted or dissipated
Low capacity	Ambitious – high commitment but lacking the capacity to deliver	Stuck – neither the intention or the capacity to deliver

Where would you place your school on this matrix?

What needs to be done to move your school towards the sustainable school or to maintain it as a sustainable school?

How do you build the capacity to be a sustainable school?

It is clear that schools have a central and fundamental role to play in securing sustainable development. By preparing young people for the future they are also defining and shaping that future. Schools have a unique opportunity but also a moral responsibility to ensure that they are a community activist as well as a community resource for issues related to sustainability. Recent research has highlighted that schools where sustainability has been successfully developed, it pervades every aspect of school life (Jackson, 2007).

The way schools function, the way they teach and what they teach will shape how the wider community and young people understand and engage with the issue of sustainable development. But what exactly does this look like in practice? The next section provides a range of case studies that illustrate and illuminate the ways schools are leading sustainable development.

3 Case studies

Sustainable development is about helping pupils develop knowledge, understanding, values and skills. The curriculum, approaches to teaching, and the learning experiences that pupils have are all key elements of effective sustainable development. In some subjects, there is a requirement for sustainable development to be taught, either by specific references within the programmes of study or by references that clearly promote the study of relationships between the environment, society and the economy.

The National Framework introduces eight 'doorways' through which schools may choose to initiate or extend their sustainable school activity. It focuses on ways in which sustainable development can be embedded into whole-school management practices and provides practical guidance to help schools operate in a more sustainable way. Each doorway may be approached individually or as part of a whole school action plan, though undoubtedly schools will find that many of the doorways are actually interconnected.

Each doorway encompasses a long-term expectation clarifying where the Government would like schools to be by the year 2020. Although every school will start from a different place, with different priorities and needs, all schools can take some immediate action to meet these targets.

Crispin School

1. School context

Crispin School is a comprehensive secondary school with both rural and urban dimensions. It is located in Street, Somerset. It benefits from supportive parents.

NOR 1093

63% Grade A* to C

Value added Score 995.9

2. In what ways is the school currently engaging with the sustainable schools agenda? What have been main successes and achievements in relation to the eight gateways?

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) underpins the ethos and culture of the school and the staff intends that every child should leave them with a concept of what ESD means. Indeed, the school aims are based on the idea of encouraging young people to lead sustainable lives. The World Wide Fund for Nature, DCSF, UNESCO and HMI acknowledge the achievements of Crispin School, and have used them as a model for outstandingly good practice. They are a recognised 'Eco-School' and have contributed to a WWF promotional CD for sustainable development. United Nations representatives have visited the school to find out more about what they do.

The most recent Ofsted report (November 2007) states, 'a unique feature of the school is its superb education for sustainable development. As a result students leave with an excellent understanding of the importance of this issue both locally and nationally' and 'the concept of education for sustainable development permeates the ethos of the school and students develop an excellent understanding of this issue at both a local and global level'. The inspectors also considered the achievement and behaviour of the vast majority of the students to be good. The overall judgement of Ofsted during this inspection was that Crispin is an 'Outstanding school'.

Food and drink

All pupils will:

- As part of their science and design and technology studies, consider the production of food and be informed about the organic food debate so that they make informed choices as consumers
- Participate in an annual Fair Trade Week where food is part of the focus
- As part of their design and technology and PSHE lessons consider the importance of having a healthy diet
- As part of their Geography studies, become more aware of food production and how certain patterns of land use impact on global sustainability. For example, the destruction of the rainforests for cattle ranches

- As part of their citizenship, RE and geography lessons become more aware of the impact of certain environmental campaigners. For example, Chico Mendez and Greenpeace.

Some pupils will:

- Try to promote local food
- Plan an orchard in the school grounds
- Have made an earth oven with a local environmental campaigner
- Grow it, cook it and eat it in their ASDAN lessons
- Run a weekly Fair Trade café as a co-operative
- Participate in peer tutoring in PSHE and give assemblies about Fair Trade at local primary schools

Energy and water

All pupils will:

- Attend lessons in geography where they learn about water as a precious global resource, the need for its conservation and their personal responsibility
- Attend Kenya Day where they learn from partners in Masana about the daily struggle for water in the families of the partner school.
- Understand why water is a key to making progress in developing countries.
- Consider geo-political issues. For example, should we promote the sale of Fair Trade Kenyan roses if they are grown using the water below Lake Navashia?
- Participate in peer tutoring in PSHE and give assemblies about Fair Trade at local primary schools
- As part of their Geography and Science learn about different sources of energy, the challenge of reducing pollution and of the energy crisis.
- During ESD days, calculate their carbon footprint and consider their responsibilities as global citizens

Some pupils will:

- Visit Wessex water and learn about water purification
- Report to governors and fellow pupils about the ways forward in our water conservation journey
- Participate in fund raising for an irrigation scheme in Kenya

- During ESD days, design and make solar ovens and make solar panels.
- Peer tutor in the local primary school and in the Kenyan partner primary schools on solar energy, solar ovens and solar panels
- Peer tutor on the carbon foot prints in Kenya
- Some exchange students have planted trees in Kenya and the UK to offset carbon emissions

Travel and traffic

Crispin has written (July 2004) a school travel plan which qualified for a £10,000 grant to implement the plan.

