



Sustainable Schools for Pupils, Communities and the Environment

An Action Plan for the DfES

introduction

Our consultation on the Sustainable Schools strategy tapped into the huge enthusiasm for a more sustainable way of living. It recognised the need for all of us, but particularly our young people, to develop the knowledge and skills to achieve the necessary change. This is a huge and urgent task. It affects us all – the economic future of this and other countries and the well-being of generations to come. This is not a change that schools make alone and nor do we expect them to do so though the framework, and the accompanying s3 self-evaluation tool, are the means by which schools can take forward their part of the action. However, we need to embed sustainable development across our school system and that means concurrent national and local action. This action plan sets out what the Department for Education and Skills will do to help schools and local authorities meet the challenge of the Sustainable Schools strategy. This is not an add-on – it is about existing policies and how they should be reframed. We are committed to aligning all areas of policy with this strategy so that schools and wider children's services are encouraged and enabled to move in a direction that is entirely consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

This action plan is structured in a way that responds to the comments and suggestions arising from the consultation. We have set out what the current position is, and what we will do, for each of the eight doorways featured in our original document, as well as ten new cross-cutting themes. We also note a number of challenges and dilemmas that remain to be resolved. I believe that by working together at all levels in the education system, we can ensure that future generations benefit from the economic and social opportunities that sustainable development will bring.



Parmjit Dhanda MP

**Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children,
Young People and Families**

Cross-cutting issues

1	The Vision	4
2	Milestones/Targets	6
3	Joining up	8
4	Evaluation	10
5	Curriculum	12
6	Training/Capacity Building	14
7	Award Schemes	16
8	Local Support	18
9	Funding	20
10	Biodiversity	22

The doorways

1	Food and Drink	25
2	Travel and Traffic	28
3	Purchasing and Waste	31
4	Energy and Water	34
5	Buildings and Grounds	37
6	Inclusion and Participation	40
7	Local Well-being	44
8	Global Dimension	47

Cross-cutting issue 1

What you told us...

“This is a fantastic way forward and seems to reflect what young people themselves believe to be important. The ‘umbrella’ nature of the initiative is the only way to do it.”

“A national framework is very welcome bringing together the teaching and management aspects of SD and the framework itself is clear.”

“This must be one government initiative that rises above party politics. The long-term nature of the initiative has to be guaranteed.”

“Getting the children involved in the actual running of the school, growing and cooking food, monitoring and reducing energy use... all of these could produce genuinely sustainable schools and children who feel worth something.”

“I’m clear about the high-level vision, but less clear on what it translates into for my individual school. I’m also unclear how high a priority the Government expects schools to place on this, compared to the many other issues we are also required to deal with.”

How we respond...

- We have a long-term outlook on the performance of this strategy and are not expecting change to take place over night. Our goal is to reorient the education system gradually and consistently over the period from here to 2020 to achieve the necessary system change.
- We do not see this strategy as ‘another initiative’. It is a different way of working that enables existing goals – like children’s well-being and achievement – to be obtained more effectively than at present.

Closing the gap...

- We have a public commitment to embed sustainable development in the Department. This is set out in the Sustainable Development Action Plan (*Learning for the Future*, published March 2006). It includes our responsibilities throughout the wider education system and in child support services, in our own working environment, and in the understanding of DfES staff at every level. The Action Plan sets out objectives and targets for DfES to deliver in 2006 – 2008 and beyond for a range of areas, including measures to ensure that policy development throughout the Department takes account of sustainability and, where practicable, supports it. It will be reported on and reviewed on an annual basis in line with guidance from the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC).
- During this Year of Action we will mount an extensive communications campaign to position sustainable schools as an important contributor to school improvement, linked to the goals of Every Child Matters (ECM) and Sustainable Communities.
- We will publish a document making clear how action to improve sustainability is complementary and underpinning to ECM objectives by June 2007.

“Mainstreaming sustainability in school needs to be a fundamental tenet of school life – just like the Every Child Matters agenda.”

Cross-cutting issue 2

What you told us...

“The non-prescriptive approach is, on the whole, to be welcomed. The absence of a detailed learning programme gives plenty of scope for schools to mould their own set of objectives, and source outside help, to suit their needs. The down-side is that the imagination and drive needed for schools to become models of sustainable development’ may be too much for some.”

“While we recognise that schools have an important part to play in supporting the Government’s sustainability agenda, this should not mean that schools alone are responsible for promoting it, nor that they should be held to account unreasonably where they do not have access to adequate resources to implement the strategy.”

“Targets set for 2020 are too far away and may not seem ‘urgent’ until too late. One way forward would be some intermediate targets for schools to reach by 2010, for example. A modular approach to the ‘doorways’ that mirrors the Healthy Schools programme could assist in the setting of such targets for schools. It would also be a process they are familiar with.”

“The 2020 timeframe of sustainable schools is so far ahead that, in this world of ‘satisfying immediate priorities’ and ‘initiative overload’, there is a danger that becoming a sustainable school could be relegated to the bottom of a pile of increasing priorities.”

How we respond...

- Sustainable development is an excellent area for schools to invest time and resources and we encourage them to do this. Not only to prepare pupils for the future, but to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the school and contribute to Every Child Matters.
- The New Relationship with Schools involves us setting out our long-term expectations for schools but encouraging them to define their own pathways and approaches to success, so energy and innovation is focused around locally relevant solutions. However, it was clear from responses that milestones would be useful to schools to help them plan and measure progress.
- In October 2006 we launched **s3** – a self-evaluation tool for sustainable schools – to help schools understand the quality of their current practices and plan next steps

Closing the gap...

- By September 2007, and linked to s3, we will establish a series of voluntary targets for schools to reach by 2010, 2015 and 2020 across the sustainable school doorways.

“Not all the targets should be 2020... We need realistic targets for 3-5 years hence.”

Cross-cutting issue 3

What you told us...

“Practical, workable links need to be made between Sustainable Schools, ECM and extended schools.”

“The vision for sustainable schools should be used to define how BSF is implemented, ensuring that capital investment in schools will result in lower carbon emissions, reduced water demand and waste production.”

“Has the DfES thought about how this framework can mesh with rather than be added to other possibly competing school strategies? For example, could Sustainable schools represent an enhancement of the National Healthy Schools Programme, adding environmental sustainability to the factors that impact on pupils’ health?”

“A joined up approach from relevant government departments to policies and funding for sustainable schools e.g. DfES, Defra, DfID, DTI, DCLG, DCMS, DH, who all are engaged with educational strategies and funding.”

“These schemes need to be joined up and fully endorsed, not just an optional add on organised by one enthusiastic member of staff until they burn out, or [are] sacrificed in favour of the three R’s.”

How we respond...

- We recognise the problem of ‘initiative overload’ and believe this strategy offers schools a powerful means of joining up many existing initiatives.
- The vision encompassed by sustainable schools (which at its heart concerns one thing – children’s well-being) offers schools a ‘bigger picture’ in which to position existing initiatives like Every Child Matters, Extended Schools, travel planning, Healthy Schools programme, Citizenship and Learning Outside the Classroom.
- We recognise the value of close cooperation on sustainable schools between government departments and will continue to build links with Defra, DCLG and others to ensure a “joined up” approach.

Closing the gap...

- We will set up a series of seminars to explore opportunities for tighter cooperation and co-development of initiatives at local and national level and with a view to establishing a National Sustainable Schools Forum, chaired by a DfES Minister,
- We have asked the SDC to identify how Every Child Matters is supported by sustainable development, and what implications this has for our policy. The SDC will publish a report in May 2007, and we will publish a document which maps this for schools and local authorities.
- We will work with school building designers, contractors and clients to better embed sustainable design principles in Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and our other capital investment programmes.
- Revised BSF “Strategy for Change” documentation will require local authorities to align their BSF visions with the doorways.

