



Every child's future: leading the way

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Resource

Thinkpiece commissioned by the National College from leading thinkers and researchers in the fields of leadership and sustainability co-ordinated by Forum for the Future.

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Foreword: Sustainability is everyone's business

Preparing children and young people for the future has always been at the heart of our education and children's services system and, by extension, at the heart of our leadership. But, as we all know, the future is not as secure as it used to be. It stands in the balance – with technology, knowledge and population growth increasing more rapidly than ever before, and the physical, economic and social resources that sustain us being rapidly depleted.

As educators and leaders, we are uniquely placed to tackle the legacy we have inherited – the future generation that will make a difference is in our hands right now. The question we must therefore ask ourselves is: if we are not leading for a sustainable future, what are we leading for?

Leading for a sustainable future touches every aspect of everything we do. It requires us to model sustainability in the way each school or children's centre operates and embed active learning for a sustainable world in every aspect of the curriculum. Leaders are uniquely placed to put this at the heart of their school's vision and ethos and to engage pupils, parents and their local and global communities in that endeavour.

Our view is that, in the current context, leadership with moral purpose requires all of us to ask ourselves what more we can do to lead for a sustainable future. And there is much to be hopeful about: our research and development work with schools over the past three years has shown the huge energy and practical commitment to this agenda that exists among school leaders – and their pupils – at every level.

"People starting education now will be retiring in 2065 – we are educating them for a future we cannot see, predict or understand. We need to rethink the fundamental principles for educating our children. Our task is to educate their whole being so they can face this future – a future we may not see... our job is to help them make something of it!"

Sir Ken Robinson, June 2006¹

This think-piece has been commissioned by the National College from leading thinkers and researchers in the fields of leadership and sustainability, and co-ordinated by Forum for the Future. It is intended as an independent perspective to stimulate debate and offer ideas on the way forward. Jonathon Porritt and Professor David Hopkins and their colleagues challenge us all to think about our responsibilities and choices as leaders working with children.

Jonathon makes explicit the moral imperative for education and calls for radical action. David makes the crucial point that healthy organisations are essential for high quality education and, from this, argues that we must put sustainability and learning at the heart of wider thinking about school effectiveness and improvement, not see it as something that can be added as an afterthought. Together, they call on leaders of schools and children's centres to take responsibility for moving this agenda forward in their own spheres and for working with their peers to change the system from within, acting as true system leaders.

Steve Munby

Chief Executive, National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services

¹ www.ted.com

Executive summary

As a custodian of future generations, education is uniquely placed to make a significant contribution to a sustainable future for every child. This is a challenge for leaders at all levels and it is one that needs an urgent response.

The future is certainly going to be different. We can be pretty sure that we will be a much more populous world in 20 years' time, that we will be consuming more natural resources (possibly to the brink of collapse), we will be experiencing the serious impacts of climate change, and 25 per cent of the world will be living in water stress. In the UK, a lot of us will also be in debt, and more of us will be obese and suffering from related illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease.

Looking at the prospects for young people against this challenging backdrop, it is clear that there are huge implications for all those involved in education today. Not only will the children now entering primary school be facing radically different problems and ideas as they start to make their way in the world, but today's new teachers will be also dealing with a fresh set of challenges when they become heads or deputy heads.

So we need a different kind of leadership – leadership for sustainable schools and children's centres. This leadership needs to come from the leaders of today's schools and children's centres working within their schools² and communities. And it needs to be born of a moral purpose that is at the heart of education and of the concept of sustainable development.

Policy-makers are slowly realising this imperative for creating a sustainable future and it is reflected in a number of core documents, but the practice of leading for sustainable schools remains peripheral.

It needs to be mainstream and as such can be extremely beneficial. Adopting the 'leading sustainable schools' approach supports the achievement of existing priorities. The school leaders that we have worked with confirmed that a focus on becoming a sustainable school has supported school improvement. In a number of cases sustainability was cited, by headteachers and in Ofsted reports, as a strong reason for moving out of special measures to becoming good or outstanding. Teachers could demonstrate improved performance in pupil attainment and behaviour, renewed interest and motivation of pupils and staff, greater pride in the school and community, enthusiasm for learning that is relevant and meaningful, pupil leadership and genuine involvement in decision-making, and greater interaction with the local community and with other cultures locally and internationally.

To reap these benefits, our leading schools are displaying some key capabilities that come together in a model for sustainable schools. This model puts sustainability at the heart of the school's purpose and embeds this into all the key elements of the school, from school improvement through teaching and learning to curriculum frameworks.

² We use the term 'schools' and 'sustainable schools' throughout this publication to include both schools and children's centres, whilst recognising that there is much good practice within children's centres that can and should flow into schools as well as vice versa.

The leadership needed to make this model of sustainable schools a reality is system leadership. In part this is because such leaders need to lead across their local community system by engaging with the interconnected nature of social, environmental and economic issues and the role of schools within these. The pioneers of leadership for sustainability must also become system leaders in the more widely accepted sense in which the National College and others have developed it: they must lead beyond their individual school or children's centre and engage with other leaders to share ideas and practice for sustainability, hence creating communities of practice, so that it becomes well understood and increasingly universal across the entire system. The leaders involved in the National College's research in this area have already demonstrated the potential of this approach by working with their communities of practice.

So we have a framework for sustainable schools and a model of the sort of leadership needed to create better schools and more sustainable schools. We now need to ensure that education is really fit for the future by making leadership for sustainable schools pervasive. That needs the many pioneers already working on this agenda to work as system leaders, engaging and supporting their peers to take it on as a guiding principle. It also needs policy-makers to get beyond grand statements to practical action and it needs the profession to apply and develop it as part of their development. The case for change is urgent. We all need to act now to provide leadership that is for every child's future.

1: Introduction

“Schools have a special role to play in preparing young people for the future. As places of learning they can help pupils understand our impact on the planet and encourage them to weigh up the evidence themselves. As models of good practice, they can offer young people, staff and communities the chance to contribute to sustainable living and demonstrate good practice to others. Empowering young people to take responsibility for their own future is not only desirable; it is a crucial feature of their education.”

DCSF³

A call for a different sort of leadership

We need a new story for our schools – for sustainable schools. As a custodian of future generations, education is uniquely placed to make a significant contribution to a sustainable future for every child, and it has a responsibility to make that difference. This is a challenge for leaders at all levels and one that demands an urgent response.

This paper is a call for leadership that takes responsibility for social, environmental and economic issues, now and in the future. We call this ‘leading for sustainable schools’. Our aim is to cut a path through the challenges of providing this leadership.

First, we set out the facts about the future and the moral imperatives for education. Then we review our current position, drawing on research and dialogue with policy-makers, leading thinkers and school leaders. Finally we explore potential ways forward, using the knowledge and experience of successful schools and system leaders.

What are sustainable schools?

Sustainable schools have a caring ethos – care for oneself, for each other (cultures and generations) and for the environment (far and near).

Schools are already caring places, but a sustainable school extends this commitment into new areas. It cares about the energy and water it consumes, the waste it produces, the food it serves, the traffic it attracts and the challenges and opportunities for people living in its local community and in other parts of the world.

Sustainable schools take an integrated approach to their improvement. Sustainable living and development are explored through their teaching provision, and approach to learning (curriculum). They are demonstrated in their values and ways of working (campus) and are the inspiration and guiding principle for working with their local community (wider influence and partnership).

In practice this means integrating high standards of achievement and behaviour with the goals of healthy living, environmental awareness, community engagement and citizenship.

