

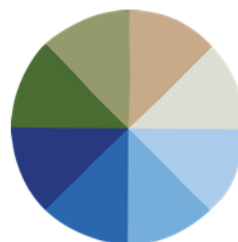
Development Education Research Centre
Research Paper No. 22



Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals: Evidence in Schools in England

Research for Our Shared World

Douglas Bourn and Jenny Hatley
2022



OUR
SHARED
WORLD



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Background to report

This report has been produced by Douglas Bourn, Director of Development Education Research Centre at UCL and Jenny Hatley from Bath Spa University, on behalf of the Our Shared World Coalition of organisations.

The focus of Our Shared World is to lobby UK government and other policymakers on why Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals should be an integral component of all children and young people's learning.

Douglas Bourn and Jenny Hatley are active members of Our Shared World network, and they were commissioned by this network to coordinate the gathering of evidence of the extent to which the themes of Target 4.7 of the Goals are already reflected within schools in England.

This report has been produced therefore to demonstrate current levels of engagement in these themes, how they are being delivered, areas of success, identifiable gaps and what the priorities for policymakers should be in the future.

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Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals: Evidence in Schools in England.

Executive Summary

The climate emergency and the Global Pandemic have had a major impact on how young people view the world, with many expressing significant concern or even a sense of despair at what may lie ahead. Educators have a major – and urgent – responsibility to equip all learners with the knowledge, skills and value base to develop resilience, hope and a belief that a more sustainable, just and peaceful world is possible and that they can make a contribution towards this.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) launched in 2015 provide a valuable framework for this vision for education, particularly expounded in Target 4.7. All governments, including the UK government, have signed up to the SDGs, including Target 4.7 that states that:

‘By 2030, ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development’

Target 4.7 calls for more than environmental, peace or human rights education in the classroom. It also suggests the need for a re-think of the purpose of education, to show that it is a public good which can empower learners to co-construct change, foster innovation and creativity and take action towards sustainability and collective human wellbeing.

Since 2015, a range of international bodies from the European Commission and OECD to UNESCO and the World Bank have called for education which includes similar themes in various policy statements since 2015. Above all, they recognise a need to think of education as more than just a benefit to the economy. For example, UNESCO has called for an increased emphasis on education as both a public and a common good. Target 4.7 themes also link to a range of international policy statements such as the Maastricht Declaration on Global Education in 2002, the Council of Europe’s programmes on human rights education and the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development from 2005 to 2014. There is therefore a wealth of expertise within the broader educational community to support the delivery of the themes of Target 4.7 within all schools in England.

The themes outlined in Target 4.7 relate closely to initiatives and instances of successful practice that have been evident in England for over 30 years, for example through policy statements from bodies such as the Royal Society of Arts, the Wellcome Trust and from leading educational figures such as Tim Brighouse.

The Department for Education’s Sustainability and Climate Change strategy launched in November 2021 gives an indication of some welcome movement within the UK government’s thinking on the purpose of education. While there is concern from various quarters that the new strategy does not go far enough, there is at least recognition of the need for sustainability education, and particularly climate education, to have a higher profile within schools.

There is encouraging evidence of examples of practice where schools have consciously promoted the SDGs, including Target 4.7, and an increasing number of schools are making broader social purposes central to their vision statements. It is encouraging that the vast majority of schools in England include some, if not all, of the themes of Target 4.7 within their curriculum. The popularity and support for these themes can be seen here:

- 3000 Schools supporting UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Award
- 70% of schools have at one or time or another engaged in the Eco-Schools Award (note this does not mean 70% of schools are currently engaged).
- Global Learning was a feature of the activities of over 8,000 schools through the Global Learning Programme and this has continued through the British Council's Connecting Classrooms programme (note that due to decreased funding, fewer schools are being reached by the current programme).
- 14% of schools involved with Fairtrade Award Programme
- Creative Partnerships programme engaged over 5000 schools in initiatives on creativity, culture and the arts.
- The Mindfulness in Schools Project which is an important contribution to intrapersonal peace education engaged over 500 teachers and 15000 pupils between 2016 and 2020

These programmes, often led by civil society organisations or professional bodies, have clearly enthused and inspired many teachers and had a direct impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. However, the reach of these programmes varies with fluctuations in funding and CSO/professional body priorities, meaning that many learners are not participating in this kind of learning. Unlike Scotland or Wales, coverage of SDG 4.7 themes in schools in England is not mandated by government. Therefore, many learners have little opportunity to explore these themes in effective ways. Given the acute global crises we currently face, this needs to change as a matter of urgency.

A feature of many of the initiatives has been the desire from teachers to support approaches that move from just acquiring knowledge about a particular field, say human rights, peace or the environment, to one that is seen as being part of a distinctive and participatory pedagogical approach. This means a crucial topic such as climate change is not as just seen as an additional curriculum subject but rather as a thread that runs through multiple subjects linked to a broader social purpose and to learner-centred pedagogies that support pupils to be more pro-active in bringing about positive change.

However, the evidence to date suggests that the SDGs, including Target 4.7 and the wider themes it raises, have not had a high enough profile within all schools in England. The evidence suggests that there have been a number of obstacles to making progress on raising the profile of both the SDGs and Target 4.7 within the ethos and practice of many schools. These include:

- Over-emphasis on examinations and testing
- The focus on a subject-based curriculum stifling creativity at an interdisciplinary level.
- Lack of promotion of the broader social purpose and role of education amongst policymakers
- Lack of training and confidence in teachers on the Target 4.7 themes
- Lack of focus on Target 4.7 themes in OFSTED inspections

- Lack of funding for CSOs and professional bodies that support schools on Target 4.7 themes
- Lack of clear vision and direction on Target 4.7 from national policy

Research shows that whilst there is increased engagement from schools in many of the themes underpinning Target 4.7, their importance and relevance is not necessarily recognised or reflected within OFSTED inspections.

Evidence also suggests that whilst government has put the responsibility for curriculum development on schools, innovation and creativity has often been the result of support from civil society organisations, professional bodies or the added incentive that an award programme can bring. This is an issue because since 2015 the amount of government funding to support such innovation within schools has considerably reduced.

What numerous studies also show is that as a consequence of the responsibility being left to schools, there is an impression of a lack of vision and direction from national policy makers. Numerous schools have responded to this by developing their own vision statements that reflect a broader social purpose to education, but this kind of response is not uniform, nor is successful implementation of vision statements.

There are encouraging examples of success. For example, many educationalists value the distinctive pedagogical approach of peace education and its activities around intrapersonal peace, peer mediation and combatting bullying and violence. Likewise, exploring cultural themes can also be an effective way of enabling pupils to connect their own identity and sense of place in the world with the SDGs. Both culture and creativity have been the subject of numerous research studies and commissions since 2010 and recognised as key to quality education. For example, creative approaches to learning help improve the overall quality of teaching and is something to which pupils respond positively.

As well as relating learning and education to a broader social purpose, the evidence also identifies the value of a learner-centred pedagogy. Examples from education on environment, global citizenship, human rights, peace and culture themes have all shown that where the learning is participatory, encourages critical thinking and is recognised as relevant to learners' needs, it has a broader impact. Pupils feel more engaged in the learning process and the overall quality of teaching is improved.

Finally, one of the wider themes in Target 4.7 is equality and diversity. In recent years, there has been a welcome increase in many schools in considering issues of equality and diversity within the classroom. The impact of the Black Lives Matters movement can be seen in schools giving increased prominence to themes such as Black History Month and decolonisation. However, teaching on climate change issues, whilst given increased prominence by the UK government through COP26, tend to focus on content and knowledge in sciences and geography rather than looking at social implications and how young people can become directly involved. In responding to these challenges, schools also need to recognise the impact the profile of climate change has had on children and young people's views about the future of the world. Many young people want to go much further and engage with these issues directly and there is a need for schools to develop mechanisms for enabling this to take place.

Recommendations

To enable Target 4.7 themes to have a bigger impact in all schools and on all learners in England, the following recommendations are suggested:

- All schools should be made aware of the SDGs, particularly Target 4.7 and be encouraged to reflect them in their teaching and learning.
- Department for Education creates a process to measure the progress that all schools are making on including the SDGs and Target 4.7 which can then be used as part of the UK government's reporting on progress towards the Goals.
- Bodies responsible for both the initial training and continuing professional development of teachers should be given resources and support to enable all teachers to have the knowledge, skills and confidence to include the themes of Target 4.7 within the classroom.
- All schools should be encouraged to consider how they are including a social purpose in their visions and mission statements

Acknowledgements

This report has been produced with the support, involvement and contributions from many people involved with the Our Shared World Network. They are too numerous to mention here but include academics and researchers, representatives from non-governmental organisations and international bodies and educational practitioners. We would however particularly like to mention Ellis Brooks, Frances Bestley, Martin Spafford, Ann Finlayson and Kate Lea for their help in gathering material for this report.

The themes identified within the report were also helped by a webinar held with members of the Our Shared World Network in October 2021. The editors of this report are however responsible for the content of this publication.

Douglas Bourn and Jenny Hatley

Acronyms

BERA	British Education Research Association
CCGL	Connecting Classrooms Through Global Learning
CLA	Cultural Learning Alliance
CLOtC	Council for learning Outside the Classroom
COP26	United National Climate Change Conference 26
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DEFRA	Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DFE	Department for Education
EE	Environmental Education
EERA	European Education Research Association
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
GAP	United Nations Global Action Programme
GCE	Global Citizenship Education
GCSE	General Certificate for Secondary Education
GLP	Global Learning Programme
HRE	Human Rights Education
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RRSA	Rights Respecting School Award
RSA	Royal Society of the Arts
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TES	Times Educational Supplement
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WEF	World Economic Forum
WIA	Whole Institutional Approach

What is Our Shared World?

The urgency of addressing complex and interrelated global challenges such as climate justice, the COVID-19 pandemic and racial, gender and economic justice cannot be overstated. The student climate strikes, #MeToo movement, COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter have revealed the pressing need - and opportunity - to ensure both *formal and non-formal education systems* include stronger elements of *engaged active citizenship*. Our Shared World (OSW), brings together a large network of actors seeking to advocate for and support the successful realisation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.7 across England by 2030, equipping our society to create a more sustainable, fairer, peaceful and resilient world.

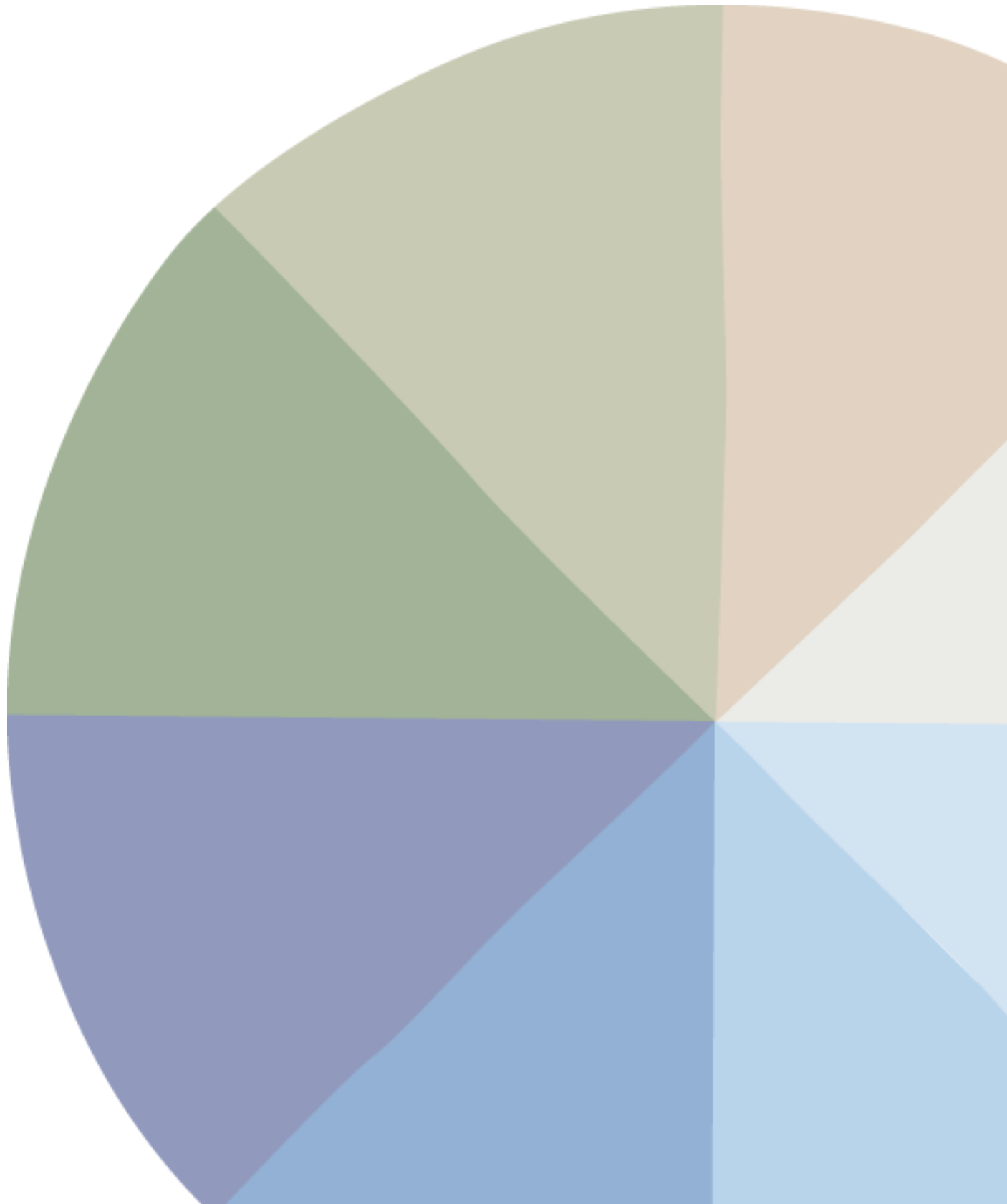
The Network sees SDG 4.7 as a vehicle for promoting high-quality education for sustainable development and global citizenship, which will act as the means to support and motivate people - especially young people - to tackle today's global challenges. Set within the wider framework of the SDGs, SDG 4.7 enables people to understand the connections between local and global issues. For example, to address the climate emergency, we also need to understand its connection with other issues such as poverty or girls' education. Using participatory approaches, SDG 4.7 also enables people to become citizens that enact and support positive change in their society. It supports learners' emotional wellbeing, educators' motivation, and all people's ability to think and act justly and sustainably for themselves, for society and for the world.

The Network has working groups on evidence and research, policy development, social movements, and action learning. It welcomes new members from across England¹.

¹ <https://oursharedworld.net/join-our-shared-world/>

SECTION ONE

REPORT SCOPE & CONTEXT



Introduction

“Young people growing up today have a lot of concerns on their shoulders. The climate and ecological crisis are threatening their futures and young people around the world are increasingly frustrated and anxious about what is happening to the planet and the lack of action to protect it² They are angry about economic and racial inequality and want to live in a fairer, more inclusive society. They are worried about rising rates of mental health issues and loneliness in their generation and now they also find themselves amid a global health pandemic.”³

This quotation from a report by Global Action Plan reflects a commonly held view amongst many educationalists in England and elsewhere in the world that the beginnings of the third decade of the twenty first century are critical ones for education and particularly for young people growing up in uncertain and insecure times.

This report aims to show how the educational community in England has been responding to these challenges and suggests that the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular target 4.7 within these goals, provides a valuable and useful framework to provide a vision around the theme of Our Shared World.

Governments and policymakers around the world look to international frameworks as a way of measuring progress on their own national programmes, but also as a way of demonstrating engagement with and support for global goals. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the latest and perhaps most important internationally agreed framework for social, economic, environmental, and educational progress. All governments who have signed up to the SDGs, including the UK government, have to report annually on progress they are making to implement them.

Education is one of the main themes of the SDGs. There are ten targets within Goal 4 which states the aim to *ensure quality and inclusive education for all*. Alongside targets related to access and skills development, target 4.7 makes reference to social issues:

Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

As the world becomes more closely connected as a result of globalisation, the impact of COVID 19 and the climate emergency, never has there been a greater need for education policymakers in all countries, including England, to work towards common international education aims. The SDGs provide a unique opportunity to frame those aims and provide a contemporary and forward-thinking approach for the development of education in England for the next ten years.

² Climate Anxiety: Survey for BBC Newsround shows young people losing sleep over climate change and the environment” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51451737>

³ Global Action Plan (2020) United in Compassion: Bringing young people together to create a better world, London, Global Action Plan; see also Lawton, G. (2019) ‘I have eco-anxiety but that’s normal’, *New Scientist*, Volume 244, Issue 3251, 12 October 2019; Ojala, M. How do young people cope with global climate change? Coping strategies, engagement, and wellbeing. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 2012, 3

Target 4.7 is, however, more than just inclusion of a number of topics within education. It is proposing support for an approach to learning that could be said to be *transformational*. This vision and approach to education has become a major theme of UNESCO's educational programme and has resulted in the launch of an international network of academics, policymakers, businesspeople, and civil society to encourage and support the implementation of Target 4.7. This network, called Mission 4.7, has the support of leading figures from key international bodies such as the OECD, International Baccalaureate, Education International and the Vatican.⁴

This report aims to provide education policymakers, researchers, and practitioners with the evidence of recent and current activity in England that demonstrates the level of interest and potential support for such an approach.

The report includes sections on the key themes identified in 4.7, but in doing so suggests that there are some wider and underlying pedagogical questions and approaches that are being identified. This is why the report begins with a section on the purpose of education - because engaging with themes such as peace, sustainability, human rights and global citizenship suggests an approach to learning that is connected to a broader social goal, namely that education can contribute to securing a more just and sustainable world.

Whilst the report focuses on research and evidence in England, reference is also to ways in which other countries and nations around the world are making reference to 4.7 in their curriculum materials and policy statements.

Finally, the importance of themes within target 4.7 - sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, peace, cultural diversity, and global citizenship - have in the past been seen as distinct and separate goals. What the Goals are proposing is that under the heading of sustainable development, they need to be brought more closely together, as they have an underlying common purpose of wanting to make the world a better place.

⁴ <https://www.mission4point7.org/who-we-are>

Report Methodology

This report is a comprehensive synthesis of the evidence of ‘what works’ in implementing SDG 4.7 in schools in England. The evidence in this report consists of both qualitative and quantitative data. This demonstrates the impact for large cohorts of young people as well as smaller groups, and individuals, which serve as exemplars of wider principles. The evidence has been sourced from academics and civil society professionals with in-depth expertise and experience in their relevant areas. It consists of academic research and PhD theses, which provide a robust underpinning, and accompanied with evidence from charities, other educational organisations (including schools) and transnational organisations including UNESCO, PISA, the UK government and professional subject bodies, including the Royal Society of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce. Evidence consists of annual reports, impact evaluations, books and articles.

The evidence covers the period from the date of publication of this report and goes back 3 to 5 years. This ensures that the evidence remains relevant, captures current expertise and is reflexive, acknowledging that the world has changed during this time, not least because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic itself has opened up conversation and debate about what education could and should be, and this report captures some of this thinking where it is supported by wider evidence. It also brings in international evidence where this is informative, and this helps to locate the English context within current international trends.

The themes of this report were identified through consultation with the many stakeholders within the Our Shared World Coalition. They reflect many years of experience in this field of work and a current in-depth understanding of the state of play. The themes come from the description of SDG 4.7 and those that are related. Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development are explicitly mentioned in the goal descriptor, but a closer knowledge of Global Citizenship shows that it necessarily intersects with Peace Education and Education for Human Rights. The experience of the group also highlighted the need for Cultural Education and what it can offer to the achievement of SDG 4.7, and so it is also included here.

The Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as the successor global goals programme to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), bringing in the evidence and themes from the decade on Education for Sustainable Development. The SDGs are seen as goals for all countries, unlike the MDGs. They are seen as a plan of action for *'people, planet and prosperity'*. Whilst eradicating global poverty remains the number one priority, human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and the interlinking of the economy, the environment and society under the banner of sustainable development means the SDGs have an all-encompassing remit affecting all areas of life for all peoples on the planet.

Heads of government saw 2030 as the target year for making substantial progress on these goals. Agenda 30 of the SDGs are 17 goals with 169 targets within them. The Goals also include a clear values base around fostering inter-cultural understanding, tolerance, mutual response and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility.⁵

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
- Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

⁵ <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

In addition, UNESCO has been playing a leading international role in providing evidence and material measuring the progress of nations on the goals and what more they could be doing.

Education, whilst coming mainly under Goal 4 with the emphasis on *quality education for all*, has relevance to all of the goals. It is education that can help to build understanding and engagement with efforts to combat the climate crisis. It has a direct role in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, and a key step towards gender equality is equal access to all forms of education for girls and women.

Education more widely helps with social and economic progress, greater job opportunities and a healthier democracy.

Whilst the focus of this report is related primarily to Target 4.7 of these Goals, as can be seen all of the targets are directly relevant to all aspects of education in England.