All pupils will:

- Participate in the school travel plan

Some pupils will:

- Participate in Walk to School days (also raising money towards the cost of the new building). (Two pupils walked to school from Othery, a distance of 10 miles!)

Purchasing and waste

All pupils will:

- Visit a landfill site
- Reflect upon their personal responsibility and the appropriate responses of their school and community to the message of reduce, reuse, repair and recycle
- Attend science lessons and assemblies which inform and challenge their responses to these issues
- Know about the work of Masana School in Kenya and its efforts to be a plastic free zone
- Recycle paper

Some pupils have:

- Been part of the Crispin recycling team which has been formed for 10 years, recycling items such as, Christmas cards, printer ink cartridges, card board
- Produced leaflets to promote plastic recycling in the local community

- Produced a DVD which questions consumer pressures. This was shown in all of the school assemblies
- Report to Governors about the next action steps in the recycling journey
- Brought in shoes for recycling

Buildings and grounds

All pupils:

- Have opportunities to enjoy the school grounds. There has been no damage to the sculptures, the courtyards or seating areas which the children have made over the years

Some pupils over the years have:

- Dug ponds
- Planted rare trees species in the environment area
- Designed and made seats from old railway sleepers
- Made a labyrinth
- Made adobe sculptures
- Designed court yards
- Made mosaic paths
- Made sundials
- Designed and planted a fair trade garden
- Designed a Peace garden and made artifacts to go in it
- Made bird boxes and log piles to attract wild life
- Designed and planted a small orchard
- Evaluated the impact of the new sustainable 'Masana block' and reported the findings to the governors

Inclusion and participation

Student participation is seen as fundamental in changing attitudes and behaviour. The young people are involved in decision making and the leadership of the school through a wide variety of activities.

The senior management undertakes reviews of their progress in relation to education for sustainability. They acknowledge deficiencies as well as successes and seek to involve students in the process where possible.

All pupils:

- Take responsibility for their learning; consider what makes good learning and good teaching and the rights and responsibilities of pupils and teachers in classroom
- Take responsibility as student receptionists
- Participate in ESD themed days
- Are interviewed by their tutors to ascertain their views on school thereby informing the schools response to such things as bullying, school rules, extended schools plans and compliance with the Disability Duty Regulations

Some pupils:

- Are part of the Green Committee. They join in the work of one of the many sub-committees – the recycling team, Fair Trade Co-operative, Ground Force
- Are members of the school council or year council. Their responsibilities include:
 - Interviewing new staff
 - Reviewing school policies
 - Reporting to governors
 - Working with local councilors
 - Development planning
 - Consulting with the pupil body
 - Organising Comic Relief and Children in Need events
 - Promoting awareness of National No Smoking Day
- Worked on the footprint of the new sustainable 'Masana block'
- Are peer supporters, peer mediators, or peer tutors who work with pupils in local primary schools
- Are prefects
- Are part of national campaigning to make poverty history
- Participate in sport teams, in music and drama
- Are part of Youth Watch which promotes personal safety and community projects
- Have worked with Street in Bloom

Local well-being

All pupils will:

- Take part in citizenship aspects of the PSHE curriculum

Year 10 pupils will:

- Research into 'Crisis in the community', and what to do when society breaks down

Global dimension

All pupils:

- As part of their citizenship, geography and RE lessons talk about the rights and responsibilities of living as a global citizen in the 21st century
- As part of their citizenship, RE, English, music, drama and history lessons appreciate the diversity of human culture and learn from its richness
- As part of their citizenship, RE and geography and history lessons consider the global conflicts in the 21st century and consider sustainable solutions
- As part of their citizenship and geography lessons and during Kenya day, and Fair Trade week have lessons which consider globalisation and our interdependence in the modern world
- Have the opportunity to visit Chalice Well (a world peace garden), walk to Glastonbury Abbey, and enjoy Kilve beach and the school grounds
- Are challenged to think about what it means to live a 'sustainable life'.
- Participate in non-uniform days to support local and national charities and the Masana scholarship fund

Some pupils will:

- Join the Kenya crew and confer with pupils and colleagues in Masana about their visions for living a sustainable life
- Fund raise for the Kenya exchange
- Go to Masana School and tutor in UK primaries and Kenyan schools about our themes for that year
- Join Amnesty International Campaigns

3. What is the school currently doing in the three areas of campus, community and curriculum which is focusing directly on issues of

sustainability? What is the impact of these developments on the school, students and community?

