

To sustainability and beyond

Inspecting and reporting on progress in sustainable development

Age group: All

Published: June 2010

Reference no: 100101

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 100101

© Crown copyright 2010



Contents

Introduction	4
What is sustainable development?	4
Why sustainability and why now?	5
Ofsted's role	6
Principles of sustainable development in inspection	7
Common evaluation schedule	9
Leadership and management	9
Quality of provision	9
Outcomes for learners	9
Annex 1. References and useful reading	11
Annex 2. Key areas for sustainable development	13
Annex 3. The sustainable schools strategy	14
The eight doorways to sustainability	14

Introduction

1. We want to make sure that sustainable development is fully reflected in all aspects of Ofsted's work so that:
 - every member of staff can play an active part in achieving our objective of contributing to a sustainable future
 - we ensure that the providers we inspect and regulate are contributing to a sustainable future.
2. We are doing this by integrating sustainable development principles into our strategic planning and performance management frameworks and our core business activities of inspection and regulation.
3. This document gives an introduction to sustainable development in the national context, sets out Ofsted's important role in promoting sustainable development and provides guidance on embedding sustainable development in all our inspection guidance, methodologies and frameworks.

What is sustainable development?

4. A sustainable society is one that is just and equitable and takes account of the environmental limits of our planet, both now and in the future, at local and global level. Sustainable development is the name given to the process of developing our society to move from where we are now to a state of sustainability.
5. Though widely used, the terms 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development' mean different things to different people. The most frequently used definition is taken from the World Commission on Environment and Development report *Our common future* (also known as the Brundtland Report).¹ This defines sustainable development as the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, both now and for generations to come, and meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
6. Sustainable development is often thought to focus on environmental challenges, reflecting the need to address these concerns. It is now accepted that true sustainable development focuses on maximising social and economic outcomes as well as environmental outcomes. Sustainable development covers a range of issues, including health, well-being and sustainable communities, in addition to issues such as waste management, energy use and resource management.

¹ *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: our common future*, World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987; www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm.

7. The Government has identified four areas for immediate attention and we have adopted these as our main priorities:
 - **Sustainable consumption and production** – using fewer material goods, using locally produced goods and services, minimising waste and maximising energy efficiency
 - **Climate change and energy** – encouraging low carbon lifestyles and travel habits, investing in energy from sustainable sources and using the most energy efficient goods and services
 - **Protecting natural resources and the environment** – including air, water, soil and biological resources
 - **Creating sustainable communities** – green spaces and access to nature, planning land use and public spaces, transport, cycle lanes, recreational facilities, social support networks, accessible low-cost food and a fairer world; reducing health and other inequalities.
8. Ofsted, like all other government bodies, has produced a sustainable development action plan based on these principles and priorities. Our action plan focuses on raising awareness of colleagues and engaging them in our drive towards sustainability, on actions which will reduce our carbon emissions and our consumption of natural resources, and on promoting sustainable communities. More importantly it focuses on our improvement role in relation to the services we inspect and regulate, as our biggest contribution is our influence on others.
9. Closely linked to sustainable development, particularly in relation to promoting sustainable communities, is the concept of corporate social responsibility. This is about how organisations manage their business processes to ensure their impact on society is positive overall.

Why sustainability and why now?

10. There is increasing awareness in societies across the world that there are limits to the earth's natural resources, and as these resources diminish costs increase. There is also growing awareness of the damage currently being done by human activity to natural systems like oceans, forests and the atmosphere.
11. Public bodies and agencies, such as the schools, colleges and other learning providers and children's services that fall within Ofsted's inspection and regulation remit, are increasingly aware of the importance of sustainable development. Many demonstrate this in the ways they manage their organisations, and in the skills, knowledge and experiences they provide for children, young people and learners of all ages.
12. Undertaking sustainable development and achieving sustainability requires the development of new knowledge, skills and attitudes. The process of acquiring

these is usually referred to as education for sustainable development. This highlights the key role of education as a tool for achieving sustainability. Education for sustainable development is clearly defined in the National Curriculum: 'Education for sustainable development enables pupils to develop the knowledge, skills, understanding and values to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future.' The Learning and Skills Council has a similar approach and definition in its sustainable development strategy *From here to sustainability*.