“The more this strategy can dovetail with existing strategies, the more likely it is to be embedded into the working of the school.”

Cross-cutting issue 4

What you told us...

“It is proving hard to engage Children’s Services in this area – they don’t see it as their remit. I think this fundamental gap needs to be addressed through central government, e.g. by Ofsted inspection, target setting and a strong emphasis on sustainability in Every Child Matters.”

“Schools need to be supported – and cajoled through the Ofsted inspection system – as much in this area as they are in all other aspects of school improvement.”

“Greater recognition for schools that achieve a sustainability award such as the green flag would also encourage more schools to take part. This could be through local authority performance indicators or even as a measure of excellence on league tables.”

“Ofsted and the wider community must acknowledge the value that a sustainable school has whatever that school’s academic results.”

“The present emphasis is upon academic targets enshrined in SATs. The balance needs to shift towards the knowledge, values and skills outlined in the framework – success in the essential academic skills will be achieved through this and be more enduring/sustainable because it was based upon real life.”

How we respond...

- There is mutual compatibility between Every Child Matters (ECM) and sustainable development and we need to ensure that all inspectors are up to speed with the aims of sustainable schools.
- We believe that school inspection should recognise where efforts are taking place to create sustainable schools.
- Ofsted is currently undertaking a survey of 40 randomly selected schools to obtain insight into how sustainable development is currently being handled. A researcher from the University of Reading, with DfES and Ofsted has begun a longitudinal study of leading sustainable schools to explore the impact on pupils.

Closing the gap...

- We will discuss with Ofsted how best to ensure that sustainable development is recognised during school inspections and to examine what further briefing could be provided to inspectors on recognising sustainable schools performance.
- With Defra, we will launch an indicator of learners' capability to contribute to a sustainable society by September 2007.

“If Ofsted were given a remit to inspect all schools’ progress towards sustainability a much clearer signal would be given to schools that this issue is a high priority.”

Cross-cutting issue 5

What you told us...

“DfES must do more than tinker around the edges of the Science, Geography, D&T and Citizenship curricula, or install a wind turbine in the school grounds. They must ensure that, from the moment a child crosses the threshold of their primary school to the moment they leave their secondary school, ESD is front and centre in all their learning – both as a discrete subject, and as a component of other curriculum disciplines.”

“The National Curriculum – at every level – must reflect the government’s commitment to securing behaviour change amongst the population of the United Kingdom towards sustainable lifestyles.”

“Teachers, especially in secondary education, usually work in subject isolation and are often unaware of the integration opportunities of ‘sustainable education’.”

“All Secondary Schools should be equipped with trained staff and be required to offer the option of discrete courses at GCSE, A/S and A-levels in Sustainability Studies within ten years.”

“Practical elements of sustainable development should be part of the curriculum, building the Sustainable Schools initiative into the centre of school life.”

How we respond...

- Within the National Curriculum, sustainable development is included within four statutory subjects – Geography, Science, Design & Technology (D&T) and Citizenship. However, it is also a fully cross-cutting theme with the potential to enrich all subjects taught in schools. We want to avoid the possibility that children leave school with little or no appreciation of sustainable development.
- Activities in the school and local area that support sustainable development (e.g. on food, energy, travel, waste, school grounds, inclusion, local and global issues) provide engaging contexts for learning core subjects and life skills.
- We expect that the new ‘Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto’ will encourage many more schools to improve the quality of their outdoor education and, in particular, enable pupils to experience and learn about the natural world.

Closing the gap...

- As part of the review of the Key Stage 3 curriculum, the draft statutory Programmes of Study for Geography, Science, D&T and Citizenship have a sharper focus on sustainable development.
- The presentation of the revised curriculum will show how different subjects offer opportunities for learning about important cross-cutting themes such as sustainability.

“If more flexibility can be brought into the curriculum then teachers would be able to bring in interesting lessons that specifically target the sustainability issues.”

Cross-cutting issue 6

What you told us...

“Many teachers do not really understand the concept of sustainability, and if they do are unsure how to implement it beyond recycling bins. They need further professional development in ways in which to integrate ESD into the whole school ethos and across the curriculum.”

“New teachers at training need to be sold the scheme’s merits, so that they want to become sustainable schools ‘champions’, and lead by example. Same goes for training for the new school leaders, be it heads or governors.”

“The TDA has a vital role in terms of the training and CPD of the whole school workforce. Sustainable development must be integral to the revised Teacher Standards, Initial Teacher Training courses and schemes of work to support all subject teachers. It must also form part of Teaching Assistant induction and ongoing CPD.”

“In our experience, it is leadership from the head teacher and SMTs that drives sustainable schools. Therefore, a valuable recommendation would be to require the inclusion of an ESD module in all NCSL courses, and proven competence in ESD be a condition of all qualifications supplied by the College.”

How we respond...

- We believe that many teachers and school staff would like to be part of national efforts to combat problems like climate change and global poverty by addressing sustainable development in their schools.
- We are aware that many universities and colleges providing initial teacher education and professional development for school staff, including senior managers and head teachers, do not currently emphasise sustainable development in their programmes.
- Naturally some local authorities do provide high quality INSET programmes around sustainability themes, often through their field centre operations, but the picture is far from consistent.

Closing the gap...

- In line with our 2006 Sustainable Development Action Plan, we will work with the Training and Development Agency (TDA) and the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) to see how they can best support school staff and leadership teams in developing sustainable schools.
- The Year of Action on sustainable schools will see the production of guidance on practical measures to support sustainable schools for governors, bursars and teachers.

“Needs to be built into professional development programmes as a core element of managing a school. At an earlier stage it needs to be at the heart of teacher training.”

Cross-cutting issue 7

What you told us...

“There is a certain amount of overlap between the schemes, and some activities enable a school to tick boxes in each of them. I would like to see them all replaced by one super, over-arching Sustainable Schools scheme.”

“A system similar to that used for Healthy Schools, with funded non contact time, support from ‘experts’ and the opportunity to network with other local schools would be ideal.”

“There are so many awards available to schools. Don’t create another one: show how they link to Sustainable Schools. Package together Healthy Schools, Eco Schools and the DfES International School Award as a Sustainable School Award.”

“Some level of compulsion may be necessary in time – sustainability is not a voluntary add-on, it is a civilised imperative.”

“All of these [schemes] can be incorporated into an inclusive concept of the sustainable school. Success in these three areas represents achievement of the best kind.”

“These awards are of course voluntary and it would be terrific to make sustainability a core issue for all schools to deal with.”

How we respond...

- We recognise the importance of awards schemes like Eco-Schools, Healthy Schools and the DfES International School Award that provide ready made vehicles for delivering the aims of this strategy. We are aware that they are supported by government to differing extents, and that Healthy Schools, for example, has more resources behind it than Eco-Schools.
- There is an opportunity now for the schemes to articulate how they contribute to this strategy individually, and also how they can work together most efficiently and effectively on behalf of schools.
- We also wish to see the many other competitions and awards schemes available to schools recognise the importance of sustainable development to children, communities and education.

Closing the gap...

- We will convene a meeting of awards schemes, competitions and organisers of voluntary actions relevant to sustainable schools to explore opportunities for integration, in May 2007.
- For the first time, the Teaching Awards Trust is including a category on sustainable development in its 2006/7 programme.
- We are working with Defra's Climate Change Champions programme to exploit the cross-links to sustainable schools.
- We are working with We Are What We Do[®] to run a competition for pupils to produce ideas for sustainability actions in their schools, homes and communities.

“I think these are excellent initiatives, but need to be backed up with support on a national level and local level.”

Cross-cutting issue 8

What you told us...

“Again and again, the same schools show motivation, inspiration and ability to work on ESD topics... and only stumble when the County Council and other local partners themselves have not quite established a coordinated, workable and well communicated way forward.”