Curriculum

Every year the school produces an annual Education for sustainable development plan, (ESD) which is monitored and evaluated as part of the whole school development plan. There is also an assembly programme which is directly linked to the school aims and thereby promotes the vision of sustainability. The school states that 'In essence, ESD for us is about encouraging students to consider their 'ecological footprint' on the planet and how their actions impact upon their own well-being and that of others.' All the pupils learn about the stewardship of the planet and are challenged to think about social justice and personal responsibility to live a sustainable life.

Staff professional development, including the induction of new teachers, has been carried out since July 2006 to ensure that each appreciates their particular role in delivering education for sustainability. Teachers are encouraged in developing activities outside of their curriculum area and out of normal school time. Time and money are found for teachers to include education for sustainability in their professional development and to help develop their expertise and planning. The curriculum is audited and opportunities found to include sustainable themes. For example, the art department redeveloped their schemes of work to incorporate the use of sustainable materials, taking on board the 'reduce, reuse, recycle' message and the geography department participated in developing a new GCSE syllabus which included a compulsory component on a sustainable development issue such as waste management and landfill. The science club has renewable energy as its main focus.

In Year 10, all pupils are involved in ESD days with students visiting a range of local agencies such as Carymoor Environmental Trust and Landfill Site. They also participate in art workshops – which provided the opportunity to design and make sculptures using sustainable materials for the school grounds. The school states that, 'Independent learning is at the heart of our numerous timetable collapse days. They energise and invigorate our students and teachers'.

Crispin's link with a Kenyan School has offered opportunities to extend and enrich the curriculum in a number of exciting ways. There is a whole term's geography work on Kenya in year 8 where the emphasis is on issues such as the sustainability of tourism, globalisation and recycling. Year 10 students take part in Kenya Day. Kenya Day is a highlight of the school year. All year 10 pupils are off timetable for the day and participate in a series of workshops about Kenya. Kenyan students and teachers will help guide Crispin pupils through a detailed look at Kenyan Society, from the delights of Kenyan dance and customs to the problems of corruption and Aids. As UN observers, Crispin pupils are expected to make recommendations on key development issues such as the role of women, water, AIDS and corruption.

All of this has as an impact that the majority of pupils remain engaged with the school and its programme of exciting opportunities and meaningful curriculum. They are active learners, involved at all levels in the decisions that affect them as individuals and their impact on the planet.

Campus

The emphasis on ESD began in 1987 with the creation of a pond and environmental area, in a space which had been used for teaching the practicalities of rural science. The environmental area became a focus for a variety of people and the science department became involved in 'Learning through landscapes' and the WWF.

Since then the environmental area has evolved to include ponds, rare species of trees, bird boxes, log piles, and a peace garden. Other features which have been built are seats, a labyrinth, sundials and courtyards, all of which have been designed by the pupils. All these aspects have contributed towards enriching the taught curriculum, and have had a positive effect on behaviour. There has been no damage to the sculptures, the courtyards or seating areas which the children have made over the years.

Another significant feature of the school ground has been the addition of a sustainable classroom block, named the Masana Block after the link school in Kenya.

Community

Governors take a keen interest in developments with regards to ESD. As well as the frequent updates they get at Governors' meetings, they participate in INSET activities and theme days. Members of the parish council and county council also take part in theme days. Governors receive regular updates about progress of ESD plans from both staff and students and there is a governor whose particular focus is ESD.

The school states,

'We endeavour to ensure that the impact of our sustainable schools work goes beyond Crispin and into our wider community.'

'As a Leading Edge School we work with local primary and secondary schools to promote ESD in the curriculum.'

There is an active school council and pupils are involved in the appointment of teaching staff, the approval of school policies and staff training. They are consulted about landscaping of the school and on the design of any building work; the children's involvement in the design of the recent 'Masana' classroom block which was built on sustainable principles being a good example of this.

As well as the school council there is a 100 strong Green Committee which organises a weekly Fair Trade café, an annual Fair Trade week and a 'Ground Force' team which maintains the school grounds. The Green Committee is very active in local and national Green Campaigns.

Parents and members of the wider community are kept up to date with developments through a half-termly newsletter and coverage of items in the local press.

