

# North East Strategic Partnership for Sustainable Schools

## Highlights & Achievements



This paper provides a brief summary of the achievements to date of NESPSS and its future intentions.

The North East Strategic Partnership for Sustainable Schools (NESPSS) was formally established in 2006. It had been in development for a number of years, honing the concept and benefits for partners from across sectors working together to help schools engage with a broad range of sustainability activities. It launched the concept of Sustainable Schools as a school improvement tool in the region at a large conference *Leading for the Future* in 2005.

It is the view of NESPSS (supported by a wealth of research) that schools engaging in sustainability enhance the achievement of their pupils, operate more efficient and effective buildings and grounds and have a significant positive impact on their community. NESPSS also believes in the benefits of a coherent coordinated approach with the connected themes of learning outside the classroom (LOtC) and a global dimension to the curriculum.

NESPSS is governed by a board of trustees with a range of expertise from the public, third and school sectors. This board was supported by a part time regional coordinator between 2005 and 2010.

NESPSS has created and supported collaborations which has enabled:

- Over 1000 teachers and practitioners receiving continuing professional development
- Over 700 schools involved in Eco-Schools in the region
- 5 local authorities with strategic approaches to supporting sustainable schools
- A collaborative approach to Forest Schools support in the north east
- The expansion of the John Muir Award into the region
- Development of the award winning Climate Change Schools project and Regional Centre of Expertise for ESD
- Successful development of the One World Network North East

### Sustainable Schools Framework

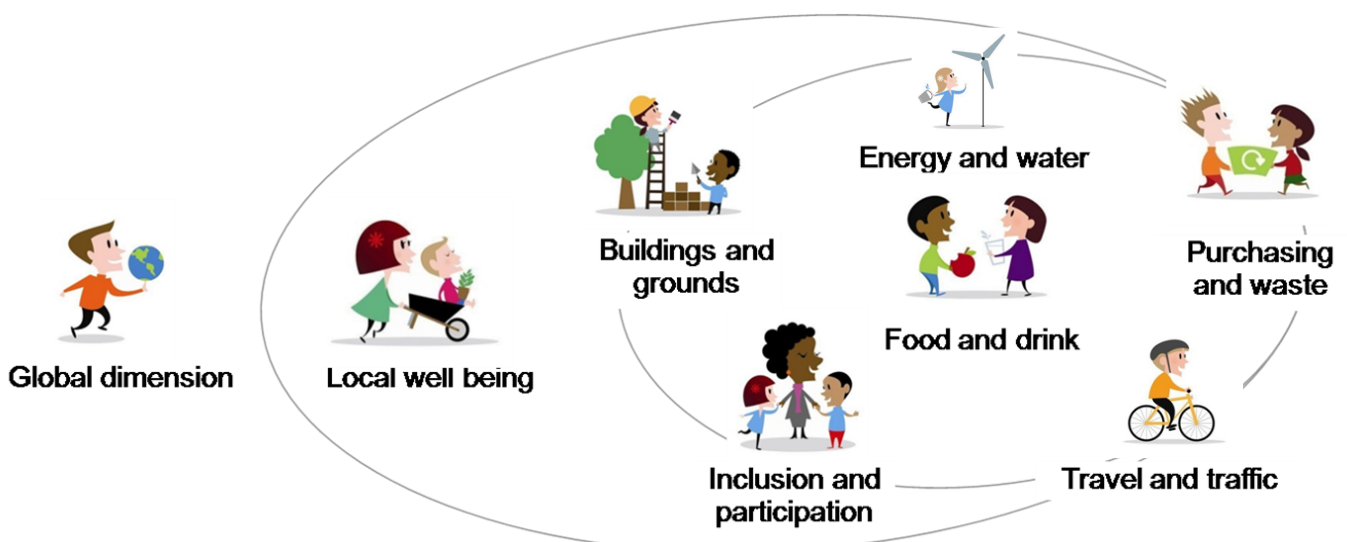
Developed in 2006 by the Department for Education in response to a challenge from UNESCO and its decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-14). Its aim was to be an overarching binding concept that helps schools organise sustainability education. It uses the following structure:

#### Care Concept:

- Care for oneself
- Care for each other (across cultures, distances and generations)
- Care for the environment (near and far)

#### Integrated Approach

Curriculum (teaching & learning both formal & informal)	Campus (building & grounds, operational practices, ethos)	Community (both locally and globally)
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NESPSS drew together and developed a more coordinated approach to support for schools engaging key parties in the region and beyond.

### **Sub Partnerships**

These partnerships focus on specific aspects of sustainability, they include:

**Eco-Schools Partnership** – a large grouping of organisations that promote and support schools through the Eco-Schools award process.

**Forest Education Initiative North East Cluster** – this group have applied for substantial funds from the Access to Nature lottery fund to develop ‘centres of excellence’ in all north east local authorities.

