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NCSL National College for School Leadership

Research Associate Report

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Going global:

leading and developing an international dimension to the curriculum in primary schools

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Introduction

Perhaps more than ever before, schools are aware they are part of a global community, and their pupils feel it too. The year 2005 seemed to be an unprecedented year of world events. The impact of the tsunami, the death of Pope John Paul II, LIVE 8 and the Pakistan earthquake all had a feeling of reality for the pupils in our schools who watched and empathised with events with which most had no natural connection.

For many schools, it is at times like this that the gaps and cracks appear to show in pupils' understanding of the world at large. A primary-age pupil's world is incredibly insular, but many teachers have noticed a willingness and eagerness on the part of pupils to find out about the wider world and their responsibilities to it. Last year's events may have faded into the background, but their happening aroused the desire in many to foster in pupils a world consciousness that would allow such events to be placed, in the future, within a context of understanding.

This research has its roots in that desire of pupils and teachers to develop a sounder understanding of the global community of which every school is a part. By looking at schools that have successfully integrated an international perspective into their curriculum, this paper will examine how school leaders can learn from their journey. Its focus is not on activities and resources, but on leadership and management strategies that can provide guidance to those who are seeking to lead and establish a global perspective in their own schools.

The first section of the paper will look at the background to the international dimension of the school curriculum. The last 10 years has seen this aspect of education being given an increasingly higher profile as schools have sought to react to both legislation and world events.

The second section will explore the findings of the research, which was carried out in over 40 schools. These schools were selected as a result of having been awarded the International School Award (ISA) at one of its three levels. Patterns in leadership and management, as identified in the schools' development, will be outlined.

The final section will suggest ways forward, identified from the research, for leadership and management teams who are looking to develop the international aspect to their curriculum. The research shows that there is no magic formula, but there are patterns and clues in the way that schools' developments have been led that may help others to follow. As these are shared, it is hoped that school leaders will become clearer about what steps can be taken in their own context.

Part 1 – the background

A short history of the international curriculum

A generation ago, the question used to be: "Where were you when Kennedy was shot?" It was seen as such a defining moment that no one could forget when and where they were when they heard the news. Since then, there have been many other shattering moments, both distant and close to home, that have connected the experience of pupils to those of children in other places. Schools play a vital role in helping children make sense of these events, using them as opportunities to teach what might be called global literacy – the practice of making sure each fragment of understanding is placed accurately within the big picture. One teacher, for example, recalls how the shootings at Dunblane led to discussions with his class:

> "I was just sitting down to take the register when I looked at my class. I saw all their faces looking up at me, just as that class had looked at their teacher the day before. One of the class put their hand up and said: 'It's a sad day today, isn't it?' 'Yes,' I said, and then I just burst into tears. Another kid found me a tissue and then we began to talk about violence, hate, death, sadness and all sorts of things. It wasn't until quite a bit later though that I picked up the presence of fear in the young people's comments. I suddenly realised that to do the event justice, not just the major things had to be addressed, but the rarity of this event had to be stressed. To do anything less could lead to a very distorted view of the world."

Each year, information about world events such as this becomes more accessible and increasingly visual. The decision for schools is no longer about whether or not some global work should be done, but whether it should be reactive or proactive in nature. In this context, the purpose of an international curriculum is to give focus and shape to this global literacy, rather than to leave pupils' understanding to develop as dictated by world events.

Along with the development of opportunities provided by improvements in ICT, the pressure on schools to educate beyond their immediate context gained a legislative momentum, with the murder of Stephen Lawrence providing the catalyst. This unprovoked attack, apparently for purely racial motives, and the systematic failures that ensuing reports exposed in public bodies, challenged many in education. Was integration and tolerance being taken as a given, and racism being passively tolerated as a result? A wave of strategies and papers emerged as different organisations, both local and national, grasped the nettle, determined to make a positive impact on the next generation before it was too late. The need was felt to examine what was being done in schools to prepare pupils for the society in which they would participate, an examination that now lies right at the heart of school self-evaluation and its effectiveness at implementing the Every Child Matters initiative.

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) also played an active part in promoting tolerance and understanding of different backgrounds, heritage and cultures. However, this was mainly in terms of anti-racist education, promoting multiculturalism in schools and celebrating diversity within the UK rather than looking to the international community. For example, the national curriculum (2000, p 11) states as part of its values and purpose that:

> "Education must enable us to respond positively to the opportunities and challenges of the rapidly changing world in which we live and work... we need to be prepared to engage as individuals, parents, workers and citizens with economic, social and cultural change, including the continued globalisation of the economy and society."