The school has established a link with Masana School in Kenya. This began, firstly with teacher exchanges and for the last three years has involved pupils from both countries as well. Part of the aim of these visits has been to raise awareness of commonalities and differences, both culturally and economically, so that values and attitudes are changed. The work of the

partnership focuses on such things as low impact technology, fair trade, international developments and global interrelationships. The theme of the exchange has been 'Living sustainable lives' and has involved Crispin providing and implementing, for example, solar panels and water tanks at Masana, and Masana School educating Crispin about composting and new aspects of recycling. As a result of joint workshops, Masana School has become a 'plastic-free zone'.

The project work done during the exchange visits feed into a yearly Kenya theme day.

The newest school building, partly designed by Crispin students for sustainability, is named 'Masana', after the link school. The PTA, as well as several members of staff, are also involved in the financial support of the education of Kenyan students, orphaned by AIDS.

Fair trade is strongly supported by the school by means of direct sales of chocolate and tea together with assemblies presented by pupils to primary and secondary year groups. Fair trade week is celebrated at Crispin in the summer term with lunchtime sales of Fair Trade ice-cream, cocktails, cakes, fudge and chocolate.

6. What are the future plans in terms of the sustainability agenda for the school?

The school hopes that its commitment to Education for sustainable development, (ESD) will have a profoundly positive impact on the way many of its pupils live their lives and that this, in turn, will contribute to a sustainable future for our planet. Future plans are to increase work carried out with feeder and link schools and to lead learning in the community by debating the 'big' sustainability questions for life in the 21st century.

The school intends to continue its work on sustainable energy with the long term goal of carbon reduction. The green room is being developed to provide a showcase of sustainable energy for visitors and the school hopes to become a model of good practice for sustainable schools of the future.

Ultimately the ideal for the school would be a new building on a nearby site. 'Building schools for the future' funding could be well spent in allowing Crispin School a fit for purpose sustainable building. Evidence shows that the management, staff and pupils at Crispin School have the commitment to succeed in educating young people in Sustainable development and global citizenship well into the future.

7. What type of support does the school need to help them fulfil these plans?

In the short term, high level advice from energy specialists would help the school in its goal of reducing its energy consumption and carbon footprint.

The school is aiming to rebuild on a nearby site entirely on the principles of sustainability, and funding is being sought. The school has the potential to become a model of sustainable practices and an inspiration to others to take similar action.

Royal Manor College, Dorset

1. School context

The Royal Manor Arts College is a co-educational 11–16 community school with specialist school status in the Performing Arts. It is located on the Isle of Portland, part of a World Heritage Site and famous for its stone, which is connected to the mainland and the seaside resort of Weymouth by a mile long causeway, Chesil Beach. Its remote rural location, whilst providing areas of outstanding natural beauty and sites of special scientific interest, has created a challenging environment for the promotion of sustainable schooling.

The Royal Manor Arts College is the only secondary school on the island and is fully comprehensive, open to all the island's children and increasingly the first choice for many from out of catchment. It does not operate entry criteria and has no intention to do so. The school is part of the Portland Pyramid, a small family of seven schools that, because of their isolated location, work very closely together for the benefit of all the island's children.

Value added results for the past two years have been 1011 and 1004. Last Year saw the school's best ever results of 57% A* –C up from 43% on the previous year.

2. In what ways is the school currently engaging with the sustainable schools agenda? What have been main successes and achievements in relation to the eight gateways?

Inclusion and participation

Eco Schools project – registered to ECO Schools

Eco Warriors in place – student led Eco group which has achieved the following:

- Persuaded a local company to provide and install a solar voltaic panel and boiler on the science department roof. This will provide hot water for the science department and enable students to learn about the benefits of alternative energy. This is demonstrated to all year groups
- Created a wildlife pond – used by the science department to support the curriculum
- Created an allotment area that will grow vegetables for distribution to elderly members of the local community
- Created a composting area for green waste
- Ensured that all classrooms have paper recycling bins
- Organised print cartridge recycling
- Introducing an anti litter campaign

Energy and water

Wind turbine project

- The school is working closely with Dorset County Council to install a 15kw wind turbine
- They have secured £20,000 of the necessary £60,000 needed through government funding. Dorset County Council will also provide £4,480 of funding
- The turbine will be small scale and appropriate for the site, with suppliers accredited under the Government's Low Carbon Building Programme.
- The turbine should not generate a lot of noise as the type being installed does not have a gearbox

- Turbines of this scale can generate up to 20 per cent of the annual energy needs for a typical school, especially in windy areas such as Portland. The turbines are connected to the grid and do not use batteries
- The school hopes too that the turbine will produce 10,000kw per year resulting in a saving of more than £700 per year
- Cabinet member for the environment Hilary Cox said: 'The projects will help us do our bit for the environment in Dorset.' 'It's also a chance for school children and the wider community to find out more about energy efficiency and climate change.'

