

Weaving Sustainability into the Curriculum

Dominic Simpson * ...

... describes the journey the school has taken
and the role of Ministry of Eco-Education [MEE]

As the world faces challenges posed by climate change, it is increasingly important to educate future generations about sustainability.

How do we make sustainability part of the curriculum and purposeful, not so that it's a "bolt-on" or just addressing a current issue, but something deeply rooted in the moral purpose that we have as educators to ensure that we provide children with the skills and knowledge they need?

This was the question that we found ourselves asking often over the last few years as we look at how the curriculum can provide opportunities for teaching about sustainability. As part of Windsor Academy Trust the issue of providing our children with understanding of sustainability was already a key part of our strategy. But ...

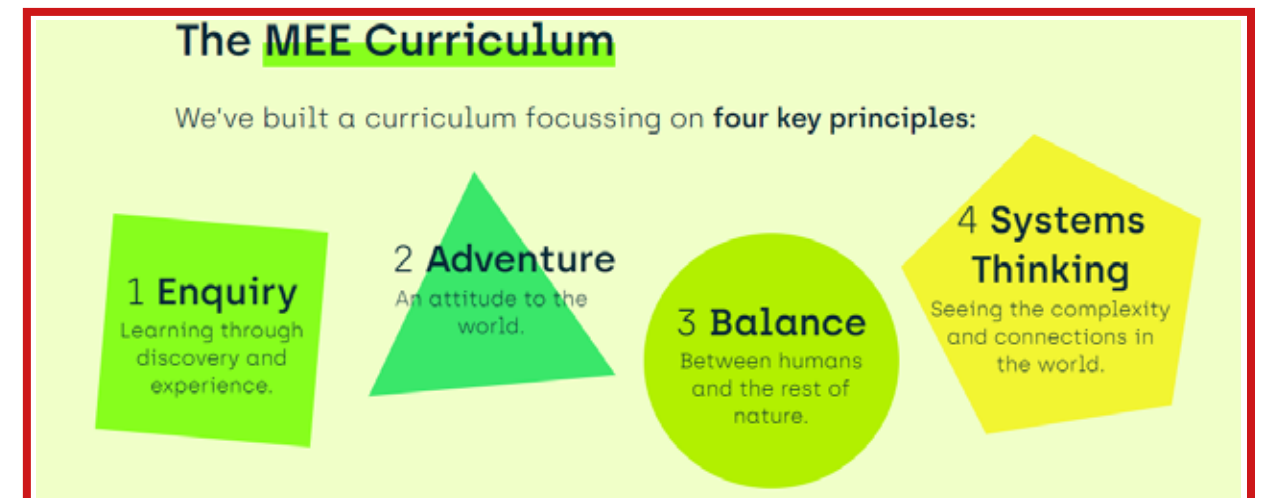
- ◇ How could we approach the challenge?
- ◇ How does it fit into an already time-restricted curriculum?



* Dominic Simpson is headteacher of Colley Lane Primary Academy, Dudley. Part of the Windsor Academy Trust family.

Our journey started in a webinar presented by Paul Turner from the Ministry of Eco-Education [MEE], that I attended last April. Paul presented the ethos of this charitable project and more importantly for time-strapped teachers, explained that they had gathered a host of resources from different sources, turned them into schemes of work and had worked alongside schools and so had a proven record of success. The schemes of work are all based around a big question, such as "Should we all go Vegan?". This is well aligned with the 'Aspire Primary Curriculum' approach that we take as a Trust.

We begin each of our themes with an enquiry question, an overarching big question upon which knowledge, skills and investigation can be built. As I listened to Paul, with his passion, it became clear how I could start to address sustainability through the curriculum.



Later at a meeting with Paul, we looked to trial the resources with staff. They looked at the schemes of work from MEE and discussed 'big questions' that might ignite a passion, such as ...

"Do we live on a plastic planet?" or "Why are some people hungry?".