These elements are then picked up in both aims of the school curriculum, with Aim 1 stating:

> "The school curriculum should contribute to the development of pupils' sense of identity through knowledge and understanding of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural heritages of Britain's diverse society and of the local, national, European, Commonwealth and global dimensions of their lives." (p 11)

Similarly, Aim 2 states:

> "[The school curriculum] should promote equal opportunities and enable pupils to challenge discrimination and stereotyping. It should… secure their commitment to sustainable development at a personal, national and global level." (p 11)

Primary schools continue to make this a priority in the setting of their visions and ethos. Religious education (RE) is seen, particularly by Ofsted, as making a contribution to these spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) values, as does personal, social and health education (PSHE). Without statutory guidance in either of these subjects, however, schools have been largely responsible for forging their own way forward, leading to a natural focus on inclusion, equal opportunities and the cultures represented within a local community, rather than developing a global dimension to the curriculum itself, as experienced by pupils on a day-to-day basis.

The following year though, on 11 September 2001, world events crashed into every classroom whether they were wanted or not. Many teachers cited this event as the one that drove home their responsibility to link local experience to a global understanding.

It was at the end of 2004 that the DfES, in collaboration with many other government departments, launched its document *Putting the World into World-Class Education*. Along with *Developing the global dimension in the school curriculum*, which was issued in March 2005, there was, for the first time since such formative events, a national framework within which schools could develop their global curriculum. The documents facilitated this by clearly setting out three goals of an outward-looking international curriculum. These are:

- Goal 1: Equipping our children, young people and adults for life in a global society and work in a global economy.
- Goal 2: Engaging with our international partners to achieve their goals and ours.
- Goal 3: Maximising the contribution of our education and training sector, and university research to overseas trade and inward investment.

This is then developed to define eight key concepts. The DfES (2005, p 6) states: “Our view is that all who live in a global society need an understanding of the eight key concepts.” These concepts are:

- citizenship
- social justice
- sustainable development
- diversity
- values and perceptions
- interdependence
- conflict resolution
- human rights

Together, these goals and concepts develop the focus of schools from their own context and local issues to promoting an understanding of how that fits in with a global perspective.

A third important element of the documents is the explanation and establishment of the International School Award (ISA) as a standard by which schools can measure themselves. This gave form and substance to the goals and concepts, allowing schools to audit their work and plan for the development of their curriculum. It is the schools that have achieved the award, at one of its three levels, which form the focus of this report. In order to appreciate the different levels to which their international curriculums have developed, the nature of the award itself is set out in the Appendix.

At the end of the 2005 cycle, the following awards were given at the three different levels attainable – Foundation, Intermediate or Full:

Level	**Number of schools accredited**	**Number working with primary-age pupils**
Foundation	37	22 (59%)
Intermediate	58	30 (52%)
Full award	182	69 (38%)

The schools contacted as part of this research were all accredited in this cycle. The following section explains what they were asked and what they stated to be important in effectively leading the development of their international curriculum.

Part 2 – the research

Focus and methodology

The research began with the issuing of a questionnaire to 65 primary schools which received the ISA at Foundation, Intermediate or Full level in 2005. A total of 42 questionnaires were returned, giving a return rate of 57 per cent.

The questionnaire focused on three main areas:

1. Schools were asked to explain their initial motivations for developing the global curriculum and how these were led and managed.

2. School leaders were then asked to describe how the staff group as a whole had been motivated and organised as the initiative developed.

3. Finally, the questionnaire asked those responsible for the international curriculum to reflect on the way it had developed in their own school. They were asked for suggestions and advice for those at the beginning of the learning journey.

After the data had been collated, patterns and trends were identified. An initial summary of findings was written, with a suggested preliminary sequence of development. This was sent to 24 of the schools that had responded to the initial survey and had shown an interest in further contact. Some 83 per cent of these schools provided feedback. They commented on the initial findings and gave more specific information about both the order of the stages in their experience and their nature. In light of the confirmation and clarification of the findings provided by these schools, the final conclusions of this report were written.

The findings – how have schools been successfully led in developing their global dimension?

Every school is unique in both its character and its context, so every school leader reading this and every school leader that responded to the questionnaire may have cause to differ with the findings outlined below. However, as schools shared their experiences and journeys, it became clear that there were seven 'stations' that served as stopping points for nearly all schools. In summary, these are as follows:

- the experience
- the enthusiast
- the event
- the evaluation
- the expansion
- the embedding
- the embracing

These will now be described, illustrated and explained in the most average order in which they seemed to occur. The lessons that can be drawn from this and the advice from those school leaders participating in the study will then be explored.