**Growing Schools Partnership**— established as a national pilot, this grouping of public and third sector organisations has organised and coordinated professional development for schools as well events, case studies and bursaries to enable schools to access expert advice.

#### **North East Rural Dimension Partnership.**

Supported by the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, this group focussed on opportunities for secondary schools and the land-based and environment diploma offer.



**One World Network North East**—This charity established in 2002 is supported by the Department for International Development. It employs staff who support schools to incorporate a global dimension into the curriculum . It also commissions organisations to develop projects and delivers a range of professional development for school staff.

**Outdoor Learning Providers Group** – an opportunity for organisations engaged in learning outside the classroom to meet and keep up to date with changes in government policy etc

### **Projects & Initiatives**

**Climate Change Schools Project.** Launched in 2008 this project has gone from strength to strength. Funded from a range of sources and with key partners such as the Environment Agency, Climate NE and the NE Science Learning Centre its work is now regarded as a national model of best practice. [www.climatechangeschools.org.uk](http://www.climatechangeschools.org.uk)



**NE Regional Centre of Expertise in ESD.** Led by Newcastle University this initiative is part of the international network of RCE’s across the globe linking academia, local authorities, private sector and schools together to develop innovative practice. <http://rcenortheast.eu/>

**John Muir Award.** In partnership with Durham County Council and the John Muir Trust the region was successful in receiving Access to Nature lottery funding in 2009 to employ a regional manager to promote the John Muir Award to schools, groups and individuals across the region. [www.johnmuiraward.org](http://www.johnmuiraward.org)

**Solar Car Challenge.** Established in 2005 this initiative highlights to primary pupils how solar power can be used to power vehicles. It has widespread support across the region from local authorities and regional agencies and culminates in a final event held at Nissan car plant each year.

## **Conferences and Events**

November 2005 – Leading for the Future Conference in Newcastle, over 130 delegates attended from across the region

January 2008 - National Sustainable Schools Forum – Durham. Aimed at a national audience of senior staff from local authorities focussing on the issue of sustainable procurement

March 2008—Northern Sustainable Schools Conference. A two day conference organised in collaboration with the north east, north west and Yorkshire and Humber regions held in York.

November 2008 - Sustainable School – Global School? A conference for teachers highlighting the relationships between sustainability and a global dimension.

March 2009 – Whole School Accreditation Schemes. Two events for teachers and local authority staff to highlight how whole school schemes such as Eco-Schools, Healthy Schools etc contribute to Sustainable Schools.



March 2010 – Sustainable Schools Curriculum Events. Three events using different approaches to maximise engagement with teachers, support staff and governors across the region.

9<sup>th</sup> March . Durham and Sunderland two events

13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> March. Alnwick Gardens science weekend

29<sup>th</sup> March. Tees Valley Conference

March 2010 – Corporate Approaches Celebration Conference. Held in Newcastle this event for local authority and third sector staff attracted delegates from across the country to learn from the six local authorities involved in an innovative approach to supporting

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## **Research and Development**

2007 – Substantial market research was undertaken across the 12 local authorities in the region to identify engagement and understanding of Sustainable Schools used to inform future strategy

2007-8 WWF Whole School Change . An action research project with WWF and participants from across sectors developing and implementing ideas to change practice in schools in the region.

2007-2009 - Local Authority Corporate Strategies. This significant project worked with six local authorities across the north east and Yorkshire and Humber regions supporting them to develop and implement their own bespoke strategies. This has led to significant change in each authority with higher engagement and support for the framework.

## Research Findings

*'The most successful schools gave their pupils the opportunity to take part in a wide range of practical activities, both within and outside the classroom, and to initiate their own projects for improving sustainability.... In several instances, this led to more positive attitudes to learning in general, better behaviour and attendance, and to improved standards and achievement.'*

Ofsted—Education for sustainable development, Improving schools – improving lives. 2009

*"Schools should give all pupils the opportunity to put their understanding of local issues into a global context, so that they see how their decisions can have an impact on others now and in the future."*

Ofsted—Schools and Sustainability 2008

*"When a school places sustainability at the core of its activity, it supports adults and young people's learning, their contribution to and improvement of their community and the sustainability of our planet." National College 2009*



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## The Future

NESPSS will build on its achievements and in the future will support:

- Roll out of the corporate sustainable schools approaches across the region
- Sustainable Schools as a school improvement approach with Children's Services departments
- Building on the partnership approach in the region and across the country
- Acquiring further funding to support the region with sustainable schools activity

It is clear that regardless of central government policy there is a real and growing appreciation of sustainability education. Schools and those supporting schools therefore will need ongoing support. NESPSS is committed to fostering and enabling that support across the region and beyond.

*NESPSS would like to thank all of the partners involved in activity to date. The successes highlighted in this document would not have been possible without the goodwill and support of so many organisations and individuals from across the public, private and third sectors. We thank you and look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.*

**For further information visit**

[www.sustainableschools-ne.org.uk](http://www.sustainableschools-ne.org.uk)



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