“I know from experience that unless there are skilled people to help schools with this agenda only the schools with committed leadership (i.e. those doing it now) will achieve. Truly the DfES and central government must require local authorities to have small teams/centres dedicated to this.”

“[We need] a combination of training existing teaching staff and appointing sustainable school coordinators alongside specialist support and partnerships with the relevant agencies/NGOs.”

“Schools look to local authorities to provide local leadership and support, and we are clear that there is a role.”

“As an authority.... We need to be a pro-active partner in this issue, and not let schools wallow in another good initiative with no real support.”

How we respond...

- We know that schools will need a lot of support to achieve the aims of this strategy. Support can come from a range of sources: pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers, community groups, NGOs, local authorities and businesses.
- You stressed the importance of support from local authorities, and we agree. Not only in the form of service delivery, but in planning, organising and identifying support from local partners. Guidance from government is clear about this: “Local Authorities have a critical role in making sustainable communities happen in all places – large and small, urban and rural¹.”
- What matters now is that local authorities ramp up their support for sustainable schools in a cross-departmental fashion, from education support services to waste management and energy efficiency. Our challenge to local authorities is ‘how can you create sustainable communities unless they have sustainable schools at their heart?’

Closing the gap...

- We will consider with DCLG and others how to ensure that the proposed new performance management framework for local areas set out in the recent Local Government White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Local Communities* should best drive sustainable schools success.
- We will provide the resources and ministerial participation necessary to run a series of seminars to enable local authorities and their partners to share good practice and drive bottom-up change, with a view to establishing a National Sustainable Schools Forum.

“Many schools are working in isolation on the same issues. A wider knowledge of the possibilities for schools to develop their practice would be useful – even just knowing where to look for ideas.”

¹ Sustainable Communities: A shared agenda, a share of the action. Local Government Association/Defra, 2006

Cross-cutting issue 9

What you told us...

“Need to provide incentives to join up funding streams that are currently fragmented. A number of stakeholders are active in schools and need to be brought together under an agreed approach for improving sustainability in schools and providing better value for money.”

“Grant and/or loan schemes to assist schools in starting up sustainable projects. In particular, waste minimisation and renewable energy schemes would benefit from funding streams that are exclusive to schools and tailored to assist schools in achieving Sustainable Schools targets.”

“Until entreaties and suggestions are complemented by finance and inspection criteria, then schools will have other priorities already set by government and backed by funding.”

“Local authorities will be invaluable in offering tailored individual support to schools, but require resources – staff/time and financial, to be most effective in this...Regional agencies can also act as a link between local and national, offering support and disseminating information.”

“Sustainable Schools needs coordinating and implementing by one body that has finance and support to sustain delivery of the various strands (doorways) of the programme.”

How we respond...

- With most funding now devolved to the frontline, schools have greater scope to direct their resources towards the aims of this strategy and we encourage them to do so. Investment in sustainable development will benefit the school, community and environment, and most importantly the pupils. It is a good use of school resources.
- This strategy is not dependent upon new funding for schools, local authorities or supporting partners. It is more ambitious than that. It is about recognising the potential for existing funding to work differently to achieve common goals. We recognise that some funding is needed to help coordinate this change.
- Some examples: over £50bn is expected to be invested in school buildings over the next 15 years. This funding could help schools make a step change in their sustainability performance. Similarly, the current investment in school food and travel planning should help schools deliver sustainability in those areas.

Closing the gap...

- We have offered £25k p.a. for two years to Government Offices in every English region to enable them to facilitate regional networks that plan, catalyse and coordinate regional support for sustainable schools and look ahead to meeting regional demand for sustainable development skills and awareness.
- During the Year of Action, we are funding the development of guidance, tools, events and web services to support this strategy.

“Schools may have greater scope to direct what funding they have to promote sustainable development, but they must have sufficient funding for this in the first place.”

biodiversity

Cross-cutting issue 10

What you told us...

“We feel this essential value of biodiversity and interdependence should be made much clearer and given greater prominence.”

“The document needs to make clearer the links between sustainability and the protection of biodiversity... there are some references to wildlife, but more needs to be made of how we rely on natural systems in order to survive.”

“School grounds provide a ‘real place’ with a host of ‘real issues’ regarding sustainable development that children and young people can learn from including: use of recycled materials in construction; composting; biodiversity; alternative technology – solar panels and wind turbines; water conservation.”

How we respond...

- A number of environmental organisations and local authorities asked for greater recognition of biodiversity within the doorways, or even a dedicated doorway. We wish to reassure them that the conservation of biodiversity and the natural world is one of the chief motivations of this strategy. The duty in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) for all public authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity is also an important driver for the [education system] to take action on biodiversity. We believe that the existing doorways already capture this opportunity for schools, as follows:
 - Sustainably sourced **food and drink** combats the loss of farmland biodiversity
 - Addressing climate change through the **food, energy and travel** doorways will have positive impacts on UK (and global) biodiversity.
 - The **buildings and grounds** doorway highlights how schools can develop their estate for learning about and conserving biodiversity and inspiring individuals to take care of the environment.
 - In support of the **inclusion and participation** doorway, firsthand experiences of the natural environment can engage pupils who do not usually participate well in learning, or who are under-achieving
 - The **local well-being** doorway urges schools to get involved in projects that enhance the local environment and in return lead to improvements to the school **buildings and grounds** can bring environmental, health, economic and regeneration benefits to local communities
 - The **global dimension** doorway highlights the necessity of understanding how our lifestyles affect the environment in other parts of the world – and how biodiversity globally is inter-related and the natural world is continually changing.
- We agree that contact with the natural world in the school grounds, local area and on school visits plays a vital and irreplaceable role in helping pupils to care for the environment, landscapes and living things. Both this strategy and the *Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto* are designed to promote this practice in schools.

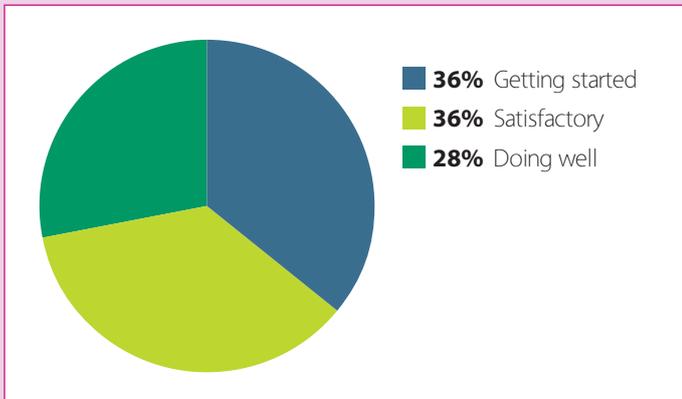
“School grounds act as important habitat networks and can be an important community resource. Schools have enormous potential to enhance or create habitats that encourage and support biodiversity.”

Closing the gap...

- During the Year of Action we have appointed a specialist to advise us on how to manage the links between learning outside the classroom and sustainable development.
- We will continue to work with Defra (and the Education and Public Understanding Group of the England Biodiversity Strategy) on how positive action on biodiversity can be taken through the doorways, as well as working with local authorities and environmental organisations to this end.
- We encourage those concerned with conserving biodiversity and the natural world to recognise how this strategy supports their aims and articulate how their work with schools enables them to support biodiversity and make progress with the doorways.
- We will encourage schools to participate in the BBC's Breathing Places scheme and its aim of initiating biodiversity improvement projects in thousands of school grounds across the UK.

Doorway 1

School's self-evaluation of performance...



What you told us...

“In Europe 31 per cent of the average household’s climate impact comes from the food they eat. The current agenda of school meal reform is focusing on health/nutrition, with the risk that sustainable eating will not be promoted in synergy. The Sustainable Schools framework is a good place to address this imbalance.”