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

- 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
- 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
- 4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development
- 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- 4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries
- 4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States⁶

⁶ <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

The SDGs form a plan of action for the achievement, by 2030, of a sustainable and prosperous future for humanity and the planet. It is certainly not without its challenges, but the coming together of all sectors of society ensures that the approach of the SDGs encompasses all areas of life and benefits all peoples. There are many targets within them, and the central place of Education is shown by its relevance to all 17 of the goals. Education provides the forum for the debate and critical analysis necessary to build understanding and engagement to combat the world's global problems, not least the climate crisis, gender equality, the erosion of democracy and the building of peaceful and inclusive societies.

Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals since 2015

For the first five years of the implementation of the SDGs there was some evidence of limited progress in areas regarding access to education, health and recognition of the need to do more on climate change. However, by 2021 there was considerable evidence of the increasing effects of climate change. 2019 was the second warmest year on record. 2020 also saw the beginnings of COVID-19 which has had a devastating effect on all regions of the globe, increasing poverty, directly affecting the health of millions of people and resulting in many young people around the world having a reduced or minimal education provision.⁷

Progress in England

The main barometer of progress in England on the SDGs has been the Statistical Index provided by the Office of National Statistics by UK government. This index provides links to data on all of the Goals, and with regard to education evidence, of progress regarding improvements within education.⁸

The 2019 review of education provides some valuable data mainly related to increases in quality education. Reference is made in this review - in response to the target on inclusive education - to the 2014 Children and Families Act. To demonstrate activity around learning about the Goals, the work of the UK civil society organisation *Send My Friend to School* is mentioned in relation to promoting awareness raising of Goal 4 and the right to education for all children. The review report also mentions the ways in which schools are teaching about the Goals through *citizenship*. Particular mention is made of the work of the British Council and its promotion of Target 4.7⁹, with Barrowford Primary School in Lancashire mentioned as an example. Examples are also given of activities and policy initiatives in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.¹⁰

The 2021 report gives no mention of Target 4.7 of the Goals, and this is reflected in strategy documents from the Department for Education. The focus of the education materials is on levelling up, improving skills and raising standards.¹¹

⁷ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/progress-report/>

⁸ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/812007/Annex-III-Statistical-Annex-26June2019.pdf

⁹ This refers to Connecting Classrooms Through Global Learning programme discussed in more detail later in this report.

¹⁰ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818212/UKVNR-web-accessible1.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-education-outcome-delivery-plan/dfe-outcome-delivery-plan-2021-to-2022>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/implementing-the-sustainable-development-goals/implementing-the-sustainable-development-goals--2>

This report aims to address this lack of evidence provided by UK government by providing a comprehensive review of evidence gathered in the last five years from academics, researchers, professional bodies, and practitioners.

The themes from Target 4.7, which are discussed later in this report, suggest some questions about the wider purpose of education - and it is to that area this report now turns.

The Purpose of Education

The SDGs are not only important for measuring progress on specific goals and targets. Their existence and overarching aims pose major questions for all governments around the world as to how they perceive the importance and relevance of education, and what its purpose really should be.

This whole wider question has been further highlighted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as many countries were forced to put much of their education provision online, prompting a general re-examination of educational approaches. The situation also opened up revealing debates in many countries as to the level of resourcing education would need to recover from the pandemic, as compared to, say, health provision and economic recovery.¹²

Whilst the purpose of education has always been a source of debate, both nationally and internationally, the pandemic has led to questions from many figures within education and society as to whether the emphasis should be just on preparing young people for the demands of entering the economy. This has perhaps been the dominant focus within UK government conversations, but there is another perspective which suggests a broader and more liberal approach that prioritises supporting young people to develop into caring and engaged members of communities and society more widely.¹³

A continuing theme of this report is the need to progress towards a state of affairs where neither approach is dominant, and instead it is fully recognised that there are a plurality of views. What both the pandemic has identified, and what has become explicit within the SDGs, is the need to encourage debate within all sectors of society as to what the purpose of education is.¹⁴

In addition to any dominant influence that may come from government, education both influences and is influenced by society. Whatever the national issue of the day, education (and predominantly schools) are asked to respond. Recent protests under the banner of the Black Lives Matter movement have led to conversations about the decolonisation of the school curriculum, and the role of white privilege within our school structures. Similarly, the student climate strikes have led to debate about the place of sustainability within schools¹⁵ and the role of children's voice - not only in determining their own learning, but in whether so-called informal learning opportunities, such as exercising their rights to march and protest, could be seen as equal educational opportunities alongside more formal curriculum provision¹⁶. Further, the climate strikes¹⁷ and race-related protests have raised questions concerning the role of theory in education and whether the dominant current economic model should be allowed to be explicitly critiqued in schools. Most recently, the pandemic has led to conversations about the nature of learning itself and the role of education in

¹² Kharas, H. (2020) 'The impact of COVID-19 on global extreme poverty'. Brookings Future Development blog, 21 October. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2020/10/21/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-global-extreme-poverty/>

¹³ Reboot the Future (2020) *Let's Talk About #RebootingEducation*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_rdPmWMH40&feature=youtu.be

¹⁴ A number of the themes now developed in this section are based on this article: Bourn, D. (2021) 'Pedagogy of hope: global learning and the future of education'. *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, 13 (2), 65–78.

¹⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jul/11/pandemic-environmental-action-conservation-metoo-black-lives-matter>

¹⁶ CAT (Centre for Alternative Technology) (2020) 'Talking to young people about climate change'. 2020. <https://www.cat.org.uk/past-webinars/talking-to-young-people-about-climate-change/>

¹⁷ UKSCN (UK Student Climate Network) (2020a) 'We, the students, demand...' <https://ukscn.org/our-demands/>. UKSCN; (UK Student Climate Network) (2020b) 'How I went from shy kid to school striker'. <https://ukscn.org/blog/2020/02/12/how-i-went-from-shy-kid-to-school-striker/>

addressing often entrenched social inequalities. With global school closures and the urgent need for education to be provided entirely online, questions are again asked about whether technology can replace the teacher, whether students are better served by algorithms or personal human judgements, and what role family structure, housing, and socioeconomic status play in educational success¹⁸.

In addition to some of the meta-questions asked above, which touch on the philosophical and social purposes of education, questions are also raised about what should constitute the content of a school curriculum. What is the appropriate body of knowledge and skills that a population should learn to become functioning members of society? Whilst questions are raised about the imbalance of curriculum time afforded to each area, few would doubt the inclusion of the core subjects of Mathematics, English and Science - just as few would doubt the necessity of a broad curriculum which includes the arts, learning about nature, and the importance of spiritual and emotional literacy. Yet the tussle between which perspective should dominate within these curricula areas is very alive. Should it be local, national, global or a mixture of these? Should it be British, European, Global, or again, a mixture? These questions influence content, teacher training and school culture and they serve to help mould the identities of children and young people as they journey through our education system.

Education's role in moulding identities is central to the type of society we wish to have – education is not considered a private affair, it is a public good and a common good; there to be shared for the benefit of all. The notion of education as a common good is an important point for both the purpose and future of education.

UNESCO's report¹⁹ on the future of education to 2050, states:

'Respect for human rights and concern for education as a common good must become the central threads that stitch together our shared world and interconnected future. As this report argues, these two universal principles must become foundational in education everywhere. The right to quality education everywhere and learning that builds the capabilities of individuals to work together for shared benefit provide the foundation for flourishing, diverse futures of education.'

UNESCO's report also asserts an education that is built by public participation, leading to an education that is not just for the common good decided by a select few, but an education fully relevant to the needs of communities, built by and accountable to the diverse voices of humanity it seeks to truly recognise.

This central theme of commonality is also posited by several key thinkers as the correct code to enable us to solve many of the challenges we face, not least the climate crisis. Education as a public and common good is described by Nóvoa and Alvim (2020) as a beacon which guides educational transformation²⁰ and by Sobin (2021) as providing *'the right moral coordinates'* that *'give good reason for hope'*²¹. It is education's essential position in the lives of individuals *and* as central to a well-functioning society which makes questions about its purpose so vital.

¹⁸ De', R., Pandey, N. & Pal, A. (2020) Impact of digital surge during Covid-19 pandemic: A viewpoint on research and practice. *International Journal of Information Management*, 55, 102171. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7280123/>

¹⁹ UNESCO (2021) Reimagining Our Future Together— A new social contract for education

²⁰ Nóvoa, A. & Alvim, Y. (2020) Nothing is new, but everything has changed: A viewpoint on the future school. *Prospects*, 49, 35–41. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09487-w>

²¹ Sobe, N. W. (2021) Reworking Four Pillars of Education to Sustain the Commons. *UNESCO Futures of Education Ideas LAB*. <https://en.unesco.org/futuresofeducation/ideas-lab/sobe-reworking-four-pillars-education-sustain-commons>

International Debates and Observations

Debate about the purpose of education has been brought into sharp focus by the pandemic. It has provided an opportunity to revisit old questions and ask new ones – not just about the role and place of technology in education, but about the nature of education in all of its philosophical, social and personal aspects. Just as the pandemic is a global phenomenon, so it has sparked a global conversation. The International Commission on the Future of Education, formed by UNESCO in 2019 and ‘composed of thought leaders from the worlds of academia, science, government, business and education’²² illuminates the potential of the current moment:

‘The current crisis is reminding us how crucial public education is in societies, communities, and in individual lives. We have been reminded that education is a bulwark against inequality—and of the importance of schooling in enabling lives of dignity and purpose. As we embrace this exceptional opportunity to transform the world, and as we reimagine the organization of our educational institutions and learning environments, we will need to think about what we want to become. We have arrived at a moment—however unexpectedly—where collectively revisiting the purposes of education and organization of learning has become imperative.’²³

The International Commission on the Future of Education agree that decisions should be based on shared principles, visions of desirable collective futures, scientific evidence, and a humanistic vision of education and development. This vision includes ‘development and human rights frameworks’ and presents nine ideas for action to be considered by the global community. Regarding education’s purpose, the commission asserts that it should remain a common good. Education should include connectivity and access to information as part of the right to an education. Alongside this, however, UNESCO’s report cautions that ‘core principles of human dignity, including the right to privacy and the right to pursue one’s own purposes, come into play when we look at the transformation disruptive digitalisation has brought’. A critical approach to technology and digitalisation is necessary.

UNESCO also prioritise participation by diverse groups, indicating that in some ways education is changing regardless of official policy making by governments:

‘The current trend towards greater and more diversified non-state involvement in education policy, provision and monitoring is an expression of an increasing demand for voice, transparency, and accountability in education as a public matter. The involvement of teachers, youth movements, community-based groups, trusts, non-governmental organizations, enterprises, professional associations, philanthropists, religious institutions, and social movements can strengthen equity, quality and relevance of education. Non-state actors play important roles in ensuring the right to education when safeguarding the principles of non-discrimination, equality of opportunity, and social justice.’²⁴

Change is often being led from the grassroots, and the focus of the future of education is on co-constructing change together with the involvement of all stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental. Part of this participation includes the voices of students and young people to co-construct change. The vision also includes preserving the school as not just a space of learning but as a ‘space-time of collective living’ - acknowledging the important truth that schools are not just for academic learning, but are important for positive socialisation, safety and mental wellbeing. Further:

²² International Commission on the Future of Education, UNESCO 2020, p7
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373717/PDF/373717eng.pdf.multi>

²³ International Commission on the Future of Education, UNESCO 2020, p11
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373717/PDF/373717eng.pdf.multi>

²⁴ UNESCO (2021) Reimagining our futures together – A new social contract for education, p13

*'Schools should be protected educational sites because of the inclusion, equity and individual and collective well-being they support – and also reimagined to better promote the transformation of the world towards more just, equitable and sustainable futures'*²⁵

Perhaps the reimagining of schools is hinted at in the wide participation of diverse public groups, where the educational opportunities afforded by this participation can be harnessed, including connecting the different spaces they inhabit. As UNESCO state:

*'We should enjoy and expand the educational opportunities that take place throughout life and in different cultural and social spaces... We should connect natural, built, and virtual sites of learning, carefully leveraging the best potentials of each.'*²⁶

They further assert that education should actively fight misinformation and the denial of scientific knowledge, and advance *'global solidarity'*, including a commitment to international cooperation with empathy and a common humanity at its core²⁷. Indeed, access to science is included in UNESCO's definition of the right to an education, which stresses *'the right to information, culture and science'*²⁸.

A feature of the SDGs is its recognition of the purpose of education as being to *'empower people with the knowledge, skills and values to live in dignity, build their lives and contribute to their societies'*²⁹. Central to achieving this purpose is Goal 4 of the SDGs - entitled *'quality education'*. This strives to *'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'*³⁰. It consists of ten targets. Target 7, known as SDG4.7, is to provide a quality education in the area of *'education for sustainable development and global citizenship'*³¹. This includes several distinct yet overlapping areas which are explored within this report. These areas of education have the participation of young people at their core, promote positive socialisation and collective living through exploration of what it means to live peacefully together, promote an understanding of child and human rights, and foster global solidarity. They exemplify the future of education that these thought leaders from academia, business, science, government and education assert are necessary for the healthy and sustainable functioning of society.

The evidence of the need for this education is clear when the impacts of a lack of quality education are considered. UNESCO's evidence is stark:

Today, more than 262 million children and youth are out of school. Six out of ten are not acquiring basic literacy and numeracy after several years in school. 750 million adults are illiterate, fuelling poverty and marginalization.

This also indicates a link between education, ways out of poverty, and paths to greater inclusion which all contribute to the purpose of the SDGs, as stated above. This is further reinforced by evidence from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in their measure of

²⁵ UNESCO (2021) Reimagining Our Futures Together— A new social contract for education, p4

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.p.8.

²⁸ UNESCO (2021) Reimagining our futures together – A new social contract for education, p2

²⁹ UNESCO (2019) <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education2030-sdg4>

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ UNESCO (2017) <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259784/PDF/259784eng.pdf.multi>

adolescents' skills across 60 countries, which shows that disadvantage impacts on educational success³²:

In 23 countries more than 1 in 3 disadvantaged boys did not attain a minimum level of proficiency in reading.
Disadvantaged students have only a 1 in 6 chance to be enrolled in a school with high-achieving students

Students in disadvantaged schools were **twice as likely** as students in advantaged schools to attend a school where **a lack of teaching staff hinders instruction** at least to some extent

9 in 10 high-achieving **advantaged students** compared to only **7 in 10** high-achieving disadvantaged students expect to finish higher education

Interestingly, PISA also report that '*students whose peers co-operate the most scored about 50 points higher in reading than students whose peers co-operate the least*'³³, demonstrating the impact that positive cooperation, a theme for the purpose of education, can have.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), another global organisation, has examined education from the perspective of the skills that will be needed for the workforce in the coming years. They state:

*'The new sets of skills required to thrive in the workplace and in modern societies are transversal skills such as complex problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, resilience and adaptability, which demand teachers of high calibre. Finally, the re-engineering of traditional education systems into lifelong learning models requires the co-ordinated design of all stages starting from early childhood, and including schooling, vocational training, universities and adult learning.'*³⁴

Common themes for the purpose of education can be seen here, not least positive socialisation and the ability to live and work well together towards solutions to global challenges. In addition, a theme in common between the OECD, UNESCO and PISA is the promotion of learning as a life-long endeavour. Just as UNESCO highlight the link between a quality education and a well-functioning society, so the OECD further highlight the impact of education on people's participation as citizens and the functioning of democracy in adult society:

'Adult skill levels are also associated with levels of social cohesion. Adults with higher levels of skills have higher levels of trust in others, in institutions and in governments, perceive themselves as having better health, and feel that they participate actively in society. This sense of social cohesion will become more relevant as the complexity of our societies increases, the issues on which decisions need to be taken become more difficult to understand, and a global perspective is required... Highly skilled people will be more motivated and able to tackle this complexity, while others will seek the refuge of echo chambers where only like-minded people participate, or they will simply ignore the issues at stake, under the impression that nothing they say or do will make a difference. The erosion of trust in governments and the fact that growing

³² PISA (2018) PISA 2018 Results (Volume II): Where All Students Can Succeed, Executive Summary, p27 <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/>

³³ PISA (2018) PISA 2018 Results (Volume II): Where All Students Can Succeed, Executive Summary, p31 <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/>

³⁴ OECD (2020) <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9789264313835->

sectors of the population are becoming less active as citizens is a major threat to the effective functioning of democratic societies.’³⁵

A similar focus on the future workforce is adopted by the World Economic Forum (WEF), whose report of a global community-based consultation into the future of education, states that ‘*Education models must adapt to equip children with the skills to create a more inclusive, cohesive and productive world.*’³⁶ To achieve this, they have identified eight characteristics which they assert define high quality learning:

- Global Citizenship Skills
- Innovation and Creativity Skills
- Technology Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Personalised and self-paced learning
- Accessible and Inclusive learning
- Problem based and collaborative learning
- Lifelong and student-driven learning

The purposes of education - drawn from a consensus of international opinion from UNESCO, the OECD, PISA and the WEF, are also found in the definition of global competencies, measured by PISA: ‘*Global competence enables individuals to examine local, global and intercultural issues, understand and appreciate different perspectives and worldviews, interact successfully and respectfully with others, and take responsible action towards sustainability and collective well-being. Beyond numeracy, literacy and science, new methods of educating are needed to help students develop the combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that make up global competence.*’³⁷

In this definition, those common themes about the purpose of education from this international perspective are clear.

Arguments for bringing renewed purpose to education post-COVID-19 often discuss the climate crisis. The pandemic has undeniably been a truly global crisis, but climate change is equally so. Issues highlighted by the pandemic have focused minds towards the realisation that what and how we learn must change if we are to create societies that are more resilient, sustainable and inclusive.³⁸ With specific reference to climate change, the focus of education now is not *about* climate change, but about *adapting to, mitigating and reverting* climate change³⁹. UNESCO assert that ‘*education about and for climate change needs to align with these three goals*’.⁴⁰ Furthermore, central to education for climate change and indeed recovery from any crisis, is the need to focus on solutions and empowerment in order to allay any eco-anxiety or sense of

³⁵ OECD (2019) https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9789264313835-en/1/2/1/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/9789264313835-en&_csp_=eef9590c8a200b40c4a9357a6f7dd37e&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book

³⁶ World Economic Forum. (2020) Schools of the Future: Defining New Models of Education for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, World Economic Forum, p4

³⁷ <https://afs.org/2020/02/03/launching-afscon-2020/>

³⁸ Giannini, S. (2020) Build back better: Education must change after COVID-19 to meet the climate crisis, UNESCO, <https://en.unesco.org/news/build-back-better-education-must-change-after-covid-19-meet-climate-crisis>

³⁹ UNESCO (2021) Reimagining our Futures Together — A new social contract for education, p30

⁴⁰ Ibid.

helplessness that may emerge from considering crises and associated problems. It is important to avoid a sense of pessimism in education and focus on being an active part of solutions. This also means avoiding a simplistic optimism often seen as wishful thinking and instead grounding education in a sense of hope, as Kelly states:

*'In re-thinking young people's futures, we need to plan and act in terms beyond the simplicity of being either optimistic or pessimistic. What we need is an exercise in HOPE... Hope is a much more radical and productive act. Hope enables us to look critically at the past, whilst simultaneously acknowledging the reality of present, and, in so doing, providing us with the capacity to envision and radically transform our future.'*⁴¹

Education underpins all 17 of the SDGs mentioned above, and the themes of SDG 4.7 outlined in this report specifically contribute to the ways in which what and how we learn can change.

'Building Back Better', the phrase attributed to the UN Secretary General for a post-COVID response, has implications for curriculum content, participatory pedagogies and how we use both physical and online learning spaces. It involves building competencies for social and emotional wellbeing alongside the more traditional model of knowledge and skills. Giannini (2020) states that education must create '*change makers, ready for global challenges*' and this means '*knowing how to navigate and be resilient in the face of periods of uncertainty and change, being skilled at assessing and managing risk, and being able to collaborate to find solutions*'⁴². This is reinforced by Gerver (2019) who states that '*education can no longer be preparing people for certainty - it must be focused more on preparing people to thrive in uncertainty*'⁴³. Gerver does not shy away from the challenge that this poses to educators and stresses that teachers need to be aware of how to educate their learners to thrive:

*'As educators, we cannot insulate ourselves from the world, or pretend that we have no role to play in it. Similarly, we cannot endeavour to protect our students from it. We must do all that we can to prepare our children for it and to do that, we need to find ways to understand it and then to use our expertise to create learning opportunities for them'*⁴⁴

As an example of promoting resilience in the face of challenges, the Sankofa Project⁴⁵, run by Global Learning London with young people and partners across three countries, uses storytelling as a method of both communal and individual self-reflection. They use this method to challenge injustice, imagine new collective futures, and build resilience for challenges faced. They state: '*We look back to stories from across the world, including our own, to find resilience for our most urgent challenges today, and towards a more hopeful and sustainable future for all.*' Resilience, risk management and living with ambiguity are skills which enable us to deal with stress and anxiety. As Giannini states, promoting this socio-emotional skill set is '*crucial to avoid the appeal of simplified answers, misinformation and conspiracy theories*'⁴⁶. The importance of socio-emotional wellbeing is also recognised as essential in a post-pandemic hybrid model of education which uses a combination of physical and online spaces⁴⁷. This framework for re-imagining education includes several competencies that overlap with the themes of education that underpin SDG 4.7 in this report, including social, emotional and intercultural skills, a global perspective, commitment to human

⁴¹ Kelly, P. (2021) Covid-19 and young people's recovery: an exercise in hope, RSA <https://www.thersa.org/comment/2021/03/covid-19-young-peoples-recovery>

⁴² Giannini (2020) op.cit.