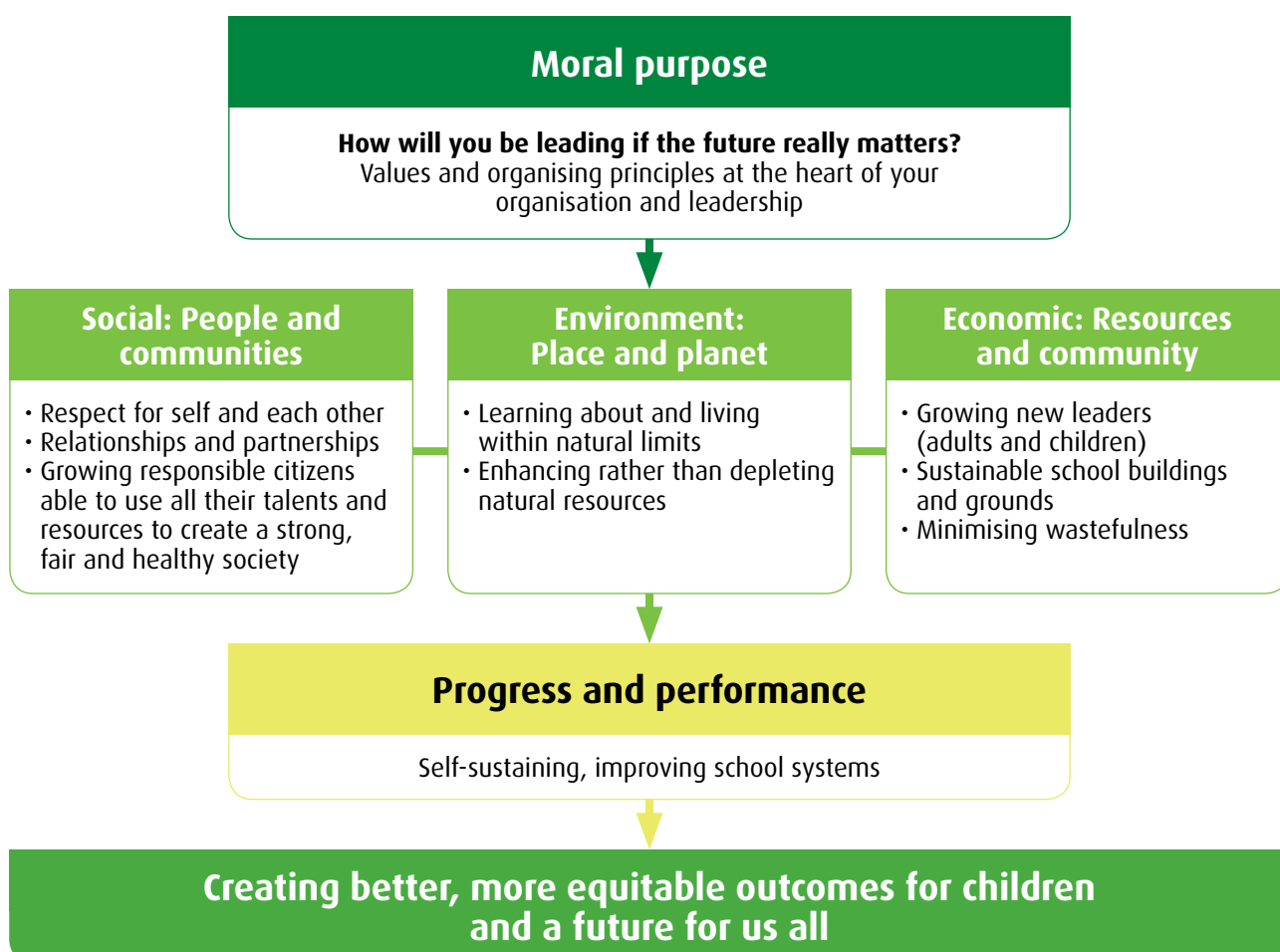
The national framework for creating sustainable schools by 2020 (DCSF)

Sustainable development and education

In developing this work, we have debated the different ways that the term 'sustainability' is used in education. At times it has been necessary to separate its different elements, to be clear whether we are talking about sustaining ecosystems, growing new leaders or improving performance of, and in, schools. The reality is that these issues are intrinsically linked, and the various elements need to be viewed as one system.

Since 2006, the National College has been working with schools to explore what it means to be a sustainable school and what leading them looks like in practice⁴. Figure 1 provides an overview of what we have concluded, and looking at the system as a whole is central. Recognising this interconnectedness and adopting a systemic approach will help us work together more effectively, creating better outcomes for children and young people and a continuing – sustainable – future for us all. This what our teachers have told us, and it is also what sustainable development is all about – forming the basis for leading for sustainable schools.

Figure 1: Leading sustainable schools



⁴ See www.nationalcollege.org.uk/index/leadershiplibrary/leadingschools/leading-change/key-initiatives/sustainable-schools/what-is-a-sustainable-school.htm

**If you are still thinking ‘why should we...?’,
read Laura’s story**

Laura was an attractive, confident and articulate 13 year old who cared for her younger siblings. She was also cheeky and defiant. She truanted, came in late to school, didn’t do her homework and was at serious risk of exclusion. Her school profile revealed she was the most able student in her year group but she had apparently become bored with school at the age of 7 or 8 and was now performing well below her capability.

With GCSEs looming, Laura felt she had already blown her chances of getting to university. But in an interview with her new headteacher she said that she ‘wanted to be good’. She and the head made a deal. Laura would be on time, do her homework and improve her behaviour, and in return the head would support her and coach her in leadership skills.

“Laura had some very sound ideas and sensible opinions that she felt no one was listening to,” said the head. “She was right. The very adult way she expressed herself was seen as cheeky and was turning staff off what she was saying. Once she realised she could be more powerful in changing the system from the inside than the outside, she began to turn the corner.”

Laura had a place on the student council and became increasingly involved in the school’s work on sustainability. She helped raise around £4.5 million for the school, accompanying the head on fundraising events that the two fronted together. A local construction firm offered her on-the-job training and the chance of a full-time job as a quantity surveyor, but Laura chose a different path. After attaining 13 GCSEs at grade C or above, she went on to college, achieved 4 good A-level passes and went to university to read law.

Her head says: “I have no doubt that Laura will become one of the best barristers in the country. Through her work on sustainability and with the student council, Laura learnt valuable social and economic lessons. She gained confidence and re-engaged with the education system. I will never forget the transformation she went through.

“If you want to engage young people, they have to feel the school is their school. You have to give them a voice and give them confidence to use it. We must never underestimate our power to change lives.”

**Valuing Our Future, The National College
Sustainability Toolkit**

2: A very different future

“Every year, we lose 100 million acres of farmland and 24 billion tons of topsoil, and we create 15 million acres of new desert... mankind is using about 160 billion tons more water each year than is being replenished by rain... We need to be able to control the diverse forces of extreme technology that are part of our future. Today’s young people will be the generation that brings about this great transition... it is vital that they – all of them – understand the 21st century roadmap and the critical role they will play.”

James Martin, founder of the 21st-Century School, Oxford University⁵

2025 is going to be very different from today

To help us identify the kind of leadership we need to achieve genuinely sustainable 21st century schools, let’s first fast-forward to the time when the children starting primary school today will be leaving formal education, and seeking to make their way in what will undoubtedly be a very different world.

Because we are locked into certain trends, we can say with considerable certainty where we will be heading by the mid 2020s on a number of critical demographic, ecological and socio-economic parameters. Here is a sample of what we can expect.

- A UK population of 69 million in 2025 will include 12 million under 15s, while 39 per cent will be over 50, and there will be 3.8 million more people aged over 65 than there are today⁶.

- The UN expects world population to rise from 6.7 billion to 9.1 billion by 2050, placing dramatic new demands on the planet⁷.
- With consumption levels predicted to rise year on year⁸, humanity will fall further into ecological overshoot, which is a measure of how far the annual demand on resources exceeds what the Earth can regenerate each year. We have been overshooting since 1980, and it currently takes one year and four months to regenerate what we use in a year⁹.
- The US government’s interest payment burden is expected to more than quadruple in the next decade, reaching \$806 billion by 2019, according to the Congressional Budget Office¹⁰, as Washington borrows and spends. At its current level of \$956.8 billion, the US federal deficit is running at nearly one-seventh of gross domestic product, its highest since the Second World War¹¹.
- According to one source, Britain’s national debt over the next five years could amount to a sum equivalent to £23,300 for every man, woman and child in the country¹².
- By 2025, 1.8 billion people are expected to be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity¹³.
- The Met Office expects a global temperature increase of around 0.4C above 2005 levels by 2025¹⁴. ‘Emissions are growing much faster than we’d thought, the absorptive capacity of the planet is less than we’d thought, the risks of greenhouse gases are potentially bigger than more cautious estimates and the speed of climate change seems to be faster’ (Sir Nicholas Stern, April 2008¹⁵).