“More emphasis should be placed on creating an understanding of the social, economic and environmental impacts of our food choices. We would also like to see a greater emphasis placed on providing opportunities for pupils to grow some food on site.”

“Healthy (organic?), ethically sourced food from local providers is clearly to be preferred to food sourced from abroad, produced without regard to animal welfare, and containing many chemicals. As any individual who tries to obtain such food discovers, however, it is hard to obtain and more expensive. Where will the extra resources come from to move school food over to such sources of supply?”



food and drink

“Needs to flag up the link between an unhealthy diet and poor behaviour, low resistance to infection and illness and that young people who are under or overweight often have a poor self image and low self esteem.”

Challenges and dilemmas...

- We rely on parents and pupils choosing to support changes in food and drink introduced by the school.
- Not all schools have obvious suppliers of local, fresh and sustainably sourced food and drink. Nor do they have the knowledge to understand the complexities of the market or the capacity to help establish such suppliers.
- Not all healthy food options (e.g. citrus fruits and bananas) can be obtained locally or even nationally, and many others are not produced in the UK all year round.

How we respond...

In September 2006 we introduced **School Food Lunch Standards** promoting fresh, less processed foods with high nutritional value, prepared on the premises where possible. Since the first principle of sustainable schools is ‘care for oneself’, a healthy diet for pupils is fundamental.

To support the standards we will continue to offer **Schools Meals Grants**, increasing from the £220 million pa from 2005 to 2008 to £240 million p.a. from 2008 until 2011. This makes healthy school meals available to all pupils and ensures that added costs do not threaten school meal take-up.

In 2005, we established the **School Food Trust** to research into school food and drink issues, develop guidance on the new standards and communicate them to everyone from governors to catering staff and suppliers.

Through our involvement in the **Food Procurement Implementation Group**, we hope to improve the nutritional quality of school food, achieve a high level of cost effectiveness, and address sustainability concerns such as food miles and the use of fresh, locally produced food products.

Guidance for Procuring School Lunches for schools and Local Authorities focuses on all aspects of food procurement, including sustainability.

Contract Variation Guidance offers schools important information about how they can change their food procurement procedures and contracts to improve both the nutritional quality and sustainability of school meals. These are available on Teachernet.

For pupils, we have recently announced a new **cooking entitlement** from 2008 to make classes on basic cooking skills and use of raw ingredients available to all pupils by 2013.

Our **Growing Schools** programme has a track record of engaging schools and pupils in out-of-classroom learning, helping them better understand where food comes from and encouraging them to grow food in school. The programme supports the **School Farm Network** and the **Access to Farms Consortium**, an accreditation scheme for farmers who host school visits. The department is also a key partner in the **Gardens for Life** project, which promotes international school linking.

We are working with Defra on the **Year of Food and Farming** which aims to reconnect children to the source of their food through a range of classroom-based and out-of-classroom activities.

All of our work on food and drink is closely linked with the **National Healthy Schools Standard** developed jointly with the Department of Health. All schools are expected to attain 'healthy schools' status or be working towards it by 2009.

We have carried out work assessing the importance of food waste to climate change and have identified it as a priority for waste reduction.

Closing the gap...

- During the Year of Action on sustainable schools we will:
 - Commission further research on the links between food, behaviour and achievement.
 - Work with DCMS and other government departments to review the impact of the new advertising restrictions of food high in fat, sugar and salt (announced by Ofcom in November 2006) on children and young people.
 - Work with Defra and the School Food Trust to stimulate local/regional food supply networks and consortia.
 - Revise schools' food contract bid criteria in order to accommodate an understanding of issues such as food miles reduction, sustainable agriculture, biodiversity conservation and animal welfare.
 - Provide guidance to schools on how to reduce food waste.

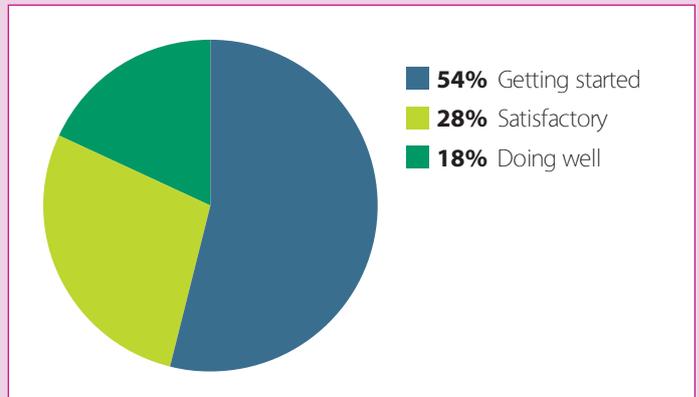
“Policies such as healthy eating in schools should not be made in isolation from other good environmental practices. For example, healthy eating could also be directly linked to local food producers, waste reduction, composting and growing food in school grounds.”



travel and traffic

Doorway 2

School's self-evaluation of performance...



What you told us...

“The vision for all schools to be models of sustainable travel, where vehicles are used only when absolutely necessary, sits uneasily with plans in the current Education Bill to extend free transport and positively encourage travelling to schools some distance away from a local school.”

“It is very difficult to encourage sustainable travel when so many schools have very high numbers of out of catchment pupils and the parents who make decisions not to use local schools do not ‘care’ about the impact of their journey to school.”

“Reconsider the role of school choice advisers and help us balance parents’ freedom of school choice with sustainable travel.”

“There needs to be a coherent national strategy, not just bits. The really difficult decisions (e.g. joined-up public transport, fewer car journeys) are not being tackled by central government, but being passed on in small pieces to organisations like schools. Schools do have an important part to play but bigger issues are being fudged.”

Challenges and dilemmas...

- Most car journeys on the school run are relatively short – less than two miles at primary age, and between two and three miles at secondary age.
- There is a strong link between economic growth and car use – including on the journey to school. The challenge is to break that link so that parents and pupils take healthier, more sustainable alternatives.
- Even where every school is a good school, parents will exercise a preference for a school on the basis of, for example, its ethos, or specialism(s) offered. The extension of transport rights included in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 aims to remove transport as a barrier to parents from low income backgrounds from exercising that choice – a choice that is always open to those from higher income groups. The challenge is for this to be delivered in a sustainable manner.

How we respond...

Whilst the proportion of pupils travelling to school by car doubled between the mid 1980s and the early 2000s, there are early indications that the growth in car use has been arrested. The **National Travel Survey** reports that from 2002 to 2005, the proportion of pupils walking to school has increased from 44 per cent to 46 per cent. The proportion travelling to school by car for these years has remained stable, at 32 per cent. Whilst this is encouraging, we want more pupils to travel by sustainable means so that the potential health and environmental benefits can be realised.

The **Travelling to School** action plan, jointly published by DfES and the Department for Transport (DfT) set a target for all schools to develop a school travel plan by 2010, with an interim target of 10,000 schools with a travel plan by March 2006. The joint DfES/DfT project board make £7.5 million per annum available to local authorities to employ a network of **school travel advisers** to support schools and local authorities in drawing up and implementing sustainable school travel plans. Schools with an approved plan receive a **capital grant** worth, on average, £5,000 to a typical primary school, and £10,000 to a typical secondary school. The grants are used for on-site projects designed to encourage more sustainable travel – bike storage, pedestrian shelters, and on-site segregation of traffic from pedestrians and cyclists.

To date DfES has provided nearly £60 million in capital grants to more than 10,000 schools with travel plans.

“[We need] really sustainable and safe pupil transport systems – not just statements that children should cycle and/or walk to school using currently poorly designed pedestrian or cycle ways.”

“Many new schools not only spend a vast amount of money on parking areas, they waste the resource of the site area.”