⁴³ Gerver, R. (2019) *Education - A Manifesto for Change*, Bloomsbury, London, p.45

⁴⁴ Gerver op.cit. p.33

⁴⁵ Global learning London (2020) The Sankofa Project <https://globallearninglondon.org/project/sankofa-storytelling/>

⁴⁶ Giannini op.cit.

⁴⁷ NPD, Microsoft & UNESCO (2020). Education re-imagined: The future of learning. <https://edudownloads.azureedge.net/msdownloads/Microsoft-EducationReimagined-Paper.pdf>

equity and well-being, a genuine interest in human and environmental sustainability and resilience, among others⁴⁸.

Building back better also includes the importance of connection, collaboration and working together. The ability to live in a shared present whilst anticipating a shared future lies at the heart of the purpose of education. Focussing on *'what we share together, what we do together, and what we build together helps us reimagine the skills and competencies most needed in the present for the futures we want to create'*⁴⁹. These purposes of education, and the future of education that can provide concrete hope and strategies for successful, inclusive, sustainable societies can be conceptualised in four pillars⁵⁰:

- Learning to study, inquire and co-construct together
- Learning to collectively mobilise
- Learning to live in a common world
- Learning to attend and care

This involves thinking again about who our learners are – not only individuals, but part of a collective whole. As Facer (2021) states, *'the idea of the autonomous human child educated to achieve success in an economy detached from the biosphere and assessed as separate from others makes no sense in this analysis (if it ever did)'*⁵¹. Education for the common good, with learners as part of a collective whole, is further stated by Fazio (2020) as necessary for solving the complex challenges facing humanity:

*'Collective and collaborative approaches to education are necessary for citizens to confront complex socio-scientific environmental challenges. Education has the important task of reorienting learners to the environmental realities that we now confront, and realities that we cannot yet forecast.'*⁵²

Connection and a global perspective are also two of the themes which emerged from an international conversation led by Reboot the Future⁵³. Their conversation involved 1500 people from education, business, government, civil society and young people across 10 countries; over 300 people participating in surveys; conversations with influential figures in education; online virtual discussions featuring 35 leading thinkers in education; and an online campaign which reached 6000 people on the question *'How should schools reboot the future?'*⁵⁴. From this conversation, four themes emerged: **connection, a global perspective, hearing the learner's voice, and values**. The theme of connection emphasised connection to self, each-other, and the planet - reinforcing the importance of collaboration and education as a common good. A *global perspective* emphasised the need for education to challenge inequity (particularly between the global north and south), to teach about global citizenship, and to teach about current issues, particularly the *'climate and ecological emergency'*, again reinforcing key tenets of the purpose of education found in the previous examples. The theme of *hearing the learner's voice* echoes previous calls to involve children and young people in being change-makers, and to engage them in processes that will affect their future.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p.28

⁴⁹ Sobe, N. W. (2021) Reworking Four Pillars of Education to Sustain the Commons. *UNESCO Futures of Education Ideas LAB*. <https://en.unesco.org/futuresofeducation/ideas-lab/sobe-reworking-four-pillars-education-sustain-commons>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Facer, K. (2021) Rethinking the 'human' at the heart of humanist education. *UNESCO Futures of Education Ideas LAB*. <https://en.unesco.org/futuresofeducation/ideas-lab/facer-rethinking-humanist-education>.

⁵² Fazio, X. (2020) Reorienting curriculum for the Anthropocene. *UNESCO Futures of Education Ideas LAB*. Retrieved from <https://en.unesco.org/futuresofeducation/fazio-reorienting-curriculum-for-anthropocene>

⁵³ Reboot the Future <https://www.rebootthefuture.org/rebootingeducation>

⁵⁴ Reboot the Future (2020) Rebooting Education: A conversation on how covid19 is changing ideas about education. <https://www.flipsnack.com/FutureReboot/rebooting-education.html>

The final theme – *values* – provided unique insight into a disconnect between the values people think will best equip young people for the future, and the values espoused by the current education system. Rather than values which promote following the status quo and celebrating individual success, the value of *'building supportive communities'* was top of the list for a re-imagined education system, further reinforcing education as a public and common good.

To build back better, education needs to remain a common good, with lifelong learners who know themselves as connected to each other and the planet, who experience participatory pedagogies and who embody the socio-emotional competencies necessary for personal and collective wellbeing. The global pandemic has thrust the world into a true crisis, but it has also presented a true opportunity to re-imagine the purpose of education and to build back better. After all, as Nóvoa & Alvim state:

*'Education is always defined over a very long time, never a short one. But at certain moments, as the one we live in, the choices we have before us are absolutely decisive. There are no inevitabilities, nor are histories already decided. Every day, we define a little, or a lot, of the history of the future.'*⁵⁵

Summary of International Debates

A consensus of international debate has highlighted that the purpose and future of education should:

- Remain a common good.
- Provide technological connectivity and access to information, in part to help fight misinformation and the denial of scientific knowledge.
- Foster teamwork, critical thinking and collaborative learning to solve complex problems together.
- Empower learners to co-construct change, fostering innovation and creativity and taking action towards sustainability and collective human wellbeing.
- Foster global solidarity and international cooperation – promoting Global Citizenship and a commitment to human equity and inclusion.
- Develop empathy, resilience and adaptability; being able to live with uncertainty, assess and manage risk.
- Be lifelong and student-driven.

In the words of Obama, interviewed by Gerver (2019: 96), we *'need to help young people think differently than in past generations. To be collaborative, to work in teams- requires a new model of education.'* SDG 4 provides an opportunity to refocus the purpose of education towards these Skills.

⁵⁵ Nóvoa, A. & Alvim, Y. (2020) Nothing is new, but everything has changed: A viewpoint on the future school. *Prospects*, 49, 35–41. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09487-w>

UK Debates and Observations

When adopting a UK perspective on the purpose of education, several themes from the international debates are present. The importance of social and emotional skills, the need to collaborate, to contribute to a thriving society and to gain the motivation to pursue further study - contributing to an ethos that learning is lifelong, are all considered important facets of a successful education. What is also present is the sense in which school leaders and teachers are dedicated to a sense of a higher purpose and mission which goes well beyond the every-day demands of running schools and teaching in classrooms. Also particular to the national debate, is the recognition that learners need to be able to self-regulate – to *'learn how to learn'* – and to be self-motivated, independent learners. In addition, education for the 21st century is asserted from the bottom-up, being rooted in community engagement, and people-powered.

In 2015 the then schools minister Nick Gibb defined the purpose of education in 3 areas: *'Education is the engine of our economy, it is the foundation of our culture, and it's an essential preparation for adult life'*⁵⁶. Education as an engine, a foundation, and a preparation underline much of the understanding present in school leaders and teachers as they work to empower their learners. The RSA highlights that, whilst many schools may be caught up in the daily accountability measures of league tables and testing, there are schools who are *'bucking the trend'*⁵⁷ and pursuing an education that meets these higher purposes:

*'How best to prepare our young people for that world is the conversation we should, as a society, be having when we talk about education. Yet so focused have our schools become on achieving the proxy goals of passing tests, hitting targets and climbing league tables, that they risk losing sight of education's higher purposes, like individual fulfilment and societal progress...There are some school leaders who simply refuse to play this bureaucratic education-by-numbers game; leaders whose decisions are shaped, not by the government's agenda, but by their own sense of mission – by the higher purpose to which they have dedicated themselves and their schools.'*⁵⁸

They provide three examples of schools who exemplify this sense of a higher purpose and also illustrate several themes of the purpose of education – that education is student led, that students should become self-motivated and, to echo themes from the international consensus, that education should promote social and emotional skills and collaboration:

The leaders of School 21, XP School and Shireland Collegiate Academy argue passionately and persuasively that student-led project-based learning provides for richer and more meaningful learning experiences that support deeper understanding; that by transferring a significant amount of control over the project to students, it provides them with the sense of ownership and responsibility that are the hallmarks of self-motivated, independent learners. They point out that by requiring students to work in groups, as well as individually, projects teach them the social and emotional skills needed to collaborate and to lead; that by culminating in some kind of product or production, they teach them the value of drafting and redrafting, of learning from their mistakes, of persevering in the face of difficulty and of taking real pride in the quality of their work; and that by creating a systematic process for documenting and reflecting on learning,

⁵⁶ Gibb, N. (2015) The Purpose of Education, Speech to the Education Reform Summit <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-purpose-of-education>

⁵⁷ Astle, J. (2017) The Ideal School Exhibition, Royal Society for Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce (RSA) <https://www.thersa.org/reports/the-ideal-school-exhibition>

⁵⁸ Ibid.

they help students ‘learn how to learn’, with teacher feedback and self- and peer-assessment a central feature.⁵⁹

In addition, the purpose of education for the 21st century is seen as requiring the involvement of all stakeholders, including the community of which the school is a part. This bottom-up ethos resonates with the RSA’s 21st century ‘*education for enlightenment*’ whose central values are ‘*freedom, universalism and humanism*’⁶⁰. Astle and Partridge (2018) state:

‘If it is axiomatic to state that a 21st century enlightenment needs to be people powered, it should be equally self-evident that the process of educating for enlightenment must be driven from the bottom up – by school governors and leaders, teachers, pupils, their parents and the wider community.’⁶¹

The importance of community engagement is also central to Schools Without Walls⁶², another RSA project which ‘*set out to find schools where community engagement and external partnerships are core to their mission to find out what they do, how they do it, and what the benefits are for students and the community*’. They visited 11 schools and found that their success fell into 4 themes⁶³:

- 1. Overcoming poverty through partnerships with families and communities** (Surrey Square Primary School, Reach Academy Feltham and PS/MS 188 The Island School)
Three schools that serve deprived communities and work tirelessly with families, public services and the voluntary sector to eliminate every possible barrier to learning that their children face. In doing so, they have helped children thrive academically and socially, and contributed to solving persistent issues facing the communities in which they are based.
- 2. Building knowledge and skills through real-world learning** (XP School Doncaster and Plymouth School of Creative Arts)
Two schools that create authentic learning experiences for students within their local communities, enabling students to develop and apply knowledge. These learning experiences have built civic pride in both students and the many local people they have had the opportunity to interact with.
- 3. Developing committed citizens through social action** (Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School, The Blue School, EMIS and UWC Adriatic)
Four schools that develop socially active citizens by empowering students to respond to issues they identified in their local communities and beyond. Young people at these schools have been able to secure tangible, sometimes even legislative, changes to make their communities better places, and have developed valuable knowledge, skills and values in the process.

⁵⁹ RSA, 2017, p8

⁶⁰ Painter, A. (2018) Ideas for a 21st Century Enlightenment, RSA, p. 4 <https://www.thersa.org/reports/ideas-for-a-21st-century-enlightenment>

⁶¹ Astle and Partridge (2018) Education for Enlightenment in Ideas for a 21st Century Enlightenment, RSA, p.13

⁶² Partridge and Bath (2019) Schools Without Walls, RSA <https://www.thersa.org/reports/schools-without-walls>

⁶³ Partridge and Bath (2019) Schools Without Walls, RSA, p4 <https://www.thersa.org/reports/schools-without-walls>

4. Preparing young people for future work and study through partnerships with universities and employers (University of Birmingham School and Cristo Rey New York High School)

Two schools that prepare students for a future they might otherwise not have dreamed of, through relationships with employers and universities. In cultivating these relationships, they are levelling the playing field for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and, over time, making the student and staff bodies of their partners more diverse.

These examples also provide a reminder of themes found within the international debates, namely the impact of education in tackling social disadvantage, in fostering socially active citizens and in empowering learners to solve complex problems.

The Wellcome Trust (2016) additionally promotes several key themes including lifelong learning, being active citizens and well-motivated learners:

*'The purpose of education is to prepare people for life, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to contribute to a thriving society. It should provide young people with the understanding and motivation for further studies and enable them to make informed decisions in their everyday lives, including about their education and employment.'*⁶⁴

However, educational thinkers pose the dilemma that the current neoliberal focus on education with its predominant purpose to serve the economy and, as stated, its narrow focus on efficiency, has obscured the essential discussion concerning the aims, attitudes and values that should underpin a schooling system and that without that discussion, schooling is in danger of operating in a vacuum. Brighouse (2019) asserts that:

*'Ideally, we now need an England-wide discussion led by and reporting to the Standing National Educational Advisory Council about what we want all our schools to promote in terms of values and broad aims in the long-term interests of the pupil and the public. A general description of skills, knowledge and experiences must follow but without clarity on values, aims and attitudes we make the jobs of our schools much more difficult.'*⁶⁵

Brighouse offers a possible 'unifying statement' which might go some way to agreeing the aims on which schools might be built:

We should want our children to understand through their schooling that:

- It will be their duty as adults to guard and participate in a representative democracy which values national and local government. To that end schools will progressively involve students in many aspects of school life and the community in which the school and the families are located.
- Their religious faith and beliefs will be respected, and they will be encouraged through their schooling to respect all faiths and the humanist position.

⁶⁴ Wellcome Trust (2016) <https://wellcome.org/sites/default/files/wtp060177.pdf> p.1

⁶⁵ Brighouse, T. (2019) The English Schooling System – yesterday, today but especially tomorrow: a Baker's dozen of essential changes towards a fairer deal for everyone. *The Priestley Lecture: Birmingham University* <https://www.oxfordschoolofthought.org/blog/strongthe-english-schooling-system-yesterday-today-but-especially-tomorrowstrong>

- Many differently rewarded careers which are vital to the wellbeing and practical operation of our society and others elsewhere in the world are open to them. These include carers, cleaners, cooks, designers, musicians, sportsmen and women, writers, composers, broadcasters, actors, builders, electricians, farmers, teachers, sailors, plumbers, other tradespeople, lawyers, accountants, doctors, nurses, other health-related jobs, bankers and providers of other financial services, shopkeepers, drivers and politicians. This kaleidoscope of employed and self-employed opportunities, available in the private, public and voluntary sectors, is ever changing and expanding under the influence of accelerating political and technological developments.
- These careers require differing talents and students' schooling experience will be based on valuing them as individuals and equipping them with the values attitudes skills and knowledge to make a successful and rewarding contribution to society as adults in and out of work.
- They will be encouraged to think for themselves and act for others through their life at school and in the community. In doing so they will explore and understand the range of obligations, rights and choices open to them in our own and other societies.
- They will encounter through their schooling experiences expert help in acquiring a foundation of skills and knowledge which will allow them to survive and flourish in our own or another society.
- They will be equipped to make good arguments for a just cause and thereby influence their social and political environment.⁶⁶

Several key themes are reinforced here and were found previously in the international debates: the importance of community, participation in democracy, respect for diversity, active citizenship, understanding their own and others' rights, independent thinking, and of being global citizens who flourish in diverse societies and who will influence towards justice.

Themes of the purpose of education are clear and resonate throughout the UK and international debates. However, what is also clear is the need for reform of schooling in the UK. As mentioned, there is the need to move away from a neoliberal focus so that innovation and creativity can flourish. Further, schools in the UK must provide meaningful educational opportunities for all young people which Gibbs (2016) asserts it does not currently provide. As he says:

*'Education fails if it does not engage and motivate learners and provide them with understanding and skills that enable them to contribute as creative social beings now and in the future. At the moment education systems are not fit for that purpose... We should ask if we want educational systems to perpetuate social and economic inequalities. It is possible for schools to engender understanding and tolerance, include all children and enable them to learn together. Today education segregates and divides. It is clear we don't need more inter-group antipathy. We could choose to have different purposes and outcomes.'*⁶⁷

Several schools in the UK have chosen to adopt different outcomes and have carefully considered their aims, values and what their learners will need in the coming years. These school mission statements demonstrate this:

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Gibbs, S. (2016) Some thoughts on the purpose of education, BERA. <https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/some-thoughts-on-the-purpose-of-education>

Harbinger Primary School, London

- Share a vision of learning as a **lifelong journey**: we are all learners
- Engender a positive **attitude and commitment** to learning: resilient, responsible, reasoning, resourceful, reflective learners
- Pass on valued **skills, knowledge and understanding**: to prepare children for the opportunities and challenges they face as the next generation

Our agreed school values are:

- Learning: An entitlement to relevant and purposeful learning, high expectations and outcomes, widening horizons and raising aspirations
- Well-being: An ethos of personal development and emotional intelligence, excellent care and guidance, intrinsic motivation to discover routes to happiness and success
- Togetherness: An environment founded on equality and inclusion, rights and responsibilities, an awareness of belonging to our immediate and global communities⁶⁸

Egerton School, Cheshire

Through dynamic teaching, a highly creative curriculum and supportive environment, every Egerton child gains a passion for learning. When combined with the knowledge, skills and values they develop, we enable our children to fulfil their potential as global citizens in an ever-changing world.⁶⁹

EGA School, London

Our curriculum offer is designed to promote intellectually curious young women, with the confidence to take their place in whichever field they choose. We believe in aiming high, with challenge and support, to ensure that dreams become realities for our young women.

We are a school committed to changing lives for all our students for the better and are guided through this by our commitment to work, believe, achieve and innovate without limits, celebrating and valuing the rich diversity at the heart of school life.

We recognise however that we need to do more to address the long standing and deep-rooted racism which has affected so many for too long.

As a school we are committed in our journey to being actively anti-racist. School must be a place where difficult and uncomfortable truths are tackled to support everyone. Education plays a critical role in tackling injustice and discrimination of all kinds, and we must ensure that we are supporting our students through both our curriculum and the building and developing of skills and knowledge, to question racism wherever they encounter it.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ <https://www.harbinger.org.uk>

⁶⁹ <http://www.egerton.cheshire.sch.uk>

⁷⁰ <https://www.egaschool.co.uk/242/vision-ethos-values>

Rathfern School, Lewisham

By promoting active and global citizenship, we can help children to learn about and understand their changing world.

We build our curriculum around Global Learning Principles to help pupils understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens. These principles aim to:

- help young people understand their role in a globally interdependent world and explore strategies by which they can make it more just and sustainable
- familiarise pupils with the ideas of interdependence, development, globalisation and sustainability
- enable teachers to help pupils think in terms of social justice rather than charity
- stimulate critical thinking about global issues, for each pupil and the whole school
- help promote greater awareness of poverty and sustainability and to explore these in the classroom.

Children at Rathfern are encouraged to become critical, active and engaged learners, who understand their responsibilities as citizens to promote equality, social justice and change.⁷¹

These mission statements show the interest in, commitment to, and understanding that learners today need to be engaged global citizens, and they contain many of the themes explored in this report in both the international and UK debates.

Summary of UK Debates

The UK debate on the purpose of education reinforces several themes from the international debate. Specifically, international themes emphasised within the UK context are that education must empower learners to:

- Develop social and emotional skills
- Collaborate
- Contribute to a thriving society
- Gain the motivation to pursue further study contributing to an ethos that learning is lifelong.

Additionally, the UK debate shows that education must empower learners to self-regulate, be self-motivated and independent. Importantly, a key feature of education must be that it is rooted in community and wider partnerships.

What is also seen in the UK context is that these facets of successful education for the 21st century are limited by a culture of high stakes testing and accountability which stifles school leaders and narrows the purpose of education to that of passing tests and achieving the next imposed benchmark. Gerver (2019) notes that schooling has focused too much on efficiency, at the expense of innovation and creativity. This will also limit the development of skills advocated by the WEF, UNESCO, PISA and the OECD. Further, there is strong feeling that the current schooling system needs to move away from this culture to facilitate what is needed for an education fit for the world and its uncertain future, with learners who need to become highly skilled in the attributes outlined in this report.

⁷¹ <https://www.rathfern.lewisham.sch.uk/Curriculum/Global-learning/>

The mission statements show some examples of where schools are forging their own path in this way and in doing so, demonstrate that it is possible in the UK context. Taking on board these changes and priorities for the purpose of education will enable the UK education system to develop the key themes outlined in both the international and UK debates, which exemplify SDG4 and thus enable the achievement of all the SDGs.

There is much consensus both among the international community and within the UK about what the purpose of education must be for the coming era. The evidence is broad and full with diverse thinkers across diverse organisations, from international big-hitters to individual UK schools, all providing similar evidence for what education needs to become. The SDGs, and specifically SDG4, provide a framework that will enable this purpose of education to be fulfilled.

