

Questions for reflection

- How would a visitor to the school recognise a commitment to global learning in the physical space; is active involvement with the space identifiable?
- Does the physical environment reflect the identities of pupils in the school, in the locality and in the UK as a whole?
- Do displays and signage reflect cultural diversity; are signs displayed in different languages?
- Are classrooms and whole school areas – e.g. hall, library, playground etc – adaptable spaces which can and do change their layouts for different activities?
- Is the physical environment used to encourage critical thinking and cooperative, participative, experiential and democratic learning?
- Are school grounds used to maximise their potential for global learning, e.g. are there multicultural play areas, a wild area, a food growing area etc?
- Do all teachers make some use of the outdoor space available in learning activities; are good links made between the classroom and outdoor space?
- Does the school provide space for pupils to enjoy cooperative play, not just competitive play?
- Are there safe spaces for sanctuary, advice and support?
- Is monitoring/measuring the school's 'footprint' seen as an important aspect of the physical environment; are pupils involved in this process?
- Is there a commitment and action plan to reduce the school's 'footprint' by encouraging recycling, reducing water and energy consumption, an ethical procurement policy etc; are pupils involved in this process?
- Evaluate current relationships with the immediate locality: Who regularly uses the school?
- How are new community members welcomed to the school community?

Thematic Links

Encouraging participation and involvement with the local community supports community cohesion

Developing understanding of food growing, global food supply chains, food miles and different approaches to farming

Developing an understanding of ways to reduce and deal with waste, water use and energy use

Developing an understanding of climate change, peak oil and actions to reduce CO2 emissions and reduce dependency on oil

Understanding of bio-diversity, local species, life processes and cycles of the natural environment.

Next steps

- Staff meeting to discuss how classroom spaces are used and changed.
- Discuss current use of outdoor space: How could it be adapted or improved to make best use of for learning?
- Seek advice from local organisations for food growing or permaculture.
- Visit other schools who make more out of their outdoor space.
- Discuss with pupils how they like to use classroom or outdoor spaces for learning or free time?

Monitoring & Evaluation: how do you know it's working?

Reduced records of damage or litter as pupils show respect and care for school environment.

Pupils engaged in creating learning spaces show an increased engagement in learning activity. Pupils evaluate how the use of space supported their learning.

Behaviour during break improves as pupils have more options for things to do.

Monitoring of common areas, including notice boards, toilets and changing rooms to detect and remove graffiti.

Introduction

All schools are different, existing in different spaces and communities, old and new buildings, urban and rural settings, with varying requirements for their pupils and communities. Some schools have lots of space outside for children to use and explore. Indoor spaces are made up of classrooms, halls, corridors, stairways as well as unacknowledged spaces such as cloakrooms or toilets.

Learning takes place across the school, both indoor and outdoor spaces providing a wealth of opportunities for creative and experiences. Playgrounds and outdoor space provide a particularly rich point for engagement with children.

Importance of the physical environment for global learning

Use of the outdoor space can provide specific activities to learn about life processes in nature, or games and playtime resources from around the world.

The physical environment of the school offers the opportunity for monitoring, measuring and reviewing processes associated with the use of resources. This could include energy use, water use, ethical purchasing, transport, travel, and waste. Food can be explored through fair trade, local food production, food waste and composting, seasonality, and food growing. These also provide evidence for use in debates and monitoring of issues which engage pupils in active learning whilst food growing projects can provide valuable and practical hands on experiences.

It is generally acknowledged that if everyone consumed resources as we do in the UK, we would need at least three planets to provide for everyone. The 'footprints' of most schools are high with procurement as the major contributor to the schools carbon footprint. (see chart)

Engaging with the school building and its immediate surroundings, use of resources and energy, opens up a wide range of learning opportunities around consumption levels in the UK and around the world, the impact of CO2 emissions and ethical procurement, problems with over-consumption and dealing with waste. These opportunities relate directly to pupils lives.

Global learning methodologies, which encourage a cooperative, experiential and democratic learning environment, can also influence the ways in which classrooms, playgrounds - and the games played and equipment used in them - and other parts of the physical environment in school are set up and utilised. Moving existing furniture to create spaces for small discussions or using hall spaces for moving debates and forum theatre or simulation activities are examples of how the physical environment can be used to foster global learning methodologies.

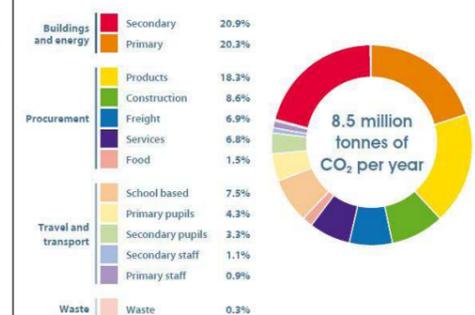
The spaces in the school can also be utilised to engage with the wider community, to get parents involved with gardening or food growing initiatives, to provide space for the local communities to meet and feed into school systems. These all provide opportunities for active participation in making decisions about their school, making changes, monitoring the impact and understanding how they and their school can really make a difference.

Outcomes for pupils

Pupils will be able to:

- Develop a sense of belonging to the school
- Have pride in and take ownership of the physical space of the school and are less likely to cause damage
- Engage in learning activities through methodologies and connections with the natural environment
- Recognise that learning takes place in a variety of spaces
- Develop appreciation for the local environment, within school and wider community
- Recognise learning can be gained from wider local community
- Recognise theirs and the school's impact on the environment, locally and globally
- Experience learning in a variety of settings and classroom set ups.
- Identify how they can make a difference
- Experience taking action in response to global concerns.

The chart shows a breakdown of the major contributors to the carbon footprint of schools in England.



