Embedding the English Early Years Foundation Stage into the Eco-School programme; visualising the journey

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Setting the scene

ESD pillars

- learning to be,
- learning to do,
- learning to learn,
- learning to live together

ESD in early childhood education curriculum:
(a) context sensitive and culturally relevant;
(b) content that fosters caring attitudes and empathy vis-à-vis the natural environment, and people living in other parts of the world;
(c) learning about respect for diversity;
(d) learning about gender issues and equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities of boys and girls;
(e) learning of basic life skills,
(f) the concept of learning for life,
(g) activities built around the 7Rs: reduce, reuse, repair, recycle, respect, reflect and refuse  

(Samuelsson and Kaga, 2008)
EYFS: Early Years Foundation Stage

→ sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life (DfE, 2014: 5)
Eco-Schools were developed in 1992 by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) in response to the UN Conference on Environment and Development. FEE’s aim for Eco-Schools is to “empower students to be the change our sustainable world needs by engaging them in fun, action-orientated learning”.

Keep Britain Tidy is an independent charity, best known for litter campaigns; but today they do much more. Eco-Schools is just one of the programmes aiming to achieve the vision of a world where people understand and actively care for their environment (2015:4).
Tensions.......... 

The EYFS (DfE, 2014) statutory framework (0-5 years) is holistic in approach with the four overarching principles:

Unique Child-Positive relationships-Enabling Environments-Learning and Development

In contrast, the Eco-School terminology focuses on ‘schools’, ‘students’ and what schools can do, however, there is a recognition of opportunities for ...

“Projects (that) are pupil-led, action-orientated and develop each child’s ‘ability to make sound choices in the face of the inherent complexity of the future.” (2015:6)

This resonates with research conducted by Siraj-Blatchford, Smith and Pramling-Samuelsson (2010) that very young children are capable of sophisticated thinking in relation to socio-economic aspects.

This project is attempting to develop a shared understanding of ESD to help those working with young children to see the connections.
No early years evident in either the handbook or the Eco school website
Previous projects related to ESD
Email responses from the Department of Education -

“Please note that I have passed on the action points you have provided to Paul Kissack’s office, who I’m sure will be most appreciative of the information.
While I cannot commit a representative to attend the meeting you discuss this far in advance, this is something I can certainly review in the New Year, possibly with a steer from Paul’s office, and with more information provided by yourself.”

“I hope this is not of further disappointment, but as is the nature of these busy diaries I am hasten to commit anything more at this stage.

“I apologise for the delay in responding to you, but we do receive a huge volume of correspondence into this inbox.”
Thank you for your email of 23 February, addressed to Amber Rudd, about sustainability. I hope you can appreciate that the minister receives a large amount of correspondence and cannot always respond personally. I have therefore been asked to reply.

“The statutory framework for the early years foundation stage gives broad areas for learning and development and more specific early learning goals. Childcare providers can make use of the goals to help children understand their environment and take care of their world. In understanding the world by the end of the foundation stage, children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes.”
The nine areas of their curriculum:

Energy / Waste / Water / Litter / School Grounds / Transport / Healthy Living | Global Perspective | Biodiversity.

As a team we developed a draft table that incorporated these nine areas with both the prime and specific areas of the EYFS (DfE) 2014 and the characteristics of effective learning (Play and Exploration, Active learning and Creating and Thinking critically).
Cluster consultations

Each lead practitioner within the cluster groups arranged consultations with practitioners/managers in regard to the first draft table.

Geographically the clusters are spread across a diverse range of England.

A diverse range of settings were consulted - children’s centres (with childminders), reception classes, nurseries, pre school settings etc.

A draft framework to trial was developed as a consequence of the feedback. This will be trialled in the Autumn term onwards ...
Feedback collated by interns

The information presented in the next slide represents the combined feedback from the cluster groups....

In keeping with the philosophy of the research design, the feedback is themed and encourages group dialogue beyond binary responses.

For manageability and efficiency, analysis of the findings have been collated using a colour coded table.

Positive feedback = brown

Things that need changing = orange

Ideas for development = blue
Table 1: Proposed ESD for EY feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Scientific and terminology can relate to initiatives such as eco-schools.</td>
<td>- Technical and complicated. - Exclusive to those with prior knowledge.</td>
<td>- Include glossary of terms. - Simplify language used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Technical and complicated. - Exclusive to those with prior knowledge.</td>
<td>- Not a working document for 0-2 age. - Not tailored to range of learning styles. - Overwhelming for those with no knowledge of ESD. - No linking ideas.</td>
<td>- Resource activity packs would aid the table framework. - Leadership pack useful for those leading and guiding the process. - Specific age group options for 0-2. - Clarity of awards/how to achieve them. - Adapt content to relate to a non-school environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Include glossary of terms. - Simplify language used.</td>
<td>- ESD and EYFS are not synced clearly in table. - Very text heavy. - Framework is broad and difficult to interpret.</td>
<td>- Set initiative into manageable chunks. - Expanded auditing tools. - Support and mentoring to gain understanding of implementation. - Links to ESD websites and/or forums to share and gain ideas (networking). - Use pictures/display board to demonstrate ESD activities. - Allow flexibility for adaptation between locations. - “Core/essential” points for children and staff to work towards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NEXT STEPS

From the collated feedback highlighted in Table 1, a workable plan was devised.

Table 2 illustrates the responses to the cluster group feedback
Table 2: Workable plan outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generic</th>
<th>Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Create a working document (flexible/adaptable to locations)</td>
<td>• Leadership Guide (Manager)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide a link to online practitioner tools</td>
<td>- Site audit tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Incorporate ‘development matters’ and ‘characteristics of effective</td>
<td>- Self-assessment tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning’</td>
<td>- Clear progression criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Utilise a range of resource types to accommodate learning styles</td>
<td>- Practitioner Activity Packs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Specific to age groups</td>
<td>• Practitioner Activity Packs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Glossary of terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Poster display (per room)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Reward tags (for poster)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Activity cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ESD personal planner (staff)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP IN ACTION

What is Global Citizenship?

Global Citizenship encompasses a range of elements that individuals can adopt into their everyday lives. These elements include values such as contributions to the world, high-level well-being for all, and respect for diversity. It also encourages people to engage with their communities, support the development of others, and contribute to the maintenance of a sustainable and healthy planet.

Are Different Sorts of Global Citizenship?

There are different types of global citizenship, such as student clubs in schools, organizations dedicated to promoting education and social justice, and community groups that work towards environmental sustainability.

Why Should We Care about Being a Global Citizen?

Every year, the increase in global connectivity and technological advancement means that we are more and more able to connect with others. This development provides many opportunities for our children to learn and share ideas with others around the world. It is important to ensure that children are able to develop positive connections with other cultures and communities, and that they are able to engage with global issues and contribute to the betterment of society.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP IN ACTION

- Encourage empathy and understanding
- Allow opportunities for children to explore
- Initiate and participate in local and global initiatives
- Teach others what you have learned
- Promote connections between social groups
- Allow access to a wide range of inclusive and diverse learning resources
- Support clubs in schools
- Organize groups and projects
- Work with community organizations
- Build partnerships with other organizations and groups
- Foster a sense of belonging and community

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Autumn onwards 2016 - trialling the project

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Possible lines of direction related to ESD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Embedding the three pillars within the pilot project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Practitioners feedback over the year.....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