Addressing the Needs and Voices of Marginalised Communities

A consistent theme of many education policies and initiatives around the world has been to address inequalities and to ensure that the more marginalised communities were listened to, supported and had appropriate resources⁷². But what is meant by marginalisation? UNESCO's 2010 Global Monitoring Report, whilst noting that the term is open to many interpretations, suggests it should be measured in terms of level of deprivation of access to and engagement in education, and those with lower levels of educational achievement⁷³. Much of the literature around this area, however, be it from international bodies such as the UN or academics, tends to focus on more sociological interpretations related to outsiders or those excluded from mainstream society. More recently, the term has been used with regard to migrants and refugees⁷⁴. Messiou however suggests that perhaps there has been too much emphasis on marginalisation with regard to specific social groups, and not sufficiently on identity, and from dialogue between teachers and students. This means teachers need to move beyond categorisations of pupils based on social groups and encourage use of dialogue between teachers and pupils and how this can transform thinking and perceptions. Messiou concludes, in their study with teachers in different regions in England, that an inclusive approach to learning that focuses on identification of barriers to participation can result in all pupils feeling valued members of the school community⁷⁵.

Underlying the themes of the SDGs, and Target 4.7 in particular, is a concern to address the inequalities that exist within education. This means not only should there be equality of access to all forms of education, but that, within education policies and practices, there needs to be a recognition that there is a need to give increased opportunities to the voices and the perspectives of those who have been most marginalised in education.

This has taken a number of forms, from multicultural education to anti-racist education; from focusing on inclusion and ensuring that policies and programmes recognised the need to provide support and resources to minority communities⁷⁶.

Within the English education system, one initiative that has become an important feature of formal education to address this has been Black History Month. This month has provided access for schools to a wealth of resources and materials⁷⁷ and guidelines on approaches to how to address this area in the classroom⁷⁸. This area relates directly to the enthusiasms and interests behind the activities of Black Lives Matter and the drives to decolonise the curriculum. The evidence around the increased engagement by schools and education researchers in this area is discussed later in this report.

As later sections on this report will demonstrate the issue of marginalisation and a sense of exclusion needs to be addressed both by policies and resources but also recognising the importance of learner centred pedagogical approaches with appropriate professional development support for teachers⁷⁹.

⁷² Smith, E. (2012) *Social Justice and Inequalities in Education* in Arthur, J. and Peterson, A. (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to Education*, Abingdon, Routledge, 350-361

⁷³ UNESCO (2010) *EFA Global Monitoring Report: Reaching the Marginalized*, Paris, UNESCO

⁷⁴ Messiou, K. (2019) Understanding Marginalisation through dialogue: a strategy for promoting the inclusion of all students in schools, *Educational Review*, 71:3, 306-317

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Kiwan, D. (2012) *Multicultural Education* in Arthur, J. and Peterson, A. (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to Education*, Abingdon, Routledge, 324-331; see also Banks, J. (2009) *The Routledge International Companion to Multicultural Education*, Abingdon, Routledge

⁷⁷ <https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/article/section/news/black-history-month-resource-pack-2021/>

⁷⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/black-history-month-primary-and-secondary-resources/zjwf8xs>

⁷⁹ McBride, M. (2018) *Refugee Children's Education- A Review of the Literature*, Edinburgh, What Works Scotland

Listening to Young People

Many young people have been active in the campaigns around the climate crisis. They also have the most to lose from the disruptions in their education caused by the global pandemic. They recognise that climate change directly affects them more than any other sector of society. Greta Thunberg has gained so much publicity and support because much of what she says is in tune with the views of many young people.

International bodies such as the UN and UNESCO have consistently called for the voice and needs of young people to be central to any sustainable development programme. They have also said that the needs of youth go beyond access to employment and skills development, but need to include having the opportunity to have a voice in determining their own future⁸⁰.

Young people have first-hand experiences of the very education challenges that are being discussed at global meetings and they would like a say in the decisions that shape their future. Broadening spaces for youth voices to shape the decisions made about their education is vital⁸¹.

International policy agreements around education often make reference to ensuring the voices of young people are heard, but all too often that voice has only token recognition⁸². That is why an ongoing theme in this report is to put the needs and concerns of young people at the heart of future education policies and programmes, how can they have a stake in deciding their own future.

These themes are not new and as long ago as 1992, Roger Hart, in describing his Ladders of Participation, made reference to moving from tokenism to citizenship:

*'Young people's participation cannot be discussed without considering power relations and the struggle for equal rights. It is important that all young people have the opportunity to learn to participate in programmes which directly affect their lives. This is especially so for disadvantaged children for through participation with others such children learn that to struggle against discrimination and repression, and to fight for their equal rights in solidarity with others is itself a fundamental democratic right.... The highest possible degree of citizenship in my view is when we, children or adults, not only feel that we can initiate some change ourselves but when we also recognise that it is sometimes appropriate to also invite others to join us because of their own rights and because it affects them too, as fellow-citizens.'*⁸³

What is evident from both the actions of young people on issues such as climate change, and Black Lives Matters, is that they are more than passive supporters of calls for global social change. Kenway and Bullen had a number of years ago suggested that young people were much more than observers, but critical engagers in understanding the wider world, as critics and cultural producers of the world around them⁸⁴. Their observations are probably more relevant today than they have ever been. As seen in the evaluation report from 'Schools For Future Youth', a European project on young

⁸⁰ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-youth-report/wyr2018.html>; <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2012/youth-and-skills-putting-education-work>

⁸¹ <https://www.sdg4education2030.org/index.php/youth-statement-investing-education-and-youth>

⁸² <https://www.youthpolicy.org/blog/participation-global-governance/moving-beyond-tokenism-to-make-youth-participation-a-reality/>; https://c4innovates.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CDLWR-3476__YESS_Tokenism-TipSheet_v4.pdf

⁸³ <https://organizingengagement.org/models/ladder-of-childrens-participation/>

⁸⁴ Kenway, J. and Bullen, E. (2008) *The Global Corporate Curriculum and the Young Cyberflaneur as Global Citizen* in Dolby, N and Rizvi, F: *Youth Moves - Identities and education in global perspectives, and Social Change*, Oxford, Oxford University Press

people and global citizenship, there was a desire to want to be more than passive recipients of knowledge about the wider world:

*'I just don't want to sit there... I want to do something about it'*⁸⁵

There have been numerous surveys and studies in the UK that have shown that many young people feel ignored or not sufficiently listened to⁸⁶. For example, in a survey with young people in Berkshire, over 300 young people reported that they never felt listened to within their local communities and councils, with only 3-4% of young people feeling like they were always listened to.⁸⁷ The COVID pandemic has highlighted many young people's concerns. Many of them have had their education disrupted. Their mental health and resilience has been challenged and there have been calls for education programmes to give more consideration to their views, needs and ensure they have a stake in determining their future.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ UK young person quoted in Hunt, F. (2017) Schools For Future Youth Evaluation Report; Developing young people as active global citizens, DERC Research Paper no.17, London UCL-IOE/Oxfam, p.78.

⁸⁶ https://www.ucl.ac.uk/evidence-based-practice-unit/sites/evidence-based-practice-unit/files/engaging_cyp_in_meaningful_research_learning_from_headstart.pdf

<https://www.closer.ac.uk/study/lsype-2/>; https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/dev/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-YEUK-Census-Report_FINAL.pdf

⁸⁷ <https://www.berkshireyouth.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/BY-Youth-FINAL-1.pdf>

⁸⁸ <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/covid19/2020/07/10/beyond-the-rainbows-the-missing-voices-of-children-and-young-people-in-this-pandemic/>; <https://institute.global/sites/default/files/articles/Listening-to-Covid-19-s-Lost-Generation-Insights-From-Our-Global-Youth-Survey.pdf>

Why Target 4.7 is Important

It is evident, as will be shown later in this report, that the SDGs and in particular Target 4.7 have become an important mechanism for encouraging debate and policy development, at both national and international levels, on the purpose of education and in ensuring that the voices of all sectors of society have a stake in its future. The support given to the international organisation Mission 4.7, for example, from leading policymakers, academics and businesspeople around the world, demonstrates the interest and enthusiasm this Target has generated around the world, and how it is leading to debates about the future purpose of education⁸⁹.

The global pandemic, the anxieties many young people have for the future of the planet, and the ongoing issues of social injustices have resulted in social movements and organisations around the world starting to come together in a recognition of a common purpose and the need to promote a vision for education that is more in tune with the underlying ethos of the SDGs.

Leading the drive for using the SDGs as a mechanism for posing these wider questions of education has been UNESCO. Their recognition of the interconnections of the themes already identified in this report can be seen in what has been called the UNESCO Berlin Declaration from their 2021 ESD Conference:

*We are convinced that urgent action is needed to address the dramatic interrelated challenges the world is facing, in particular, the climate crisis, mass loss of biodiversity, pollution, pandemic diseases, extreme poverty and inequalities, violent conflicts, and other environmental, social and economic crises that endanger life on our planet. We believe that the urgency of these challenges, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, requires a fundamental transformation that sets us on the path of sustainable development based on more just, inclusive, caring and peaceful relationships with each other and with nature.*⁹⁰

This Declaration went on to propose the powerful role that education could play as an enabler of changes in mindset and world outlooks. Target 4.7 is seen in this Declaration as the anchor for education for sustainable development and the enabler of all the Goals. What was also significant about this Declaration was its inclusion of the word transformation and the specific mention of skills for change:

*ESD enables learners to develop their cognitive and non-cognitive skills, such as critical thinking and competences for collaboration, problem solving, coping with complexity and risk, building resilience, thinking systemically and creatively, and empowering them to take responsible action as citizens, fulfilling their right to quality education*⁹¹

*The Berlin Declaration called on countries to integrate education for sustainable development into policies at all levels, to encourage whole institutional approaches and empower educators 'with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for the transition to sustainability'. Reflecting themes suggested already in this report, the Declaration also called for the recognition of youth as key actors in addressing sustainability challenges and supporting local action.*⁹²

⁸⁹ Mission 4.7 was founded by Global Schools and the SDG Academy, both flagship programs of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, in partnership with the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens, UNESCO, and the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University.; <https://www.mission4point7.org/#about-mission-4-7>

⁹⁰ <https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/esdfor2030-berlin-declaration-en.pdf>

⁹¹ <https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/esdfor2030-berlin-declaration-en.pdf>

⁹² Ibid.

*This Declaration builds on a series of annual Global Education Monitoring Reports and other publications that promoted a series of agreed indicators such as the extent to which the main themes of global citizenship and sustainable development, gender equality and human rights could be mainstreamed at all levels of national education policies*⁹³

In support of Target 4.7, UNESCO in its Global Education Monitoring Report stated that more than any other education target for the SDGs, *'it touches on the social, humanistic and moral purposes of education, and their impact on policies, curricular contents and teacher preparation'*⁹⁴. A range of studies since 2016 have called for evidence to be gathered at both a national and thematic level on the themes within Target 4.7⁹⁵. However, as Benavot has shown, there is still a lack of consensus as how to measure progress on the target⁹⁶.

What is however evident is that, whilst there have been criticisms of a number of initiatives that have been inspired by Target 4.7 such as PISA's Global Competencies tests in 2018⁹⁷, there are many countries around the world that have given increased recognition and importance to sustainable development and global citizenship related themes within formal education policies and programmes. The UNESCO study in 2016 found evidence of human rights education being prevalent in most of the 78 curriculum frameworks researched, with sustainable development being addressed in about three-quarters of the countries. There was also strong evidence in a large number of the countries of competencies such as *'fostering environmentally sustainable lifestyles'*⁹⁸.

European Context

In Europe, many of the themes that have been identified within Target 4.7 of the SDGs have been features of education policies and practices for nearly forty years. Whilst many of the activities have been led by civil society organisations, often helped by funding from the European Commission, there have been influential policy initiatives that have subsequently gained approval at national levels. As well as the European Commission, the Council of Europe, including its North-South Centre, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe have played important roles. The outcomes of these initiatives include:

- Council of Europe Declaration on Human Rights Education⁹⁹
- Peace Education¹⁰⁰
- Culture and Creativity¹⁰¹
- Environmental Education and sustainable development¹⁰²

⁹³ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373718>; <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265866>; <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259338>; <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245752>

⁹⁴ <https://en.unesco.org/news/global-education-monitoring-gem-report-2020>

⁹⁵ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259784>;

⁹⁶ <https://www.bridge47.org/news/06/2021/exploring-target-47-dr-aaron-benavot>

⁹⁷ See also Engel, L. C., Rutkowski, D., & Thompson, G. (2019) Toward an international measure of global competence? A critical look at the PISA 2018 framework. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 17(2), 117–131 <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2019.1642183>; Robertson, S. L. (2021) Provincializing the OECD-PISA global competences project. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 19(2), 167–182

⁹⁸ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245752> p.36

⁹⁹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/charter-on-education-for-democratic-citizenship-and-human-rights-education>

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/peace-and-violence>;

¹⁰¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe>

¹⁰² <https://rm.coe.int/168070e540>; <https://www.bridge47.org/resources/12/2018/maastricht-global-education-declaration-and-council-europe-policy-framework>

- Maastricht Declaration of Global Education

The Maastricht Declaration is particularly important in the context of Target 4.7 because it shows there has been a policy drive since 2002 for an approach to education that brings together all of the themes. Under the umbrella theme of 'Global Education', it states:

- *Global Education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all.*
- *Global Education is understood to encompass Development Education, Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention and Intercultural Education; being the global dimensions of Education for Citizenship*¹⁰³

This declaration played a major role in encouraging both governments and the European Commission to support in 2002 the establishment of Global Education Network Europe (GENE). This Network, funded by the European Commission, brings together ministries and agencies from over 25 countries across Europe¹⁰⁴.

The European Commission, although it funds through separate directorates aspects of the themes of 4.7, has given increased importance to bringing these areas together. As Themis Christophidou, the Director-general for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) at the European Commission noted at a conference in 2021:

*'Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 calls for us to ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development by 2030. To find a balance that respects our own needs, and the needs for our planet, we need to change our behaviour, and that begins with education. Education in a lifelong learning perspective is key to changing mindsets and empowering citizens with the strength of knowledge to take action for a greener, more sustainable Europe. I am convinced that education and training policies that gear towards inclusive, green, and digital transitions hold the key to Europe's future resilience and prosperity.'*¹⁰⁵

Bridge 47

An indication of the importance that the European Commission has ascribed to Target 4.7 has been their resourcing of the Bridge 47 network which, since 2018, has brought together civil society organisations and policymaking and research bodies across Europe and beyond to promote the SDGs through the lens of global citizenship education. This network linked securing progress on the SDGs to a transformative approach to learning. The project, which finished in July 2021, demonstrated how the themes of the SDGs can inspire several hundred civil society organisations across Europe to see how education can be a vehicle for global social justice, sustainable development and global citizenship¹⁰⁶.

A feature of this Network was to demonstrate the value of breaking down the silo mentalities that can often exist within the field of peace, human rights, sustainable development and global citizenship education and to encourage a common goal of transformative learning.

¹⁰³ <https://rm.coe.int/168070e540>

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.gene.eu>

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.bridge47.org/news/06/2021/towards-coherent-european-approach-target-47>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.bridge47.org/about>

The network was responsible for not only coordinating some innovative events, training materials, podcasts and resources, but it also produced some valuable guidelines for how to measure progress on Target 4.7 and specifically linking Target 4.7 to the concept of transformative learning.

Bringing the Themes of 4.7 Together

Historically, the various themes within 4.7 have tended to be sponsored and funded by different ministries and agencies related to their particular areas of interest. This has meant, for example, that themes of global learning and global citizenship have tended to be supported by foreign affairs ministries and development agencies, whilst sustainable development being funded by environment departments.

The GENE State of Global Education Report in 2019 noted:

‘Though almost all actions reported to GENE adopt a human rights and holistic approach to Global Education, some trends are more explicit than others. The recognition of diversity as a resource and the promotion of equality ran like a thread through the Global Education work among GENE participants during 2018. Countries reported on work to mainstream tolerance and respect and the celebration of diversity in multicultural societies as a focus both in formal and non-formal education’¹⁰⁷

There was also a recognition of more initiatives related to the themes of equality, with an emphasis on women’s and children’s rights.

Related to the theme of diversity, there were several initiatives that aimed to promote equality from a Global Education perspective. For example, Estonian NGO Mondo started a two-year project with a thematic focus on women’s and children’s rights, while the Finnish National Agency for Education published a guide for secondary education institutions to support the implementation of equality principles in everyday school life. Belgium and Greece also undertook efforts not only to raise awareness of gender equality, but to bolster gender mainstreaming across Global Education initiatives. Belgian civil society organisations developed a charter and a best practice guide to mainstreaming gender in Global Education, while Greece developed a Guide to Gender Mainstreaming in Education. Along with these trends, country reports frequently linked national policy and activities with global social justice dimensions, poverty eradication, and growing and persisting inequalities both within countries as well as between countries of the “Global North” and the “Global South”.¹⁰⁸

There have, however, been examples where policymakers, in recognition of the dangers of this fragmented approach, have developed strategies that are more holistic.

¹⁰⁷<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f6decace4ff425352eddb4a/t/5fc40cf96457125654ba5954/1606683902082/SO-GE-2019-web-version+%282%29.pdf>

¹⁰⁸<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f6decace4ff425352eddb4a/t/5fc40cf96457125654ba5954/1606683902082/SO-GE-2019-web-version+%282%29.pdf>

Examples of a Holistic Approach

Finland

Finland has been ranked highest of all countries in the world in implementing the SDGs. One of the reasons for this has been its long-standing commitment to global education as defined in the Maastricht Declaration. Pupils within formal education are expected to:

*'understand the prerequisites for human wellbeing, the necessity of environmental protection, and the relationship between the two; learn to observe changes taking place in the environment and human wellbeing, and to act for the good of the living environment and the enhancement of wellbeing; learn to evaluate the impact of their consumption and daily practices, and adopt the courses of action required for sustainable development; learn to promote wellbeing in their own communities and to understand the threats to, and potential for, wellbeing at a global level; and learn to act constructively for a sustainable future.'*¹⁰⁹

However, whilst there has been an ongoing commitment to this more holistic approach, there has been concern about a move away from a focus on international solidarity and structural injustices to a focus on individual competencies¹¹⁰. This concern can be seen in the 2021 Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools in Finland with the focus on a series of transversal competency areas. These included:

- Global and Intercultural competence
- Ethical and Environmental Competence
- Civic Skills
- Multidisciplinary and creative competence

Slovakia

The influence of bodies such as GENE can be seen in the development of Slovakia's global education strategy which is heavily influenced by the Maastricht Declaration. Initiated in 2012, the strategy makes reference to development, environmental, multicultural, peace and human rights education. Global education in its broadest sense is included in guidelines for teachers on an annual basis and cross-cutting themes are part of the state's education programme.¹¹¹

Austria

Similar themes and influences can be seen in Austria where there has also been long-standing funding for development education and engagement of many civil society organisations in environmental, intercultural, human rights as well as global themes. The Ministry of Education promotes a series of teaching principles that includes Health promotion, Intercultural education, Media education, Political education, Reflective gender education and equality, Environmental education, Economic and consumer education.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹https://www.allianceforchildhood.eu/files/Improving_the_quality_of_Childhood_Vol_7/QOC%20V7%20CH06%20DEF%20WEB.pdf

¹¹⁰ Lehtomaki, E. & Rajala, A. (2020) *Global Education Research in Finland* in Bourn, D. (ed.) *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Global Education and Learning*, London, Bloomsbury, 105-120.

¹¹¹ O'Loughlin, E. and Wegimont, L. (2013) *Global Education in Slovakia- The European Global Education Peer Review Process*, Amsterdam, GENE

¹¹²<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f6decace4ff425352eddb4a/t/5fc40cf96457125654ba5954/1606683902082/SOGE-2019-web-version+%282%29.pdf>

Wales

In Wales there has been a long-standing commitment to education for sustainable development and global citizenship which had been enshrined in curriculum guidelines and materials since 2008.¹¹³ Sustainable development was also featured within the Welsh constitution through the *Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015)*, which requires ‘public bodies to do things in pursuit of the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales in a way that accords with the sustainable development principle’.

However, the revised curriculum planned for introduction in 2022 gives less explicit mention of ESD and global citizenship, although aspects can still be seen in such statements within the vision document that includes the aim that all children and young people should be ‘ethical, informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world’.

An example of progress on these themes is the announcement that the teaching of Black history will be mandatory in all schools. Professor Charlotte Williams, who led the review which led to this announcement, stated:

*‘Our new curriculum can only be enriched by revealing the diversity of perspectives and contributions made by the ethnic minority communities to the development of Wales across its history and in the present.’*¹¹⁴

Another ongoing feature of the Welsh curriculum is its commitment to human rights education and specifically the rights of the child as framed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Scotland

In Scotland, the themes of sustainability and global citizenship are featured within Scottish international strategy and in 2020 through a specific report calling for greater action to embed the SDGs within all aspects of society and the economy. These commitments build on a long-standing engagement with the themes of global education, sustainable development, and human rights education.

