

**Education, Children and People Services**

**Learning for Sustainability Strategy**

Report for Professional Learning Operations Group

**Summary**

This report informs the PLOG about the proposed Scottish Borders Council Strategy for Learning for Sustainability in SBC. See Appendix 1 (attached)

**1. Background**

1.1 Learning for Sustainability is an international priority (UNESCO 2013). It involves learning to live within the environmental limits of our planet and to build a just, equitable and peaceful society. It is concerned with every level and type of learning and the provision of quality education for all. Learning for Sustainability is a priority for the Scottish Government and Scotland's education professionals. The Scottish Government's *Action Plans for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development [2005-14]* set out actions for all sectors of education.

1.2 In Scotland, Learning for Sustainability became the umbrella term created by the One Planet Schools Working Group to cover Sustainable Development Education, Developing Global Citizenship and Outdoor Learning. In December 2012, the group produced a national Learning for Sustainability Report which was accepted and adopted by The Scottish Government in March 2013.

1.3 The importance of developing a whole school approach to Learning for Sustainability was emphasised by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) when, in December 2012, they published the Standards for Leadership and Management. In a short introduction, GTCS state:

'Learning for Sustainability' is a whole school commitment that helps the school and its wider community develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and practices needed to take decisions which are compatible with a sustainable future in a just and equitable world. Learning for Sustainability has been embedded **within** the Standards for Leadership and Management to support leaders in **actively** embracing and promoting principles and practices of sustainability in all aspects of their work.

1.4 The significance of this statement lies in the fact that GTCS has adopted the One Planet Working Group's definition of Learning for Sustainability and have now embedded it in their whole suite of Professional Standards: the Standards for Registration, the Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning and the Standards for Leadership and Management.



1.5 The nationally agreed pupil entitlement can be summarised as follows:

- All learners should have an entitlement to Learning for Sustainability in their curriculum.
- In line with the new GTCS Professional Standards, every practitioner, school and education leader should demonstrate learning for sustainability in their practice.
- Every school should have a whole school approach to Learning for Sustainability that is robust, demonstrable, evaluated and supported by leadership at all levels.
- School buildings, grounds and policies should support learning for sustainability.

## **2. Scottish Borders Council Learning for Sustainability Strategy**

2.1 The SBC strategy states that all pupils must have opportunities to:

- Learn about the world – become successful learners by developing a knowledge and understanding of the landscape, the natural and cultural heritage of Scotland and the wider world and, while doing so, become reflective and open to new thinking and ideas.
- Learn for life and work in a global society – by developing into responsible citizens and effective contributors who have a respect for others, understand and appreciate different beliefs and views while being able to communicate their own beliefs and views to others with confidence.
- Learn through global contexts – learning to live sustainable lives by appreciating the inter-dependence of people and the environment worldwide, and able to apply critical thinking in new contexts, locally and beyond.

2.2 To achieve the above, every school in SBC needs to:

- adopt a whole school approach to Learning for Sustainability that is robust, demonstrable, evaluated and supported by leadership at all levels;
- ensure that school buildings, grounds and policies support learning for sustainability approaches

2.3 To do so, each school should ensure that they adopt the ‘four Cs’ approach - curriculum, campus, culture and community:

### **Curriculum**

Strong leadership at all levels is required to ensure that Learning for Sustainability is used to plan relevant and meaningful learning opportunities through the four contexts of CfE: interdisciplinary learning, the ethos and life of the school, personal achievement and the experiences and outcomes of the eight curricular areas.

### **Campus**

Each school should maximise use of their buildings and school and community grounds as part of their work to embed Learning for Sustainability. Across Scotland, many schools are developing wilderness gardens and vegetable patches to stimulate learning and play.

## **Culture and Community**

Each school should appreciate and celebrate the diversity of Scotland's history, culture and heritage and engage with other cultures and traditions around the world. It should also know, respect and care for the rights, responsibilities, values and opinions of others. It should promote an awareness and understanding of democratic processes where the school community participates in critical thinking and decision making.

### **3. Recent Learning for Sustainability Developments in Scottish Borders Council**

3.1 SBC schools continue to meet the revised Eco School targets. The main challenge for some schools is to meet the requirements of re-assessment of Green Flag awards.

