

Lampton School Involving Students to Develop Sustainability

Summary:

Lampton School has developed various aspects of sustainability, including the global dimension, travel, energy and waste, which has had a practical impact on the school estate as well as raising awareness. Aspects of sustainability are embedded in the school's Self Evaluation Framework and School Improvement Plan.

Key staff 'champions' have been vital to taking this agenda forward. However, leadership of sustainability issues, as with many whole school initiatives, must quickly involve a growing number of staff across subject disciplines and at different levels of leadership to increase impact and avoid overload. Involvement of students has had a high priority, with the school council and environment group playing important roles. Involving students and celebrating achievements via noticeboards or assemblies maintains enthusiasm.

Impacts: Developing sustainability strategies has supported and developed corporate responsibility across the school among both students and staff. Practical initiatives have had significant impact, eg. the number of students and staff regularly cycling to school has doubled; energy monitoring has had a direct effect on facilities management and building planning; paper recycling has reduced waste and influenced student behaviour; involving students in healthy meal provision has led to a significant increase in lunch uptake.

Key leadership role: Middle leaders

Achievements, Outcomes and Leadership:

Lampton School has developed several areas of sustainability over a period of years.

Looking outward

With partner schools in both Uganda and Goa, students and staff at Lampton have access to 'real-life' experiences from other parts of the world. In February 2008, students and staff from Lampton visited our partner school in Goa for ten days, truly 'an experience of a lifetime' as students immersed themselves in another culture. The return exchange will take place in June 2008. Curriculum links are vital to ensure genuine sharing of resources and learning experiences between the partner schools. Key staff have led these developments displaying enthusiasm and commitment.

Global dimension

Distributing leadership

Surveys of methods of student & staff travel to school have led to a publicity campaign to encourage more use of public transport, cycling and walking. Increased cycle storage has assisted greatly and the number of students and staff regularly cycling to school has doubled. Walking for some distance each day, as well as cycling has had an impact on student health. Key staff have taken time to research available resources and much help has been given by Hounslow and Transport for London (TfL) advisors. Again, enthusiastic and committed key staff have played a vital role in taking these developments forward.

Travel and traffic

Promoting student voice

The School Council has been involved in reading school fuel meters at regular intervals. This monitoring is resulting in a publicity campaign to reduce the amounts of electricity and gas used by the school. Over the next few months, a "Lights out at Lampton" day will bring wider awareness to all students and staff to encourage reduction in 'wasted energy'. This has had a

Energy and water

direct effect on the facilities management and building planning at the school with areas such as 'biofuels' and 'ground-source heating' being investigated as alternative heat sources. Key staff, organising and supporting the School Council and in the school's operations area, have shown commitment to investing their time and energy to further these initiatives.

*Promoting
student voice*

A few years ago, the school's environment group analysed a day's waste from the school to investigate the potential for "reduce", "reuse" or "recycle" strategies. This resulted in placing a recycling bin in each classroom to facilitate recycling of waste paper (the main content of the school's waste). Although the sale of waste paper for recycling is not profitable, each tutor group has representatives who regularly empty their recycling bins. Key staff led this initiative and continue to encourage recycling of paper across the school. Linked to this, students regularly ask staff to copy information on both sides to reduce the amount of paper used across the school. Other recycling, such as collection of aluminium cans, is not viable as the quantities involved are small.

**Procurement
and waste**

*Promoting
student voice*

Catering at schools has been the subject of much review over recent years. Lampton school has had new caterers from January 2008. These are committed to involving students in healthy meal choices. There is a variety of meals to include menus taken from many countries, reflecting the school's multi-cultural student and staff make-up. Although this new service has only been operating for a few months, the involvement of students and regular meetings with sample student groups has led to a significant increase in lunch uptake. Key staff from our caterers have liaised with key members of the school's staff as well as key students on the school council, and this has led to significant improvement and appreciation of the food offered at lunchtime. Appropriate publicity and marketing of the lunch offer is now needed for the school meal uptake to grow even further.

**Food and
drink**

Hydration has always been encouraged at the school. Students have considered the benefits of easy access to fresh water on many occasions. Discussions some time ago led to encouragement for students to carry a water bottle with them and sip water through the day, including during lessons. Funding has been found to install several fresh water taps around the school buildings. Students are encouraged to sip water and understand the benefits of hydration in many subject lessons as well as via tutor periods and various notices around the school.

*Distributing
leadership*

Benefits of the Developments:

Throughout all areas of sustainability, Lampton School students and staff have benefited from the work of key individuals who have shown the commitment and enthusiasm to take aspects of each project forward.

*Engaging
others*

Possibly unlike many initiatives across a busy secondary school, innovations that involve students and develop from ideas of key staff tend to find general agreement from colleagues in the staffroom and amongst the general student body. Given opportunities to develop links with partner schools in other parts of the world, encourage cycling and walking, be more energy efficient as a school or collect paper for recycling, most students and staff are pleased to join in and do their part.

One of the main benefits of developing sustainability strategies is that it supports and further develops a corporate responsibility across the school.

There are many groups and organisations that support sustainability developments, grants are available in some areas of sustainability and much advice is available very easily.

Key leadership lessons:

Looking outward

- Developing significant links with partner schools requires open discussion of issues faced at both schools – trust is vital and grows through time as resources are shared and professional debate progresses. Key staff need to maintain regular contact with colleagues across the world. Celebration of the work of the partnership brings in more interested staff & students and fresh ideas to grow the partnership.

Engaging others

- Involving students, via school council or environment group, and celebrating the achievements via noticeboards or assemblies, creates an enthusiasm across the school, and students and staff can share their interests in making the school more successful.
- Identifying key ‘champions’ who will carry a sustainability project forward at partner schools (in the UK) may present some challenge. They will need to be contacted and supported to assist in their journey at their school. It must be recognised that each school is unique and will have its own way of taking forward sustainability issues.
- Some will readily involve their student groups but some will want to have more control over developments. Sensitivity to each potential partner school will be a key feature of the support required to help raise the sustainability agenda in partner schools.
- Celebration of successes, sharing of achievements and recognition of the work of all partners will be a key tactic to engage potential partner schools.

Distributing leadership

- The only area where care is needed is to avoid overburdening specific individual staff at any one school. If initiatives are taken forward by one or two key individuals, there is the possibility of overload and celebration/publicity for what has been achieved may be missed out.

Promoting student voice

- Leadership of sustainability issues at a school, as in many other whole school holistic initiatives, must quickly attempt to ‘spread the word’ and involve a growing number of staff across several subject disciplines and at different levels of leadership. At Lampton school, there has been an ethos of involving/consulting students whenever possible and this has been a key feature in the development of sustainability for this school.

Setting the vision

- The school Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF) and the School Improvement Plan (SIP), as well as subject SIPs, are key documents for every school; aspects of sustainability development need to be embedded into both the SEF and SIP to recognise its place in the present and future growth of the school.