The experience

In 1984, Bob Geldof was sitting in his armchair watching the news. A report by Michael Buerk came on, detailing the severity of the famine that was sweeping across Ethiopia. The report had such an impact on Geldof that he felt he couldn't just ignore it, and over the course of more than 20 years the experience of watching that news report has been a catalyst for campaigning and action that few can have missed.

This is an excellent example of an experience. Although few would say their experience has been as life-changing as Geldof's, nearly every school's international development can be traced back to an experience that someone had at some time, although the nature of those experiences is varied.

Sometimes, as it was for Geldof, members of staff witnessed the world around them and decided that their professional role allowed them to channel their experience into something positive and proactive. This report has already mentioned a whole number of different news stories that have had a global impact on society in recent times. As well as events that pitch one country, race or doctrine against another, such as terrorist attacks and wars, there are natural disasters such as the Asian tsunami in 2004 or global movements such as Make Poverty History and LIVE 8.

It is certainly not just negative events that act as a spark to light the global fire. Some schools cited a staff member's holiday as the start of their work. Others talked about visits by people from other countries, either directly linked to their school or to the community of which their school is a part. One school talked about the effect of meeting 'real people' and how this sparked into life the school's desire to develop the international curriculum.

> ”A visitor from Ghana [known to a child’s grandparents] talked to the children about his homeland. When he returned, he encouraged the headteacher of a primary school in Ghana to contact us, leading to an exchange of letters” (headteacher).

In other schools, it was a purely educational experience that started the journey. One school spoke of how a staff member had been sent on a Comenius[1] exhibition and seminar. They were so struck by the opportunities and potential of this work that they came back buzzing. Others simply encountered the issue as part of ongoing standards and effectiveness work.

> ”The headteacher attended the launch of a Developing an International Dimension strand of the excellence cluster and saw presentations by a variety of companies” (international co-ordinator).

Whether it was being struck by a news report, the friendliness of locals on holiday, the opportunities of exchange or the action points in an Ofsted report, all schools seem to be able to work their way back to an experience that started everything off. What the experience was doesn’t really seem to matter. What is important, however, is the consequence of that experience. To take the next step towards developing the global curriculum, it seems that the experience needs to produce an enthusiast.

The enthusiast

When asked for some advice about how to start the move towards an international outlook, one head put it very simply: "Get a Donna," he said.

In this case, the enthusiast was named Donna, but in most schools which have gone on to develop their work the international work began because one person deemed it important enough to channel some time and energy into it. There is no particular profile that seems to fit this person over a number of schools other than their personal commitment to the task.

In some schools, this enthusiast is the headteacher who has a personal enthusiasm that becomes a part of the school vision.

> ”Having worked abroad and in a small, rural, isolated community, it was an ideal opportunity to give the children and staff a purpose to develop links with other schools, locally, nationally and internationally.”

In most schools, however, it was not the head and in most cases not a member of the existing leadership and management team. In some schools, it was finding this enthusiast that seemed to kick start the whole movement towards the school having a global dimension.

> “The enthusiast in our case came from another school for a job unrelated to international dimension but brought the idea of Comenius with her. I wanted to

[1] The Comenius programme is funded by the EU and aims to promote transnational co-operation within schools and colleges in the EU. To date, around 15,000 European schools have signed up. It is part of the wider EU education programme, Socrates.

> develop the international work but at that time wasn't sure how to do it. Both our previous experiences plus her enthusiasm have moved us forward" (headteacher).

For the enthusiast to start something of significance there is a common thread of working in a culture of support and encouragement. Only in this environment will they find the courage to act on their passion. As many of these enthusiasts are not in a leadership role within the school, the support and freedom to fail that can only come from the headteacher is essential. If the enthusiast was given time and space for their passion to grow, most schools found that their own enthusiasm drove the school onto the next step: that of organising an event.

The event

If the experience is the fuel and the enthusiast is the rocket, then the event is lift-off.

Many schools tell of international days, where the normal school timetable, groupings or routines are taken over for a day or a number of days. In the place of the usual provision are international events, which can include activities drawn from music, the arts, language, drama and more.

> "Our international schools week is looked forward to by our children and this year, the school council have had a big say in what will be covered during that week" (international co-ordinator).

A key indicator of the global curriculum's development stage is that these events are normally self-contained, with defined planning periods and an organised structure to the event itself. They are sometimes linked either to specific school projects such as fund-raising, or they incorporate annual school events such as performances in front of parents or Sports Day, but they are not, at this stage, seen as part of school development. For example, the school that had identified an enthusiast in the shape of a parent governor with links in Ghana shared the following as an example of an event.