Numbers of schools with awards as of June 2016: Bronze 55 Silver 62 Green Flag 17

3.2 Other strategies supporting Learning for Sustainability:

- Energy: In 2013 – 2014 the Council's Energy team visited nine schools and made 24 presentations to a total pupil audience of approximate 560.
- Waste: The Council's Waste team conducted 19 audits in 16 different schools (15 primary 1 secondary) seven of which were first audits, six were follow up second audits and in three schools first and second audits were carried out over the same year. They also worked with schools to review their approaches to litter and dog fouling and are considering ways in which they can help schools find out about what happens to recycled materials. Both teams have continued their involvement with schools in session 2014 – 2015.
- School Travel Plans:
- Countryside Rangers
- Harestanes
- John Muir Awards
- Borders Forest Trust
- OWL's: Outdoor Woodland Learning

3.3 CLPL Opportunities

SBC Offer a variety of professional development opportunities, including:

Offering funded twilight sessions, workshops, individual mentoring and networking events, in support of global citizenship as a core part of Learning for Sustainability. This is available to individual teachers, faculties, whole schools, or learning communities. There are also opportunities to provide support for probationer teachers.

Offering a further range of funded Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) opportunities through the Global Learning Programme Scotland (GLP-S). These CLPL courses are designed to support professional reflection and the new mandatory GTCS professional update.

Delivering international learning workshops through The British Council's Connecting Classrooms Programme.

Access to a lending library of global citizenship resources which are loaned out to teachers to support them with their Learning for Sustainability work. Teachers are welcome to come into the centre to browse and seek advice on relevant resources.

Sharing good news with the wider public via a quarterly newsletter **SBCConnect** to keep residents up to date with developments in Learning for Sustainability at the global, national and local levels and to signpost relevant and useful resources. Connect also showcases work from across SBC.

Encouraging SBC contributions to **Stride**, a popular, twice-yearly global citizenship magazine published by the network of Scottish Global Learning Centres which provides practical information and activities for teachers. The magazine has now gone online and can be accessed at [www.stridemagazine.org.uk](http://www.stridemagazine.org.uk) By offering the magazine in an online format, schools in every part of SBC are now able to access and download activities to support their Learning for Sustainability work.

# People and Place

## Learning for Sustainability

### SBC Strategy

February 2016

*'The entitlement to learning for sustainability complements the purpose of Curriculum for Excellence and sends a clear message that in the context of the broad general education and the totality of children and young people's experience through their education, sustainability and developing as responsible global citizens should be an expectation for all.'*

From Scottish Government response to  
One Planet Schools Working Group, March 2013

## **Introduction**

Learning for Sustainability is an international priority (UNESCO 2013). It involves learning to live within the environmental limits of our planet and to build a just, equitable and peaceful society. It is concerned with every level and type of learning and the provision of quality education for all.

In Scotland, Learning for Sustainability became the umbrella term created by the One Planet Schools Working Group to cover Sustainable Development Education, Developing Global Citizenship and Outdoor Learning. In December 2012 the group produced a national Learning for Sustainability (LfS) Report which was accepted and adopted by The Scottish Government.

## **Learning for Sustainability (LfS) - A Definition**

The One Planet Report Working Group definition is as follows: *'A whole school approach that enables the school and its wider community to build the values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and confidence needed to develop practices and take decisions which are compatible with a sustainable and equitable society.'* This definition has been adopted in SBC.

## **Recommendations of One Planet Schools Working Group**

The report of the One Planet Schools Working Group recognised the need to move from a system which was often reliant on the enthusiasm and commitment of individuals, to one where a learner's access to Learning for Sustainability is recognised as core to their learning experience. Their high level recommendations are:

All learners should have an entitlement to Learning for Sustainability in their curriculum.

In line with the new GTCS Professional Standards, every practitioner, school and education leader should demonstrate learning for sustainability in their practice.

Every school should have a whole school approach to Learning for Sustainability that is robust, demonstrable, evaluated and supported by leadership at all levels.

School buildings, grounds and policies should support learning for sustainability.

These recommendations are accepted in SBC.

General Teaching Council Scotland (GTC Scotland) Expectations

GTC Scotland has adopted the One Planet Working Group's definition of Learning for Sustainability and has embedded it in their suite of Professional Standards: the Standards for Registration, the Standards for Career-Long Professional Learning and the Standards for Leadership and Management. GTC Scotland seek *'to support leaders in actively embracing and promoting principles and practices of sustainability in all aspects of their work'* and state that *'all teachers should have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in relation to important cross-cutting themes across the curriculum, such as international education, sustainable development, citizenship, enterprise and creativity'*.

## **Why include Learning for Sustainability within pupils' learning experiences?**

Many practitioners have found that Learning for Sustainability provides motivational, relevant, challenging and creative learning experiences which engage learners and improve behaviour, attitude and attainment.

LfS is about ensuring that we all recognise our responsibilities to each other and the wider world. Our children and young people are growing up in a global world and their education must help them develop skills for learning and prepare them for living and working in an increasingly multicultural, sustainable and international society.

