



Looking around and seeing the open road

WOODHEYS PRIMARY SCHOOL, MANCHESTER

From assistant to head

Woodheys' sustainability journey began back in 1995 when a dynamic teaching assistant took a look around and decided that something needed to be done about the state of their school grounds. Instead of just using a pot of blue paint, the children came up with designs and everyone got involved in painting. Over the years, this same classroom assistant turned environmental projects coordinator has brought on board other members of staff, including the Head, so they are now ready to look around again and see what needs to be done.

'We have made a good start but now we need to draw different themes, polices and staff members together for a fully integrated approach'

Leafleting the street

Everyone is kept informed of what is going on through a variety of methods, including:

- whole school assemblies;
- school newsletters;
- corridor and classroom displays;
- environmental newsletters;
- noticeboards inside and outside school;
- letters about specific projects.

One of these leaflets shows suggestions of areas where they feel sustainability can be taught and practised throughout the school, for example:

- through the National Curriculum, e.g. literacy, numeracy, Science, Geography, History, IT, PHSE, Citizenship, Art;
- through national initiatives including Eco Schools, Healthy Schools, Healthy Futures;
- by giving pupils a voice via debates, circle time, a School Council, suggestion boxes, assemblies, class and assembly presentations;
- using competitions and awards including 'Greenfingers Challenge', Caterpillar Eco Awards';
- by giving opportunities for pupil participation, e.g. gardening, clubs, listening to speakers, raising funds for charities, twinning projects locally, nationally and internationally.

The open road

At Woodheys they have found it important to thank everyone for their help and input, however small, thus celebrating and acknowledging success. This helps to keep that vital morale and interest high. Plotting and seeing the difference between December, 2003 and June, 2004 gave them a real boost. Nevertheless, the environmental coordinator – the main 'driver' in this school – continues to push the sustainability message forward, within and outside the school gates; arranging visits from directors from the Government Office in North Wales, giving talks at Wildlife trusts, and making presentations at local and national events.