13. There have been a number of significant national policy developments affecting education and children's services, which have led to the increased focus on sustainability. Providers must focus on all aspects of their work, including resource efficiency and energy use and the contribution being made to local communities. For example, the National Framework for Sustainable Schools states, 'By 2020 the Government would like all schools to be offering and promoting healthy, local and sustainable food and drink, produced on site (where possible), with strong commitments to the environment, social responsibility and animal welfare, and with increased opportunity to involve local suppliers.'
14. The Department for Children, Schools and Families (now the Department for Education) made a strong commitment to a sustainable future in the *Children's Plan: building brighter futures*, which aims to make England 'the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up' and states that 'sustainable development is a non-negotiable for children's well-being';² and in *Brighter futures – greener lives*, which states that 'children cannot grow up into a stable and secure world unless we, as a country and as an international partner, find ways to improve our well-being while conserving our most precious resource, the planet.'³
15. For a list of the important policy documents relevant to sustainability in education and children's services see Annex A.

Ofsted's role

16. Ofsted exists to raise standards in education and children's services and improve the lives of children, young people and adult learners. Our strategic plan explicitly commits us to ensuring that the providers we inspect and

² *The Children's Plan: building brighter futures*, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007; <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=CM%207280>.

³ *Brighter futures – greener lives: sustainable development action plan 2008–10*, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008; <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00339-2008&>.

regulate are contributing to a sustainable future. We do this by providing impartial and objective evidence on the quality and performance of the services we inspect and regulate, in order to support improvement in those services and ensure better outcomes for service users, including those outcomes important in achieving a good quality of life.

Principles of sustainable development in inspection

17. The Government has made clear its expectations of public bodies, including Ofsted, as well as schools and colleges. It expects the public sector to take a lead in sustainable development by promoting and delivering it through all its policies as well as through its operational activities.
18. The providers we inspect and regulate take an integrated approach to sustainable development. They promote it through their core services, such as teaching or the provision of care, reflecting it in their values and ways of thinking and behaving, and in the way they engage with local people and partners. Ofsted's approach to the inspection of sustainable development will similarly be an integrated one, reporting on sustainable development where appropriate within the framework and not as a discrete grade. An integrated approach will make use the range of inspection evidence already being collected and scrutinised by inspectors. This complements our objective of providing an inspection process which is proportionate.
19. The former Department for Children, Schools and Families' working explanation of sustainable development as it applies to services for children, young people and families revolves around the idea of care:
 - care for oneself
 - care for each other
 - care for the environment.
20. This positions sustainable development as much more than energy efficiency and recycling. It is about how we think and work towards common objectives of importance to children, young people and families now and in the future.
21. Judgements, or evaluative statements, about sustainable development will be found in all aspects of the common evaluation schedule – outcomes, quality of provision and leadership and management. These judgements will also inform inspectors' judgements about the provider's overall effectiveness and capacity to improve. Evaluative statements may be explicit or implicit. One example of an explicit judgment in an existing framework is A5 in the Learning and Skills Common Inspection Framework, which seeks evidence that learners develop skills, knowledge and understanding relevant to community cohesion and sustainable development. An example of an implicit judgement included in the

Common Inspection Framework is A4: 'Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well-being?'

22. The Department for Education's online school self-assessment form 's3: sustainable school self-evaluation' requires schools to consider their approach to sustainable development across all aspects of their teaching and learning, leadership and management and engagement with the community. It is designed to gather evidence to support in the sections of the school self-evaluation form, which itself makes references to sustainable development in a number of places, for example: the school's context; the contribution pupils make to the school and wider community; the pupils' economic well-being; value for money and outcomes for pupils in the sixth forms. Schools may also expand upon their work to support sustainable development in other sections, including:
- the extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles
 - the quality of teaching
 - the content and contribution of the school's curriculum
 - leadership and management
 - the governing body
 - the school's engagement with parents and carers
 - the engagement with partnerships.
23. Consideration has been given to the inclusion of a discrete grade for sustainable development in the common evaluation schedule. However, in March 2009 the Corporate Management Team recommended that an integrated approach should be adopted, as introducing a grade at this time may be counterproductive.
24. The advantages of an integrated approach are:
- sustainable development is integrated within the inspection of a provider and across the inspection report
 - the profile and status of sustainable development is raised and promoted with providers without necessarily adding to the burden of inspection
 - inspectors can use existing inspection processes and inspection focuses to gather evidence and evaluate progress in sustainable development
 - additional resources are unlikely but there is an identified need for appropriate training for inspectors.