Our physical environment is enhanced by making sure products come from sustainable sources and that our environment is a genuinely 'green' one.



Global Learning Centre

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Details of current teacher training, information on global learning and examples of HEC's work
www.globallearninglondon.org.uk

Join the London Global Teacher Network - LGTN offers London teachers the chance to connect around global learning.
www.lgtn.org.uk



Learning in a Global Context was developed through Local4Global, funded by UK Aid.



Learning in a Global Context is a framework for supporting schools in preparing young people for life in an increasingly globalised world.

Checklist to ensure a physical environment that promotes global learning

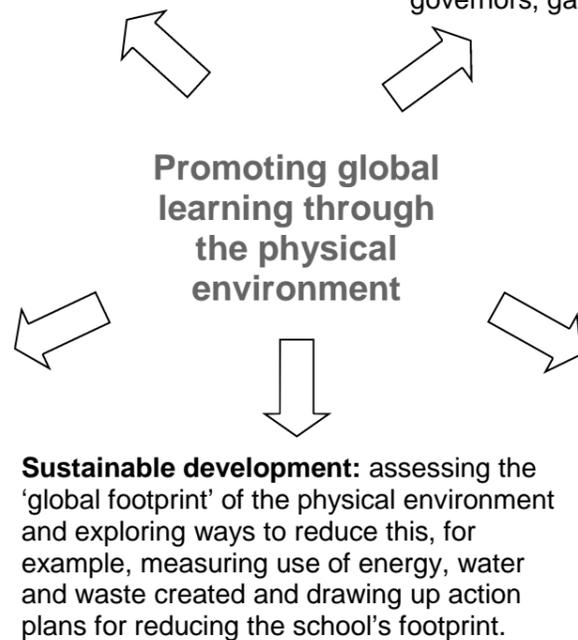
The following checklist aims to help schools to consider how the physical environment can contribute to global learning. Some practical examples of how the physical environment might be utilised, adapted or developed to transmit global learning is given in each case.

Critical thinking: using the physical environment to encourage questioning and dialogue, for example encouraging pupils to question and discuss a series of 'cultural artefacts' set up in a set location in school; children grow 'staple crops' from different cultures such as potatoes, corn etc. and consider why they have become staple crops.

Participation: pupil and whole school community involvement in decision making about the physical environment at school, for example in designing playgrounds; planning, designing and implementing 'cultural gardens' or a 'peace garden' or deciding what vegetables to grow and how etc. Set up a 'physical environment committee' which includes pupils but also involves teachers, parents, governors, gardeners etc.

The role of play: ensuring that the physical environment is conducive to cooperative play, for example, considering whether the playground and equipment is designed to encourage competitive and aggressive games or cooperative play; making use of spaces for roleplay and simulations on global issues such as trade.

Diversity: ensuring the physical environment reflects the identities of pupils and the diversity of the local and global community, for example – depending on the school and its context – ensuring signs are in different languages; displays reflect cultural diversity; games played in the playground are drawn from a variety of cultural backgrounds etc.



Sustainable development: assessing the 'global footprint' of the physical environment and exploring ways to reduce this, for example, measuring use of energy, water and waste created and drawing up action plans for reducing the school's footprint.



The extent to which each nation's schools provide a safe and healthy physical environment plays a significant role in determining whether the next generation is educated and healthy. Effective school health programmes, including a safe and healthy school environment, are viable means to simultaneously address the inseparable goals of Health for All and Education for All.

World Health Organisation (WHO) on the Physical School Environment.

St. Gregory's RC Comprehensive School in Kent has been sharing their learning on sustainable water use through their 'One Drop' project. Activities included measuring existing water use in the school and identifying ways to reduce water use. Pupils were also involved in building their own rain water harvesting system which was then used for 'leaky pipe' drip watering systems for growing projects.

Hever Primary School worked with the school care taker to monitor it's use of electricity. Pupils engaged with numeracy activities to see the changing use of electricity and which processes were most energy intensive. They then managed to reduce their electricity bill by 15% just by awareness raising activities with pupils and designated pupil energy monitors in each classroom checking that no energy was being wasted.

CASE STUDIES

Gorsemoor County Primary School's eco committee worked with the whole school community to plan and carry out improvements to the school grounds, aiming to create a healthy and sustainable outdoor environment.

The committee made sure the improvements used sustainable, local materials whenever possible and the developments included a small 'tree nursery' to provide saplings for use in areas around the site and a 'community pond'. Pupils debated possible developments and decided on the best places to site new trees, tables and play equipment. Teachers take opportunities to use the school site and highlight environmental, economic and social aspects of sustainability in the formal and the informal curricula.

Parents, pupils and outside agencies have all supported this project and participated in different phases of the work. This long-term project has also encouraged links with schools in different countries.

This development of the physical environment has enabled pupils to have new opportunities for healthy activities and undirected play, increased levels of enthusiasm and motivation and created a sense of ownership of the school grounds.

<http://tinyurl.com/69s7fbg>

Moulsecroomb Primary School was passionate about engaging with the local community to raise the profile of the school in its locality which had previously been the target of vandalism. The school set about transforming the school's grounds for learning and play, and blur the boundaries between the school and community. The aims was to foster a sense of community cohesion and ownership by the local residents. Initially plans to create an orchard, an iron age fort, round house and fairytale forest were not taken seriously as it was assumed that they would be vandalised immediately. But, the cynics were proved wrong and key to the success has been the involvement of the whole community and support from local organisations and groups. Moulsecroomb's outdoor environment now abounds with learning opportunities which involve the children in decision making and activities for food growing, investigating and shaping the landscape, and creating structures from natural materials. The local community is actively involved through day to day access to the grounds.



Creative recycling



Rainwater harvesting



School garden plans