> "We held a book swap event as part of Book Week – children were encouraged to bring in one book to swap and one book to send to the school in Ghana" (headteacher).

Other examples of events were organised in response to International Education Week, International Day of Languages, Black History Month and international sporting events such as the Olympics.

What these events provide is a context for raising awareness of the whole international issue. They draw in a much wider circle of pupils and staff than just the enthusiast. These initial events rarely have an agenda over and above the event itself, but can lay the foundations for future work by inevitably leading on to an evaluation of the event and, in so doing, the value of international work itself.

The evaluation

This appears to be the key leadership step in making the difference between a school that has one-off international events and a school that has an international aspect to its

everyday curriculum. Across a number of years, a school will have many theme days and events. It will equally have the opportunity to pursue development in a whole number of directions. A school will pick its focuses for development based on its priorities and perceived needs. It is at this point in the process that the leadership teams of many schools decided that they would benefit from developing the global dimension to their school.

> “We are very much a monocultural school. We felt it was even more important for our children to appreciate and experience the diversity of the world around us” (international co-ordinator).

The reasons for this decision are many and varied but most, as exemplified by this quote, seem to be centred on issues raised by a school's context. For some schools, an international event highlighted the monoculturalism of their intake. The senior leadership recognised the limited experience or understanding of their pupils and felt that broadening horizons was an essential part of educating those pupils.

> “A new headteacher saw the need of this isolated village community to develop wider horizons” (headteacher).

In other schools, the motivation was almost completely the opposite. Very multicultural schools found immense value in an international event that affirmed and built on the cultures and traditions already represented in the school community. Many found that an international event allowed links to be made with parents or outside agencies. Self-esteem in pupils was developed and trust between schools and families was established and built.

Other schools found themselves in a situation where their traditional intake was being shaken up by a new intake. One school talked of a new need for understanding in the light of asylum seekers making up an increasing proportion of the school's population. Others spoke of families from minority ethnic backgrounds beginning to appear in schools that had been traditionally white. International work was seen as a valuable, yet unthreatening way of promoting tolerance and understanding in these changing schools.

Whatever the reasons, the passion of the enthusiast and resulting international events asked a question of the leadership teams in these schools: 'Will developing a global dimension be to the benefit of our school?' For many schools, the answer might be: 'Not enough to divert time and resources away from other projects.' In these schools, there will probably still be an enthusiast or two who flag up issues and opportunities; there will accordingly probably be regular events or theme days. The schools that formed a part of this study, however, decided the answer was 'yes'. This answer leads to the need for growing the work beyond the enthusiast: it calls for a commitment to expansion.

The expansion

The increasing nature of devolved leadership in primary schools means that all staff, both teaching and support, are likely to have responsibility for some area of school development in some capacity or other. The most obvious of these will be in the leadership and management team (LMT), followed by those who are subject leaders. In addition, the remodelling of the workforce has led to support staff taking a greater lead in

areas such as resourcing, improving the school environment and contributing to extracurricular work.

The outcome of this is that nearly everyone in school has some kind of trumpet to blow or soapbox to stand on. With a limited number of display boards, bulletins, assemblies and staff meeting agendas, there are many simultaneous calls on a teacher's time, care and attention. If the international enthusiast is left to champion global work on their own, they are likely to remain a single trumpet, sounding no louder in the school's theme music than anyone else. If the school leadership and management team has decided to make international work a priority, it needs – based on the experience of schools studied – to find ways to expand that work beyond the immediate influence of the enthusiast.

> "For our expansion, we think of sharing – sharing out the vision, resulting in a willingness to find time to become engaged. For us, sending teachers on exchange visits [Comenius] was an excellent way of committing them to the project" (international co-ordinator).

Most schools found that the way to do this was to form an international team, usually under the leadership not of the head, but of the enthusiast. Now affirmed and empowered by the school's commitment to international work, heads from a number of schools commented on the continuing professional development (CPD) value that this role had for the individual, along with the resulting benefits to the school of a renewed passion and commitment to see the work develop:

> "She [the international co-coordinator] has taken on the whole project and is passionate about developing this at Fairways. She has just completed interview for global teacher placement this summer" (headteacher).

