



Everyone listened to, heard and respected

MEARE VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL, SOMERSET

Meare prides itself on serving the community in which it is based. It has been working on projects throughout the school in a variety of ways – from their schools grounds project to a successful link with Kenyan schools, where they plan and deliver the curriculum alongside each other. Before they started working on this project, they were already working along the lines of a whole school, participatory approach but needed a structure and plan for extending work in this area.

‘We would be interested in documenting our journey as we work toward sustainability...We hope to focus our work ...and give us the opportunity to integrate these themes.’

Listening

They decided to hold a buffet meeting to which the whole staff was invited along, from the Head to the lunch time supervisors. A teacher from another WWF Support Scheme school was invited in to run the workshop so as to add an external element and therefore engage the staff more. This session was intended to celebrate what they were already doing and to broaden the staff’s understanding of sustainability. It was approached with the view that they were open to new ideas and suggestions of how to take things forward. All the participants were given an information sheet, ‘Putting you in the picture’, which included information about the project, and a leaflet about Learning for Sustainability.

‘We need everyone on board’

A subsequent session was held after school, to which parents were invited. The idea was to find out what they could contribute to the school and to inform them about what the staff was trying to achieve. There was a real desire to share ideas, and to involve a wider group than the staff in the direction of the school. This work was showcased at their summer fete in an effort to engage the community in what was happening and to ask them what they wanted for the school and how they might be able to work together.

‘It’s great the school’s doing stuff that really matters’ – community member at fete

The greatest challenge – but also the most rewarding – was in bringing the pupils on board with their views and ideas about the school and how they might take these ideas forward. The school took part in a WWF pupil debate looking at making recommendations and creating action plans for their sustainable school.



'Everyone was there when the decisions were made'

Staff on a weekend away worked on the school assessment matrix from *Pathways*, and used the ideas collected from the parents, community, and pupils to come up with suggestions for moving forward. They looked at the areas of Learning for Sustainability and together decided on what they were going to do, writing it into the computer as they went. This became the School Development Plan. This is an example of the whole school community really coming together, listening to one another, and deciding together what they wanted for their school. The next challenge is to look at how they can work together, listening and sharing in a climate of respect so as to build on individual classroom practice and impact on the teaching and learning of the whole school.

'I've been teaching for 25 years, and it's just given me that bit of a buzz. And if I've got a bit of a buzz then it goes onto the children.'