⁵ www.21school.ox.ac.uk/

⁶ http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/NPP-2006/wuk065y.xls

⁷ World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision <http://www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm>

⁸ www.panda.org/about_our_earth/biodiversity/biodiversity/

⁹ www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/footprint_basics_overview/

¹⁰ www.nytimes.com/2009/05/04/business/economy/04debt.html

¹¹ www.nytimes.com/2009/05/04/business/economy/04debt.html

¹² www.express.co.uk/posts/view/96623

¹³ <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2007/1000494/index.html>

¹⁴ www.metoffice.gov.uk/climatechange/guide/timeline/

¹⁵ http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/stern_review_report.cfm

- More than 4 million Britons will have diabetes by 2025. Unhealthy diets and a lack of exercise will lead to a diabetes explosion in the coming decades, according to Diabetes UK, which suggests there will be a 46 per cent rise in cases compared with current figures¹⁶.
- Demand for food will jump 50 per cent by 2030¹⁷.

These stark facts and figures reflect the course that we've set on and just some of the issues that our future students will be facing as a result. Quite simply, we've been living beyond our means. The recent near-meltdown of our global financial system shows just how overextended we've been financially, with grim consequences for many. But the trauma we are suffering in the current recession is nothing compared to the sort of disaster we'll see if we push our ecological systems – and especially our stable climate – into collapse¹⁸.

So our current development model needs to change, and quickly. Lester Brown from the Worldwatch Institute (2006) says that the changes necessary to secure human life for the future need managing with unprecedented speed. The Green New Deal Group (Sims et al, 2008) has calculated that, according to the most recent climate science, we have fewer than 90 months left in which to start reducing the concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere before climate change reaches a point of no return.

Education for 2025 needs to start with the changes that are happening today

"It goes back to why I am a teacher and my role in life."

School leader

Looking at the prospects for young people against this challenging backdrop, it is clear

that there are huge implications for all those involved in education today. Not only will the children now entering primary school be facing radically different problems and ideas as they start to make their way in the world, today's new teachers will be also dealing with a fresh set of challenges when they become heads or deputy heads.

To continue denying or even equivocating about this situation and its likely impact on young people would leave us all in moral jeopardy. Teachers, policy-makers and educationalists must fundamentally reappraise the degree to which the curriculum, the operation of schools, and the dominant values that underpin education are falling short of what is required now. Education and learning must play a leading role in taking us out of this social and ecological crisis.

Transforming education through transformed leadership

"Accountability doesn't come from Ofsted, it comes from parents and children themselves. Bring them up close, one group at a time, and ask them what they think about it. What you believe affects what you do. It's not just about school, it's about society."

School leader

Many countries, both developing and developed, have recently engaged in large-scale reform to make schooling more effective and efficient in preparing and educating citizens for the global economy. This is driven by the moral purpose of ensuring that every student, irrespective of their background, has the opportunity to reach their potential and to understand the world in which they live.

¹⁶ www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/jun/09/health.healthandwellbeing

¹⁷ www.guardian.co.uk/science/2009/mar/18/perfect-storm-john-beddington-energy-food-climate

¹⁸ For a more detailed exploration, see Porritt, 2009.

But our moral purpose should also extend to contributing to a better, more sustainable future for students. And this needs leadership: leadership which ensures that, as schools transform, they adapt to the sustainability challenges ahead.

For any reform movement, local leaders are pivotal. So this is where school leadership for sustainability should start. By embracing social and ecological challenges with enthusiasm and integrity, local school leaders also have an impact on the wider system as a whole. That's when they can become system leaders.

Willing to shoulder wider responsibilities, system leaders are as concerned about the improvement of other schools, their community and the wider sustainability of the planet as they are about their own schools. Crucially, they understand that in order to reform the education that they are delivering, they need also to change the larger system by engaging with it in a meaningful way.

So, transforming education must start with transformed school leaders and school leadership. By developing the concept of leadership in this way, we begin the journey towards schools that are genuinely sustainable.

La mer de glace

Last summer we took our year 6 children to Chamonix with the aim of learning about well-being. As well as the adventure of travelling, we spent time in the local community and landscape asking questions such as:

- What does it mean to look after yourself – to sustain yourself?
- What does it mean to look after each other and to work well together?
- What does it mean to look after the world?
- If you were the mayor of Chamonix, what would you do to sustain this beautiful environment?

We experienced climate change by putting our hands on the shrinking glacier and watching it melt. At the end of the visit, the

group actually did present their ideas about sustaining this area to the mayor and he is now using these ideas to inform his sustainability plans.

Now in year 7, the same children have been emailing me to say that secondary school is not doing what we do here. My response to them is: 'You are the champions, you are the leaders of the future, so you do it! Challenge them, make them do something different.'

Sustainability in education believes exactly that. It integrates high standards with high-quality learning, and it says to our children: 'Are we doing the best for each other and for our world? If not, what are we going to do?' It's a complicated debate, but it's one that children – the children that I know – really want to engage in and to find solutions for.

School leader

3: Meeting our needs now and in the future: leading from moral purpose

“Sustainability is intertwined with leadership. As a leader of future generations I have a responsibility to inculcate the skills of good citizenship and the care agenda. It is my duty to prepare children for the unknown: a world and a plethora of technology that currently don’t yet exist. The only certainty is that if I don’t promote the values that underpin sustainable practice, there won’t be a world to live in.”

School leader

The concept of sustainable development has been based on strong moral foundations ever since its first emergence in the late 1970s. By the time of the Brundtland Report in 1987¹⁹, which defined sustainable development as ‘meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’, this moral foundation had assumed two explicit elements:

- It is wrong for any one generation to prosper at the expense of future generations – **‘inter-generational equity’**.
- It is wrong to further enrich the world’s wealthy elites when the basic needs of the vast majority of humankind are still not met – **‘intra-generational equity’**.

The discourse of sustainable development has been built on these twin pillars, just as much as on the more familiar green elements of biophysical sustainability.

The idea of inter-generational equity commands almost universal consensus across cultures and wealth divides. Both intellectually and intuitively we just know it’s wrong to make hay today, if succeeding generations will consequently find their entitlements narrowed and chances diminished tomorrow.

The idea of intra-generational equity, by contrast, is obviously much more vigorously contested. It means addressing the divides between rich and poor, both within and between nations – something that provided a political faultline long before sustainable development emerged on the scene. Although advocacy for intra-generational equity retains much of its moral power, it has had relatively little political traction in recent decades.

Both concepts appear in the five guiding principles that underpin the UK government’s sustainable development strategy (HM Government, 2005), which offers a useful model for thinking about whole-system approaches and leadership (Figure 2).