The Travelling to School action plan is complemented by a range of related activity. We are working with non-governmental bodies to help make cycling to school a safe alternative. A combination of £10 million from DfT, and a further £16 million in match funding has enabled Sustrans to link an additional 300 schools to the **National Cycle Network**, with around 200,000 pupils and their families benefiting. Cycling England receives £5 million p.a. from DfT to roll out **cycle training** for pupils to the new national standard – **Bikeability**. Delivery of this training is currently being piloted in four local authorities, and will be available nationally from April 2007.

In primary schools, DfT is providing grants to schools that will enable them to employ **walking bus** coordinators. £5 million p.a. is being provided over each of the next three years to help schools coordinate walking bus volunteers, or fund other activities to encourage more walking to school.

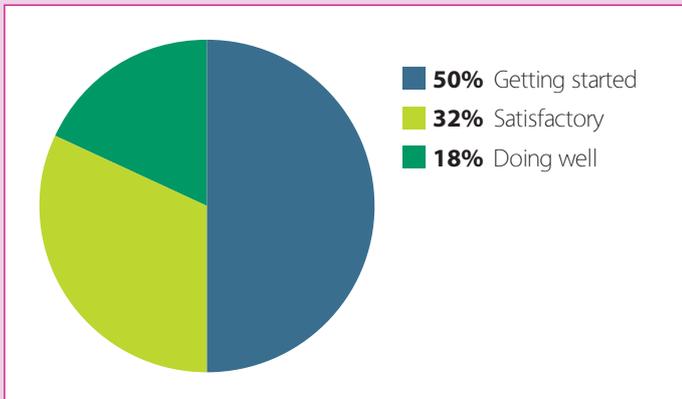
Through the new **Geography, Science** and **Citizenship** secondary curriculum, there will be more opportunities to make teaching and learning about travel and traffic and their significance to sustainable development more prominent.

Closing the gap...

- Pupil's usual mode of travel to school will be recorded as part of the annual School Census from January 2007. This will enable schools and local authorities to monitor the impact of their school travel plan and other interventions, and will provide valuable data to local authorities promoting sustainable travel choices.
- We want all schools to have a travel plan in place that addresses sustainability and pupils' health and fitness by 2010.
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a general duty on all local authorities in England to assess the school travel needs of all children and young people in their area, and to promote the use of sustainable modes of travel. As well as assessing travel needs, local authorities will have to conduct an audit of the sustainable travel infrastructure, and develop and publish a strategy to improve the infrastructure supporting sustainable travel to school.

Doorway 3

School's self-evaluation of performance...



What you told us...

"I try to promote practical recycling and waste management in schools within my area. However, with the limited recycling facilities available to schools at no cost, this is difficult."

"There are some fundamental things government can do to help make certain aspects of sustainability easier for both schools and local authorities. For example – if Defra were to publicly clarify its definition of schools waste to be household then getting free kerbside recycling schemes established for schools would be simpler."

"A major issue in terms of waste and sustainable procurement is the global inequality of access to resources and the use of developing countries resources to produce goods that rapidly become waste in the developed world – or indeed are shipped back to the developing world as waste where there are fewer environmental and health and safety protections."

"Children are keen to recycle waste but this is not always supported by the infrastructure set in place by local councils."



purchasing and waste

“I feel the consultation needs to push a more firm ethical purchasing policy and really examine all the products that a typical school uses and then examine if there are environmentally friendly and ethically-made alternatives.”

Challenges and dilemmas...

- Sustainable procurement and waste minimisation is a new area for our procurement staff. Much of our work is in the development or pilot stage.
- There is a perception among school buyers that sustainable procurement cannot be justified on value for money grounds. The reverse is true – it is just that the costs of cheap goods are often shouldered by other countries or parts of society, or other areas of the budget, like waste disposal.

How we respond...

Our interest in sustainable procurement in schools is relatively new. However, we propose to introduce a DfES **e-procurement market place** for schools which will establish an online market place of ‘screened’ suppliers who must meet ‘supply charter standards’. The standards will address sustainability issues including packaging, local sourcing, sustainable design, production and distribution, and fair trade. The first wave of e-procurement market place pilots will be launched in **the Spring of 2007**. As most school purchasing occurs at school level, we are also developing **guidance for procurement staff** and are considering a qualification that would emphasise the role of procurement in supporting school sustainability.

Sustainable procurement refers to when procurement is used as a lever to deliver wider environmental, social and economic policy objectives. The scale of public spending means that we have a vital role in furthering sustainable development, through the procurement of our buildings, goods, works and services. The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (Securing the Future) has committed the public sector to lead by example in delivering those objectives.

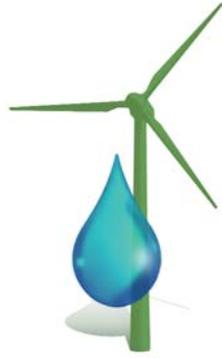
Getting schools to minimise waste, recycle and compost is very important. We are aware that there are barriers that stop schools recycling. However, we will be working with Defra and other partners to minimise those barriers. We will be taking actions that clarify the definition of schools waste, providing advice to schools on actions that they can take (Top tips) and encouraging local authorities to provide recycling facilities to schools.

Purchasing, waste and recycling are addressed in several subjects in the National Curriculum, including in **Design & Technology** where choice of materials and the product life cycle are linked to recycling, environmentally safe materials, waste management and corporate social responsibility. Our Growing Schools programme offers a range of resources that help schools and teachers address recycling and composting on the school grounds.

Closing the gap...

- The commitments set out in the recent UK Government's Sustainable Procurement Action Plan will help Government deliver a procurement policy that delivers sustainability and efficiency.
- Our screening system for suppliers intending to feature in the new e-procurement market place will contain challenging sustainability criteria in line with the Sustainable Schools Strategy and the Government's Sustainable Procurement Action Plan. We will encourage schools only to choose products meeting environmental product standards developed and published by Government (currently promulgated under the "Quick-wins" banner).
- Defra's new Waste Strategy, planned for publication in spring 2007, highlights the opportunity of schools to model good waste minimisation practices for pupils and the whole community. As part of the immediate follow-up work to the strategy we will present analysis of the state of waste and recycling in schools and highlight the potential for local authorities to provide recycling services to schools.
- Defra will clarify the definition of schools' waste and encourage local authorities to provide reliable, high-quality recycling facilities to schools to help them showcase waste minimisation in the communities; and, provide advice to schools on actions that they can take to improve waste collection and recycling arrangements.

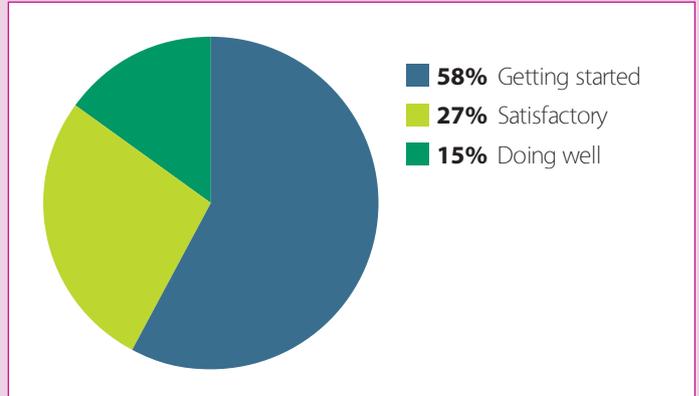
"Funds should be available to support schools developing initiatives – e.g. covering transport costs so students might visit landfill sites to see what happens to our waste."



energy and water

Doorway 4

School's self-evaluation of performance...



What you told us...

“Pupils learn about sustainable development and the importance of saving energy, recycling etc. in lessons but unless the school itself carries these out then the message isn't absorbed and understood properly.”

“Just as schools have to conform to disability access regulation, so all schools should be required to become carbon neutral – or carbon positive buildings – by 2020.”