Teams ranged in size, scope and make-up, according to a school's perceived needs and intentions. It was common to have staff members from across the age range of the school and other members to be drawn from a range of stakeholders. In different schools, this meant that support staff, governors, parents and pupils – usually school council members – worked alongside teaching staff to spread the development work across the school in practical, everyday ways, such as marking celebrations like Black History Month or the International Day of Languages. Examples were also given of existing topics, such as bridges and structures being given an international flavour by looking not just at local bridges, but those from all over the world. The consequence of this is that, over time, international work expanded from being the focus of a special event to being something that involved a much larger proportion of the school community. As a result, community members took their international work and, as it spread out across the school, embedded it.

The embedding

Once a team has been established, the international flavour can begin to seep throughout the school community. Where a team was composed of a range of staff including teachers, support staff, parents, governors and pupils, schools found that global elements began to be developed across the curriculum and across the school.

> "We now share any opportunity to develop the global dimension within our schemes of work across the curriculum" (international co-ordinator).

The key to this embedding seems to be an understanding that having a developed international perspective is not dependent on the big events and the passionate enthusiast, but rather is built by lots of small elements working together in such a way that everyone is involved and affected. Whilst expansion still depends on the passion and drive of the enthusiasts and the boost of events, embedding is the stage at which international work gains a momentum of its own that will allow it to carry on rolling. Now a part of the school improvement plan, it will be subject to the same kind of expectations and monitoring as other background values such as ethos and SMSC provision. If the big event by the enthusiast is like an aria being sung by a soprano, a school that has an embedded global curriculum is like the chorus, working together to make for a fuller, even more impressive sound.

This was the stage that many schools said took the longest amount of time and could be the hardest to quantify. The very structure of the International School Award acknowledges this. The different stages of the award are geared to schools at different stages of embedding their international work, with the full award requiring that 75 per cent of the school community is involved with at least one of seven projects that must be in place in a successfully accredited school. The extent to which international work has expanded within a school and the effectiveness of the international work's leadership will determine how quickly and how widely this work can be embedded.

> "Needs key lead. And constant driving. Planned into curriculum with major events throughout the year" (international co-ordinator).

Like all other givens of the school curriculum, international work will still need leading, by the co-ordinator or the expanded team. Without this step, however, international work simply remains the remit of that special interest group. However passionate they are, the only pupils that will be affected by their work will be those who end up in direct contact with team members, leading to an inconsistent pupil experience. The key to successfully leading a school to a comprehensive embedding of a global perspective will be to monitor and evaluate how and where it is being embedded and making sure that staff understand its place in the school vision. Where this happened all staff became engaged in the work and began to identify and seize opportunities independently of the team. At this point, the school has reached its final stage of development – the embracing.

The embracing

On walking into one local 'international' primary school, the visitor is confronted by a dazzling array of colours and designs. All around the entrance lobby, enhanced by its previous life as a chapel, are flags from around the world, each of them labelled and vibrant. World maps can be seen on the walls and there are photos of schoolchildren happy and smiling. These children are not just pupils from this school, however. There are also children, smartly dressed in their school uniform, standing outside their own school in India. The two schools are linked in both curriculum and purpose. A school with developed and established links with schools around the world is likely to be at this developed and ever-deepening stage of having embraced a global perspective in its curriculum. The links also provide a context for that direct contact that allows the embracing to take place at an individual level as well as whole-school level.

> ”During the third year of the Comenius project, teachers from partner schools stayed in Bath for five days and visited the school. Only then did teachers and pupils really understand the need for a European dimension” (international co-ordinator).

It is not the link itself that brings international substance to the curriculum, rather the sense of audience that it brings allows threads to be woven throughout topics and across academic years. This, in turn, facilitated pupils making links with pupils as schools developed their understanding with each other. The result is that international work evolves from being every now and then to being every day. As this happens, the link is made not just from school to school and from pupil to pupil, but also from the international dimension to the 'native' classroom. The international work then becomes subject to the monitoring and evaluation procedures for all other curriculum work and, as such, is open to the constant renewing and enrichment that self-evaluation can bring.

> “All teachers are keen to broaden children’s experience of the world – developing global awareness is important to them. We have ‘learning walks’ to check the evidence of other cultures in classroom displays. We have organised one-off events, activities linked to curriculum topics and try to bring in international awareness whenever possible” (headteacher).

As schools develop their links, they foster the ability to create experience after experience for their community. The school may be visited by staff from their partner schools. This may turn into exchange, where staff have the chance to make foreign trips, visiting the schools they are in partnership with. Pupils may develop friendships and understanding with others around the world, exchanging thoughts, work and happenings. This is where the international dimension ceases to be icing on the school curriculum and has instead become an integral ingredient, adding an exotic and enriching flavour to the cake itself. With regular and widespread experiences, new members of the school, both staff, pupils and parents, had opportunities to be turned into enthusiasts, allowing the whole cycle to be continued and enriched.