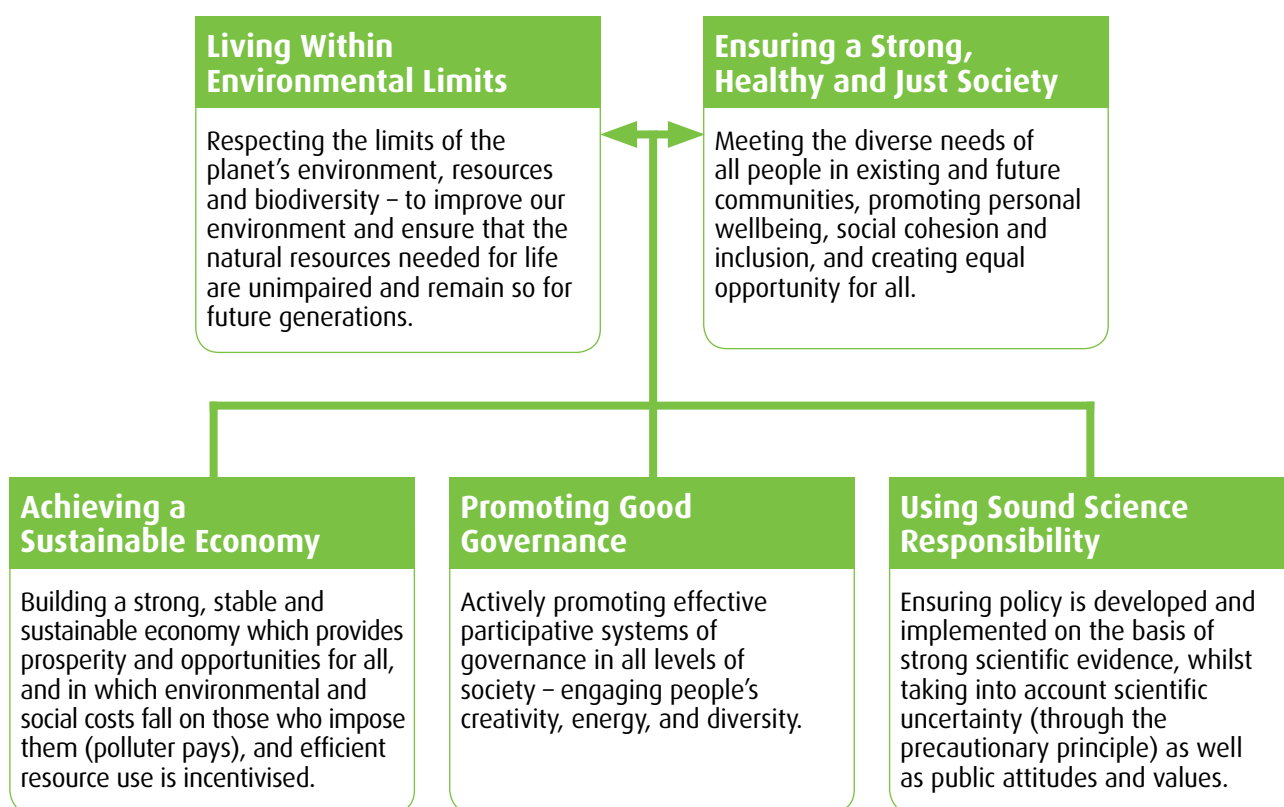
“It’s not (just) about what you do but how you do it – fulfilling your core business in a way that supports sustainable development.”

DCSF²⁰

¹⁹ World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987

²⁰ Sustainable Schools – How National Recognition Schemes can support your schools practice: DCSF. www.dcsf.gov.uk/index.htm

Figure 2: Five principles of the UK government's sustainable development strategy



'Living within environmental limits' and 'Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society' are characterised in the government's sustainable development strategy as the two overarching objectives or ends of sustainable development, while the three boxes below express the means by which those ends will be achieved. The qualitative language of 'strong, healthy and just' clearly denotes an explicitly moral basis, both within and between generations. The concept of 'Living within environmental limits' derives from a more empirical, quantitative starting point, with any moral weighting implicit, rather than explicit.

These two overarching objectives clearly go hand in hand. For instance, as we begin to comprehend the full implications of accelerating climate change, we need to define both the limits themselves (in strictly scientific assessments about rates of emission, maximum concentrations of greenhouse gases, etc), and the basis on which we then allocate any entitlement to emit.

But it's the next logical step where the moral arguments kick in with a vengeance. Does 'just' necessarily imply each individual being entitled to exactly the same share of the atmosphere's absorbing capacity, regardless of current levels of wealth or carbon-intensity of lifestyle? Or should it allow for some historical recognition of each individual's starting point as we set about the process of radical decarbonisation that we now know is our moral imperative?

A moral dilemma for education

“Practising sustainability is a great way to teach it.”

School leader

How far can teachers take up the gauntlet of this sort of moral imperative? In 2007, the decision to distribute a copy of Al Gore’s documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* to every English state secondary school was challenged in the courts. This challenge was ultimately unsuccessful, but it raises a second-order moral and quasi-legal dilemma: to what extent are teachers obliged to reflect some kind of continuing balancing act about the way in which climate change and the whole sustainability challenge are treated in schools?

This question of balance goes to the heart of the leadership dilemma that school leaders now face. Should schools be in the business of reflecting back to young people the contemporary paradigm of progress – in terms of values, material aspirations, consumerist behaviours – that has dominated people’s lives since the middle of the last century? Or should they be actively preparing them for the very different world that awaits them and will be asking very different things of them?

This is, of course, a very old debate for teachers. It takes on a particular moral poignancy given the inter-generational basis of sustainable development. Teachers can and should be seen as a proxy for future generations. If we continue our current unsustainable practices – over-using resources and polluting the atmosphere, for example – we are in fact stealing the entitlements and destroying the life chances of today’s children and young people, as direct representatives of tomorrow’s generation. No individual teacher, let alone headteacher, should be in any doubt as to his or her own moral standing in that regard.

So what kind of moral perspective should school leaders bring to what is taught, and how it is taught, in their schools? What is required to respond to the moral imperative of ensuring a good future for our children?

The answer must be that we aspire to a time when all schools are microcosms of the world as it will need to be in 2025, that is:

- living exemplars of sustainability practice
- achieving self-sufficiency in energy, generating zero waste and zero emissions
- growing and cooking as much fresh food as possible
- bringing the natural world back into the school and its grounds
- promoting diversity, equality and social cohesion in the school environment
- learning how to create an inclusive local and global community
- learning and teaching, through the entire curriculum, that reflects this and prepares pupils for the challenges of the future

The case studies in this think-piece are just a few of the many examples of schools already addressing the moral perspective, and realising this vision in practice. The challenge is to make this practice universal, so that we can all live out the values of an interdependent world, where the future well-being of each of us depends on the well-being of all. From now on, all leaders need to act from this moral purpose.

4: Where are we now?

“By becoming a sustainable school and being guided by the principles of care (for self, others and the environment), we can create a high-achieving learning community, in which pupils develop into healthy, responsible citizens with the confidence and skills to take action to improve the world in which they live.”

School leader,

“Sustainable development is a non-negotiable for children’s well-being.

DCSF²¹

Policy-makers are slowly realising the sustainability imperative

Policy is going in the right direction as policy-makers are slowly realising this imperative for creating a sustainable future, but the practice of leading for sustainable schools is still peripheral.

Over the last 30 years, the education system has taken on an increasing number of environmental and social justice programmes. Statements and plans that relate directly to sustainable schools include the following.

- The Children’s Plan (DCSF, 2007) aims to make England the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up in.
- The white paper *21st Century Schools* (DCSF, 2009) acknowledges that the contribution schools can make in building stronger relationships and understanding across communities, both locally and internationally, is recognised in their new formal duty to promote community cohesion alongside the duty to promote wellbeing. Meanwhile, sustainable schools set an example of careful management and global awareness so that children and their families are educated and enabled to live in a world with limited resources and a changing climate (DCSF, 2008:30).
- DCSF’s *National Framework for Sustainable Schools*, which articulates the importance of sustainability, sets a requirement for all schools to be sustainable by 2020. It argues the need for all schools to demonstrate a commitment to care: care for oneself, for each other and for the environment. Schools are also asked to have an integrated approach to improvement in all aspects of their work across curriculum, campus and community, and an exploration of how they can improve practice across the framework’s doorways or sustainability themes.
- The Sustainable Development Commission’s report *Every Child’s Future Matters* (2007) highlights that ‘it may not be possible to deliver [Every Child Matters] at all unless the environment becomes one of its leading considerations’ (Sustainable Development Commission, 2007:38). The report draws together a range of evidence to show that environmental issues impact directly, not just on outcomes such as ‘being healthy’ or ‘achieving economic well-being’, but also on ‘enjoying and achieving’. For example, the ongoing experience of road and air traffic noise is shown in a number of studies to be stressful for children, affecting their cognitive development, classroom behaviour and reading comprehension.
- The stated aim of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority’s new curriculum is to reflect the kind of society we want to be, where education is a route to equality of opportunity for all, a healthy and just democracy, a productive economy, and sustainable development.
- The UK has agreed to legally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80 per cent by 2050, and at least 26 per cent by 2020, against a 1990 baseline²².