Our planet is affected by major issues such as climate change and global poverty. These require our young people to be part of an innovative generation that knows how to work with others to find solutions, that cares about human rights and values and celebrates cultural diversity.

## **What does this mean for SBC schools?**

All learners have an entitlement to Learning for Sustainability as part of their education. Therefore, every school in SBC needs to:

- adopt a whole school approach to Learning for Sustainability that is robust, demonstrable, evaluated and supported by leadership at all levels;
- ensure that school buildings, grounds and policies support learning for sustainability approaches.

For any LfS approach to be successful, pupils need to:

- Learn **about** the world – become successful learners by developing a knowledge and understanding of the landscape, the natural and cultural heritage of Scotland and the wider world and, while doing so, become reflective and open to new thinking and ideas.
- Learn **for** life and work in a global society – by developing into responsible citizens and effective contributors who have a respect for others, understand and appreciate different beliefs and views while being able to communicate their own beliefs and views to others with confidence.
- Learn **through** global contexts – learning to live sustainable lives by appreciating the inter-dependence of people and the environment worldwide, and able to apply critical thinking in new contexts, locally and beyond.

To do so, each school should ensure that they adopt the 'four Cs' approach - curriculum, campus, culture and community:



## Curriculum

Strong leadership at all levels is required to ensure that LfS is used as a vehicle for learning within Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). It is a most effective way of delivering the four purposes of learning: successful learners, effective contributors, responsible citizens and confident individuals. It also allows us to plan relevant and meaningful learning opportunities through the four contexts of CfE: interdisciplinary learning, the ethos and life of the school, personal achievement and the experiences and outcomes of the eight curricular areas.

## Campus

Each school should maximise use of their buildings and school and community grounds as part of their work to embed Learning for Sustainability. Across Scotland, many schools are developing wilderness gardens and vegetable patches to stimulate learning and play.

## Culture and Community

Each school should appreciate and celebrate the diversity of Scotland's history, culture and heritage and engage with other cultures and traditions around the world. It should also know, respect and care for the rights, responsibilities, values and opinions of others. It should promote an awareness and understanding of democratic processes where the school community participates in critical thinking and decision making.

## What are SBC schools already doing to embed Learning for Sustainability?

Many SBC schools exemplify good practice in embedding Learning for Sustainability within their curriculum. The diagram below shows some of the key contexts which are currently being used to make connections in and across learning:



SBC Offer a variety of professional development opportunities to ensure **Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL)** in support of global citizenship is a core part of Learning for Sustainability. This is available to individual teachers, whole schools, faculties or learning communities. CLPL Opportunities include:

- Offering funded twilight sessions, workshops, individual mentoring and networking events, in support of global citizenship as a core part of Learning for Sustainability. This is available to individual teachers, faculties, whole schools, or learning communities. There are also opportunities to provide support for probationer teachers.
- Offering a further range of funded Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) opportunities through the Global Learning Programme Scotland (GLP-S). These CLPL courses are designed to support professional reflection and the new mandatory GTCS professional update.
- Delivering international learning workshops through The British Council's Connecting Classrooms Programme.
- Access to a lending library of global citizenship resources which are loaned out to teachers to support them with their Learning for Sustainability work. Teachers are welcome to come into the centre to browse and seek advice on relevant resources.
- Sharing good news with the wider public via a quarterly newsletter **SBCConnect** to keep residents up to date with developments in Learning for Sustainability at the global, national and local levels and to signpost relevant and useful resources. Connect also showcases work from across SBC.
- Encouraging SBC contributions to **Stride**, a popular, twice-yearly global citizenship magazine published by the network of Scottish Global Learning Centres which provides practical information and activities for teachers. The magazine has now gone online and can be accessed at [www.stridemagazine.org.uk](http://www.stridemagazine.org.uk) By offering the magazine in an online format, schools in every part of SBC are now able to access and download activities to support their Learning for Sustainability work

### **SBC Learning for Sustainability Group**

In the past there has been a SBC LfS group, representing all areas of learning, and both private and SBC. It is recommended that a similar group be re-established to ensure ongoing LfS development in SBC. The recommendation will be that the group will meet frequently and encourage broad membership of school staff and LfS partners.

Links to SBC Educational Excursions Policy, November 2014  
This strategy sits alongside the above policy.