The dominant frame of reference remains however Learning for Sustainability which has been a curriculum entitlement since 2011. This framework brings together global citizenship, outdoor learning, and sustainable development as a right for every child.¹¹⁵ There is evidence to suggest that, with teachers having to undertake training to support their teaching of Education for Sustainability under the General Teaching Council of Scotland Professional Standards framework, there has been ‘increased learner motivation, engagement, participation and skills for learning, life and work’. However, there is some other more recent evidence that suggest that there is a need for greater emphasis on professional development of teachers, and to more closely link together the various elements of sustainability.¹¹⁶

A feature of progressing the goals within schools has been the commitment to ensuring the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child are embedded within the policies and practices of all schools. Over 50% of Scotland’s schools have been involved in UNICEF’s Rights Respecting School Award

¹¹³ <https://hwb.gov.wales/api/storage/eaf467e6-30fe-45c9-93ef-cb30f31f1c90/common-understanding-for-school.pdf>

¹¹⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-56447682>; <https://gov.wales/written-statement-update-progress-recommendations-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-communities>

¹¹⁵ <https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/learning-for-sustainability>

¹¹⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/educational-outcomes-learning-sustainability-brief-review-literature/documents>

What these examples (from elsewhere in the UK, Europe and globally) show is increased engagement in many countries from education policymakers about not only how to address 4.7 within curricula, but also on committing to a more holistic approach that ensures that global, sustainability, human rights, peace, and culture themes are seen as inter-connected.

Before this report looks in detail at the evidence regarding the themes of Target 4.7, it is appropriate to note the ways in which sustainable development in its broadest sense has been reflected within education in England.

Promotion of Sustainable Development Within Education and Society

Target 4.7 of the SDGs begins by stating the requirement to: *'Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development'*. The target suggests that the following themes that are promoted are seen within the context of sustainable development.

UNESCO, in their promotion of the SDGs, have suggested that:

'to shift to a sustainable future, we need to rethink what, where and how we learn to develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that enable us all to make informed decisions and take individual and collective action on local, national and global urgencies...

ESD empowers learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to take informed decisions and make responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society empowering people of all genders, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity...

*Education for Sustainable development is seen as holistic and transformational and encompasses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment itself.'*¹¹⁷

This approach suggests that sustainable development is more than just additional knowledge, or even just making reference to the environment. It is seen by UNESCO as a distinctive approach that brings together a range of concepts and themes within the context of working towards a more sustainable planet.

The concept of sustainable development was first outlined at the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. It became used as a concept within education following its promotion by the World Commission on Environment and Development and their report on 'Our Common Future'. The centrality of education to progressing towards a sustainable future became a key element within the 1992 UN Rio Summit on sustainable development through its Agenda 21:

*'Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues... Both formal and non-formal education are indispensable to changing people's attitudes so that they have the capacity to assess and address their sustainable development concerns... To be effective, environment and development education should deal with the dynamics of both the physical/biological and socio-economic environment and human (which may include spiritual) development, should be integrated in all disciplines, and should employ formal and non-formal methods and effective means of communication.'*¹¹⁸

The aims of education for sustainable development moved from bringing together environmental and development education to it being seen in a broader holistic sense, initially bringing together environment, economy, and society¹¹⁹ and more recently to one that emphasises personal and societal transformation¹²⁰.

¹¹⁷ <https://www.gcedclearinghouse.org/sites/default/files/resources/200782eng.pdf>

¹¹⁸ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>

¹¹⁹ Walshe, N. (2017) An interdisciplinary approach to environmental and sustainability education: developing geography students' understandings of sustainable development using poetry, *Environmental Education Research*, 23:8, 1130-1149

¹²⁰ Jicking, B. & Sterling, S. (2017) *Post-Sustainability and Environmental Education*, London, Palgrave

Curriculum in England and Sustainable Development

Between 1997 and 2010 there were a range of curriculum and educational initiatives within England that aimed to put elements of this broader approach within a series of policy statements and guidelines. Whilst they did not go as far as posing a transformational approach to learning, they did make reference to the themes of sustainable development in its broadest sense. For example, the term was referred to as being '*about developing the knowledge, skills and values to participate in decisions about the ways we do things individually and collectively, both local and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future*' (DETR,1998)¹²¹.

In taking these themes forward within the curriculum, the following concepts were suggested: interdependence, citizenship and stewardship, needs and rights of future generations, diversity, quality of life, sustainable change, uncertainty and precaution.

Whilst the government, during the first decade of the twenty first century tried to encourage the implementation of these concepts through a programme called Sustainable Schools, the 'doorways' this approach took focused mainly on content around themes such as food and drink, energy and water, travel and traffic, purchasing and waste, etc. Although the doorways also included inclusion and participation, well-being, and the global dimension, it could be argued that an opportunity was lost to reorientate the purpose of education more generally towards a more sustainable future.¹²²

Since 2010, where sustainable development has been reflected within broader educational goals, the emphasis has been on content within specific curriculum subjects such as geography and the natural sciences, or more recently in demonstrating support for the overall aims of the SDGs.¹²³ In 2021, the Department for Education established a unit on sustainability, and in November 2021 published a draft strategy on Sustainability and Climate Change.¹²⁴

As later sections will show, there is clearly space within the existing national curriculum in England to promote learning about sustainable development and the SDGs in particular. An analysis of these opportunities was conducted by National Association of Environmental Education (NAEE) which confirmed these opportunities, but as this report noted, the ways in which they were interpreted was left to the teacher to decide.¹²⁵

Education and the Sustainable Development Goals Overview

Education is recognised as one of the main themes of the Goals. It is the specific focus of Goal 4, but it can be seen to be relevant to all of the Goals. As this report has already highlighted SDG4 has ten targets.

This report focuses on Target 4.7, but as with most things, it does not exist in isolation and indeed supports the achievement not only of the other 9 education goals, but of the SDGs more widely. As this report demonstrates, several cross-cutting themes exist within 4.7 which necessarily intersect

¹²¹ DETR (1998) Sustainable Development: Opportunities for Change (White Paper) London, HMSO

¹²² Teachernet (2008) The National Framework for Sustainable Schools

¹²³ <https://naee.org.uk/sustainable-schools-framework-doorways/>

¹²⁴ This strategy is discussed in more detail later in this report in the section on environmental and sustainability education

¹²⁵ <https://naee.org.uk/embedding-sustainable-development-goals-sdgs-curriculum/>

with other goals. The theme of social justice, whilst often carrying different definitions, consistently centres on principles of equality and the recognition and celebration of diversity. It focuses on a meaningful existence for the individual as well as equal participation for those affected. With these principles in mind, education must be open to all learners with their many diverse characteristics, supporting the achievement of all aspects of Goal 4. A glance at the other 16 SDGs also demonstrates the relevance of education and its theme of social justice. For example, SDG 5: gender equality, SDG 1: zero poverty, SDG 10: reduced inequalities, and SDG 16: peace, justice and strong institutions, to name just a few.

Social justice, with its focus on equality and diversity, also intersects with other cross cutting themes. Decolonisation has gained traction in recent years, largely due to the Black Lives Matter movement which seeks justice for people of colour. This has led to many institutions and even individuals in the UK examining the roots of their wealth and acknowledging possible colonial beginnings. This search for justice remains controversial, perhaps reflecting the discomfort that arises when an individual, a community and indeed a country are asked to shine a light on current and past behaviours. This reflection is a necessary part of decolonisation and the desire for justice, forming what can be called 'cognitive justice', and this further intersects with the SDGs not just in education but also, for example, gender equality.

The success of the SDGs also rests on further cross cutting themes – that of active participation and citizenship in order to achieve the actions necessary, the need to develop a global outlook and the importance of maintaining a focus on sustainable development. The problems the SDGs are trying to solve cross borders. A global outlook, active participation, a focus on sustainable development, decolonisation, and social justice are all themes necessary for the solution of global problems.

However, as this report also demonstrates, simply learning about them as if they are facts to memorise is not enough. It must be applied (we must learn 'for'), and it must be experienced (learn 'through'). For example, we can learn facts *about* climate change, but we must also learn *for* the purpose of rectifying it - and one of the best ways to do that may be *through* examining its current impacts. A global outlook also requires an understanding that we are all connected - to each other as human beings and to the planet - and thus requires valuing diversity and working towards inclusion for all. Inherent in this is gender equality which has been the focus of social movements in recent years, not least the Women's marches in 2016 and the #MeToo movement. Indeed, gender equality whilst having been noted as a goal in itself to date should not be seen that way any longer, but instead be '*a prerequisite for ensuring sustainable futures of education.*'¹²⁶

With awareness of the purpose of education for the common and public good at the fore, and with critical analysis a central component, education can achieve the transformational and systematic change needed for the solution of global problems. Hence the cross-cutting themes inherent in SDG 4.7, and described in this report, intersect with and support these wider education goals.

Alongside critical analysis, another central component of education recommended by several of the themes in this report is that of a learner centred pedagogy. As we have seen from the youth climate strikes, young people are calling to have their voices heard in the issues that affect them. Whilst many schools have instituted school councils, often at primary age, these are often critiqued for being tokenistic. Children are 'consulted', but not on the central issues within the school which affect them. Being consulted over which fruit you would like at break time or which playground games you would like that week does not communicate a sincere desire to include young people as agents of change. Arguably, it merely keeps them on the periphery. In contrast, young people are

¹²⁶ UNESCO (2021) *Reimagining Our Futures Together — A New Social Contract For Education*, p20

demanding that they be listened to and included. One way in which education can respond to this cry is by adopting a learner-centred pedagogy which includes participatory forms of learning. What is meant by being learner centred is contested, as Clifford (2015) notes:

*'There are different interpretations among educators: some associate learner-centred approaches with techniques such as group work; others with practices whereby the teacher gives little instruction and learners find out for themselves; others say it's all about a 'philosophy', and not tied to any particular method at all.'*¹²⁷

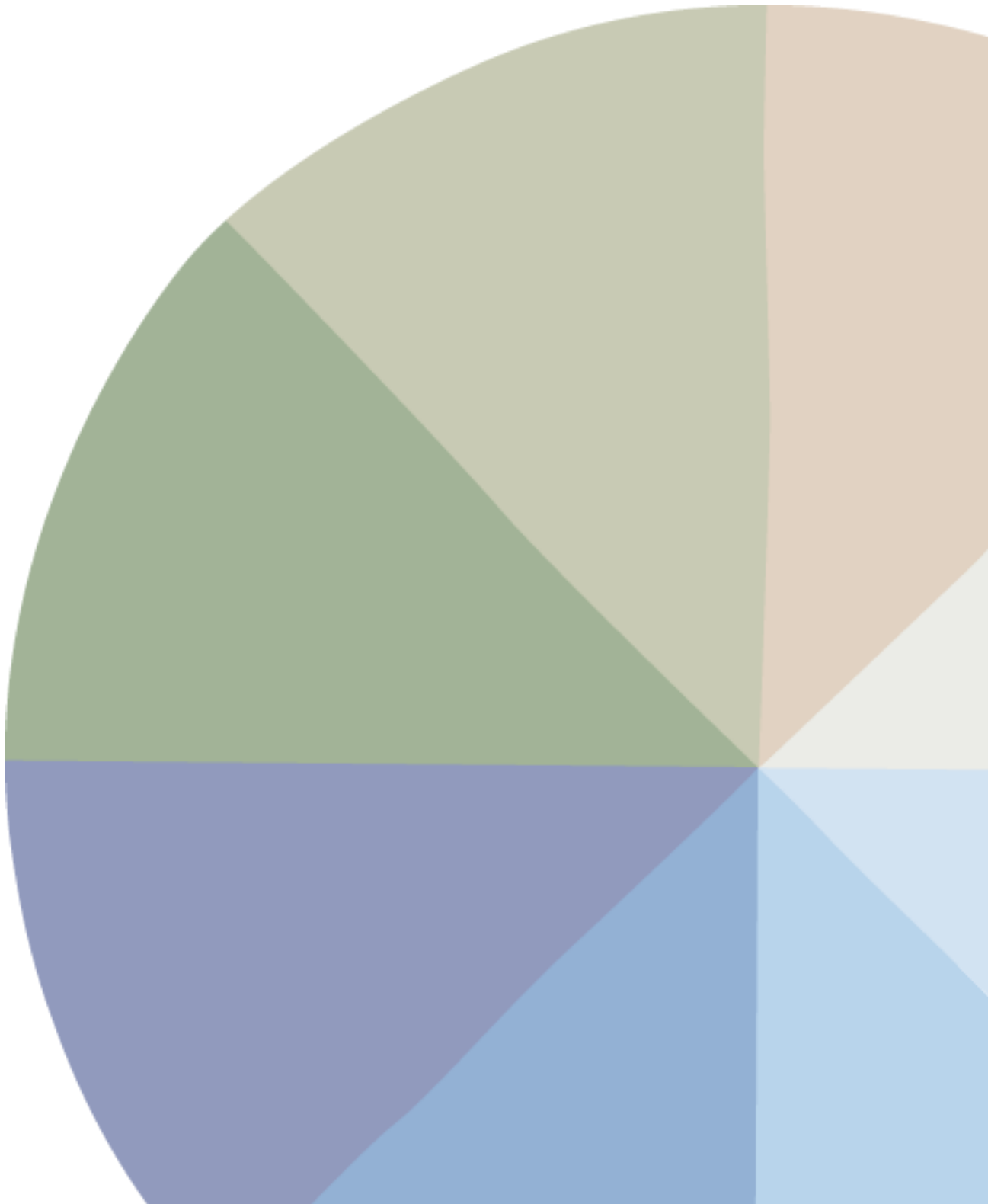
What is clear however, is that learner-centred approaches move away from traditional hierarchies between teacher and student, and towards more of a partnership approach to learning. A genuine learning partnership can deepen understanding, analyse complexity, and provide young people with a sense of agency. It also lends itself to dealing with problems as they are, not as watered-down issues divorced from their real-life context. Problems are interdisciplinary. Climate change, for example, is not just a scientific problem but has geographical, social, and political elements too. One way in which young people are put at the centre of their learning, and which lends itself to critical thinking, participation and interdisciplinarity is through the use of SOLE (Self-Organised Learning Environments) (Mitra, 2013). Winner of the TED prize in 2013, Mitra's work demonstrates that when children ask questions which don't have an easy answer and then, using the internet, work cooperatively to find the answers, incredible learning can take place. As Scripture (2014) says: *'SOLEs are the first step towards preparing our children for a future we can barely imagine'*¹²⁸. This is important if young people are going to become the active citizens needed to solve the problems highlighted by the SDGs.

¹²⁷ <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/do-learner-centred-approaches-work-every-culture/>

¹²⁸ <https://blog.ted.com/building-a-center-for-research-into-self-organized-learning/>

SECTION TWO

THE EVIDENCE



Themes of Target 4.7

As a reminder, goal 4.7 states:

'By 2030, ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development'.

This definition provides clarity on the themes of education needed to achieve the goal: Education for Sustainable Development (called here Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development to reflect current nomenclature), Global Citizenship Education, Education for Human Rights, Peace Education and Cultural Education. Target 4.7 is, however, more than just inclusion of a number of topics within education. It is proposing support for an approach to learning that could be said to be transformational. Its basis can be found in the key components and pedagogical approaches discussed in the previous section and its purpose is truly for the public and common good - to create a better world.

We see these aspects reflected again in the themes presented here. The evidence, from a range of stakeholders, both illuminates their distinctive contributions to the achievement of the goal and also their common threads and purpose. In this way, they speak with one voice about 'what works' for the achievement of Target 4.7.

Evidence is presented for each of the themes. It covers current thinking and debate, examples of practice from schools and informal education settings and the different perspectives of the various stakeholders, from teachers and pupils to academics and activists.

Theme 1

Environmental education and Education for Sustainable Development

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the evidence and research on environmental and sustainable development education within schools in England since 2015. The chapter reviews the different interpretations of the terms around the theme, provides an overview of evidence, identifies a number of common areas of activity such as climate change and shows the influence of the demands by young people for action. It further suggests that a useful way of reviewing evidence in this field is through the lenses of education about, for, in and through.

Environmental and sustainability issues have, as a result of the climate emergency, become constant themes within a lot of educational discussions and activities over the past few years. There have been a range of reports, academic studies and calls for action from a wide range of bodies within education and society more generally recommending that sustainability and particularly climate emergency themes become more central to the lives of all schools in England.¹²⁹

This recent interest builds on several decades of activity, educational research, and practices from leading civil society organisations such as WWF, RSPB, SEEd (Sustainability and Environmental Education), the Royal Wildlife Trusts, Eco-Schools and the National Association of Environmental Education.

What is evident is that there has been, despite differences between governments in policy, a growing understanding that people are part of nature and not ‘users’ of it. Whilst the UK government has signed up to many global agreements regarding environmental and sustainability themes, these have not always been translated into educational policies and practices.

Within England there has been, and remains, a wealth of experience and expertise, although, as will be shown, some of this has been in specific areas. There is evidence of motivation, enthusiasm, and support for these areas of learning amongst educational practitioners.

In November 2021, the Department for Education in England, in response to the increased interest in sustainability and the need to address the topic of climate change for schools during the COP26 Conference, launched its first strategy on sustainability and climate change education for nearly twenty years which clearly provides some opportunities for the development of themes outlined later in this section.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Rickinson, M., Lundholm, C. and Hopwood, N. (2009) *Environmental Learning*; Dordrecht, Springer; Scott, W.A.H. and Gough, S. (2003) *Sustainable Development and learning: Framing the Issues*, London, Routledge; Wals, A. (2009) *Social Learning: Towards a sustainable World*, Wageningen Publishers; Nolet, V. (2016) *Educating for Sustainability*, New York, Routledge; Scott W. and Vare, P. (2021) *Learning, Environment and Sustainable Development - A history of ideas*, Abingdon, Routledge

¹³⁰ Department for Education (2021) *Sustainability and Climate Change: a draft strategy for the education and children’s services systems*, London, DFE

2.0 Terminology

For this section of the report the focus is primarily on environmental education and education for sustainability. The definitions that have influenced the identification of evidence gathered in this section are:

*'Environmental education is a process that allows individuals to explore environmental issues, engage in problem solving, and take action to improve the environment. As a result, individuals develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues and have the skills to make informed and responsible decisions.'*¹³¹

In addition, there are many 'adjectival' educations e.g., outdoor learning, climate change education, energy education, biodiversity education, conservation education etc. For each of these, the 'adjective' can just replace environment in the above definition.

More broadly, any review of evidence and literature around education for sustainability or sustainable development tends to start with perspectives outlined by UNESCO with recognition of the original Bruntland definition:

ESD empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. It is about lifelong learning and is an integral part of quality education. ESD is holistic and transformational education, which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. (UNESCO, 2018)

Sustainable development is "*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (Brundtland Report 1987).

3.0 Overview of Evidence

3.1 Policy and Schooling

Between the 1960s and 1980s, there was a growing recognition of the need for an educational response to the then emerging environmental challenges. By the 1980s, environmental education was referenced in a range of HMI reports and became identified as one of five cross-curricular issues that schools could include in their curriculum. Environment Education (EE) advisors were appointed in every local authority.

As a result of the impact of the Bruntland Report 'Our Common Future' and the Rio Summit in 1992, the term sustainable development began to take increased emphasis over environmental education. This change in emphasis became most notable during the period of the Labour government between 1997 and 2010 when the joint education and environment ministries supported the Sustainable Development Education Panel and the specific schools initiative, Sustainable Schools. Sustainable development became recognised as a cross curricular theme and there was clearly a move from education about the environment to education for sustainable development.

¹³¹ <https://www.epa.gov/education/what-environmental-education>

There was also a move to put the emphasis much more on school leaders rather than government in terms of who held responsibility for ensuring that sustainability was a more central part of school life and that the environment was taken as a cross-cutting theme.¹³² The outcome of this work was a stated purpose in the National Curriculum:

*'Aim 2: It should develop their awareness and understanding of, and respect for, the environments in which they live, and secure their commitment to sustainable development at a personal, local, national and global level. It should also equip pupils as consumers to make informed judgements and independent decisions and to understand their responsibilities and rights.'*¹³³

Since 2010, the promotion of EE and ESD has been left primarily to civil society organisations and professional bodies. As noted elsewhere in this report, the UK government removed from the curriculum the cross curricular themes and there was a return to the primacy of subject based knowledge. Themes such as climate change for example were not seen as priorities by successive ministers of education¹³⁴. Although climate change content was originally only to be taught at A level (KS 4), after much public debate and pressure it was included at GCSE level, but not lower. The argument is that the climate science is too hard to understand at younger ages as learners will not have grasped the basic scientific concepts.