“More demanding expectations in areas such as 'energy and water' and 'purchasing and waste' could provide immediate responses to the issue of climate change.”

“LEAs need to help with procurement, so that getting solar heating is not a huge project for the head teacher, but is as easy as replacing the heating system would be with old fashioned, energy-expensive technology.”

Challenges and dilemmas...

- Simple good housekeeping can produce useful energy and water savings. An upfront investment – sometimes on a significant scale – is often needed to install renewable energy and water recovery technologies. The long-term benefits of some of these measures are often extremely difficult to assess.
- When schools are built or refurbished, there is a one-off opportunity to influence its energy performance. The ongoing challenge is to ensure that they continue to be operated as efficiently as possible throughout the building's life.
- As schools open their doors longer hours and provide a greater range of local services, their demand for energy and water will inevitably rise.

How we respond...

Through our **Action Plan for Geography** schools will be encouraged to make teaching and learning about energy and water, and their significance to sustainable development, more prominent.

We have developed 'top tips' guidance to help schools assess the most cost-effective changes they can make, and signpost to more comprehensive guidance that has been prepared previously. As part of our Year of Action we will be publishing a **Bursars' Guide to Sustainable Schools** in April 2007 containing practical suggestions on energy, water and waste management. We will also encourage schools to access support and guidance available from the Carbon Trust and other organisations.

We will support schools and local authorities that wish to use their **Devolved Formula Capital** to invest in measures to improve sustainability even though it is not a funding requirement. We also support the Carbon Trust's energy financing scheme, managed by **Salix**, which provides loans of £200-500k which are paid back through efficiency savings. Office of Government Commerce (OGC) have established a similar funding scheme for water efficiency which requires no capital investment. We will continue to investigate other innovative methods to fund energy and water efficiency.

We have estimated that the carbon 'footprint' of all schools in England is approximately 10 million tonnes of CO₂, approximately half of which is attributable to fuel and electricity used in school buildings. The **energy efficiency and carbon emissions** for new school buildings and refurbishments will improve as standards are raised through building regulations and other policy instruments. We will investigate the technical and economic implications of further improvements in energy use, and set challenging targets, particularly for new schools where the opportunities are greatest.

"We need schemes where schools are given the capital equipment – a proportion of the costs could be repaid via budgets over time as energy savings are made."

“The extended schools agenda could involve an associated increase in energy costs for schools by up to 50 per cent due to increased opening hours. The strategy for ICT relies on escalating use of a very carbon-intensive energy source. Local authorities are facing the problem of how this is to be paid for, and how the increase can be met through sustainable means.”

In December 2006, DTI launched Phase 2 of its Low Carbon Buildings Programme. This made a further £50m grant funding available for small scale **renewable energy** systems in existing schools and other public buildings. During the Year of Action we will be introducing guidance on renewable energy systems in schools. We will also be commissioning the production of a software tool which allows users to compare the whole life cost benefits of renewable energy with other technologies such as energy efficiency measures. We are also planning to introduce a requirement that biomass (e.g. wood fuel) be evaluated for all major capital projects and will be investigating the feasibility of developing a standard methodology for such assessments.

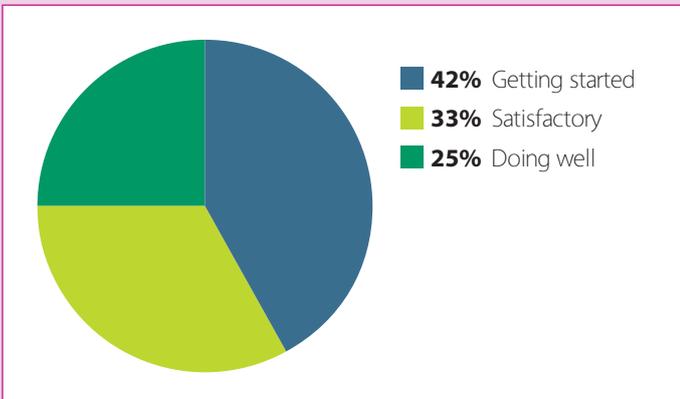
As a result of the European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) all schools will be required to have an energy certificate by January 2009 or sooner. We are currently considering the use of ‘smart meters’ as part of a package of measures to allow schools to demonstrate compliance with the Directive.

Closing the gap...

- Central government intends to cut its carbon emissions by 30% by 2020 (on 2000 levels) and become carbon neutral by 2012. We will announce related targets for the schools estate in September 2007.
- We will investigate the wide variation in water use between schools, set realistic best practice benchmarks, and actively promote measures to achieve best practice by reducing water consumption in schools through a combination of efficiency measures and water reuse technologies.

Doorway 5

School's self-evaluation of performance...



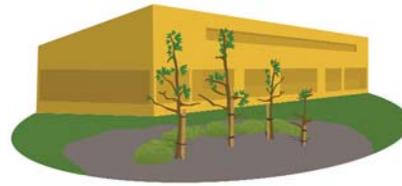
What you told us...

“We are concerned that the Department has not been consistent in its thinking around sustainable development, notably in respect of Building Schools for the Future...the consultation paper does not clearly state that the principles it is promoting should be adopted fully in the BSF programme.”

“The vision for sustainable schools should be used to define how BSF is implemented, ensuring that capital investment in schools will result in lower carbon emissions, reduced water demand and waste production.”

“Local authorities building schools, especially through PFI, need very strong guidelines from central government – or better still requirements – to ensure best environmental practice – solar capture, maximum insulation, grey water capture, etc.”

“Government must address the issue of sustainability within Private Finance Initiatives and contracts between the private and public sector. Best value should not just be about the cost.”



buildings and grounds

“Having just moved into a brand new architect designed building, I am appalled at the standard of building – lights have to be on all the time – no natural light – poor design. Why not ask someone who works in a school what is needed?”

Challenges and dilemmas...

- The opportunities to improve sustainability vary from site to site. There are wide variations in location factors such as access to public transport, the extent of school grounds, the availability of wind and solar energy and available construction materials.
- Some measures to improve sustainability do not have clear financial benefit and the non-financial benefits can be difficult to quantify (e.g. increased biodiversity, or the use of a non-toxic paint and other materials).

How we respond...

We have developed a version of BREEAM (the Building Research Establishment’s Environmental Assessment Method) specifically for the design and construction of schools (including refurbishment). This is more challenging than the generic version of BREEAM. Since March 2005 it has been a condition of funding that all major projects within the capital programme, both new build and refurbished schools, register for a BREEAM assessment and achieve a minimum rating of very good.

We are looking at how this standard might be raised, together with options to complement the BREEAM standard. This may be through additional targets, e.g. for energy and water consumption, or the development of a ‘code’ for sustainable schools along similar lines to that devised by DCLG for homes.

In support of the above we are conducting research into the costs and benefits of many of the design features which are considered within a BREEAM assessment, and also funding demonstration projects. Three secondary school projects within the **One School Pathfinder** programme of Building Schools for the Future (BSF) will be demonstrations of sustainable buildings and grounds. These three schools will (as a minimum) achieve a BREEAM rating of excellent, meet more than 20 per cent of their energy needs from renewable energy, and will allow the sustainable features of the schools’ design to be used for teaching and learning. Two of these schools are aiming to significantly reduce carbon emissions, and one is aiming to be carbon neutral.

As most BSF schools will be funded through Private Finance Initiative (PFI), the private contractors involved have an interest in reducing both capital and operating costs – encouraging resource-efficient designs.

We have also published **design guidance, exemplar designs** (concepts and ideas to inspire design) and **case studies**. Amongst recent publications, **Designing School Grounds** addresses a wide range of sustainable design considerations, and **Design of Sustainable Schools – Case Studies** covers various design features of twelve schools.