Purchasing and waste

- Currently in the process of upgrading school computers to RM 'ecoquiet' machines
- These machines are quieter, produce less heat and use two thirds less energy than normal computers
- The school hopes to save £9,000 a year by switching to these machines

Buildings and grounds

- Solar panels installed. (1.5kw solar heating unit in science block)
- New boilers are required and the school is investigating alternatives to traditional oil and gas
- New windows are needed on one block and, again, alternatives to 'normal' glass are being investigated – such as glass with thermal and reflective properties

Food and drink

- The school is an accredited healthy school and has taken measures to remove all vending machines, and change school menus

Travel and traffic

- The school has a school transport plan that is geared to encouraging students to walk, cycle or bus to school rather than come by car

3. What is the school currently doing in the three areas of campus, community and curriculum which is focusing directly on issues of sustainability? What is the impact of these developments on the school, students and community?

Curriculum

Science – the department is very keen to promote all aspects of sustainable living and this is taught explicitly in lessons to all years. The Eco group is run by the science department and has provided valuable resources that enrich the science curriculum. The wildlife pond and allotment areas created by the eco group are used during science lessons. As well as providing hot water for the science department, the solar panels and boiler on the science department roof enables students to learn about the benefits of alternative energy, and this is demonstrated to all year groups. Composting and recycling are also becoming a way of life in the school.

Campus

The creation of a pond and wildlife area has enhanced the school grounds with students having access at different times.

Perhaps the largest impact on campus will be the addition of the wind turbine being planned for installation later this year.

Community

In the wider local community students take part in 'Beach Clean Days'. Year 10 and 11 enrichment lessons have been used by students to restore an ancient walled garden in Underhill and to work with the Island Ranger to clear waste ground to make it accessible for walkers. The school is hoping that the proposed wind turbine will have a positive impact on the local community as the turbine should be very quiet and demonstrate the benefits of using sustainable power in this ideal location.

6. What are the future plans in terms of the sustainability agenda for the school

Ideally the school would be looking at a new build in which case they would build in eco-sustainability from the beginning.

7. What type of support does the school need to help them fulfil these plans?

The school requires more financial support to achieve the realization of the wind turbine which is about £15k short of its £60k target. The council planning office may also insist on a maintenance contract of approximately £400 per year to keep the turbine running properly. This will make the project less cost effective and make the payback period longer. Specialist advice may enable them to reduce this cost.

Ringmer Community College

Lewes Road, Ringmer, Lewes, East Sussex BN8 5RB
01273 812220 **Principal:** Ms Kathy Stonier

1. School context

- Secondary school, non-denominational, mixed, 11–16 years
- 838 on roll
- 60% of students travel by bus from dispersed rural areas and towns, up to 20 miles away
- Free school meals – low, just over 3%
- Specialist status for technology
- A*–C Results 49% for 2007
- Contextual Value Added 1004.6 for 2007
- Ringmer won the Chairman's Award for the Most Sustainable School in Autumn 2007

2. In what ways is the school currently engaging with the sustainable schools agenda? What have been main successes and achievements in relation to the eight gateways?

Gateway 1: Food & drink

- Students are involved in 'Food to Farm' projects, which involves visiting local farms, seeing the animals and their meat and then using these products to make their own dishes
- The school has polytunnels which it uses to grow vegetables and the school also keeps chickens and uses their eggs

Gateway 2: Energy & water

- The school's 120 Eco representatives raised money for Ringmer to have its own wind turbines and solar panels in order to reduce its energy bills
- The school has recently moved into a new building which has many energy saving devices, eg. light sensitive lights, sky lights that close automatically when it rains. Due to student pressure, wind breaks were later added to prevent doors flying open in the wind and energy being lost

Gateway 3: Travel and traffic

- Cars are rarely used by students, as most come in by bus, but if they do, car sharing is greatly encouraged
- Students rationalised the car parking areas in the school

Gateway 4: Purchasing & waste

- The school recycles all paper, card and cans. It has a pad-making facility for paper that has only been used on one side only

3. What is the school currently doing in the three areas of campus, community and curriculum which is focusing directly on issues of sustainability? What is the impact of these developments on the school, students and community?