Common evaluation schedule

25. This section suggests examples of how sustainable development might be included in the inspection guidance, methodologies and frameworks. If we are to measure the improvements which providers make in their contribution to a sustainable future, it is desirable that there are specific references to sustainable development in the inspection guidance, methodologies and frameworks as they are developed.

Leadership and management

26. Sustainability is fundamental to lasting improvement. Leadership and management are key to this. Leaders and managers in all remits can incorporate good sustainable development principles into their practice and contribute to mitigation of climate change through their consideration of food and drink, energy and energy consumption, water use and quality, travel and traffic, purchasing and waste, buildings and grounds, inclusion and participation, community cohesion, local well-being and the global dimension.
27. Sustainable providers are also characterised by distributed leadership, with a strong corporate social responsibility.

Quality of provision

28. Whether the provision is of teaching and learning or of care, the provider can reasonably be expected to encourage users to develop more healthy habits, more socially responsible behaviour, and personal accountability for their actions in relation to prosperity, fairness and environmental care. The provider should:
- adopt the principles of sustainable development in the provision of its service, for example by providing opportunities for improving health and well-being from exercise and access to the outdoors, and active travel (walking and cycling)
 - prepare users for a sustainable future, such as planting and growing food crops, through specific vocational content of programmes, or through developing a sense of responsibility with regard to the use of energy and natural resources and minimising waste.

Outcomes for learners

29. The work of the provider results in users developing:
- appropriate knowledge, skills, understanding and values to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future

- healthy and socially responsible behaviour and personal accountability for their actions in relation to prosperity, fairness and environmental care
 - skills, knowledge and understanding that support community cohesion and sustainable development.
30. The five Every Child Matters outcomes underpin a range of initiatives that have been developed to address the needs of all children and young people from birth to 19, focusing on their well-being, personal development and future prosperity. The Sustainable Development Commission's publication *Every Child's Future Matters* gives Every Child Matters a strong sustainable development focus.

Annex 1. References and useful reading

Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our common future, World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987; www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm. Published as an Annex to the General Assembly document A/42/427, Development and International Co-operation: Environment, August 2, 1987; www.un-documents.net/a42-427.htm.

Climate Change Act 2008;
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2008/ukpga_20080027_en_1.htm

Securing the future: developing the UK sustainable development strategy – the Government's sustainable development strategy⁴

National Framework for Sustainable Schools 2006 – Department for Children, Schools and Families;
www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainableschools/index.cfm

From here to sustainability: the Learning and Skills Council's strategy for sustainable development, Learning and Skills Council, 2005;
<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/2005/ourbusiness/strategy/from-here-to-sustainability-lsc-strategy-for-sustainable-development.pdf>

Every child's future matters, Sustainable Development Commission, 2009; www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/ECFM_report.pdf

National Curriculum; <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/>

Sustainability Online Resource and Toolkit for Education (SORTED) website;
www.eauc.org.uk/sorted/home

The National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services has produced a large amount of high-quality material on sustainable development and school leadership;
www.nationalcollege.org.uk/index/leadershiplibrary/leadingschools/leading-change/key-initiatives/sustainable-schools

's3 Self Evaluation Form for Sustainable Schools', and 's3+: sustainable schools self-evaluation for local authorities who support sustainable schools', Department for Education; available from www.education.gov.uk.

⁴ *Securing the future: developing the UK sustainable development strategy*, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2005;
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/publications/uk-strategy/index.htm>

Ofsted

Education for sustainable development: improving schools – improving lives (090004), 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090004

Raising standards, improving lives: the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills strategic plan, 2007-2010 (070179), 2007; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070179

Taking the first step forward – towards an education for sustainable development (HMI 1658), 2003; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/1658

Schools and sustainability - A climate for change (070173), 2008; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/070173

Sustainable development briefing for section 5 inspectors;
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Education-and-skills/Schools/Supplementary-guidance-and-resources-for-inspectors/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Education-and-skills/Schools/Supplementary-guidance-and-resources-for-inspectors/(language)/eng-GB)

Annex 2. Key areas for sustainable development

There are **10 key areas** in which leaders and managers can incorporate good sustainable development principles and should contribute to mitigation of climate change;