Since 2018 there has been increased engagement by UK government in the field of EE and sustainability as a result of its preparations for COP26. There has been recognition of the value of environmental themes within schools by DEFRA through their focus on farm visits and increased connections with nature. The UK government Environment Act of 2021 makes direct reference to value of learning about nature.¹³⁵

The culmination of this increased engagement was the creation of a special unit within DfE on Sustainability and the launch of their strategy in November 2021. Although much of the focus of this strategy is on climate change and an emphasis on science teaching, there is a recognition of the importance of education to the broader areas of sustainability as noted in the Foreword to the report by the Secretary of State:

*'We have both the responsibility and privilege of education and preparing young people for a changing world- ensuring they are equipped with the right knowledge, understanding and skills to meet their biggest challenge head on.'*¹³⁶

One area that often demonstrates movement in education policy is the content and themes within examinations. Glackin & King (2018) examined the examination specifications for EE in the 3 exam boards. The focus was on environmental topic content rather than the broader EE/ESD approach to 'allow individuals to explore environmental issues, engage in problem solving, and take action to improve the environment'. In 2019, 2020 and 2021 the DfE initiated the Sustainability Award for Schools. The Times Educational Supplement (TES) had been closely involved in an earlier version of this Award and UK government plan to develop this through a proposed Climate Leaders Award linking to existing awards such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and others. It is aimed at engaging children and young people in environmental activities.¹³⁷

¹³² see Greer, K. (2020) Governmentalities of climate change education in England perspectives from history, policy and position-holders, Unpublished Phd Thesis, Kings College London.

¹³³ House of Commons (2009) National Curriculum Fourth Report of Session 2008–09 Volume I, The Stationery Office, London. Available at: <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/pdfs/2009-CSFC-national-curriculum.pdf>

¹³⁴ See Greer op.cit.

¹³⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>

¹³⁶ DfE (2021) op.cit. p.4

¹³⁷ Ibid. p.10

Another key approach to ensuring environmental and sustainability education is part of school provision is through it being an essential component of the initial training of teachers. A range of studies have shown how, with changes in the provision of teacher training, there has been less space for the themes suggested in this report. There are examples of modules and special projects within many university courses, but they tend to operate on the margins of courses rather than being core.¹³⁸

3.2 Civil Society Engagement

Glackin and King's study, which examined the Examination specifications for EE in 3 exam boards, and which is discussed in more detail later, perhaps summarises best the landscape of the field. They found that environmental education sits within a '*deficient and muddled policy landscape*'¹³⁹, but despite these challenges, the support and engagement of a wide range of professional bodies and civil society organisations has ensured that environment and sustainability issues have relevant and appropriate support within the classroom.

For example, the National Association for Environmental Education has been working to engage children and schools with the environment and sustainability for 50 years. They produce curriculum guides showing where environmental education comes into the national curriculum from Early Years to KS4, provide advice on a whole school approach, and link their work to the SDGs¹⁴⁰. They have also produced a Guide for governing bodies of schools that emphasises the importance and value of a whole school approach to environmental sustainability¹⁴¹.

The World Wildlife Fund have been working for over 30 years to engage schools with environmental education. They work with over 10000 schools on issues such as climate change, biodiversity and food¹⁴².

The RSPB also promotes environmental and nature education. Their Wild Challenge consists of 24 activities helping children to connect with and learn about nature. Schools can achieve the bronze, silver or gold awards and it enables pupils to '*apply curriculum knowledge and skills, as well to develop their resilience and sense of agency through outdoor learning*'¹⁴³. The Wildlife Trusts have also been welcoming schools onto their nature reserves for more than 50 years¹⁴⁴.

Subject associations such as the Geographical Association and the Association for Science Education also promote environmental education and sustainability.

An important initiative that has engaged large numbers of schools in England has been the Eco-Schools programme. This programme has been in existence since 1994 and has engaged several thousand schools in England. It has a seven steps programme based around a school developing an environmental action plan, identifying curriculum links, and having an Eco-Code which the school should follow. At the end, the school receives a Green Flag award¹⁴⁵. Research in 2013 suggested that the programme had reached over 70% of schools in England¹⁴⁶.

¹³⁸ Bourn, D. & Soysal, N. (2021) Transformative Learning and Pedagogical Approaches in Education for Sustainable Development: Are Initial Teacher Education Programmes in England and Turkey Ready for Creating Agents of Change for Sustainability, *Sustainability*, 13(16), 8973; Bourn, D., Hunt, F., Blum, N. & Bamber, P. (2017) A Review of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education in Teacher Education (UNESCO GEM Background Paper), UNESCO: Paris; Summers, D. (2013) Education for Sustainable Development in initial teacher education: From compliance to commitment—Sowing the seeds of change, *J. Educ. Sustain. Dev.*, 7, 205–222

¹³⁹ Glackin and King (2020) :7.

¹⁴⁰ <https://naee.org.uk/latest-report-from-naee/>

¹⁴¹ <https://naee.org.uk/feb-16-guidance-for-school-governing-boards/>

¹⁴² <https://www.wwf.org.uk/get-involved/schools>

¹⁴³ <https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/schools-wild-challenge/>

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/schools>

¹⁴⁵ <https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/about/how-it-works/>

¹⁴⁶ Keep Britain Tidy (2013) Eco-schools in England: Exploring success to inform a new horizon, Wigan, Keep Britain Tidy

There have also been a number of specialist organisations and initiatives that have become influential within schools such as The World's Largest Lesson¹⁴⁷, Teach SDGs¹⁴⁸ and networks around climate justice¹⁴⁹.

It is evident that, as many young people have become engaged in the climate justice issue and the resultant school strikes, this has had a knock-on effect on what is taught in the classroom.

Reflecting on the influence of the various government initiatives and engagement by civil society organisations, Martin et.al. (2014) suggested there have been dangers with some of the policies to adapt a moralising tone, of what *should be done* or that just by following policies, change will somehow happen. They further suggest that a 'clear message' from government need not be the most critical factor in embedding ESD. They conclude that, whilst schools may respond to OFSTED inspection frameworks, it is more about the extent to which sustainable development issues become part of the fabric of society and the education system that in the end is more important.¹⁵⁰ Civil society organisations and professional bodies have all been subject to the vagaries of changes in funding priorities and this has had an impact on enabling long-term strategies for professional development around environmental and sustainability themes for teachers.

3.3 Understanding Environmental Education

Two major reports were produced by academics from Kings College London in 2018 that aimed to provide a summary of 'Understanding Environmental Education in Secondary Schools'¹⁵¹ The first report, looking primarily at policy, identified the following:

- The provision of environmental education in formal schooling is weakly supported by national policies with a lack of a clear vision
- Environmental education in schools is therefore patchy and dependent on examination priorities, especially GCSEs with greater interest where geography rather than science can lead to increased interest in the field
- These exam-based courses however varied with some offering more learning that encouraged radical environmental improvement whilst others focused more on technological solutions
- This focus on examinations meant that the emphasis in the learning was on content knowledge rather than the development of skills to gain and participate in any form of social and environmental activism

The report recommended:

- The need for a coherent national policy for environmental education in secondary schools
- This policy should reflect the need to look at all facets of the field
- Young people should be encouraged to become engaged in environmental issues that reflect an understanding of a wide range of voices and perspectives

¹⁴⁷ <https://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org>

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.teachsdgs.org>

¹⁴⁹ <https://www.globaljustice.org.uk/join-our-climate-justice-network/>; <https://ukscn.org>

¹⁵⁰ Martin, S., Dillon, J., Higgins, P., Strachan, G. & Vare, P. (2014) *Reflections on ESD in UK Schools* in Jucker, R. and Mathar, R. (eds.) *Schooling for Sustainable Development in Europe*, Dordrecht, Springer, 335-360.

¹⁵¹ Glackin, M. A. & King, H. (2018) *Understanding Environmental Education in Secondary Schools In England: Report 1: Perspectives from Policy*, In *King's College London King's College London*.

The research report also found that at Key Stage 4 particularly there was a strong influence of school textbooks due to their linkage to specific examinations.

The study looked primarily at geography and the science curriculum and found that, even with such an important issue as climate change, little time was given to this area, and there was little or no discussion on social implications and responses people could and should be taking.

The second report from Kings College focused primarily on the views of educational practitioners. It found there was a clear mismatch between what teachers saw as the potential for environmental education, reflecting current student interests and societal needs, and the curriculum focus on subject based knowledge. The report stressed the need to support schools to *'develop citizens who have the knowledge, skills and conviction to positively respond to future global and local environmental issues impacting communities and our ecosystems'*¹⁵². To ensure this, the report recommended that environmental education should have the same status as numeracy and literacy within schools. Their main findings were therefore that:

- Environmental education is perceived as a broad church encompassing a wide range of topics/ issues
- The perception of environmental education as a soft science needed to be challenged
- The need to challenge the perceived decline in environmental education particularly within sciences
- The need to address the perceived tension between geography and science as to whose priority it was. The area should be seen as a whole school priority
- The green skills agenda offers a real opportunity for environmental education to be seen as directly relevant to future careers of learners¹⁵³

To address these challenges the report recommended that:

- Environmental education should be recognised in future Ofsted's school inspection framework
- Effective environmental education should be seen both within and outside of the classroom
- By making connections to local issues, learners are able to engage in forms of social action to address issues that concern them
- The area needs to be recognised within the teaching standards with opportunities for teachers in both their initial and continued development to develop the confidence, skills and dispositions to address environmental matters
- Examination boards need to reflect the broader approaches to environmental education including sense of social responsibility and forms of social action
- Senior leaders to be encouraged to include these themes in their mission statements

Research by Teach the Future, the body set up UK Student Climate Network and Students Organising for Sustainability, produced an important report in 2020 that reviewed recently published evidence and consultation with a range of key stakeholders in the educational world¹⁵⁴. The report noted

¹⁵² Glackin, M. A., King, H., Cook, R. & Greer, K. (2018) Understanding Environmental Education in Secondary Schools In England: Report 2: The Practitioners' Perspective, In *King's College London* King's College London. p.1

¹⁵³ Ibid. p.2

¹⁵⁴ Ibrahim, Z. & Brindle, J. (2020) Teach the Future. SOS and UKSCN, available at: [https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5f8805cef8a604de754618bb/5fa3e667cd1ee8abe322f067_Ask%20\(England\).pdf](https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5f8805cef8a604de754618bb/5fa3e667cd1ee8abe322f067_Ask%20(England).pdf)

research conducted by bodies such as National Union of Students¹⁵⁵, Oxfam¹⁵⁶ and a You Gov poll¹⁵⁷ that had called for more opportunities for young people to learn about environmental and sustainability issues within the classroom. Building on this evidence, the Teach the Future research identified the following challenges and obstacles to effective learning about environmental and sustainability issues within schools:

- Climate emergency and ecological crisis not regarded as a learning entitlement
- Over emphasis on examinations
- Teachers state that they do not have sufficient knowledge about climate emergency and ecological crisis to confidently teach the subject beyond minimum requirements
- Not included within professional standards for training of teachers
- Over emphasis on subjects particularly at secondary level and where it is discussed mainly in science and geography
- Move away from a lot of outdoor learning in comparison to growth in engagement in technology, financial management and character education
- Lack of funding and resources for the field

Like the Kings College report, Teach the Future called for a thorough review of ways in which climate emergency and ecological crisis are taught, and for it to be an integral part of all teacher training. Finally, the report called for an English Climate Emergency Education Act to bring all of these areas together.¹⁵⁸

3.4 Research on Perspectives of Teachers

Alongside this review of policies and calls for greater action by policymakers, there has been a growing body of research on the perspectives of teachers in England on environmental and sustainability education. A feature of much of this research is how teachers have dealt with contradictions within policy initiatives, their own experiences and views, and responding to the obvious enthusiasms in these fields by children and young people.

Research by Vare for example showed the challenges teachers had in wanting the ethos of the school to have a strong sustainability focus. His research also found some evidence of some teachers feeling uneasy about being too prescriptive about sustainability being part of the whole curriculum. Teachers wanted to see environmental and sustainability education as being about developing habitual behaviours and encouraging critical thinking. There was agreement amongst the majority of the teachers interviewed about the importance of the area, but many were uncomfortable about the extent to which they should be just doing what governments or policymakers are saying. There was also evidence in his research about tensions as to whose responsibility the teaching of sustainability themes was.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ <https://www.sos-uk.org/research>

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jun/21/teachers-want-climate-crisis-training-poll-shows>

¹⁵⁷ <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/education/survey-results/daily/2020/01/22/d1cab/1>

¹⁵⁸ https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/5f8805cef8a604de754618bb/5fa3e67365c750644b6bf6c9_Climate%20Emergency%20Education%20Bill.pdf

¹⁵⁹ Vare, P. (2020) Beyond the Green Bling: Identifying contradictions encountered in school sustainability programmes and teachers' response to them, *Environmental Education Research*, 26 (1),61-80

Research by Rushton with trainee geography teachers showed the diverse ways in which they envisaged teaching sustainability and environmental themes within the classroom. There was also a recognition of the importance of their approach to teaching sustainability, making connections to the pupil's own life experiences. Bringing in personal stories was seen as important in this context. There was also a belief that, as teachers, they should be developing a sense of agency within their pupils, that they could make a difference in the world. One student teacher said she wanted to '*empower students*'. They were however conscious that they could be seen by their future teaching colleagues as idealists, but felt that sustainability must be a core element of the geography curriculum.¹⁶⁰

3.5 BERA initiative on Education for Sustainable Development

The British Education Research Association (BERA) has been another body in the UK calling for a major commitment to education for environmental sustainability in secondary school, and launched in November 2021 a Commission to produce a manifesto for action. Led by Lynda Dunlop from York University and Elizabeth Rushton from Kings College, the Manifesto noted that '*education has a key role to play in creating long-term responses to the social and environmental consequences of the climate crisis*'. It recognised the demands being made by young people and teachers for greater recognition of the importance of sustainability within schools. The Manifesto specifically called for a review of the secondary school curriculum and for there to be sustainability co-ordinators in all schools. To achieve this, the Manifesto also called for an increased emphasis on continuing professional development to help teachers '*gain confidence in teaching about sustainability*'.¹⁶¹

4.0 Key Themes

4.1 The Need to Re-Think Environmental Education

Although the dominant discourse, from the 1980s to the third decade of the twenty first century, has been the gradual shift from focusing on environment to sustainability, there has in recent years in England and elsewhere in the world been a conscious move from academics and researchers to re-think and re-focus on the importance of the environment within education. This is in part a response to wider societal issues, but it also reflects a recognition within research of the need to put the environment more centre stage. That is why there are a number of international initiatives that now refer to environmental sustainability education¹⁶². An example of this can be seen in the article in Environmental Education Research by Reid et.al.¹⁶³. They argue for the field to have a central place within the school curriculum, but further suggest that there is a danger of a reductive approach to seeing environmental themes having a higher status as the answer and not recognising the importance of community engagement and seeing environmental and sustainability issues as part of everyday life. This means a re-orientation of education in general towards sustainability. This theme has been recognised at a UNESCO Conference on ESD in 2021 in making reference to changing mindsets and supporting the integration of all facets of sustainable development within all areas of education.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ Rushton, E. (2021) Building Teacher Identity in Environmental and Sustainability Education: the perspectives of preservice secondary geography teachers, *Sustainability*,13, 5231,1-18

¹⁶¹ <https://www.bera.ac.uk/news/manifesto-for-education-for-environmental-sustainability-efes-published-by-bera-research-commission>

¹⁶² For example, the special interest groups within European Education Research Association (EERA) and BERA

¹⁶³ Reid, A. Dillon, J., Ardoin, N. & Ferreira, J-A. (2021) Scientists Warnings and the Need to Reimagine, Recreate, and Restore Environmental Education, *Environmental Education Research*, 27:6,783-795

¹⁶⁴ UNESCO (2021) Learn for Our: An Act for Responsibility Planet. Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development, Paris, UNESCO

4.2 Young People's Engagement

Throughout the history of environmental and sustainability education there has been an ongoing debate that the field has been too instrumental and deterministic with the emphasis on individual behaviour change¹⁶⁵. This theme has seen increased recent discussion as a result of the climate justice campaigns led by young people. For example, SEEd's Youth Listening Project showed the extent of all the global issues that were of concern to young people and their desire to find out more beyond the classroom. Their overwhelming view was they wanted to learn how to live sustainably¹⁶⁶.

A constant theme throughout this report is that addressing the SDGs has to include within its educational objectives a sense that young people themselves can make a difference through their own engagement in the issues. To do this, as the Global Action Plan report states, young people need the knowledge, the skills and the self-belief to enable them to play an effective role in society. They need the knowledge to understand the complexities of the sustainability issues the world is facing. They also require the skills to implement their enthusiasms, to engage others and to look at issues critically and from different perspectives. They also need the belief in themselves that they can take action. What makes the Global Action Plan report distinctive is that it adds a fourth element of shared compassionate values. This means being concerned about the wellbeing of others and caring about people and the planet.

4.3 Climate Change Education

Evidence suggests that climate change, although primarily focused within two subjects, geography and science, is taught in the majority of schools in England¹⁶⁷. This research by Howard-Jones et.al. showed that there was increasing evidence that teachers were appearing to 'afford climate change a level of precedence shared with literacy and numeracy' (Ibid.12). However, their research, which demonstrated a desire by teachers to include elements of civic competencies within their teaching about climate change, appears to be in contradiction to the curriculum guidelines which make no reference to a sense of social responsibility. Their research moreover found that teachers were conscious that climate change topics should have a social action component. This evidence also suggests that teachers, in recognising the impact of the student led climate change strikes, need to take account of young people's concerns about these issues. After all, as UNESCO note:

*'Children and youth have, understandably, led some of the most forceful calls for action and delivered harsh rebukes to those who refuse to acknowledge the precarity of our moment and take meaningful corrective action. In the consultations that informed this report, consistent across the focus groups conducted with and by youth, and in youth surveys, a high level of concern is evident about climate change and environmental devastation.'*¹⁶⁸

This area therefore poses questions about children and young people's sense of agency and extent to which they should be encouraged to be actors for social change¹⁶⁹. There are some who might question that this area should be outside of the role of schools, but as Dunlop et.al. have

¹⁶⁵ Jickling, B. & Wals, A. (2008) Globalization and environmental education: looking beyond sustainable development, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 40:1, 1-21

¹⁶⁶ <https://se-ed.co.uk/youth-listening-project-attitudes-to-sustainability-report-2018-19/>

¹⁶⁷ Howard-Jones, P., Sands, D., Dillon, J. & Fenton-Jones, F. (2021) The views of Teachers in England on an action orientated curriculum, *Environmental Education Research*, 27:11, 1660-1680

¹⁶⁸ UNESCO (2021) Reimagining Our Futures Together — A new social contract for education, p31

¹⁶⁹ Walker, C. (2017) Tomorrow's Leaders and Today's Agents of Change? Children, Sustainability Education and Environmental Governance, *Children in Society*, 31,72-83

commented, schools should be places ‘where they can be encouraged to share, encounter and challenge perspectives which can then be critically reflected upon and refined’¹⁷⁰.

As Hicks has commented, issues such as climate change cannot be resolved through knowledge alone. He suggests that alongside the head (knowledge), there is a need for feeling (heart), and this means identifying and choosing what to do (discernment), which results in taking action through a sense of agency (acting)¹⁷¹. Perhaps this combination of knowledge, heart, discernment, and action can provide a useful framework for thinking about climate change education which UNESCO state must turn to adaptation, mitigation and reverting climate change.¹⁷²

These themes and debates have become more prominent within education since 2018 as a result of the campaign from Greta Thunberg, and the strikes and actions that developed around the world including the UK. This interest and engagement has been heightened in 2021 by increased evidence of climate change and the lead up to COP 26 in Glasgow.