²¹ Sustainable Schools – How National Recognition Schemes can support your schools practice: DCSF www.dcsf.gov.uk/index.htm

²² www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/legislation/provisions.htm

Policy statements do not reflect current practice

“It is not about double sustainability on a Thursday morning.”

National College leader²³

Despite the growing number of policy initiatives, research carried out for this paper show that action for sustainability remains peripheral in practice. Headteachers are constantly faced with numerous, sometimes conflicting, priorities. Performance standards dominate the landscape, and they are therefore the priority for many. The new standards framework does include questions on sustainable practice, and Ofsted did ask schools in 2007 whether they were implementing the sustainable schools framework as part of the self-evaluation form (SEF), and asks how they are preparing learners for their future economic well-being through an understanding of sustainable development. Despite this, sustainability is not yet truly embedded into the school curriculum, the accountability framework or mainstream policy documents. It has yet to become a priority for every school leader.

It's not that they lack enthusiasm for it. In a National College survey²⁴, 98 per cent of over 1,700 leaders who responded said sustainability was important to them personally. Fewer than 15 per cent, however, felt that their school was already addressing sustainability in key areas such as energy and water, travel and traffic and purchasing and waste. The strongest area of practice identified was 'inclusion and participation', though even that was only satisfactorily in place in 30 per cent of schools. This suggests that schools have some way to go before they are models of sustainable practice.

Ofsted's recent report (HMCI, 2008)²⁵ supports this conclusion, indicating that sustainability in the majority of schools remains unprioritised, partial and unco-ordinated. Even where an individual member of staff may have the energy to move things forward, his or her work remains isolated and focused on small-scale projects such as gardens and recycling, rather than whole-school approaches.

²³ National College Sustainability Event – February 2008.

²⁴ Leading Sustainable Schools – Liz Jackson (2008) The National College Publication <http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/docinfo?id=17264&filename=leading-sustainable-schools.pdf>

²⁵ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Education/Leadership/Management/Schools-and-sustainability>

5: Designing sustainable schools that support current priorities

Delivering on core priorities

It's all well and good to argue for schools to put sustainability at the heart of their vision and ethos, but the truth is that our national models of school improvement and success are not predicated on environmental, or even organisational sustainability. An independent review of school leadership (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007) showed that many of leaders struggle with heavy workloads, and fail to rise above the day-to-day operational tasks to take a strategic look at their schools. So it is important that sustainability doesn't just become one more item on the list of things to do.

The reality is that a focus on leading sustainable schools will actually support the achievement of existing priorities.

There is strong evidence of this in research carried out for the National College that demonstrates the power of taking a sustainable approach²⁶. The National College supported 56 school leaders in developing sustainable schools and enabling groups of local schools to share experiences by working together in communities of practice. These school leaders confirmed that a focus on becoming a sustainable school had supported school improvement. In a number of cases, sustainability was cited by headteachers and by Ofsted as a strong reason for moving out of special measures to becoming good or outstanding.

Teachers could demonstrate improved performance in pupil attainment and behaviour; renewed interest and motivation of pupils and staff; greater pride in the school and community; enthusiasm for learning that is relevant and meaningful; pupil leadership and genuine involvement in decision-making; and greater interaction with the local community and with other cultures locally and internationally.

Bowbridge Primary School

The school is in a deprived area of Newark and aspires to be a full-service extended school, providing leisure and learning with facilities for access to external agencies.

The school has strong leadership and direction from the head, particularly supported by the school business manager. Their vision and concept of sustainability is broad and includes aspects that have traditionally been included to promote environmental protection and understanding. The head considers that education for sustainability is 'a holistic approach to school improvement' and 'provides an appropriate route for addressing the Every Child Matters agenda'.

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Pupils are given opportunities to care for the environment in practical ways and to understand the underlying rationale and to take these ideas back into their homes.

²⁶ Birney & Reed: Sustainability and Renewal: Findings from Leading Sustainable Schools Research 2009

Education for the environment and sustainability is an explicit part of the vision of the school, which includes such statements as 'care for the world and its people' and 'healthy menus with locally sourced food'. The school garden is well used; each year group is given a plot, mainly to grow vegetables that are then used in the school kitchens. The global dimension is firmly established because the head has developed a link with a sustainable community in South Africa that has its own eco-school.

Sharing the vision

Sustainability is firmly embedded within the formal curriculum where it is especially related to citizenship education and social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) but also in geography, science, art and other curriculum subjects. To give particular emphasis to green issues, the school has an environmental week in the summer term and an energy week in the spring. It is working towards the Eco-Schools Green Flag award, and has also joined the EU Active Learning Project in relation to managing and monitoring energy in the school and embedding this in the curriculum.

Innovation is encouraged by the head, who maintains a high profile within the school. This encouragement is both through his example and a willingness to try out new ideas and take some risks. Time has also been allocated to planning and looking for opportunities to include education for sustainability in the life of the school.

Giving pupils responsibility

An important principle is that pupils are given increasing responsibility, particularly as they progress through the school. There is a well-established school council which acts as a platform for a certain amount of decision-making. The head has involved many people in the school, including the pupils, with plans and proposals currently in negotiation with the local authority to replace a range of old buildings on the site with a building that makes a smaller environmental impact.

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The head has a high profile within the school, expressing his ideas with and listening to staff, pupils and parents.

Learning for life

The school motto, 'Learning for life', is exemplified in the practical ways in which the school provides an educational hub in the area. There is an adult learning partnership with Newark and Sherwood College, funded initially by the European Social Fund (ESF), and the Microsoft Anytime, Anywhere Learning initiative has paid for a computer suite for adult and pupil learning. The head is keen to establish more realistic role models for learning in the community and invites adults to school assemblies to receive their awards and certificates.

Making it happen

The head leads by example, welcomes innovation by the staff, and encourages others to participate and try out new things. Successes are celebrated and staff made to feel valued. There is strong support from the school governors, two of whom have specific responsibility for monitoring education for sustainability. The head's own research degree addresses and demonstrates his continuing professional development in education for sustainability, while the school's association with the WWF-UK Learning for Sustainability initiative has provided opportunities to learn from other schools that are similarly developing sustainability practices.

The stories and learning from this research study, such as the one from Bowbridge Primary School, have significantly increased our understanding of what it means to be a sustainable school, and provided new insights into how to lead for them.

Where school leaders embrace sustainability, they see it as a powerful organising principle that delivers real benefits. In these schools, sustainability goes well beyond the initial steps of reducing energy costs or increasing recycling: it underpins the school's vision, permeates every aspect of the school and becomes a valuable learning context for pupils.

"The thing is not to get hung up on windmills and solar panels, but to evaluate where you are now and make small savings across the board. You can involve pupils in that."

School leader

"At the beginning I thought it was all about recycling and saving energy. Now I can understand how the parts fit together and have an impact upon society locally, nationally and globally. The best part is that the pupils and I are learning together, we've made mistakes and sometimes we turn into cul-de-sacs, but because of that we have an even better holistic understanding."

School leader

Core capabilities for leading sustainable schools

The National College research²⁷ identifies seven core capabilities shared by schools that are leading on sustainability.