Gateway 1: Food & drink

Community

- The school has strong links with the local agricultural college, which works with the school on these issues

Gateway 2: Energy & water

Campus

- As a result of installing wind turbines and solar panels, Ringmer has gained back 15% of its electricity. Extra electricity made over the summer holidays was sold back to the National Grid

Community

- The Eco representatives run training at local Primary Schools on recycling and how to be an Eco rep

Gateway 3: Travel & traffic

Campus

- Students successfully campaigned for a speed hump to be put in at school to increase safety

Gateway 4: Purchasing & waste

Campus

- All students and staff are aware of the issues of recycling

4. What are the future plans in terms of the sustainability agenda for the school?

Gateway 1: Food & drink

- The school is currently working with their catering company to promote healthy eating and to cut down packaging

Gateway 2: Energy & water

- The school has a bid in for a bio-mass boiler

Gateway 3: Travel & traffic

- Students are currently leading a campaign to install a pedestrian crossing outside the school

St Francis of Assisi Academy

1. School context

This joint Anglican/Roman Catholic school has the environment as its specialism, and a commitment to sustainable ways of living. It is the only school with sustainability as its focus

Location/Catchment. It is a co-educational inner city school situated in the heart of Liverpool and is currently oversubscribed.

NOR 773

Value added. The school is at the top of the local CAV league table 1051.6 GCSE Results Level 2, 5+ A*–C (and equivalent) 43%

2. How is the school currently engaging with the sustainable schools agenda? What have been main successes and achievements in relation to the eight gateways?

The present head and the Anglican Bishop of Liverpool have provided much of the impetus for the school's development. The Specialism Development Plan for 2006–09 begins by stating that the aim is to become a school where 'working sustainably is the norm and where sustainability is transferred into the local community and beyond'.

Student pride in the academy is an aspect that the senior management consider important. The school is featured regularly in the press, with articles featuring on the quality of the buildings, including the environmental design aspects. The head considers this has led to improved student self-esteem and attainment over recent months. St Francis has topped the value-added tables locally

Buildings and grounds

- The academy was designed to make both a landmark building and to champion the best practice in environmental design with materials selected to minimise environmental impact
- The building itself has received a high level of publicity, drawing attention to the environmental design features. This has been significant in raising the initial enthusiasm of staff and students to sustainability
- The school sports and assembly hall was created underground to avoid having a 'big ugly box' stuck onto the building
- The sandstone excavated in the process was used on the flat roof of the hall, where there are also ventilation windows
- The surface will be used for growing plants under polytunnels for the allotments being acquired nearby
- Some outer walls of the school are covered with a short-growing shrub to help drainage, and resemble mossy banks rather than traditional classroom blocks
- There has been significant cooperation and financial assistance from the Groundwork Trust, particularly in relation to the development of the Year 7 allotments

Energy and water

- The glass roof of the atrium captures the sun, which provides up to 10 per cent of the school's electricity

Purchasing and waste

- In the 'environmental lab' at St Francis, the speckled desks are made from recycled yoghurt pots
- Mobile phones have been crushed down to create a montage instilling a message about our throw away society
- In the cyber café, a display panel ensures that students can see how much electricity is being generated at any time, the school's running total, and how much carbon dioxide has been saved so far by the school's creation

Inclusion and participation

- The 'student voice' is considered to be important by the senior management of the academy. It is recognised that with students from this local community, careful induction into democratic processes is necessary and takes time
- Local well-being
- Links with the local community are recognised as important and the management believe that the academy should be a significant local focus. The deputy head has made considerable efforts in this direction; first by placing emphasis on a high profile social event in the local park and then by making it clear that the academy has a stake in the development and management of the park adjacent to the school

Food and drink

- Year 8 students created a DVD presentation for an online conference, *The Sausages Story*, calculating the food miles covered to deliver their favourite school dinner

3. What is the school currently doing in the three areas of campus, community and curriculum which is focusing directly on issues of sustainability? What has been the impact of these developments on the school, students and community?

Curriculum

The architects were asked by the academy's chairman of governors, the Bishop of Liverpool, James Jones, for a school that would, above all, 'teach' about the environment, and the school strives to ensure that environmental issues are embedded in the curriculum.

The strategy is to introduce children to the ideas at an early age, through gateway subjects that get them thinking about their effect on the world. Mr. McElroy, who has responsibility for the way in which sustainability is being introduced into the classroom, states that 'The subject can be incorporated most easily into geography and science lessons, but it does feature in other ways.' Maths lessons, for instance, can cover the financial transactions needed to buy materials for the gardens attached to each class, which, with support from the Groundwork Trust, are being cultivated by the students.