1. **Food and drink** – An unhealthy diet contributes to obesity and poor concentration. Healthy, ethically sourced foods can offer high nutritional benefits while protecting the environment and supporting local producers and suppliers.
2. **Energy** – Rising demand for energy is storing up problems for future generations. Energy conservation can tackle this problem and save money.
3. **Water** – Rising demand for water is storing up problems for future generations. Water conservation can tackle this problem and save money.
4. **Travel and traffic** – Rising vehicle use adds to road congestion, road accidents and pollution. Car-sharing and public transportation help ease these concerns, while walking and cycling also boost fitness and well-being.
5. **Purchasing and waste** – Waste, and the ‘throw away’ culture that encourages it, can be tackled through sustainable consumption. Providers can reduce costs and support markets for ethical goods and services at the same time.
6. **Buildings** – Buildings both old and new can incorporate sustainable development principles by the use of suitable design principles, the choice of appropriate technologies, the use of interior furnishings and environmental management.
7. **Grounds** – The design, development, use and maintenance of grounds can contribute to sustainable development by the use of suitable design principles, by encouraging biodiversity and making a contribution to the local community for learning and play.
8. **Inclusion and participation** – Providers can promote community cohesion by providing an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere that values everyone’s participation and contribution and challenges prejudice and injustice in all its forms.
9. **Local well-being** – Providers may be able to act as hubs for activities within their local communities contributing to the environment and quality of life.
10. **Global dimension** – Growing inter-dependence between countries change the way we view the world, including our own culture. Providers can respond by developing a responsible, international outlook among their users based upon an appreciation of the global impact of their personal values and actions.

Annex 3. The sustainable schools strategy

The eight doorways to sustainability

The former Department for Children, Schools and Families' sustainable schools strategy comprises eight sustainability 'doorways'. Each plays a role in the major areas of school life – the curriculum, campus and community. Schools can come into sustainability via any of the doorways and every one provides further opportunities for organisations to get involved.

1. Food and drink

An unhealthy diet contributes to obesity and poor health, as well as poor concentration and performance. In contrast, a sustainable school that procures healthy, ethically sourced food can offer nutritional benefits and improve pupils' understanding of food and where it comes from, while also protecting the environment and supporting local producers and suppliers.

2. Energy and water

The rising demand for energy and water across the planet is storing up problems for future generations. Eco-efficiency measures can help schools to reduce their environmental impact. By reducing the amount of energy and water they use, schools can benefit from real cost savings. Money saved on energy and water can be channelled back into the school to improve the quality of the children's surroundings. Sustainable schools can showcase energy efficiency, renewable energy use and water conservation to pupils and the whole community.

3. Travel and traffic

During term time cars on the school run account for 16% of early morning traffic and a measurable increase in pollutants near schools. Being driven to school decreases pupils' independent mobility, reduces their amount of daily exercise and detracts from their awareness of road safety. Rising vehicle use also adds to congestion, road accidents and pollution. Car sharing and public transportation help ease these concerns. Walking or cycling offer other sustainable alternatives, while boosting fitness, increasing concentration and instilling positive habits for life.

4. Purchasing and waste

Waste, and the 'throw away' culture that encourages it, can be tackled through sustainable consumption. By adopting a 'reduce, reuse and recycle' approach, and using local goods and services of high environmental standards, schools can reduce costs and support ethical markets in their communities.

5. Buildings and grounds

The design and management of the school estate affect its environmental performance and its ability to help pupils learn sustainable living. A well-designed and cared for school provides an excellent teaching and learning resource for staff and pupils. Sustainable design principles, technologies, interior furnishings and environmental management provide working examples of sustainable living, benefiting pupils' well-being and behaviour.

6. Inclusion and participation

The ability of communities to live together peacefully depends on their capacity to value difference and diversity. Inclusion and participation are important goals of sustainable development learning. Schools can promote community cohesion by providing an inclusive, welcoming atmosphere that values everyone's participation and contribution, and challenges prejudice and injustice in all its forms and sources, instilling in pupils a long-lasting respect for human rights, freedoms, cultures and creative expression.

7. Local well-being

With their central locations, facilities and extensive networks, schools can act as hubs of learning and catalysts for change in their local communities. Focusing on local challenges and finding solutions to them gives pupils the opportunity to learn and helps to strengthen local relationships. It also allows them to experience how decisions are made at first hand, and to develop applied skills that complement classroom study.

8. Global dimension

Growing interdependence between countries changes the way we view our world, including our own culture. Schools can respond by developing a responsible, international outlook among their pupils on global challenges such as poverty and climate change, helping young people to develop a responsible international outlook.