1. **Purpose and a well-defined ethos:** seeing the purpose and ethos of a school within a wider global context and making sustainability a central part of the school ethos and values rather than an additional task

²⁷ Birney and Reed 2009 – Sustainability and Renewal: Findings from the Leading Sustainable Schools Research 2009

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2. **Integration with other educational initiatives:** integrating the goals of a sustainable school with other educational policies and initiatives and using them to enable all other agendas including Every Child Matters (ECM) to be brought together
 3. **Sustainability linked to school improvement supports raising achievement and attainment:** building on ECM to invigorate the approach to school improvement, and boosting leaders' confidence to make a difference and deliver results
 4. **Learning:** focusing on and improving learning and helping to make learning real and relevant
 5. **Curriculum improvements:** promoting curriculum change and development by shifting away from a narrow focus on environmental education to a whole-school approach and cross-curricular themes
 6. **Pupil involvement:** benefiting pupils by providing opportunities for involvement and participation including becoming leaders which in turn creates improved behaviour
 7. **Improvement of ecological and social performance:** having a positive impact on the social and ecological footprint, reporting savings in energy consumption, building stronger links with the community and raising young peoples' aspirations

Typically, these factors complement each other. For example, pupils can develop their capacity to think critically about their future and also to influence it, using opportunities to learn about real world issues across the curriculum and at the same time be able to influence change in areas such as energy reduction, fair trade and school grounds (Vare & Scott, 2007).

Student voice is a key component, with learning for empowerment rather than compliance at its heart. In the process, pupils relish the opportunity to learn about real, complex issues. Defra's recent survey of young people's attitudes to climate change found that 72 per cent of 11–17 year olds said they enjoyed studying climate change at school, and a remarkable 90 per cent said they wanted to maintain or increase the emphasis on it (Defra, 2008).

Leaders as cultivators of healthy organisations

"You need to get everyone involved to make it sustainable. It's not just for one person to lead."

School leader

In the National College research, successful leaders are characterised as cultivators who set out a clear vision and work from their passion, values and moral purpose to promote the innovation and well-being of others, thereby creating the conditions in which ideas and potential can flourish.

They are willing – indeed, see it as essential – to share leadership with pupils, parents and staff across the school. They support the emerging ideas of others in the system, securing resources and funding, taking risks, learning from mistakes, engaging with the community and reaping the benefits.

They also find that leading for sustainable schools often meets the requirements of other policy initiatives, including community cohesion, narrowing the gap, teaching and learning, curriculum development, improving performance standards and engagement in schools and the community. They are seeing an impact on all five ECM outcomes and finding new life in their schools and communities. Increasingly, these leaders recognise the value of working with the whole system, and their leadership reflects this, as the impact of what they are doing reaches out beyond the school and into the local community.

What's more, the concept of leading sustainable schools provides an overarching framework for thinking about school improvement and organisational health more broadly. Matthew Miles, one of the first commentators to understand the dynamic between the organisational condition of schools and the quality of education they provide, noted that 'a healthy organisation not only survives in its environment, but also continues to cope adequately over the long haul, and continuously develops and extends its surviving and coping abilities' (Hopkins 2001). Though when he analysed schools against this definition of organisational health, he diagnosed them as being seriously ill.

Contemporary thinkers in educational leadership see organisational sustainability as the route back to health for these schools. School improvement efforts, they argue, need to focus on ways in which workforce and leadership capacities can be built and sustained, in individual schools and across whole systems, as well as on the more traditional aspects of school improvement such as student behaviour, learning and attainment.

"Sustainability is the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement with deep values of human purpose... It is not just the outcome of continuous improvement we need to observe, but we must also understand the key characteristics of systems that display dynamic sustainability."

Fullan, 2005

Key factors in restoring school health, all of which align strongly with a sustainable schools approach, include:

- a commitment to staff development and to establishing a professional learning community
- practical efforts to involve staff, students and the community in school policies and decisions
- transformational leadership approaches that are both focused and dispersed among staff within the school
- effective co-ordination strategies that ensure consistency of practice and high expectations
- serious attention to the potential benefits of enquiry and reflection and gathering data on both achievement and learning
- a commitment to collaborative planning activity that adapts external changes within the wider world for internal purposes

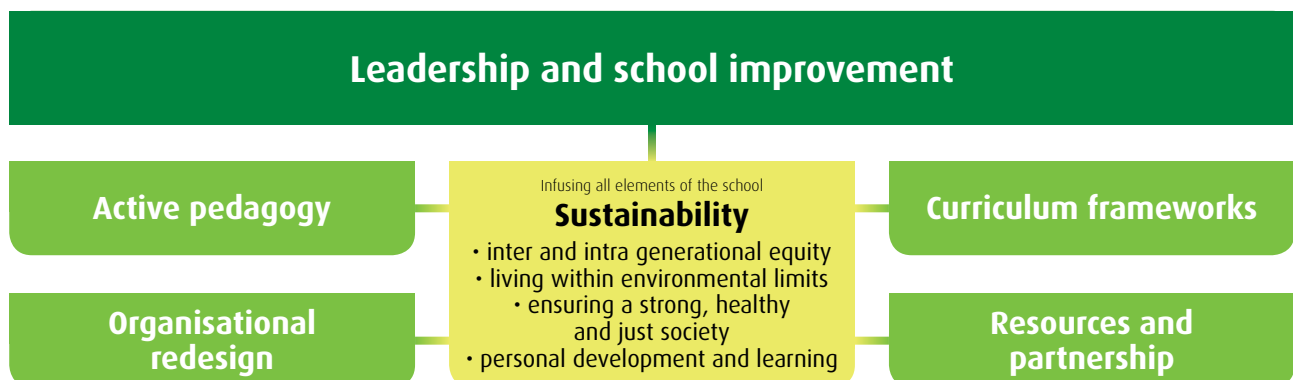
The Sustainable Development Commission, in its recent research on strategic priorities for schools (Sustainable Development Commission, 2008), saw that the challenges and principles of sustainability have great potential to be the ultimate joining-up agenda, bringing together the different pieces of the school jigsaw. It is in the nature of a sustainability approach that it benefits from being tackled collaboratively, while the need for innovation and continuous improvement also helps to promote shared learning and planning.

“Most of it is cost neutral because it’s about what happens between your ears.”

School leader

The moral purpose of sustainability therefore is central. It infuses the five key interacting elements that make a school great. The characteristics of these five elements, in a school that is leading on sustainable development, are as follows.

Figure 3: Leading sustainable schools



A new model for leading sustainable schools

By taking the key elements that make any school great and healthy, and embedding the moral purpose of sustainability throughout them, we can start to develop a powerful new model for a sustainable school. From here we can start to get a picture of a sustainable school design, demonstrated in Figure 3.

Curriculum frameworks: At the heart of the sustainable school, the curriculum actively deepens subject expertise, and teaches young people about sustainability through engagement in learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom.

Active pedagogy: The most important element of the design of any school is its approach to teaching and learning. Evidence suggests that a sustainable school has active pedagogy which reinforces the sustainability approach across the school and brings learning to life.

Organisation redesign: Promoting sustainability across the school requires significant changes in its organisational design, with timetables that allow for extended lessons, facilitate project-based work and the provision of blocked-out days for work beyond school. Time is also set aside for students to take on leadership responsibilities at school.

Leadership and school improvement: Strong leadership and governance, coupled with a commitment to continued and embedded professional development, are critical to the health of any learning organisation. There is a strong role for the governors of sustainable schools to maintain both a commitment to sustainability and a focus on standards and excellence. Leadership of the school reflects the principles of sustainability, and builds a consistent culture and set of values throughout the school. In this context, active enquiry and experiential learning are as much a part of staff professional development as part of the core curriculum.

Resources and partnership: Sustainable schools manage their resources well, and model sustainable development through their finances, purchasing and use of campus, staff and wider community. A sustainable school will be working towards becoming a fully extended school, with specialist facilities available to the local community and with a commitment to bringing parents directly into the life of the school. Schools will look to create wider public value, thus improving their wider impacts in terms of community cohesion and the enrichment of people's lives. Sustainable schools, as the heart of their communities, can give genuine expression to the concept of 21st century schools.

Cherry Orchard School and Children's Centre

What does sustainability mean at Cherry Orchard School and Children's Centre? It's a bit like peeling an onion! It is difficult to answer the question without understanding all the multi-layers of culture, ethos, practice and relationship that make our school a rich learning environment.