Part 3 – some ways forward

Lines of development

It has been important to call the 'seven Es' stations rather than stages, because although all the schools that took part in the study had been through them all, not every school had stopped at all of them. Every school was different, but two general patterns emerged that may allow school leaders to consider how they might successfully move their schools forward. It may be helpful for school leaders to compare the development of their international work so far with the two patterns identified. I have called schools that match these two patterns the organic international school and the cultivated international school.

The organic international school

The organic international school is a school in which the international work started naturally. The work probably had humble beginnings, often as a result of one enthusiast. Because of this, these schools found it hard to trace the origins of their work, particularly as the leadership and management team was often not involved in the early stages. Rather, an enthusiast, responding to some experience in either their personal or educational circumstances, began work within their own sphere of influence. In time, an opportunity arose to organise an event. In many schools, this was a real step of faith for the enthusiast. Rarely in a leadership or management role, the event placed them in a wider school context than they were used to. Looking back, one enthusiast said:

> "Anyone becoming international co-ordinator does need a personal commitment as it needs a lot of time dedicated to it and good communication skills are essential."

In these schools, the key to the international work developing beyond the enthusiast was an evaluation by the LMT, usually following a whole-school event or series of events. The schools in which an evaluation was positive saw the international work expand, usually through the creation of a team. Because the LMT saw the value in the work and prioritised it, time in meetings was allocated for the work to be discussed; local authority involvement was embraced where it was available; while opportunities for INSET and CPD were taken and resources of both time and money were earmarked to develop the work. Because the work rarely originated within the senior leadership of the school, the evaluation was a necessary step in these organic schools, causing the LMT to adopt it as a priority in school development. This in turn facilitated its forward movement. Without this adoption, international work in these organic schools would probably continue but also most likely remain simply as the enthusiast's baby and could well leave the school with them should they take their enthusiasm elsewhere.

Just as common in these schools though was the part the LMT played after the evaluation. One school's experience was that:

> "Two people led it [the international work]: they were not from the leadership team. As a result, the leadership team had to show commitment and enthusiasm. [The work provided] good leadership experience for the two members of staff" (headteacher).

The LMT did not usually take over the leadership of the international work following their evaluation. Rather, they supported and empowered the enthusiast to form a team and then contributed to the expansion within the part of school which they led. This then resulted in a wider shared ownership, crucial to the next steps of embedding the international work in the curriculum and the whole school community embracing it as part of the school's vision.

The cultivated international school

The cultivated international school is a school in which the international work has been started deliberately in response to an identified need.

In these schools, an evaluation, formal or informal, often preceded the work. For any number of the reasons already discussed, the head or LMT identified the impact that international work could have on the school and sought to make it happen. Because of this, the development of the curriculum through the creation of an international dimension was seen as a means of moving the school towards its vision from the beginning, in addition to simply having value for its own sake. For example, the head of one such school wrote:

> "In March 2004, we had an Ofsted inspection. As a result of this I wanted to explore why our very good ethos was not excellent. This sounds arrogant, I know, but I wanted to have an 'excellent' for our ethos. I started to look at schools that had been graded above us and discovered in my non-specific research that the only factor I could find that these schools had in common was a global or international dimension. Consequently, I decided that we too needed to look beyond our local patch."

As a result of this 'cultivation', the head or another senior member of the leadership and management team may have taken on the role of enthusiast in the initial stages.

> "Initially, I led the work, trying to put a global dimension into the PSHE curriculum. Since September, the work has been taken on by a school development group led by a member of staff who has taken on the role of international co-ordinator. We have two school development groups. All teachers and some school councillors sit on one or the other. The head does not. They are led by teachers with the brief to bring some new thinking to the school. Short- and long-term actions are planned but the groups have a life-span of one or two terms, with the hope that any new ideas will be embedded in practice thereafter" (headteacher).

Running consistently through the schools that took this road, however, was the leadership strategy of creating enthusiasts who could then champion the cause and lead it forward. The heads perceived that they would not be able to be the enthusiast in the long term and looked for opportunities to give their staff experiences, or to develop those already with some kind of experience into enthusiasts. The same head writes:

> "This led me to look at international opportunities for teachers with the British Council, which in turn converted one teacher into an enthusiast who led the school development group which led the school adopting an approach."

Another headteacher wrote:

> "I was inspired and excited but realistic enough to know I can't drive this project. However, I had a teacher who was 'looking for something extra to do'."