4.4 Outdoor Learning and Wellbeing

Within the environmental and sustainability education field, outdoor learning has always had an important role in supporting a more experiential approach to children’s experiences and engagement with the environment around them¹⁷³. The importance of these areas of learning have been heightened by COVID-19 and there is considerable evidence to demonstrate the value of learning beyond the classroom as part of building a child’s persona and social development, their own well-being, and contributing to a broader and more holistic and experiential education.¹⁷⁴ There has been recognition of the importance of these areas by UK government through funded initiatives by Natural England¹⁷⁵. A popular organisation that has engaged a large number of schools in this area have been Forest Schools which, as well as providing an ‘*alternative form of education*’, are now becoming used within mainstream schools¹⁷⁶. Since its first development in one school in Somerset in 1993, by the end of the second decade of the twenty first century, over 12,000 teachers had been trained in Forest Schools practices¹⁷⁷. Research by Forest Schools identified the following:

*‘Outdoor learning contributes to a child’s physical development, their mobility and interactivity which has been shown to help to improve general educational attainment
Being outdoors encourages opportunities for children and young people to express themselves more and being stimulated by the wonders of the things around them.
The approach of Forest Schools can enable a more flexible approach to learning, to respond to children’s starting points and needs.’*¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁰ Dunlop, C., Atkinson, L., Stubbs, J., & Turkenburg-van Diepen, M. (2020) The Role of Schools and Teachers in Nurturing and Responding to Climate Crisis Activism, *Children’s Geographies*, 19:3, 291-299

¹⁷¹ Hicks D. (2019) Climate Change: Bringing the pieces together, *Teaching Geography*, Spring 2019, 20-23

¹⁷² UNESCO (2021) Reimagining Our Futures Together — A new social contract for education, p30

¹⁷³ See Natural Connections Demonstration Project 2012-2016: Final report; York Consulting’s Learning Away Report in 2015 on Impact of Residential experiences on young people; Mark Rickinson’s report for the Field Studies Council in 2004 on Review of Research on Outdoor Learning

¹⁷⁴ Stirling, S. & Emery, H. (2016) A whole school framework for emotional well-being and mental health. National Children’s Bureau, London; Van Poortvliet, M., Clarke, A. & Gross, J. (2019) Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools. Guidance Report. Education Endowment Foundation; Marchant, E., Todd, C., Cooksey, R., Dredge, S., Jones, H., Reynolds, D. et al. (2019) Curriculum-based outdoor learning for children aged 9-11: A qualitative analysis of pupils’ and teachers’ views, *PLoS ONE*, 14(5)

¹⁷⁵ Lee, E., Vare, P. & Finalyson, A. (2020) *The Ebb and Flow of Environmental and Sustainability Education in UK Schools* in Gough, A. (eds.) *Green Schools Globally*, Switzerland, Springer Nature

¹⁷⁶ Waite, S. & Goodenough, A. (2018) What Is Different About Forest School? Creating a Space for an alternative pedagogy in England, *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education*, 21: 25-44

¹⁷⁷ Harris, F. (2018) Outdoor Learning Spaces: the case of forest school, *Area*, 50,222-231

¹⁷⁸ Children and Young people Now (2018) Outdoor Learning Spaces: the case of Forest Schools

This research mirrors a range of other research which shows that school students '*engaged in learning in natural environments have been found to have higher achievement in reading, mathematics, science and social studies*'¹⁷⁹. There was also evidence that learning in a natural environment has improved attendance rates and behaviour patterns. Research looking specifically at the impact of outdoor education programmes on the attainment levels of primary school pupils found that, from analysing through a specific programme called Wilderness Schooling, pupils who participated in the initiative increased their attainment in English and Mathematics more significantly than those who had not participated in the programme¹⁸⁰. Some of these themes are discussed further in the section on this report on Culture and Creativity.

Building on the comments above regarding outdoor education, an important piece of research was undertaken on outdoor activities with local Wildlife Trusts. The research for 37 Wildlife Trusts, mainly with primary school children, looked at the relationships between being outdoors, enjoying the natural world, and a sense of well-being. The research found that even children with the lowest initial levels of wellbeing and pro-environmental outlook showed significant increases in their mental health. The research suggested that nature experiences may help to address stress and fatigue. A particular comment was made about how experiencing nature can help children develop a sense of independence, of being able to follow their own motivations and enthusiasms.¹⁸¹

The value of Forest Schools and outdoor learning in general was commented upon by Rekers-Powers & Martin-Millward (2022) in response to the impact of COVID-19 as part of what they call a '*recovery curriculum*'. They suggest that Forest Schools and outdoor learning can help with providing children and young people with space '*to be, to reflect and to re-connect*'.¹⁸²

4.5 Quality of Teaching and Learning

A feature of the exploration of evidence in this report is the nature of the type of pedagogical approach that is advised in order for education for SDG 4.7 to be effective. Most approaches, which account for the development of the field from the 1960s onwards, can be grouped into the following categories (and sometimes more than one):

- 1) Learning in – e.g., nature, wellbeing, care for, becoming environmental citizens, communities
- 2) Learning about – e.g., curriculum and content focussing on the environment, sustainability or global issues
- 3) Learning for – ESD – e.g., aiming for resilience, agency, participation, critical thinking
- 4) Learning through – e.g., working through community, transformative/action learning projects/ whole school/institution approach, culture, partnerships with business

Each of these is now taken in turn.

¹⁷⁹ Natural England (2016) Link Between Natural Environment's and Learning; evidence briefing, EIN0 17, Natural England

¹⁸⁰ Quibell, T., Charlton, J. & Law, J. (2017) Wilderness Schooling: A controlled trial of the impact of an outdoor education programme on attainment outcomes in primary school pupils, *British Educational Research Journal*, 43,3, 572-587

¹⁸¹ Sheldrake, R., Reiss, M., & Amos, R. (2019) Children and Nature, Wildlife Trusts and UCL, <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/Children%20and%20Nature%20-%20UCL%20and%20The%20Wildlife%20Trusts%20Full%20Report.pdf>

¹⁸² Rekers-Power, A. & Martin-Millward, T. (2022) Forest School and its place within a Covid-recovery curriculum, BERA Blog, <https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/forest-school-and-its-place-within-a-covid-recovery-curriculum>

4.5.1 Learning in

In line with the examples above, learning 'in' hints of an immersive approach to learning.

As mentioned before, Forest Schools are an initiative that sees children spend time in nature, with the freedom to take risks and explore what nature has to offer. They have been educating for ten years, have extended into Beach Schools to explore the coastline, and extended internationally, with Bush Schools in Australia and New Zealand. They aim to be transformative, focusing on the individual learner, and they contrast this with outdoor learning more generally which they describe as '*transactional: if you do a, you will receive b.*'¹⁸³. Forest School is described as '*nature-based communities where trained practitioners nurture learner-led exploration and discovery, nurturing meaningful experiences for positive lifelong impacts*'¹⁸⁴. They also aim to nurture personal wellbeing, including the social, emotional and physical needs of participants.

In so doing, they connect with some of the other themes of this report, for example Global Citizenship Education, which also serves to educate holistically. Forest School also exemplifies the purpose of education described previously, where socio-emotional learning and wellbeing play an important part.

Another initiative to learn 'in' is Outdoor Classroom Day - a global movement to make time outdoors part of every child's day. '*On two days of action each year, teachers take children outdoors to play and learn*'¹⁸⁵. Espoused benefits are that it develops key skills for life, gives better understanding of the environment, enhances engagement with learning and increases physical and mental health. The initiative's impact report from 2021 states that 10.4 million children have taken part so far, resulting in an additional 35 million hours of additional time outdoors in over 170 countries.

Comments from teachers who have taken part include: '*We are aware of the science behind young children's learning and development and know that being outside is paramount to healthy, happy learners*' and '*With the chaos that the world is in in general, connecting to the outdoors gives a sense of normality and safety*'¹⁸⁶. Whilst not independently researched, the comments from participants do highlight the links teachers are seeing between children's health, happiness, and the outdoors. It would seem that Outdoor Classroom Day also contributes to the purpose of education as outlined in this report.

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom's mission is to '*ensure that EVERY child should have the opportunity to experience the world beyond the classroom walls as an essential part of learning and development, whatever their age, ability or background*'¹⁸⁷. Their website lists many published research studies which make the connection between increased time outdoors and gains in self-regulation, greater pro-environment decision making and the promotion of healthy behaviours.¹⁸⁸

What has not been as well developed and popular as yet is the immersive experience in changing the school and being in the community or workplace, as this also constitutes 'learning in'.

SEEd's Young Changemaker Programme pilot at secondary level has evidence that action learning projects designed by teams of students, in their school or community, can have transformative effects on understanding of sustainability, change processes and building resilience or action competencies. The Harmony Project also has enquiry based learning projects at primary level where students are immersed in local issues.

¹⁸³ <https://www.forestschoools.com/blogs/forest-school-blog/the-difference-between-outdoor-learning-and-forest-schools>

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.forestschoools.com/pages/what-is-forest-school-an-introduction>

¹⁸⁵ <https://outdoorclassroomday.com/>

¹⁸⁶ Semble/Outdoor Classroom Day (2021) The Difference we have made, Impact Report

¹⁸⁷ Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (2020) Annual Report <https://www.lotc.org.uk/annual-report-and-accounts/>

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.lotc.org.uk/category/research/>

4.5.2 Learning about

The following table provides a snapshot of some of the activities and themes undertaken in learning about the environment and sustainability, with examples of organisations who are leading this area of work, and organised by the SDGs. It is not intended to be a comprehensive list.

Many of these organisations' programmes do however cover all 4 'learnings'- in, about, for and through. The activities they suggest encourage learning outdoors, connection with community and real-world sustainability issues in the community or school, action learning projects, enquiry based learning projects and critical and systems thinking.

Education name	Themes	Topics	SDG	Examples of organisations:
Biodiversity	Nature Conservation Ecoliteracy	Birds, butterflies, bees, rewilding, Habitats, Soils etc	SDG 15	RSPB WWF-UK Trees for Life Marine Conservation Society The Eden Project Wildlife Trusts Plantlife WWT
Climate Change	Energy Literacy	Zero carbon Carbon footprint	SDG 7	Solar for Schools Centre for Alternative Energy Oxfam Ashden Awards -Lets go Zero
	Climate Science	Melting Ice caps Changing weather Disasters	SDG 13	Geographical Association Royal Geographical Society National Association of Environmental Education
Transport	Travel Transport	Eco tourism CO2 emissions	SDG 9, 11	Living Streets Sustrans
Pollution	Air	CO2 and urban air pollution	SDG 13, 15	EcoSchools Twinkl (BBC)
	Ocean	Plastics	SDG 14	Surfers against Sewage
Consumption and Production	Waste Plastics	Recycling	SDG 12	British Council Connecting Classrooms WRAP

Learning in the Natural Environment, (LINE), learning outside the classroom	Outdoor classrooms Residentials School grounds Fieldtrips	Nature Caring for nature Wellbeing Resilience	SDG 3, SDG 15	CLOtC Learning through Landscapes and Outdoor Classroom Day RSPB Royal Wildlife Trusts Forest Schools OASES
ESD – learning ‘for’	Transformative pedagogies Change education Eco Activism Agency		SDG 4.7	SEEd EcoSchools Teach the Future The Harmony Project PECT
Economy	Circular Economy Sustainable business		SDG 12, 9, 8	Ellen McArthur Foundation
Food and Farming		Hunger, poverty, development, urbanisation	SDG 2, 9	LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) Oxfam
Water		Droughts, farming, climate change	SDG 6, 9	WaterAid WWT
Sustainable Living				SoS Global Action Plan (UK) RSA Schools Without Walls

4.5.3 Learning For

The OECD report ‘Green at Fifteen’ (2021) demonstrated that a sense of agency in 15-year-olds was not dependent on high PISA scores. The analysis showed that knowledge-based education systems did not engender a sense of agency.

Discussions and moves to measure the impact of EE or ESD have led to many sustainability competencies reports. The UNECE competencies have now been tested and practically developed into an Erasmus project called a Rounder Sense of Purpose¹⁸⁹.

The competencies include:

- Integration: Systems, futures, achieving transformation
- Involvement: attentiveness, empathy, values
- Practice: transdisciplinarity, creativity, action
- Reflexivity: criticality, responsibility, decisiveness

¹⁸⁹ <https://aroundersenseofpurpose.eu/>

They can be further grouped under:

- Thinking holistically
- Envisioning change
- achieving transformation

Learning outcomes for learners are included e.g.

**Transdisciplinary Learner Outcomes: The educator helps learners to...
Identify and express their own values and perspectives and the strengths and limitations of
these within a given context related to sustainability**

The competencies have been aligned with the SDGs and come with example activities for each of the goals. Empathy, creativity, criticality, interdisciplinarity and action are all part of the competencies, making them a good fit for educating for SDG 4.7 as these match some of the cross-cutting themes inherent in this report.

4.5.4 Learning Through

Using a whole institution approach (WIA) to sustainability and ESD would provide both the governance, support and learning environment that would support the teacher's work and development. There are many models of 'whole institution approaches', from award-schemes to theme-based approaches, following a knowledge theme through the stages of a student's education career to a developmental school improvement model.

This last approach was developed by key global partners of UNESCO during its GAP programme (2014-2019). A generic model was adapted to suit all educational institutions from early years to higher education institutions. The model was then tested, adopted globally and the impacts were reported.

This model uses an appreciative enquiry starting point and a development framework that can be adapted and adjusted both to individual education settings, but also over time as an institution develops its learning and understanding of sustainability and, hopefully, its ambitions.¹⁹⁰

The 6 domains with the WIA framework and some suggested dimensions are:

- Governance – i.e., policies, mission, funding, training, responsibilities
- Estate – i.e., the buildings and grounds
- Procurement – i.e., what the institution buys in
- Curriculum – the design, intent (outcomes including sustainability competencies) and approaches for teaching and learning
- Community/stakeholders – the ways in which the institution works with others to make learning for sustainability a real-world learning opportunity
- Action learning/research for development of sustainability and ESD practice, evidence of impact, and ongoing improvement

¹⁹⁰ <https://se-ed.co.uk/whole-institution-school-approach-sustainability/>

Research has shown that adopting this model has led to a change in culture and sustained sustainability work in education institutions, moving it on from ad hoc or 'add-on' types of activities to a more central role in the organisation of the education institution (UNESCO, 2019). It also models the important concepts of lifelong learning, collaboration, and action learning in a safe environment within the institution. More importantly, the institution models a systems approach to embedding ESD.

5.0 Conclusion

It seems clear that across policy, civil society, academic research, and from children and young people themselves, there is a call for a greater focus on sustainability within education. This is recognised as needing to build long term habits and to provide the skills in critical thinking necessary for young people to play their part in solving the complex challenges of the climate emergency.

Teachers are calling for this too, and there is a need to provide ongoing training for teachers so that they can adopt the skills necessary to meet this challenge. Evidence is also strong for the link between the environment and wellbeing. Several civil society organisations work with schools to promote this aspect, not least Forest Schools, and research mirrors this, showing links between learning outdoors and attainment in Maths, Reading, Science and Social Studies.

With the evidence and desire from all stakeholders – government, civil society, teachers, and young people – to focus education more on the environment and sustainability, it is also clear that a whole institution approach is the way forward for embedding these themes successfully.

Connecting it all Together

- Environment and Sustainability Education is seen by all stakeholders as an important tool for combatting the climate emergency and ecological crisis and for equipping children and young people with the knowledge, skills, compassion, self-belief, and attitudes needed for them to effect change
- The calls from and for young people to have agency to effect change speaks to the importance of a learner centred pedagogy focused on developing skills of self-regulation, collaborative problem solving and global citizenship
- The purpose of education requires the involvement of all stakeholders, should fight the denial of scientific knowledge, foster critical thinking and the solving of complex problems together and in so doing, empower learners to co-construct change. Environmental and Sustainability Education hits all of these points and thus serves to support the purpose of an education for the 21st century
- The challenges faced by the world are interconnected. Education plays a key role in fulfilling all of the SDGs and they need to be seen in a holistic light. Target 4.7 specifically mentions sustainable development. It is a central contributor to efforts to protect, repair and improve life on a planetary scale

Theme 2

Global Citizenship Education

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the influence and impact of the global citizenship or global learning themes within the English education system since 2015. It includes sections on the terminology of the field, its positioning within the national curriculum, and the extent to which it has engaged schools and teachers. The chapter then looks at particular themes that demonstrate the relevance and impact of global citizenship to education in England in terms of improving the quality of teaching and learning, teacher agency, capturing the imagination of pupils, relevance of themes such as a global outlook, social justice, and anti-racist work.

A feature of this chapter is that this influence builds on a long-standing and well-respected body of practice that goes back over fifty years. Within England there is a strong and long tradition of interest in learning about global and international development issues within formal education. This is in part due to the contribution of international development NGOs such as Oxfam, Christian Aid and CAFOD, a network of local Development Education Centres (DECs, now part of the Consortium of Development Education Centres [CODEC]), and interest from professional bodies such as the Geographical Association and Royal Geographical Society. From 1993 to 2018 this support was enhanced by the existence of an NGO explicitly dedicated to global education and learning - the Development Education Association, later renamed Think Global.

This area of education has also been helped by public funding, most notably that from the UK government and, up to 2020, the European Commission. From 1997 to 2010, the then Department for International Development (DFID) gave grants to a wide range of civil society organisations. Since then, the funding has been drastically cut with the main programmes funded being Connecting Classrooms and the Global Learning Programme (GLP) from 2012 to 2018. From 2018 to 2022 these areas have been merged into one programme - Connecting Classrooms Through Global Learning (CCGL) - which was managed by the British Council. European Commission funded programmes came from two budget lines, one specifically on development education through Europe Aid, and the other being the Erasmus programme. Civil society organisations in England from 2021 can no longer apply to these programmes.

This practice, led by nationally based and locally organised civil society organisations, which increasingly gained the support and enthusiasm of policymakers and more recently academics and researchers, has had an important influence in many schools. However, the field, as will be shown, could still be said to be on the margins of educational practice, relying on the enthusiasm of individual teachers with high quality NGO and professional bodies' support rather than any direct recognition by policymakers of the value and importance of all pupils developing a global outlook and being encouraged to see themselves as active global citizens.

As this field of global citizenship education covers a wide range of complex issues and proposes approaches to teaching and learning that are based on participatory forms of learning, providing appropriate and relevant professional development opportunities for teachers has been a high priority.

2.0 Terminology

There are a number of terms that have been used in England to cover this area. Historically, the main term used was *development education* but today the most common are *global citizenship education* or *global learning*. Other terms used include *global education* and *global social justice education*. The following themes could be said to summarise much of the practice around the use of these terms:

- Promoting learning about global issues
- Encouraging a participatory approach to learning
- Having an ethos of global social justice
- Supporting and encouraging learning that seeks action and social change

This approach supports education about the key factors underpinning poverty and inequality in the global North and South, and how we can achieve sustainable development. It responds to issues of development, human rights, and justice, to issues of economic, social, political, and environmental interdependence, and to issues of citizenship in a globalised society. It aims to provide a justice framework that upholds and promotes human rights, sustainable development, local-global security, and international feminist solidarity, both here in the UK and elsewhere in the world. It also aims to promote the voices and viewpoints of those who are excluded from an equal share in the benefits of human development globally, and helps learners understand better the complex realities we live with and the historical trends that brought us here.

Above all, this approach aims to enable learners to develop the knowledge, understanding, values, critical-reflexive attitudes and skills they need to be active global citizens. Fundamentally, it is about enabling young people to play a critical role in supporting the creation of a just and sustainable world without poverty and inequality, participating in and making a positive contribution to the interdependent world they are part of.

A feature of these approaches is the common usage of a range of participatory teaching and learning approaches, including enquiry, dialogue and discussion, role play, ranking exercises, communities of enquiry, reflection and action. These approaches cover the cognitive, affective, relational and existential dimensions of learning, all of which support teaching and learning both *about* global issues and *for* active global citizenship. These contribute to knowledge and understanding of economic, political, social, and environmental systems, and of interdependent histories, global relationships, possible futures and of the limitations of understanding.

The educational approaches are based on, and promote values of justice, democratic participation, diversity, compassion, curiosity, systemic critical-reflexive thinking, and open-mindedness. They involve a transformational and critical pedagogy which challenges the status quo locally and globally, can explore long-term needs for our collective wellbeing, and which leads to the acquisition of skills for active engagement with and reflexive examination of global issues, for example through creativity, collaboration, problem posing and solving, and strong media literacy.

3.0 Overview of Evidence

Evidence of the impact of global citizenship themes within schools in England can be found in a number of different sources. One of them is the evidence gathered from the various government funded programmes. Secondly there is the material gathered by civil society organisations and

professional bodies as part of their ongoing activities. In some cases, this evidence was related to evaluation reports required for externally funded projects such as the European Commission or trusts and foundations. Thirdly, there is the growing body of evidence from a range of research studies, including Masters dissertations and doctoral theses as well as academic articles and books on the subject.

What the evidence shows most strikingly is the value teachers and pupils place on learning about global themes and issues. Teachers, as a result of professional development opportunities and through engaging in projects and award programmes with increased confidence, feel a sense of passion and enthusiasm about their own work which, as a consequence, has improved the overall quality of their teaching. Pupils feel a sense of relevance to their own and future lives through learning about global issues. They recognise the interdependent nature of the world we are living in and, as COVID-19 has shown, what happens in one part of the world can have a direct affect elsewhere.

3.1 Enthusiasm of Schools and Teachers

Understanding global issues and having the knowledge and skills to contribute to securing a more just world have been popular aspects of the lives of many schools in England for over forty years. Their popularity has been built on a desire of teachers who wish to broaden pupil's horizons and encourage a sense of global citizenship within the school.

Important initiatives which were originally funded by UK government but are now self-funding include:

- Global Dimension website, managed by Reboot the Future¹⁹¹
- Development Education Research Centre at UCL Institute of Education which hosts ANGEL, the Academic Network on Global Education & Learning¹⁹²
- TEESNet, a network of teacher education and civil society organisations¹⁹³

Alongside these initiatives, global citizenship themes are very much the heart of the work within schools of leading international NGOs such as Oxfam, Christian Aid, CAFOD, bodies such as UNICEF, the network of locally run development education centres, and a growing number of consultancy bodies.

In addition, professional subject associations such as Geographical Association, Royal Geographical Society, Association of Science Education and Association of Citizenship Teachers have all provided resources and a range of professional development courses linked to global themes.

