



Assessing for success

YSGOL GYFUN LLANHARI, RHONDDA CYNON TAF

This large Welsh speaking Secondary school not far from Cardiff started by creating a task group consisting of a cross section of teaching staff, with the aim of formulating a school policy on sustainable issues. The idea of whole school participation in curriculum development had remained relatively unexplored: it was hoped that a framework for developing good practice would enable school staff to prepare strategies that could be delivered across the school efficiently and effectively.

Assessment that's fun?

This coordinating group decided to use Activity 5 from WWF's *Pathways* and the self assessment matrix – which looks at Learning for Sustainability through the lens of different themes (see below) – as a focus for a school away day. The activity and matrix were translated into Welsh and then handed out. The intention of the activity is to enable participants to look at where they think their school practice is in each of the themes and elements, from pre-engaged, through introductory, emergent to advanced, and to consider this both from an individual and group perspective. They then discussed how they might move towards a more engaged level, and copied the text from the grid so that individual departments could list the contributions they felt they were making to each of these areas. The information was then compiled into a school summary sheet.

The themes and elements of Learning for Sustainability:

- School ethos and culture – a whole school approach and policy;
- Monitoring and evaluation – action learning;
- Teaching and learning – curriculum, diversity, ways of teaching, and professional development;
- Pupils – participation, empowerment, and a safe and supportive environment;
- Community – linking with parents, governors, local, national, and global community;
- Schools estate – resource management, grounds, and buildings.

'The school self assessment was the most valuable for us. Some people thought we were low down on the scale; others further up. Together we have moved towards the front'

Self evaluation is becoming an integral part of the school ethos, so reflecting on and documenting learning experiences in this way was of great benefit to the school, as was the discussion within and between departments.

Creating action from reflection

After eight months of looking at and assessing what they have been doing, they have now placed ESD, under the themes, within their school policy, clarifying the parameters of ESD for the school. They are committed to celebrating their achievements and progress. This collaborative approach to tackling the ESD themes has resulted in a common awareness and understanding of where they want to go and what they need to do to get there.

'The grid is used as part of our school policy process.'

ONE PLANET
SCHOOLS