Schools that had followed this line of development hinted at having faced more reluctance in the staff group as a whole when it came to embedding and embracing this work. Starting out as a proposal led by the LMT, it carried with it the baggage of being yet another initiative. One headteacher said the biggest challenge in developing their international work was: "…to get everyone on board when they are tied in to a very prescriptive national curriculum. Some still see this as an unnecessary bolt–on."

Only schools with a real commitment to international curriculum development made it the priority over a number of years, allowing enthusiasts to be grown, events to be valued and the vision to expand to capture the school community as a whole.

First things first… an evaluation

In light of these lines of development, the first action that would need to be taken by school leaders to find next steps for their international work is to undertake an evaluation. The key to this evaluation is to take the meaning of the word literally and establish the value of any international work to the school community.

Whether organic or cultivated, all schools surveyed made clear the commitment that was required to develop global work beyond the passion of the enthusiasts and into the everyday experience of the pupils. This commitment was rooted in an understanding of the part it played in the school vision, and the only reason the school vision had a global perspective was because of the benefits it was perceived to bring to the school community as a whole and the pupils in particular. The survey would suggest that any evaluation carried out by school leaders should:

- identify the characteristics and context of their school, particularly the character of the resulting global literacy that shapes the pupils' understanding of the world
- identify the benefits of developing and enriching the international experience of pupils
- identify the resources, particularly people, time and money, that would be available to develop this work
- identify other curriculum strategies and initiatives being undertaken in the school that will make a call on the same resources as developing global understanding

This final point should then lead to an honest appraisal as to the value a school is willing to put on developing its international work. If push comes to shove, and there are only so many staff meetings, will developing global aspects of the curriculum be given priority? If the answer to this is 'yes', then the school's LMT can begin to place this priority into the hands of those most able to carry it forward and expand it throughout the school community.

Next Steps…

Organic schools need to grow a team, cultivated schools need to grow enthusiasts

If schools can identify with the development of the organic school, then it is likely that there are enthusiasts somewhere in the school community organising events that are valued and enjoyed. The next step, following a positive evaluation by the school's LMT, is to facilitate expansion. Without it, the work is limited by the capacity of the enthusiast. As one enthusiast in such a position put it:

> "Don't try to do too much – it snowballs very quickly – unless lots of people are involved."

The most common way in which this happened was through the formation of the team that pooled both existing and potential enthusiasts with members of the LMT, whose presence facilitated the expansion. Some schools indicated that the wider the cross-section of the school community represented on this team, the more successfully the work expanded. As mentioned earlier, some schools recruited from the governing body, support staff, parents and pupils, via the school council. One international co-ordinator shared part of the secret of their success like this:

> "Keep slowly plugging away… Have a group of interested people and eat whilst you discuss matters."

Only when the work was expanded and value attached to it by the LMT were schools able to support, monitor and evaluate the embedding of international work in the wider school community.

If schools can identify with the development of the cultivated school then it is possible that the work is clearly already valued by the LMT. Following an evaluation of the work, creating opportunities for potential enthusiasts to have experiences was seen as vital to making an impact on staff above and beyond that of other initiatives. One school that used enthusiasts to lead all accreditation programmes in schools admitted:

> "Maintaining high levels of interest after the actual award has been somewhat difficult" (headteacher).

Surveyed schools had different approaches to doing this. Some schools talked of tapping into funding streams that allowed international staff exchanges to take place or for visitors from other countries to be hosted. Others focused on giving encouragement and opportunity to parents or other community links that had contacts abroad. As staff worked alongside these living resources, the potential they offered for enriching the curriculum became clear. This in turn began to lead to events for the wider school community to participate in, giving substance and cohesion to the desire for international work to contribute to the school vision. One such school stated:

> "I do think it was important to inspire teachers and offer them an experience before looking at the curriculum. We would not have achieved as much if we

were not led by a teacher who was fired up by her visit to Germany" (headteacher).

Only when enough staff were sufficiently enthusiastic to buy into the value of international work for the school were those leading the work able to move towards expanding it and bringing it into the everyday experience of pupils, rather than it being just another here today, replaced tomorrow bolt-on.

And then…

The seven Es can act as a framework for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of international curriculum work for school leaders. The different stations described do not provide a chronological progression of stages which once achieved can then be forgotten. Rather, they are the characteristics of an embedded and embraced international curriculum dimension that will be impacting on the day-to-day lives of the pupils. For example, whilst it is unlikely that international work can begin at all without an enthusiast, someone to champion the work and stir up passions makes just as significant a contribution to developing flourishing global projects as they do in the initial stages. Likewise, events that can raise awareness of a developing global literacy can also provide a focus for a more sophisticated understanding, allowing the whole school to express its values and vision.

