



We are only small – but together we can change the world

UPTON CROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL, CORNWALL

The small things count

Some of the teachers at Upton Cross have been interested and working on the issues of sustainability for over 10 years. However, with half their teaching staff, including their Head, being new they decided they needed to go through a period of review in order to build up their understanding of what it all means and how they can develop it in their classrooms. Their hope for their school is that ESD should give real depth and progression to pupils' learning so that by the time they come to leave they should be truly global citizens.

'This year we are reviewing delivery of ESD, Development Education, Environmental Education, Health Education, Citizenship and PHSE, looking at combining all into a cross curriculum rolling programme, therefore Pathways will support this.'

In order to bring the new staff on board, the long standing teachers set out the story of the school so far, highlighting all the areas of practice that they thought were important such as their Eco Schools status, links with India, a schools grounds project, peer mediation, etc. This 'story' was also a useful when presenting what the school was doing to the County Council, looking at how they can develop ESD across the county.

Developing a progression

The next challenge for the school was to look at the curriculum and develop how they were going to integrate and take forward their work across the whole school.

'trying to come up with links within the curriculum, but also through the little bits of time between the things that we do'

A whole day INSET was used with the teaching staff. First they re-evaluated their understanding of sustainability: post cards found in their local shop were used to deconstruct the social, environmental, economic, and governance issues associated with the local issues, before looking at the external impacts of these issues.

'we realised we need to make compromises, create a balance and long-term planning in order to make the hard decisions about sustainability'

Using this basis of understanding about sustainability, the question of 'what kind of learners do we need in this world' was asked in order to explore what skills, knowledge, and values they would need to look at in their curriculum in order to address sustainability. After looking at and defining 12 characteristics of effective learners they decided together that they would focus on those five that they considered to be most relevant to their school and which they would like their pupils to develop. These characteristics fell under the headings of Inquirer, Thinker (global), Caring, Communicator, and Open-minded.

ONE PLANET
SCHOOLS



These five areas were then looked at across the key stages and classes of the school so as to create a progression through the school.

'This activity really made staff think hard, gave us a useful physical support for teaching and learning...using the skills approach makes curriculum mapping much more workable and manageable.'

Changing the world

The next steps the teachers will take will be look at how they can engage more of the staff, whilst the ESD coordinator will support the teachers in looking at the real opportunities to teach these key characteristics so that they are truly 'preparing children to be active citizens for the 21st Century'.