Campus

The effects of this new environment on pupils, has been extraordinary. In 2007, St Francis came top of the Government's CVA (Contextual Value Added) league table – The GCSE A*–C pass rate improved from 26 per cent to 40 per cent. 'The new buildings, smart uniform and excellent facilities have given the students a sense of pride,' says Steve McElroy, the school's vice-principal. 'They have far more facilities, and can now work independently and much more effectively.'

Community

The Specialism Development Plan for 2006–09 begins by stating that the aim is to become a school where 'working sustainably is the norm and where sustainability is transferred into the local community and beyond'. The school is currently involved in the celebrations surrounding Liverpool as this years 'City of culture' and plans are underway for another high profile event in the nearby park.

6. What are the future plans in terms of the sustainability agenda for the school?

The school is working towards the goal of carbon neutrality. Much of the plan is detailed and covers many aspects of the life and management of the school, setting a proposed time frame on the possible achievement of each element of the plan.

Continuing Professional Development with some staff is already underway using the World Wildlife Fund 'Pathways to sustainability' as a focus. The school is also committed to preparing for an Eco-Schools Silver Award and then on to a Green Flag Award.

The healthy schools initiative is underway.

7. What type of support does the school need to help them fulfil these plans?

The school estimates that carbon neutrality is approximately 60 years away. An energy consultant may help them in achieving this aim sooner.

4 Leadership for sustainability

In all school development and change, leadership plays a crucial role. It is one of the most important influences on a school's ability to improve. We know that leadership can influence a school for better or worse and we also know that effective school leaders largely share the same set of characteristics.

They have:

- Strong vision
- High expectations
- Clarity of purpose
- Drive and determination
- A relentless focus on teaching and learning

But what does leadership for sustainable schools look like? In the case studies we saw examples of leadership for sustainability, where there was concerted and deliberate attention on promoting and delivering the sustainable development agenda.

But let's be clear about what is meant by leadership for sustainability. There is a distinction between **sustainable leadership** and **leadership for sustainability**. Sustainable leadership tends to mean leadership that is durable and lasts over time. But leadership for sustainability is intrinsically leadership that fosters, nurtures and supports sustainable development. This is not just an issue of semantics; the difference is substantive and important. In their work, Andrew Hargreaves and Dean Fink (2006:265) talk about sustainable leadership as leadership which is intimately related to the leadership of others. Connectivity at the heart of leading sustainable schools, it is essentially widely distributed.

A recent piece on research on sustainable leadership concludes that the emerging model of green or sustainable leadership builds on what we already know about effective school leadership (Jackson, 2007: 9). This implies that leadership for sustainability does not require radically different forms of leadership but rather a different focus for the leadership activity. Effective

leadership is effective leadership but the orientation and nature of this leadership can alter depending upon the developmental priority or priorities. The research also concludes that distributed leadership seems to be the best model fitted to fostering sustainability in schools with different aspects of sustainable development being led by different members of the school community. By sharing tasks out many are enabled to participate in the overall strategy, reducing the burden on those in formal leadership positions and more deeply embedding sustainability across the school (Jackson, 2007:9).

Sustainable development will not be achieved by leaders or schools acting alone. Much will depend upon the formation of new networks, partnerships, alliances or federations to share leadership knowledge, address problems and share expertise. Sustainable development will depend on the way leadership is distributed and co-coordinated within, between and outside schools (Harris, 2005; 2008)

Leadership for sustainability

Leadership for sustainability is leadership that has a deep moral purpose; it is leadership that is widely shared and is not the preserve of the individual. Leadership for sustainability is not based on hierarchies or power bases but rather is a collective set of influences that overlap and connect. The sustainability agenda is too big, the issues too complex and diverse to rely on top down approaches to leadership practice. Leadership for sustainable schools requires leadership at all levels within the school, between schools and outside the school. **Leadership for sustainability is distributed leadership** (Harris, 2008).

Leadership for sustainability sees the school, the community and the wider context as inter-related and interconnected. These cells of mutual influence shape how leadership is enacted and understood. As the following diagram illustrates it is the overlap between these circles where leadership for sustainability can be located and extended.



Leadership for sustainability requires leadership in all these spheres and therefore requires leadership practice that is purposefully distributed and co-coordinated. Sometimes head-teachers or members of the school leadership team are the leaders for sustainability. At other times they can also be other professionals, community workers, business people governors, teaching assistants, caretakers, parent and pupils. The basic point here is that leadership for sustainability requires **broad based involvement of many leaders, at many levels and across different spheres of influence.**

It is clear that there is not one way to take on the sustainability agenda in schools; there is no one person whose job it is to lead the process; and there is no one person who can achieve this on their own. By definition it has to be a collective and distributed form of leadership activity.