It would, therefore, be of benefit for school leaders to look at the seven Es and consider which stages are well evidenced in their own school setting, which are in development and which are in need of immediate attention. This can then be the focus of school improvement work and addressed in line with the school leadership's approach to other improvement issues.

Conclusion

When discussing the seven Es with some of the schools surveyed, the school leaders felt challenged to find their own Es that made a contribution to the development of the global perspective in their schools. One head decided that they couldn't have moved forward without help from the 'experts'. She cited the British Council as an organisation with knowledge and contacts that allowed steps to be taken by her staff which could not have happened without their help. Another talked of the importance of 'encompassing' – trying to make pupils aware of how the world was shrinking and how an understanding of the world was vital for their future lives.

Perhaps the best summary of the role of school leadership in this development though came from a primary school, where the head talked of the importance of being an 'enabler'; not only because the schools that seem to have successfully led this work are characterised by the enabling they do of their staff, but because the vision that lies behind it is intended to enable the pupils of today to function effectively as citizens of the world in the future.

The first two goals of *Developing the global dimension in the school curriculum* (DfES, 2005, p 3) also begin with an 'e' – "equipping our children, young people and adults for life in a global society and work in a global economy" and "engaging with our international partners to achieve their goals and ours". The 'e' in the third goal, however, is the 'e' that I conclude with: education. All school leaders who feel that developing the international dimension of the school curriculum is important, do so because they feel that to ignore this is failing to give their pupils a complete education.

To school leaders who are hoping to move their schools further on in this journey, the findings of the research and suggested ways forward come with the encouragement of those who have gone ahead of them and found a world of opportunities waiting.

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Appendix

The International School Award

The International School Award (ISA) was originally launched in 1999 to provide a benchmark for excellence in the development of an international curriculum. Co-ordinated by the British Council, the ISA was declared to be "a major prize for excellence in this field" in the DfES strategy document *Putting the World into World-class Education*. This document also contains a DfES aspiration that all schools, in time, would work towards being awarded the International School Award.

In the first five years of the existence of the award, over 500 schools received accreditation. A very large number of these were secondary schools that were able to draw on existing Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) work and foreign exchange work that was part and parcel of school management already in place. For most primaries, it demanded the breaking of new ground, requiring them to use new technology to forge links with schools and countries across the world.

The format of the full award is one of projected action, not just recorded events. An action plan for curriculum development is submitted in July, giving details of intended cross-curricular work for the forthcoming academic year. Throughout the year, evidence of this development is collected in order to compile a dossier that chronicles the planned activities. This dossier is then submitted for accreditation which, if successful, is awarded in the following October.

This framework means that schools intending to apply needed to have a fairly developed international perspective before they were able to submit an application. Last year, however, saw a change, with the award being split into three levels – Foundation, Intermediate and the full award. This allowed schools at different stages to reflect on and be recognised for the international work they had done thus far. It also gives a clear framework for moving international work forward as schools work through the different levels to full accreditation. With the current framework, it would take schools that were just beginning their international work about four years from initial plans to receiving the full award. Accreditation, once given, is for three years.

The main components of the award at its different levels are as follows:

Foundation Award: Introducing Internationalism

- A list of aims, a kind of values and vision statement needs to be formulated and agreed. This is signed by the headteacher and chair of governors.
- An international audit is carried out to record what is already happening in the school.
- An international co-ordinator, responsible for international curriculum development, must be named.
- Details and evaluations are submitted of three cross-curricular activities that must have involved 25 per cent of pupils across the school. The evaluations should come from staff, pupils and parents or other community members.

- The school must submit evidence to show its commitment to finding potential international partners. This can be through registration with the Global Gateway, the British Council's partnering service.

Intermediate Award: Developing Internationalism

- The aims must now have evolved into a draft policy.
- A further audit of international activities must have taken place.
- An international co-ordinator, responsible for international curriculum development, must be named.
- Details and evaluations are submitted of five cross-curricular activities that must have involved 50 per cent of pupils across the school. The evaluations should come from staff, pupils and parents or other community members.
- The school must have an established link with at least one partner school in another country.

Full International Award

To receive the full award, the dossier submitted at the end of the year should show evidence of:

- An established international policy within the school's development plan.
- The results of an international audit.
- An international co-ordinator with a clearly defined role.
- Details and evaluations of seven cross-curricular activities that must have involved 75 per cent of pupils across the school. The evaluations should come from staff, pupils and parents or other community members.
- A strong partnership with one or more schools in another country or countries, along with evidence of collaborative work.