

# LOOKING AT THE JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT

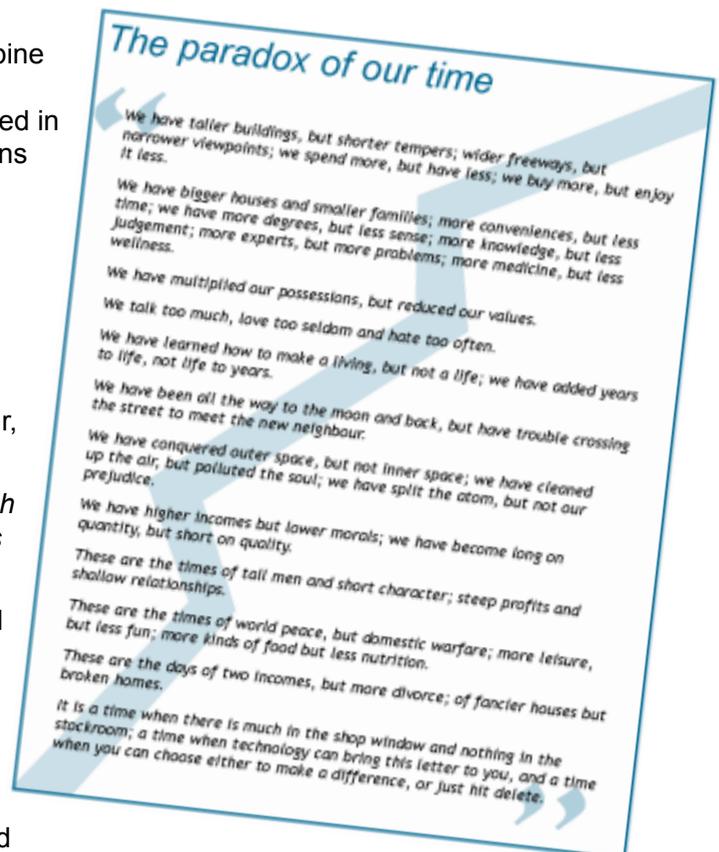
## CASE STUDY: THE PARADOX OF OUR TIME

### Johannesburg – redressing the balance?

Johannesburg is in South Africa, a country recently described as “the world leader in inequality.” Great wealth and great poverty exist side by side in the city. Many people visiting the 2002 World Summit on sustainable development were shocked by this. Speaking of the expensive welcome being shown to world leaders in the city, some journalists wrote about “caviar, lobsters and shanty towns.”

The *paradox of our time* comes from a student at Columbine High School in the United States. In April 1999, several students at the school had been murdered. This happened in the world’s richest country, and led people to ask questions about what really matters. Is wealth enough to give us a good quality of life?

- ❑ Children looked at the idea of scales and balances. What would the world need to have “a positive balance?” [eg of human rights with responsibilities]. They developed posters to express their ideas.
- ❑ They went on to work on paradox in their literacy hour, using the following definition:  
*“A paradox is something which is said or written which puts two things which are opposite together, but says that both of them are true.”*
- ❑ Using the Columbine text as a model, they discussed and wrote down paradoxes about the way we live today.
- ❑ Finally, children used this statement as the starting point for a class survey of a major issue in the local area [eg safety and crime]. They made a class newspaper which was shared with peers, parents and the community.



***“We have more operations but less health  
We buy more toys but have more sadness  
We run around the country and we don’t get anywhere  
We have more things to do, but less time to play with”***

Year 4 child, Birmingham

We want a better  
balanced world



***“We have learned how to fly,  
but forgotten how to walk”***

Class 2 children, Solihull