Sustainability permeates all aspects of school life. It is a way of leading the school, and it aligns with citizenship to underpin our curriculum and wider activities, and is encapsulated in our Children's charter for learning.

We often source ideas from the children. Our curriculum was rated as outstanding by Ofsted because it is creative, cross-curricular, skills based, able to adapt to change and not bound by content. It has a direct impact for the children as part of their lives, and in discussing its impact we also consider links to the national and global economy and wider ECM agenda. For this approach to work, the philosophy and values of the school have to be embedded as part of the leadership and systems and understood by all. So every opportunity we can find to encourage children to make informed choices about a sustainable future is taken up. Every setback is used to learn from and to encourage our children to make informed choices for a sustainable future.

School leader

6: Leading for the future: a new model for whole-system leadership

“A new kind of leadership is necessary to break through the status quo. Systematic forces, sometimes called inertia, have the upper hand in preventing system shifts. Therefore, it will take powerful, proactive forces to change the existing system (to change context). This can be done directly and indirectly through systems thinking in action.”

Fullan, 2005

We have looked at the benefits of putting sustainability at the heart of schools’ vision and ethos, so that every child’s future really does matter. We have seen how organisational sustainability and school improvement can be married with moral purpose to design genuinely sustainable schools – organisationally and ethically.

There is one more, really important step still required, and that is to take these examples to scale, and develop leadership that can underpin this transformation. This needs a more holistic model of leadership itself. We need leaders who, as well as designing and leading sustainable schools, go beyond the school gates and drive sustainability throughout the whole system of education. In short, we need whole system leaders.

“These new theoreticians are leaders who work intensely in their own schools, or national agencies, and at the same time connect with and participate in the bigger picture. To change organizations and systems will require leaders to get experience in linking other parts of the system. These leaders in turn must help develop other leaders within similar characteristics.”

Fullan, 2005

This sort of leadership has significant potential to contribute to systemic educational improvement. This was recognised by David Miliband when he was Minister of State for School Standards. He saw the development and deployment of a cadre of system leaders (as part of a new relationship between schools and government) as a potential solution to the key challenges he had identified for school leadership (Miliband, 2004).

When informed comment and government policy combine in this way, it suggests that system leadership is an idea whose time has come. It is the final layer of leadership that we need to meet the challenge of making sustainability truly a central principle in our school system.

So what will this system leadership look like in practice?

In *Every School a Great School*, Hopkins (2007) suggests that a great school will have five striking characteristics. System leaders will deploy their experience, knowledge and skills to:

- actively lead improvements in other schools
- commit staff in their own and other schools to the improvement of teaching and learning
- lead the development of schools as personal and professional learning communities
- lead work for equity and inclusion through acting on context and culture
- manage strategically the impact of the classroom, school and system on one another, understanding that in order to change the larger system one has to both engage with it in a meaningful way and manage subsequent change at a school level

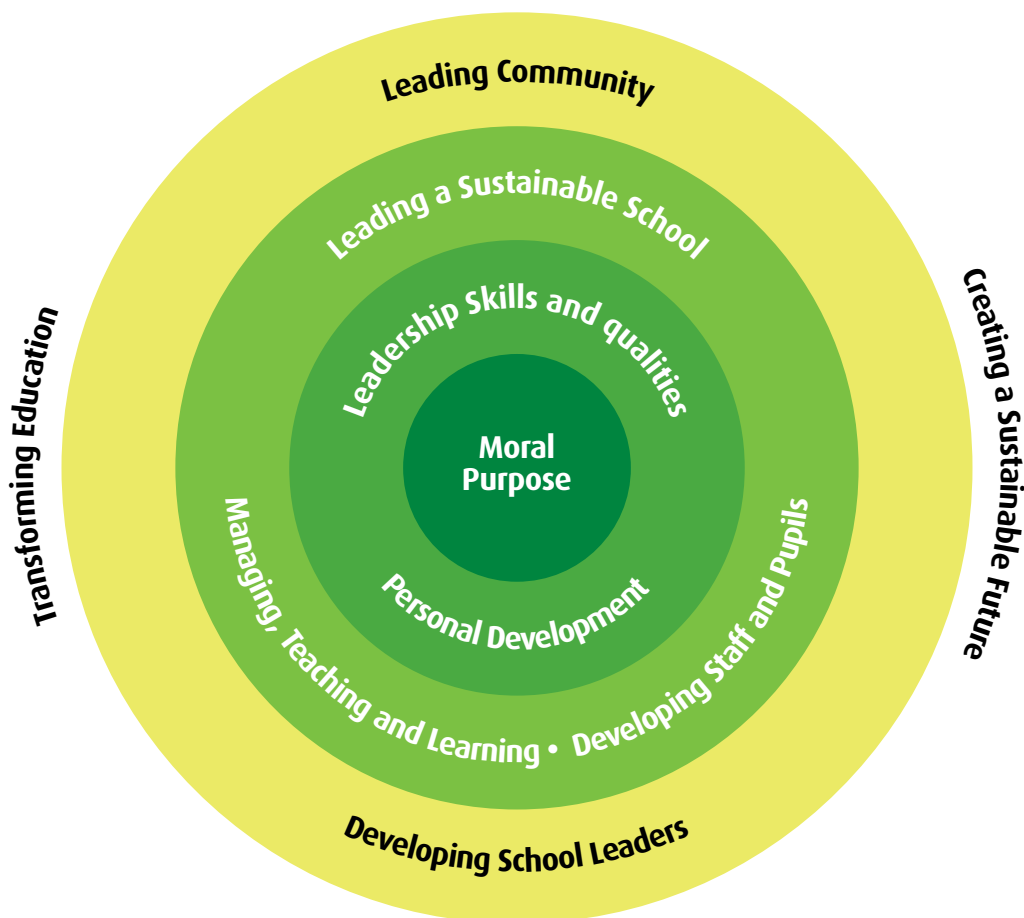
A model of system leadership practice

“The greatest challenge on our leadership journey is how we can bring about system improvement. How can we contribute to the raising of standards, not only in our own school, but in others and colleges too? What types of leaders are needed for this task? What style of leadership is required if we are to achieve the sea-change in performance that is demanded of us?”

Dunford, 2005

Figure 4 offers a model of system leadership practice. It combines the key characteristics of successful leadership with the range of roles needed.

Figure 4: Model of system leadership practice



The model in Figure 4 exhibits a logic that flows from the inside-out. Driven by sustainability as a moral purpose, a system leader not only has aspirations and capabilities for sustainable schools (particularly by creating powerful learning contexts for his or her students), but also, as seen in the outer ring of the model, works to change other contexts by engaging with the wider system in a meaningful way.

This model has been exemplified by some of the 56 school leaders on the National College's Leading Sustainable Schools programme. They have developed broader leadership roles by initiating, stewarding and enabling a community of practice among local schools, helping them start their own journey towards sustainability. Supported by the National College, they have united in their common purpose, shared resources and ideas, and supported each others' learning in mutual partnerships. Their pupils, schools and community have all benefited from this wider connection and outward-facing collaboration. Research by Birney & Reed (2009) shows that school leaders highlight the success of working with the community.

"[working with] the community I feel that higher achievement has been made than would have occurred if schools were working in isolation."

Sustainability and Renewal: Findings from the Leading Sustainable Schools Research Birney & Reed, 2009

The challenge to all school and children's centre leaders, then, is twofold. It entails not only embedding sustainable thinking and practice within their own boundaries, but also looking outwards and working with other schools, children's centres and other agencies to help them move forward. It involves learning together, and sharing together, how best to lead for every child's future. This is the challenge of working as true system leaders.

7: In our hands: leading the way for education to tell a new story

“I believe that the school system of the future looks very different to the one we have today.”

Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families²⁸

“The Children’s Plan is based on a wider goal (quality of life in childhood); a larger field of play (the community not just the institution); a larger menu of tools and strategies (not just effective teaching and learning but community-based work with families); an expanded number of players in the field (not just schools and teachers but a range of public and community agencies).”