We are also looking at capacity building: enabling teachers and other stakeholders to participate in the planning, design and construction process. We have developed a Design Quality Indicator (DQI) for schools with the Construction Industry Council to develop a framework for the assessment of school design. We are also working with the National College for School Leadership to provide training that will support head teachers in their client role within BSF. The aim is to ensure that buildings are not only built to the highest standards, but that they are fit for purpose, as defined by the communities that will operate them.

We have funded the Sorrell Foundation to develop a suite of resources, including DVDs, booklets, case studies and touring exhibitions to build children's capacity to participate in school design. Although there is no statutory requirement for pupil participation in school design, we encourage schools to involve pupils in the stakeholder engagement processes.

We are also releasing several new design guidance documents: the **Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto** and **Growing Schools** will encourage and support schools to use their school grounds as a teaching and learning resource across the curriculum for pupils of all ages and abilities. For example, from 2007 a new DVD will be available to illustrate the educational and behavioural value of using gardening, growing and cooking as part of the national curriculum.

We are working closely with DTI and the Cross-Departmental Group on Construction in the development of a strategy for sustainable construction. The group is aiming to publish their strategy during 2007.

Closing the gap...

- By February 2008 we will bring our capital investment programmes into full alignment with the aims of this strategy, and the government's wider sustainable development goals, through adjustments to their core documentation and key performance indicators. We are already revising the BSF "Strategy for Change" to require local authorities to align their BSF visions with the eight doorways.
- By September 2007, we will set out targets for the environmental performance of the schools estate, and explain how our capital funding and support will contribute to achieving them. The targets will specifically cover carbon emissions attributable to fuel and power use within new school buildings and will contain high standards for energy efficiency, renewable energy and other carbon reduction methods.

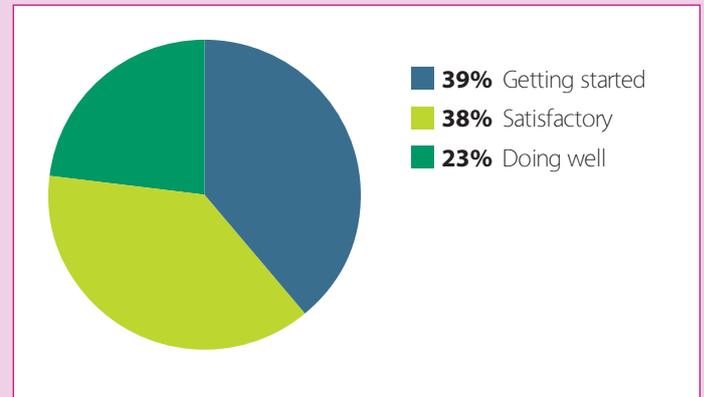
"...it should not be assumed that 'a new school equals a sustainable school'. Much depends on the extent to which requirements for sustainability are built into the specification for the building's design."



inclusion and participation

Doorway 6

School's self-evaluation of performance...



What you told us...

“There would appear to be a conflict between wanting all schools to be socially inclusive and the fact that there are selective schools which cannot be fully inclusive.”

“[The consultation] seems to drift toward giving stereotypical examples of sustainability which relate to the environment. It would be useful to have other examples, such as physical activity (linked to ‘Inclusion and participation’ and ‘Local well-being’). This would encourage people using the framework to see all school activity as being relevant to sustainability.”

“It is of concern that ‘Inclusion and participation’, ‘Local well-being’ and ‘Global dimension’ are listed as separate doorways when they are in fact intrinsic to the understanding and application of the practical issues referred to in doorways 1–5.”

“[We need] more participation from the local community – particularly parents. We can do it at school but need to persuade parents to help us in school and promote it at home.”

Challenges and dilemmas...

- Schools are microcosms of their local communities and while they can promote inclusion and participation through their culture and ethos, and through their teaching and learning, success is dependent upon the will of pupils, parents and the wider community to work together towards common objectives.

How we respond...

Our commitment to inclusion and participation predates interest in sustainable schools and hence the policies, programmes and projects in place do not explicitly address sustainability. However, they do contribute to community cohesion which is an important goal of sustainable schools.

The **Citizenship curriculum** has emerged as an effective way to encourage the involvement of pupils in inclusion and participation activities. Having pupils participate in school decisions and take the lead on sustainable development in their schools, homes and communities is vital preparation for their active citizenship in the future.

We want all children and young people to be able to participate fully in the life of their school and have respect for diversity. The Government's policies are designed to improve outcomes for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. We are taking forward a long-term programme of practical action to help make that a reality, which includes improved training for teachers, better measures to recognise all children's achievements, guidance to help schools to improve access for disabled children and young people, and work to bring mainstream and special schools much closer together so that children and young people from both types of school have more opportunities to learn and socialise together.

Schemes like Forest Schools allow children to experience the natural environment first hand and take part in positive activities. We are aware that such schemes can have a significant impact on children's self-esteem and behaviour, particularly those who are not strong academic performers, and also bridge social divides. The *Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto* is encouraging more schools to benefit from these kinds of scheme.

Geoff Whitty, Director of London University's Institute of Education, is reviewing the work of school councils to make recommendations for future policy. Early findings show that where school councils are working well they are making schools better places to learn and better places to be, pupils feel they are listened to and respected by the adults around them.

“Inclusion and participation is frustrated by the encouragement of faith schools.”

In 2004, we established the first **Children and Youth Board**, a group of 25 young people from across the country, whose role it was to advise the Minister for Children, Young People and Families on the development of policy on issues that affect them. The two previous boards have worked on a range of issues including the appointment of the Children's Commissioner and the Respect Action Plan, and we hope to establish a third board shortly.

We are also helping to develop participation capacity and infrastructure in the voluntary and statutory sector by funding **Participation Works**, an online gateway to participation resources and practice for engaging young people

Local authorities and governing bodies must already have regard to statutory guidance on the consultation of pupils in connection with the taking of decisions affecting them. We are encouraging schools to put the 2004 guidance issued under Section 176 *Working together – giving children and young people a say* into practice in ways that are meaningful to children and young people. The vast majority of secondary and primary schools now have active school councils, supported by Schools Council UK, an educational charity that the Government has funded. Furthermore, we have ensured that school inspection arrangements make the views of children and young people an important part of assessing how local areas are doing. We have changed the law so that school governing bodies can now appoint pupils as associate members, allowing them to attend governing body meetings and become members of committees.

Parish Councils often encourage young people to form a youth council which advises the parish council on local governance arrangements and their impact on young people, covering issues such as recreation, social activities, planning, transport, environment and education. This involvement gives young people the experience and skill to play an active role in their communities when they reach 18, the age at which they can stand for election to the parish council.

We have also helped the **UK Youth Parliament** (UKYP) support young people to have their say by providing them with core and participation funding. The UKYP aims to give young people (11-19) a voice at the local and national level by supporting them campaign on important issues and the opportunity to come face to face with figures in Parliament and central Government.

Closing the gap...

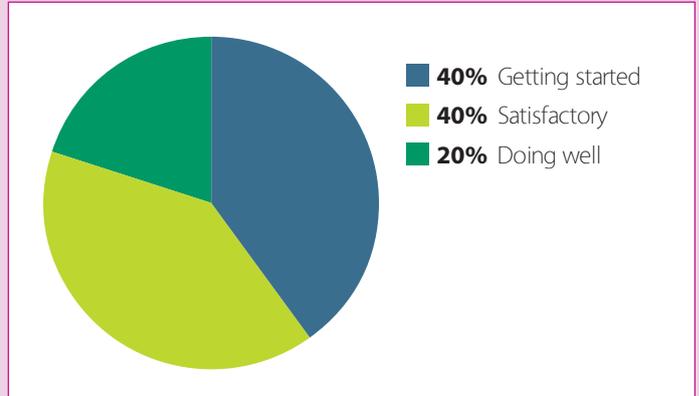
- We will ensure that we seek the views of young people as stakeholders as we develop our plans for a sustainable future, through, for example, asking the Children and Youth Board to advise us on how education policy should be adjusted to address children's need for a sustainable future, and seeking similar advice from the Children's Commissioner, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, and the UK Youth Parliament.



local well-being

Doorway 7

School's self-evaluation of performance...