It was a case of 'having a go' and enabling staff to explore the resources that had been collated by Paul and his team. The trial was a huge success, not only from generating and capturing the school community's passion for sustainability and its importance but also in how it could be weaved into the curriculum. It was clear to staff and leadership that there was the support for implementing sustainability across our curriculum.

MEE have developed curriculum ideas drawing on a wide range of freely available resources to embed sustainability across every subject.



Transport



Energy



Food



Nature



Society



Waste



Water

THE MINISTRY OF ECO EDUCATION

- a collaboration of teachers working together to place sustainability at the heart of education

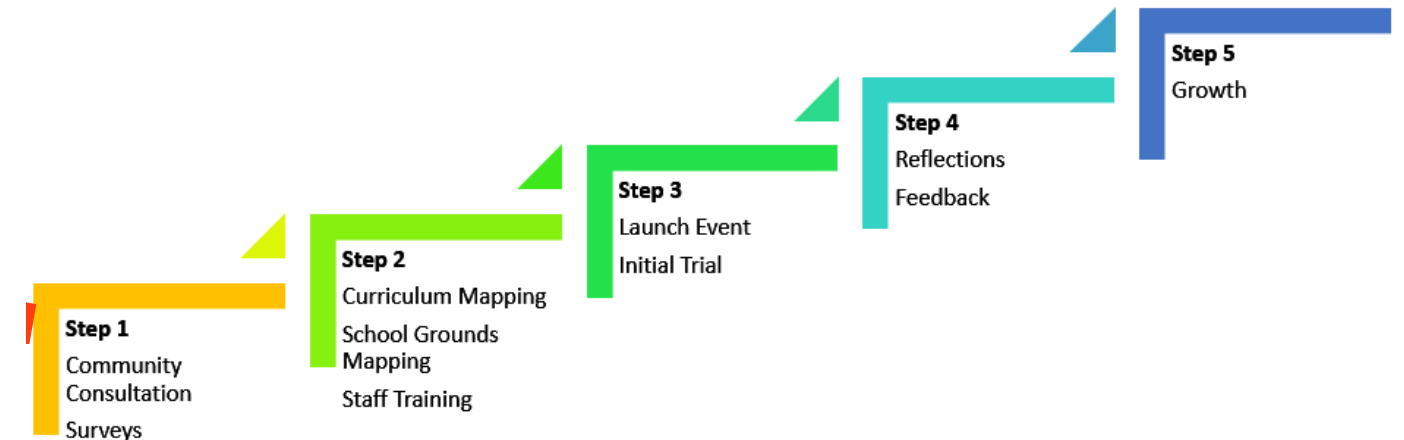


Click to see video

Video: Nick Moss [Head at Minchinhampton Primary] discusses the early days of the MEE initiative. The vision was one of school improvement enhanced by work responding to sustainable development and climate change.

Once we had started this journey, it became clear how much is available for schools to enable children, staff and parents to develop the knowledge and understanding of the need to address sustainability within our curriculum, not only to raise the collective purpose of why it's important but also to address our civic responsibility. An introduction to Schools of Tomorrow and further research into the MEE's successful work with schools such as Minchinhampton Academy, consolidated the desire to move forward with this.

After presenting to our Trust Leadership Team and partnering with MEE, we are now in the stages of developing a Trust-wide approach to the curriculum at primary and secondary level. Colley Lane Primary Academy with Cheslyn Hay Academy and Great Wyrley Academy are the first schools to work on embedding sustainability across the curriculum



The clear 5 steps of implementing the project from the MEE, which has worked in their founding schools, alongside the four key principles of their curriculum, made it easy for us to see how it will be embedded.



Paul Turner (MEE) meeting with Dawn Haywood, CEO, Chris Berry, Director of Operations and Heads from Windsor Academy Trust

MEE has supported us – meeting the Trust Leadership, leading assemblies and delivering CPD for staff.

It is an exciting time, the journey has begun to have sustainability **not just weaved into our Aspire Curriculum, but at the heart of it.**