Leadbeater & Mongon, 2008

In a world facing economic and ecological crisis, it is time to act and act fast. Improved schools and a better future for every child depend on action that goes beyond the enthusiastic minority to become the defining ethos of the education system. This paper calls for a new story of what education is for, and a new model for leading and sustaining the system change that will enable it to tell that story.

It’s a rewarding path for the practitioners who follow it. Sustainability brings an approach to whole-school improvement with short and long term benefits for pupils, schools and local communities. The pioneering leaders in this field, holding to their broad vision of sustainability, are finding it a powerful force for school capacity-building and renewal. Leaders who do this find they are meeting other targets and priorities along the way.

But it does demand willingness and the ability to learn afresh from research, from colleagues, from our own experiences and from the work of others. When sustainability is at the heart of a school, it determines the way that school is run, from its core values to the curriculum, to improved pupil motivation, attainment and behaviour, and relationships with the community and the wider world. The leadership task becomes to cultivate and embed this activity into every aspect of the school, starting small if need be, but involving pupils, staff and others in such a way that the change becomes widespread and sustainable.

Action for school leaders, policy-makers and the wider profession

There is a lot to be done to get from where we are to where we want to be. So here are three key things we would like to see happening, as part of finding a new story for education.

1. School leaders putting sustainability at the centre of their approach: There is plenty of good practice out there. This report has described new models both for designing sustainable schools and for leading them. But these changes need to become mainstream. School leaders, with differing points of departure, can:

- build on the good practice of the ECM agenda. The good news is that many schools are further down the track than they realise. In working on the ECM, citizenship or community cohesion agendas they are already acting in sustainable ways without necessarily describing it in these terms

- start somewhere. Lots of our leaders say that they simply don't know where to begin. If this is you, then we recommend finding out what is important to your pupils, school and community and starting from there. Use the National College's Valuing our Future toolkit to assess what you are already doing well, and build on that
- explore the sort of leader of sustainable schools you want to be, and embed this thinking throughout your school and beyond. Sustainability has power in the curriculum, on campus and in the wider community. By exploring all of these, leaders can deliver a wide policy agenda and fulfil their own moral purpose

2. **Policy-makers developing appropriate policy frameworks and accountability systems:** These frameworks and systems can promote a sustainable approach and build acceptance that sustainability is crucial to everything we do. We have seen that there are lots of wise words and warm statements around sustainability, but these need to translate into bold action. We need to see sustainability prioritised in school inspections. We need to see support for a public conversation around the moral purpose of schools and sustainability. And we need more support for sustainability to be comprehensively addressed within national frameworks that genuinely help school leaders deliver with greater ease on a range of priorities.

3. **A professional movement informing policy and transforming education from the inside-out:** This is vital if the education system is to be both self-sustaining and self-improving. Leaders everywhere need to take responsibility for moving forward, and for shaping the schools, children's centres and education system that they and their children want to see. We need a profession that is both trained and rewarded for thinking about the wider system and acknowledged through their career paths too. The National College's work on communities of practice discussed in this paper is a start, but more time, support and resources are needed to make this movement widespread.

The lives of our pupils and our teachers in the mid 2020s will differ dramatically from those of today. To equip them with the skills they need to fulfil their potential, we need to take up this agenda now, and we need to move fast. Leading for sustainable schools is a clear way forward. It is time to act as if the future really matters.

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About the authors

Jonathon Porritt, Founder Director, Forum for the Future

Jonathon Porritt is an eminent writer, broadcaster and commentator on sustainable development. Established in 1996, Forum for the Future is now the UK's leading sustainable development charity, with 70 staff and over 100 partner organisations, including some of the world's leading companies. He has just stepped down as Chairman of the UK Sustainable Development Commission after nine years of working with the government on sustainability.

He is Co-Director of the Prince of Wales's Business and Environment Programme which runs senior executives' seminars in Cambridge, Salzburg, South Africa and the USA. He is a non-Executive Director of Wessex Water and Willmott Dixon Ltd and a Trustee of the Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy.

Jonathon was formerly director of Friends of the Earth (1984–90); co-chair of the Green Party (1980–83) of which he is still a member; chairman of UNED-UK (1993–96); chairman of Sustainability South West, the South West Round Table for Sustainable Development (1999–2001); a Trustee of WWF-UK (1991–2005), and a member of the Board of the South West Regional Development Agency (1999–2008).

His latest books are *Capitalism as if the World Matters* (2007 (revised)), *Globalism & Regionalism* (2008) and *Living within our Means* (2009).

Jonathon received a CBE in January 2000 for services to environmental protection.

Professor David Hopkins

David Hopkins is Professor Emeritus at the Institute of Education, University of London, where until recently he held the inaugural HSBC iNet Chair of International Leadership. He is on the Board of Trustees for Outward Bound, holds

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David was formerly the Chief Adviser on School Standards at the Department for Education and Skills and Director of the Standards and Effectiveness Unit where he succeeded Sir Michael Barber. Prior to that, David was variously Professor of Education, Chair of the School of Education and Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Nottingham where he is now also Professor Emeritus. Whilst at Nottingham he was a member of the team that secured the location of the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Centres on the university's Jubilee Campus; he was subsequently appointed to the National College's Governing Council and chaired its first think-tank. In December 1999, he was appointed to chair Leicester City Partnership Board and was responsible for the modernisation of the local education authority there. David previously worked as an instructor and programme director with Outward Bound, as a schoolteacher and university lecturer, and was for 11 years a tutor at the University of Cambridge Institute of Education. His PhD on 'Organisational Change in Faculties of Education' was from Simon Fraser University, Canada.

David is committed to improving the quality of education for all, and the action orientation of his work is characterised by an integration of policy, research and practice. His professional interests are in the areas of learning and adventure, teacher and school development, leadership, educational change and policy implementation. He is a long-time consultant to OECD on issues of policy innovation, school improvement and teacher quality, as well as to the World Health Organisation, the Soros Foundation, the Aga Khan Foundation and

the Inter-American Development Bank on the themes of education reform and school development. He has lectured and consulted in some two dozen countries on these topics. He has directed or co-directed numerous research projects including the DES School Development Plans, ESRC Mapping the Process of Change in Schools, ESRC Improving Schools and DCSF Leadership and Learning projects. David also initiated the school improvement network Improving Quality of Education for All (IQEA), and the Success for All literacy programme in England.

Anna Birney

Anna is Head of Leadership at Forum for the Future, and runs its leadership programme, which ensures individuals and organisations show leadership for sustainability to create the change that is necessary in both business and the public sector.

Anna is an experienced facilitator and developer of leadership processes for sustainability. She has worked with public, private and NGO leaders in the UK and internationally on implementing innovative approaches to change. Recently she has been working with the Welsh Assembly on the development of its sustainable development scheme as well as running the National College's Leading Sustainable Schools programme where she is working with 56 communities of practice to develop their leadership capability.

Anna previously worked within the social change team at WWF-UK, with a primary focus on the education system. She worked with schools at an organisational development level, enabling them to place sustainability at the heart of their operations, local authorities to understand strategically and practically how to bring about change and national government and its associated bodies in creating appropriate policy frameworks. She was instrumental in

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Jane Reed

Jane is head of the International Network for School Improvement, London Centre for Leadership in Learning at the Institute of Education. She is a senior lecturer, consultant and coach with an academic background in developing the connections between classroom pedagogy, professional learning, school leadership and change. She has run several successful national action research projects for the past decade with practitioners around the country that develop pupils' engagement and participation in learning.

Her current research interest is the learning and leadership processes that enable schools to be more environmentally aware and responsive and use school improvement processes to move beyond traditional approaches to teaching environmental studies. She has been studying in the field of ecology and systems thinking and its application to school improvement and leadership for the past 15 years. In the 1990s she set up the first ecoliteracy project in the UK, inspired by the work of Fritjof Capra.

In 2007 she worked on the sustainable leadership research project for the National College in partnership with WWF-UK. She is contributing to a book on climate change and school improvement to be published in 2009 and is a member of the special interest group for sustainable development at the Institute of Education.

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