### **Review Date**

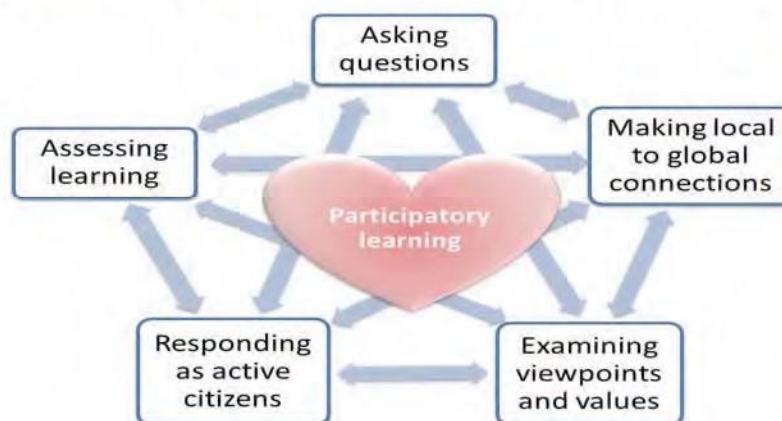
This policy will be reviewed and updated by XXXX at the latest.

## Learning for Sustainability and the CfE: Support for Schools

Global Citizenship is a key cross-curricular theme and is fully embedded across the experiences and outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence. Both the GTCs, through the Professional Standards, and the Scottish Government have significantly strengthened their commitment to global citizenship under the umbrella of **Learning for Sustainability**.

It is becoming increasingly evident that we are not living within our means. A disproportionate amount of the world's resources are being consumed by wealthy industrialised nations. This is happening with huge environmental and social costs. **Global Citizenship** is a way of living that recognizes our world is an increasingly complex web of connections and interdependencies. One in which our choices and actions may have repercussions for people and communities locally, nationally and internationally. It nurtures personal respect for others, wherever they live. It encourages individuals to think deeply and critically about what is equitable and just and what will minimize harm to our planet. Exploring global citizenship themes helps learners grow more confident in standing up for their beliefs, and more skilled in evaluating the ethics and impact of their decisions.

### A framework for Global Citizenship:



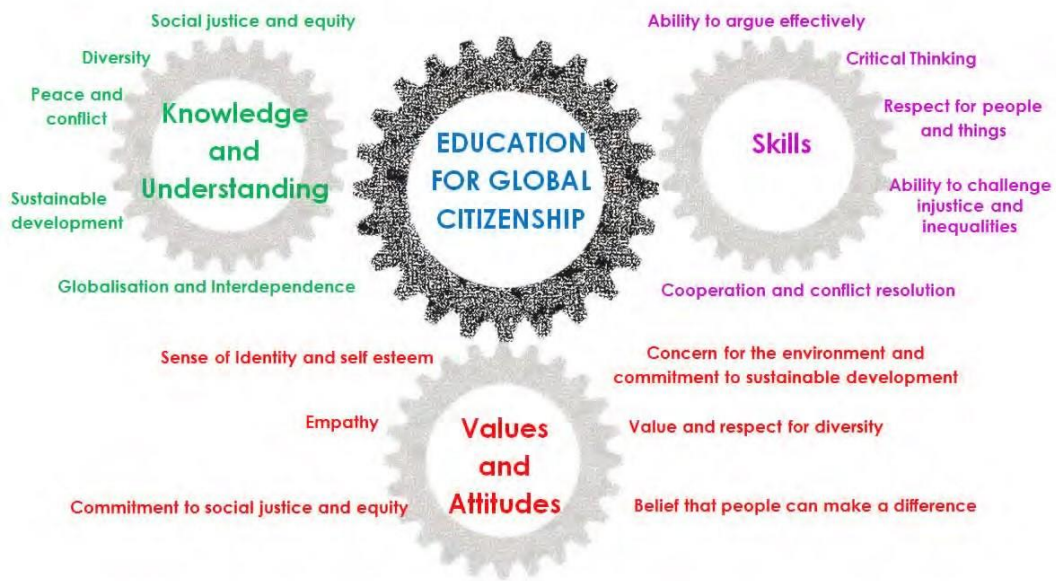
Young people are naturally passionate about topics that connect to real life as it is happening now ... a world challenged by conflict, inequality and environmental harm, and crying out for positive change.

Whatever is being taught, from art to mathematics, from science to sports, global citizenship themes connect to subjects across the curriculum, creating lessons with stimulating, contemporary content that learners feel is relevant to their lives.

#### Global citizenship themes include:

- Diversity
- Human rights
- Responsibility for actions affecting others
- Social equity, fairness and justice
- Socio-economic interdependence and enterprise
- Sustainable development and climate change

## The Key Elements of Education for Global Citizenship



Education for global citizenship involves active and participatory learning which engages young learners while developing confidence, self-esteem and skills of critical thinking, communication, cooperation and conflict resolution. These are all important components in improving behaviour, motivation and achievement throughout the school.