What you told us...

“In our experience the primary school has been our shining example of what can/should be done to encourage our community to take action on climate change.”

“If sustainable schools are at the heart of sustainable communities then support should come from within that local area especially as the issues will be different from one community to the next. ...It needs to be a ‘bottom up’ approach using local resources and finding local solutions.”

“Need to engage communities with design of schools as a community resource.”

“More clarification on the relationship with the Extended Schools agenda would be helpful.”

“As a parent I’d prefer to have a well-rounded child who has a good education than a child who has an excellent education but is a social nightmare. Put community, people and place before standards.”

Challenges and dilemmas...

- Some schools do not regard themselves as strategic contributors to sustainable communities, despite the obvious impact of local well-being on pupils' achievement and behaviour.
- Longer opening hours and service concentration on school sites will increase their carbon emissions and potentially add to road safety and congestion concerns.

How we respond...

We are committed to seeing all schools become **Extended Schools** by 2010, with half of all primary schools and one third of all secondary schools offering the following extended services by 2008: study support; access to child care; parenting support; swift and easy referral to essential children's services; and community access to school facilities.

Schools are determining what these elements look like based on consultation with their communities, with some aspects of the offer being delivered in partnership with outside agencies and community groups to avoid duplication. We have allocated £840m over five years (2003 – 2008), most of which is routed through local authorities, to support the process. Funding is based on characteristics such as levels of social deprivation and rural access issues.

Through **Extended School Remodelling Advisers**, the Training and Development Agency (TDA) is working with local authorities to build the capacity of schools' senior management teams, extended service providers and teachers, to support the development and delivery of extended services and help teachers concentrate on their core job of teaching. We have also contracted ContinYou to develop regionally based **Extended School Support Services**.

We encourage schools to build partnerships with other schools in communities from different cultural backgrounds to help to breakdown outdated and negative stereotypes.

£3m p.a. is being distributed as small grants to **Community Champions** – individuals committed to making a difference through often small, but strategically targeted actions. Local groups using school premises might access support from *Every Action Counts* an initiative offering fun activities, support and information to local community and voluntary groups. (www.everyactioncounts.org.uk)

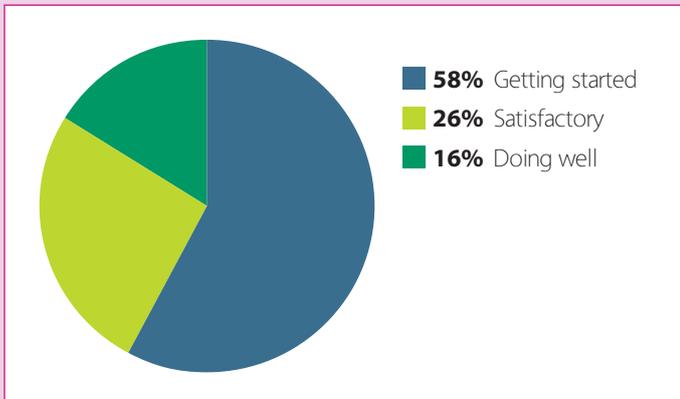
“More needs to be done to connect sustainable schools to the sustainable communities (mentioned in ECM) and community cohesion agendas.”

Closing the gap...

- The Extended Schools programme focuses on supporting parents and families, increasing pupils' achievement and children's services integration. While this contributes to local well-being, particularly for families living in deprived areas, we recognise that the programme should be better aligned with the goal of sustainable communities.
- We encourage all schools to explore the idea of sustainable communities through the Citizenship curriculum, and to engage in environmental and community based activities that improve the local well-being.
- As part of the Key Stage Three review, we will give greater attention to the goal of sustainable communities within the Citizenship curriculum.
- The 2006 Education Act places a duty on governing bodies of schools in England to promote community cohesion, and for Ofsted to report on the contribution made by the school towards community cohesion.

Doorway 8

School's self-evaluation of performance...



What you told us...

“We need to be mindful of the ecological impact of ‘school exchanges’, i.e. the exchange of 100’s and 1000’s of UK schools with African schools will only escalate aspects of climate change.”

“Clarification is needed on the links between social, economic and environmental activities on both a local and global scale. This approach is weighted too much in favour of the local and the environmental.”

“Working towards a common vision with many stakeholders is a great idea, but funding does need to be available to involve those smaller organisations who are currently delivering sustainable development/global dimension education.”

“How can we expect our young people to grasp more global concepts such as climate change, depletion of rainforests etc when they don’t understand what is on their own doorstep?”



global dimension

Challenges and dilemmas...

- International school partnerships have real value in terms of exchange of practices, cross-cultural understanding, and motivating staff and pupils at both ends of the partnership, but the impact of physical visits on carbon emissions can no longer be ignored.
- Some respondents thought that the consultation paper favoured local environmental concerns over larger, global challenges such as social justice and inequity. While this is not the case, we do believe that childrens' engagement with the global agenda is strengthened by familiarity with local problems and their solutions.

How we respond...

We launched our **International Strategy** for education, skills and children's services in November 2004. This includes a focus on equipping children, young people and adults with the skills needed for life in a global society, and work in a global economy. One of eight key concepts that underpin this aim is an understanding of sustainable development.

An **International School Award** has been in place since 1998. Schools achieving the award have integrated global issues and awareness into the curriculum and celebrate international diversity in their community. The whole-school approach favoured by the award helps schools to develop their pupils as global citizens.

We launched the **Global Gateway** in 2004 – an online, one-stop-shop for a range of resources that help schools establish international links and address the global dimension.

Every year we sponsor an **International Education Week** to celebrate and communicate the good practice happening in many schools and encourage others to consider the importance of preparing young people to live in a global society.

Guidance on developing a global dimension in schools was republished in March 2005 with support from DfID, DEA, QCA and OfSTED. Because of the interest shown in this area by several other government departments and numerous organisations, we introduced a Global Dimension in Education Working Group. DfID and DEA are members of this group, as is the British Council, a key delivery partner for several of our projects.

We also fund the DfES **Teachers International Professional Development Programme** provides around 2,500 places for teachers to travel to other countries to learn about different approaches to teaching and learning. With our partners, the British Council, we are also looking at ensuring greater support for schools at local and regional level through closer collaboration between existing networks e.g. local authorities, Development Education Centres, Enabling Effective Support deliverers and other groups with a global dimension remit.

Closing the gap...

- We will work with the British Council to ensure that the DfES International School Award reflects the language and aims of this strategy in time for the academic year 2007/08.
- Between 2008 and 2012, we will continue to support schools in building cultural and educational links with schools in other countries, utilising the benefits of information and communications technology to the full. We will also develop guidelines for schools on offsetting any carbon emissions from international visits and exchanges.
- Through the British Council, we will continue to provide free and user-friendly online collaboration tools for schools via the Global Gateway.
- The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will provide an exciting opportunity to raise the cultural understanding of young people by providing them with a range of 2012-related inter-cultural and global citizenship learning experiences. The education programme being developed will provide a coherent package of cultural opportunities that inspires young people, enabling them to take a more outward-looking approach to other countries.

“Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is essential if young people are to have the skills, values and knowledge that will enable them to participate fully in a global society.”



“Sustainable development will not just be a subject in the classroom: it will be in its bricks and mortar and the way the school uses and even generates its own power. Our students won’t just be told about sustainable development, they will see and work within it: a living, learning place in which to explore what a sustainable lifestyle means.”

Tony Blair, September 2004

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