Recent research sponsored by the NCSL highlighted that:

Effective distributed leadership is essential in order to embed sustainability within the school and to get everyone on board (Jackson, 2007:7)

From this research the common characteristics of leaders of sustainable schools were identified as follows:

- Optimistic and outward looking
- Passionate about sustainability
- Have an integrated, systemic understanding of the world and their place in it and can communicate this to others
- Understand how society, the environment and individuals connect within these contexts

While such characteristics are no doubt necessary and worthy, put crudely, they are insufficient to lead sustainable schools. Other skills, abilities, knowledge and understanding are required. Other forms of leadership and other leaders within and beyond the school will be needed. In short, leadership for sustainability requires a different type of leadership and a different type of leader because of the sheer challenge of the sustainable development agenda.

Sustainability leadership challenges

The sustainability challenges facing school leaders include:

- The need to embed the care agenda – care for ourselves, care for others and care for the environment – as a distinctive commitment
- Involving all the school's stakeholders in decision-making about sustainable development – balancing short-term interests with longer-term goals while considering the needs of the environment, future generations, and other communities
- Using the eight doorways – and the real-life learning opportunities they offer – to enhance pupils' enjoyment and progress, and contribute to pupil's achievement and standards
- Developing individuals with the knowledge, values, skills and self-confidence they need to make positive contributions to their family, their community, their job, the environment, and the wider world
- Ensuring that the curriculum best addresses the statutory requirements for teaching sustainable development while contributing to each pupil's enjoyment of learning, and their need to keep learning sustainable behaviours over their lifetime?
- Ensuring that approaches to leadership and management promotes best value, best practice and sustainability

- Producing citizens of the future who are committed to safeguarding and caring for the planet

These challenges are far reaching, substantial and ultimately require forms of leadership practice that are very different from our current ways of working. The educational organisations of the future will be networked, diffuse and partly virtual. For each learner there will be a different configuration of learning support, an individualised and personalised learning programme. Therefore the leadership of the future will be primarily concerned with **maximising synergies and connectivity**. It will not be focused on the results of individual parts of the organisation but the focus will be on the quality, nature and extent of learning provision as well as the organisation's ability to contribute to sustainable development.

Leadership for sustainability requires that school leaders take the long view of change and development. The challenge for school leaders will be how to keep that long view of change without sacrificing the immediate focus on teaching and learning. The challenge will be how to build capacity without losing coherence? How to distribute leadership without relinquishing accountability and focus?

In very practical terms, leadership for sustainability will necessitate the creation of time, space and opportunity for groups to meet, plan and reflect. Engaging the many rather than the few in leadership activity is at the heart of leadership for sustainability. Consider the following questions.

What needs to happen for leadership to be shared and distributed between your school, the community and the locality?

What challenges might distributed leadership pose to you, your school your community and locality? How might these challenges be overcome?

Where is the leadership potential, within your school, the community and the locality? How could you release it?

Final word

Schools have a critical role to play in modelling the practices and behaviours that will guarantee sustainable development across future generations. They have an important responsibility to impart the values that will put sustainable development at the forefront of decision making and the way young people choose to live in both their personal and professional lives. Schools have to be the driving force behind this agenda as it cannot be left to chance, goodwill or altruism. There is a compelling moral and social purpose that is urgent.

School leaders are facing a future where schools will need to be much more externally facing than ever before. It is clear that there needs to be a greater focus upon collaborative working, relationship building and forging strategic partnerships. Their role is primarily concerned with responding to the needs of students and requires understanding other agencies and organisations that work with students. Schools leaders will need to understand the local context much more if they are to generate further improvement.

In summary:

- School leaders have a central role to play in the implementation of sustainable schools. Unless they set this as the main priority and reinforce this through school development planning processes, it is unlikely to be fully implemented
- Sustainable development needs to be embedded in teaching and learning policies, and school improvement policies, so it is seen as an integral part of the student learning process and a student entitlement
- Leadership of sustainable schools needs to harness the leadership capability and potential within the school, community and locality
- Diverse leadership forms will need to be embraced to effectively coordinate, plan and sustain developments across the sustainable development agenda
- Leadership for sustainability is ultimately distributed and widely shared

The sustainable development agenda presents an enormous challenge for those leading schools but also an important opportunity. Schools have an important role to play in imparting sustainable values to the next generation, particularly as young people will be the decision makers of the future, both in their personal and professional lives.

Schools need to make a decisive move toward more sustainable development. Not just because it is the right thing to do, but also because it is in all our interests. It offers the best hope for the future. Whether at school, in the home or at work, everyone has a part to play. It doesn't matter where a school starts from, or which aspect of sustainable development it chooses to prioritise. The main thing is that it starts, now. The future is already with us.

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