Since 2018, the main government funded programme supporting global citizenship themes within schools in England has been Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning (CCGL). The aims of the programme are to:

'Help pupils understand the big issues that shape our world and equip them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to make a positive contribution to society. The Programme combines a range of professional development opportunities for teachers on global learning

¹⁹¹ <https://globaldimension.org.uk>

¹⁹² <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/centres/development-education-research-centre>; <https://angel-network.net>.

¹⁹³ <http://teesnet.liverpoolworldcentre.org>

themes alongside opportunities for international partnerships between schools around the world.’¹⁹⁴

This programme has been managed by the British Council with the active involvement of a range of civil society organisations and professional associations. The network of local Development Education Centres, for example, have played a leading role in providing professional development courses for teachers.

The current CCGL programme has engaged over 1800 schools in professional development courses and/or applications for grants for international partnerships. Its predecessor, the Global Learning Programme (GLP), engaged 7797 schools, or 33% of schools in England, and focused primarily on the professional development of teachers. Over 5000 teachers attended initial twilight training courses for the programme and almost 12,000 teachers took part in training provided by a wide range of accredited civil society organisations.

These programmes show the positive interest within schools in promoting learning about global issues. The voluntary participation by schools demonstrates there was a recognition that learning about the wider world, and how to encourage a sense of being global citizens, was seen as an important aspect of a pupils’ learning by many teachers. Both CCGL and GLP have also shown that learning about global issues is seen as relevant for all types of schools in all areas of England regardless of social, economic, or cultural context or OFSTED rating.

This shows that the field of global citizenship education and global learning is not only popular within many schools, but also has potential for being a feature of all schools in England with appropriate resources and educational support.

Many teachers involved with programmes like GLP and CCGL found that they were provided with something different in terms of motivation, something aside and apart from working towards examinations and testing. For example, the encouragement of schools to move from a ‘charity mentality to one of social justice’ inspired many teachers, with many feeling empowered to do the things they thought they couldn’t, but *should*.¹⁹⁵

If teachers are actively involved in developing curriculum projects on global citizenship themes, there is ‘evidence of increased confidence’ and of enthusing fellow teachers. International partnerships were also seen as not only a valuable educational activity in themselves, but also potentially providing a stimulus for further global citizenship activities and, with relevant professional development opportunities, could help to challenge paternalistic relationships between partner schools and promote a sense of international solidarity.

This, and other evidence suggest that global learning approaches can be a valuable way of securing teacher retention, to give them confidence and motivation, and to remind them of the wider social purpose of education.

These themes have been re-enforced in research by Strachan with pre-service teachers:

*‘Global learning is absolutely essential for the development of myself and those I teach’.*¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ <https://connecting-classrooms.britishcouncil.org>

¹⁹⁵ Hunt, F. (2020) Characteristics of a Global Learning School, in Bourn, D. (ed.) *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Global Education and Learning*, London, Bloomsbury. (pp. 342-355)

¹⁹⁶ Strachan, A. (2020) An exploration of how teachers’ attitudes to global learning can be used to inform primary science education, *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, 12(2):121-132

3.2 Teacher Agency and Creativity

The field of global citizenship education is a complex one requiring a degree of skills and knowledge but also a sense of enthusiasm, motivation, and confidence that educators can teach this approach to learning. This is why the theme of agency is important in reviewing the evidence on teachers' engagement in global citizenship approaches. The term agency has become subject to considerable academic debate over the past decade as schools and teachers face increasing constraints on their abilities to teach the subjects in the way they would like because of the pressures of exams and testing.

However, Global Citizenship themes provide important spaces for teachers to develop more creative approaches to their teaching. They provide an opening for teachers to consider differing pedagogical approaches to those which maybe dominant within their schools. GCE is based on encouraging teachers to think about how they can make pupils' learning relevant to real-world issues. Through the resources and professional development opportunities made available from government funded programmes, and the work of civil society organisations, global citizenship pedagogical approaches can instil a sense of confidence and belief in teachers that they can make a difference. It can also enable themes such as the Sustainable Development Goals becoming part of the everyday life of a school's curriculum. Strachan's research showed that creative approaches developed teachers' sense of agency which in turn was an important driver for them to find space for global citizenship in the classroom:

*'Training pre-service primary teachers in the knowledge, skills and strategies that are required to adopt a global learning pedagogical approach to teaching primary science has the potential to promote greater engagement in and autonomy around the primary science curriculum, ensuring that it is meaningful to our future global citizens. Not only does science provide a vehicle through which to engage teachers and pupils with the 2030 SDGs, but it provides a foundation for authentic twenty-first-century learning.'*¹⁹⁷

This sense of social relevance to the needs of today is a theme found in a number of studies, and has become a way of motivating teachers to remind them of the reasons they came into teaching. Teacher agency is also present in the work of Votes for Schools.¹⁹⁸ This organisation encourages participatory approaches to learning that seek action for social change. They do this by supporting *'teachers to have the confidence to facilitate discussions on challenging, difficult-to-teach topics'*. This encourages a sense within teachers that they can make a difference, that they can develop their own approaches to learning with their pupils.

3.3 Quality of Teaching and Learning

There is evidence from a range of studies that demonstrate that global citizenship themes help to raise the quality of teaching and learning, improve OFSTED ratings, and increase the engagement and support of parents/carers and the wider communities around schools.

For example, Alcock and Ramirez Barker (2016)¹⁹⁹ provided evidence of how global learning approaches improve writing in a primary school that had been inspected as unsatisfactory by Ofsted. A follow up inspection showed the value of this approach:

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ <https://www.votesforschools.com>

¹⁹⁹ Alcock, H.L. & Ramirez Barker, L. (2016) Can Global Learning Raise Standards Within Pupils' Writing in the Primary Phase? Development Education Research Centre Research Paper 16, UCL Institute of Education, London, UK

*'The school uses global education themes very effectively to set pupils' learning in a worldwide context and broaden their views of the world. This makes the learning more relevant and interesting for pupils, and so it contributes to their enthusiasm for learning.'*²⁰⁰

An Ofsted inspection of Egerton Primary School in Cheshire also noted the importance of global learning themes:

*'The curriculum is very broad and supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They have a wide understanding of the world around them as a result of the many trips, visits and clubs the school offers. The school is recognised as an Expert Centre for the National Global Learning Programme for its positive contribution to a globalised world within the school curriculum. This enhances pupils' lives and gives them an understanding of both the challenges and the wonders of the world. Pupils are rightly proud of the links the school has with a school in Kenya and enthusiastically and readily talk about it.'*²⁰¹

3.4 Pupil Engagement

Both GLP and CCGL have gathered evidence of pupils' interest and knowledge gained from global learning themes. Over 90% of pupils within the GLP thought that global issues affect their lives, with a particular understanding of causes of global poverty. Brown's study came to similar conclusions: *'all groups of young people were able to give some explanation of the relationship between conflict and poverty.'*²⁰²

CCGL has given particular emphasis to promoting resources and activities around climate change, and how learning can lead to informed action including how to organise social media campaigns.

The success of these programmes has also been helped by the engagement of schools in a range of award programmes such as:

- Rights and Respecting School Award programme which has engaged over 5,000 schools across the UK²⁰³
- Fairtrade Award Programme²⁰⁴
- Global Schools Award²⁰⁵

There have also been several other GCE initiatives which have engaged a considerable number of teachers and pupils. These include:

- Send My Friend to School²⁰⁶
- World's Largest Lesson²⁰⁷
- Get Up and Goals Project²⁰⁸

²⁰⁰ OFSTED (2015) <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/2452080>

²⁰¹ OFSTED (2018) <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/21/145981>

²⁰² Brown, K. (2015) Young People's Understanding of Global Poverty (DERC Research Paper no. 14). Development Education Research Centre, Institute of Education.

²⁰³ Further information about this Award programme is covered later in this report on human rights

²⁰⁴ <https://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/fairtrade-schools-awards/>

²⁰⁵ <https://globalschoolsaward.org.uk>

²⁰⁶ <https://sendmyfriend.org>

²⁰⁷ <https://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org>

²⁰⁸ <https://www.getupandgoals.eu>

3.5 Evidence of Need

The field of global citizenship and global learning has made an important contribution to broader societal themes that have emerged in recent years. For example:

- supporting the engagement of the many young people in campaigns around the climate emergency who have shown their desire to participate in society and take part in social action that aims to secure a more sustainable world. This has also led to a wealth of school materials to support these initiatives
- encouraging a global outlook in children and young people in response to the dangers of xenophobia, as demonstrated by Black Lives Matters initiatives around the world, calls to decolonise the curriculum, and promotion of more directly anti-racist work
- challenging the inequalities that exist within and between societies, brought into stark relief and exacerbated by the global pandemic
- challenging gender inequalities and recent concerns about rape culture in schools

Related to all of these areas are the Sustainable Development Goals which are increasingly being used by schools and teachers as frameworks to introduce global themes into the classroom.

These, and other societal themes have historically been a major feature of global learning and global citizenship education practice in England for many years. Outlined in the next section are some recent examples that demonstrate the evidence from research and practice in these areas.

4.0 Key Themes

4.1 A Global Outlook

Promoting a global outlook has been one of the major elements of global citizenship education and the evidence of this can be seen within the GLP programme. Data from over 800 pupils for GLP showed an increased awareness of global interdependence, including how people and events in the UK can affect people's lives overseas. This evidence also showed that 93% of pupils care about the planet; 91% of pupils want to make the world fairer; reducing poverty in the world is important to 75% of pupils; 75% of pupils think global issues affect their lives.

Another example of encouraging a global outlook is the way in which imaginative teachers have explored 'British Values' within a broader frame of universal values around democracy, mutual respect and tolerance, and human rights.

A feature of many projects in schools with a global theme over the past decade has been on forging links and partnerships with schools from elsewhere in the world. This is a major feature of CCGL and evidence from partnerships between schools in Stevenage and Kathmandu in Nepal shows how both teachers and pupils have broadened their horizons²⁰⁹. The CCGL programme also frames and supports international partnerships between schools using the SDGs.

²⁰⁹ https://www.britishcouncil.org/np/sites/default/files/developing_effective_learning_in_nepal_0.pdf

4.2 Anti-Racist Work

Proponents of GCE themes within schools have long argued for greater recognition of voices and approaches from marginalised and oppressed groups, and for including more perspectives from the Global South. This can be seen for example in a wealth of resources related to Black History Month. Moncrieffe's book on *Decolonising the History Curriculum* shows the limitations of the history curriculum for primary school children in England, but also the challenges of promoting a decolonising approach via a predominantly white teaching profession. He notes the value of educational initiatives such as Black History Month, but often these are tokenistic and are counter to a dominant narrative of teaching history that is based on nation building from the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings onwards.²¹⁰ Another practice-focused publication is that by Marie Charles and Bill Boyle on *Decolonising the Curriculum Through Theory and Practice*. This weaves together themes of mathematics, use of artefacts, and an understanding of imperialism through an Afro-centred pedagogical approach in a practical way for teachers.²¹¹

4.3 A More Just and Fair World

One of the most popular ways in which schools have promoted a sense of social justice is through activities on the theme of fair trade. Various organisations have produced resources on this theme, but the biggest impact has been through the Fairtrade Award programme organised by the Fairtrade Foundation.

Key to the educational work around the Award is promoting a sense of fairness and the desire to secure a more just world. One secondary school noted that its more senior pupils had, through geography, examined: causes of world poverty, indicators of development, globalization, the impact of transnational corporations, issues of ethical fashion, trade and fair trade. Another school noted that the pupils already had a knowledge of fair trade through geography and so the follow-up activities took the learning to greater depth by looking at trading inequalities in the world, especially in the developing world and the effect of unfair commodity prices on people's livelihoods.²¹² Fair trade is a '*practical starting point*' for global citizenship that is clearly an attraction for many teachers. It provides an opportunity for pupils to make a connection between global issues and their everyday lives and buying and selling fair trade goods gives them something practical to do.

Evidence from research on the impact of the Award programme on learning demonstrates a strong linkage between awareness of fair trade and injustices in the world.

4.4 Participation and Engagement of Young People in Social Change

A range of studies have shown increased focus and emphasis in encouraging and supporting greater pupil engagement and participation in global concerns. Evidence shows that where pupils were more involved in the planning and running of activities, they had a greater sense of agency and ownership of the outcomes of the learning. This can be seen particularly in some of the initiatives led by organisations such as UNICEF, the Fairtrade Award programmes, Send My Friend to School and through the work of organisations such as CAFOD, Christian Aid and Oxfam.

Simpson carried out an action research study with teachers on moving from charity to social justice mentalities. Her research found that an indicator of this movement was going beyond fundraising as

²¹⁰ Moncrieffe, M.L. (2020) *Decolonising the History Curriculum*, London, Palgrave

²¹¹ Charles, M. & Boyle, B. (2020) *Decolonizing the Curriculum through Theory & Practice: Pathways to Empowerment for Children, Parents & Teachers*, London, Alibris UK

²¹² Bourn, D. (2018) *Fairtrade in Schools and Global Learning*, Development Education Research Centre Research Paper 18, UCL Institute of Education, London, UK

the main form of activity around global citizenship themes. There was also a recognition that charity was a temporary and short-term solution.²¹³

Another organisation which has supported young people's engagement and participation in learning about societal issues has been Votes for Schools. Their activities have included debates on issues leading to votes which are then passed on to policymakers. This process is seen as a way of pupils seeing the impact of their actions. The value of such approaches has been commented upon in a number of OFSTED reports and direct feedback from schools.

5.0 Conclusion

Global citizenship and global learning themes have had a considerable impact within many schools in England. This impact has been greatly helped by the support from civil society organisations and government funded programmes. What this evidence shows is that where schools, teachers and young people engage in global citizenship type activities, there is increased enthusiasm for learning and for linking this learning to societal change. Underpinning many of these activities is a values base of concern for a more just and fairer world, to encourage greater young people engagement in societal issues and above all to promote their voice to appropriate policymakers.

This chapter has shown that both nationally led initiatives and those from the grassroots can be effective as a means of engaging more schools, teachers, and pupils in global citizenship activities. These activities not only motivate pupils to learn more, but many of them are also a result of a clear need identified within schools and by teachers.

Connecting it all Together

- Global Citizenship Education supports education on the key factors that underpin poverty, inequity and sustainability in the world. It responds to issues of justice, human rights and to economic, social, political and environmental interdependence
- It encourages a participatory approach to learning that seeks action and social change. It focuses on democratic participation, compassion, and transformation that challenges the status quo
- In doing so, it fulfils the purpose of education that it is for the common good. It is again about the solving of complex problems together and taking action towards collective human wellbeing.
- Collective human wellbeing lies at the heart of all of the SDGs, showing once again that they need to be taken holistically. SDG 4.7 and Global Citizenship Education are central to the achievement of all the SDGs

²¹³ Simpson, J. (2019) *Learning to Unlearn: Moving Educators From a Charity Mentality Towards a Social Justice Mentality* in Bamber, P. (ed.) *Teacher Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship*, Abingdon, Routledge

Theme 3

Education for Peace and Non-Violence

1.0 Introduction

Education for peace and non-violence has been a feature of educational practice in many schools in England. This chapter outlines the ways in which this can be identified through evidence covering both inner and intrapersonal peace as well as intergroup peace and national and international peace education. This chapter initially summarises the different ways peace education can be interpreted and also how it can be identified within the school curriculum.

Peace can mean different things, and be achieved in different ways, depending on a person's perspective. For some, peace might be achieved through military means with the aim of an absence of war; to others, using military means to achieve peace is anathema because violence cannot be used to achieve lasting peace.

The Peace Education Network²¹⁴ emphasise a move away from violence as a means of solving problems. They note that, whereas disputes and conflicts are inevitable, violence is not and that *'education must seek to promote peace and tolerance, not fuel hatred and suspicion'*²¹⁵ if cycles of violence are to be stopped.

The Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) defines peace education as *'The idea that sustainable peace can be encouraged via how and what we learn'*²¹⁶. They do not position peace education as a rigid set of curriculum guidelines but as a *'way of approaching teaching which is defined by its human-centred ethos and emphasis on creating well-rounded learners.'*

Peace education is included in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Peace education means teaching and learning that builds the integrity of relationships at every level. UNICEF makes explicit reference to these levels and defines peace education as:

*'The process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.'*²¹⁷

Further to UNICEF's levels or layers of peace, the Quakers further define intrapersonal peace as a peaceful relationship with yourself and add a peaceful relationship with the planet, or environmental peace.

²¹⁴ <https://peace-education.org.uk/why-education-for-peace-is-important>

²¹⁵ UNICEF (1996) The State of the World's Children. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-children-1996>

²¹⁶ Quaker Council for European Affairs (2019) Peace Education: Making the case. <http://www.qcea.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Peace-Education-report.pdf>

²¹⁷ Fountain, S. (1999) Peace Education In UNICEF. UNICEF New York. https://inee.org/sites/default/files/resources/UNICEF_Peace_Education_1999_en_0.pdf

2.0 Terminology

The following table outlines these *layers of peace* in greater detail, showing that Peace, and therefore peace education, operates via many interconnected layers. In its example topics, the contribution of peace education to many core elements of the SDGs which are also mentioned in other themes in this report can be seen. For example, equality, diversity, and socio-emotional competencies, plus decolonisation, anti-racism and sustainable development.

Layer of peace	Relationship	Example topics
Inner/ Intrapersonal	Peace with ourselves	Mental health, emotions, neurology of fight or flight, nonviolence to yourself, CBT, mindfulness, self-esteem, personal identity
Interpersonal	Peace with the people around us	Negotiation, Mediation, empathy, conflict resolution, conflict coaching, restorative approaches, Nonviolent communication (NVC).
Inter-group	Peace between different communities/groups	Interfaith/intercultural understanding, identity, personal and group identities, equality, dialogue, solidarity, antiracism, reconciliation, grassroots peacebuilding
National & international	Peace between governments, people and nations	Nuclear weapons, the arms trade, colonial violence, conscientious objection, nonviolent change, international law, diplomacy, alternatives to violence, challenging militarism/imperialism
Environmental	Peace with the Earth/natural world	Climate justice, Ecology, environmental violence, compassion for life and the natural world, my relationship with nature.

The QCEA have further defined these layers of peace as a set of ‘competencies’ – *‘the knowledge, skills and attitudes, which enable learners to transform conflict and build peace’*²¹⁸, and they also reinforce the idea that peace education is therefore complementary to human rights education and global citizenship education. Peace competencies are defined as:

Knowledge	Attitudes	Skills
Direct, structural and cultural violence Causes and dynamics of violent conflict Peaceful alternatives to violence International human rights/gender/racial standards Current Affairs	Open-mindedness and inclusiveness Respect for self, others, and the environment Empathy Solidarity Social connectedness Self-awareness	Constructive cooperation Dialogue Mediation Nonviolent communication Understanding, managing and expressing emotions Active listening Intercultural cooperation

²¹⁸ Ibid.

Environmental sustainability	Tolerance	Teamwork
Civic processes	Desire to promote justice	Analytical skills
Positive peace and negative peace	Social responsibility	Critical thinking
Inclusion and exclusion	Curiosity	Negotiation
Conflict Management, prevention, resolution and transformation	Gender sensitivity	Reflection
Interfaith and intercultural learning	Cooperativeness	

At all levels, peace is not simply a passive rejection of direct violence, but the active pursuit of justice and human rights: *'positive peace'* (a term used by Norwegian scholar Johan Galtung). In this context, *'peace and non-violence'* is about action - not just rejecting violent behaviour, but disrupting injustice with compassion, creating the conditions for *'positive peace'* to thrive. Positive Peace as a term was also used by Martin Luther King Jr, who included the presence of justice, love and brotherhood. Conceptualising peace education in terms of negative and positive peace, enables it to deal with and identify a *'common narrative of the human condition'*, thus applicable to all peoples.²¹⁹

3.0 Overview of Evidence

3.1 Curriculum Context in England

Education for peace and non-violence is growing worldwide and there are inroads in the English curriculum.

The OFSTED inspection framework in England looks closely at two areas in which peace education may be located. The first of these is Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development which provides a mandate to discuss peace and non-violence. This sits within the school's ethos rather than being tethered to a particular curriculum area, and may contribute to the achievement of school cultures and systems mentioned above.

Schools may also interpret OFSTED's inspection criteria on *'behaviour and attitudes'* as encouragement to focus on positive relationships using peace-making tools like restorative practice. This again may contribute to conducive cultures and systems.

However, schools may also interpret the criteria in authoritarian ways, arguably leading to pressure to rely on so-called *'peace-keeping'* tools like isolation and exclusion which have been shown to be damaging.

Educators in England sometimes note that the *'invisible curriculum'* (also called the *'hidden curriculum'*) of modelled behaviour and approaches can run contrary to the values espoused by schools and in line with peace education, such as inclusion and responsibility.

The Prevent programme, also located within school cultures and systems rather than curriculum subjects, aimed at identifying young people at risk of radicalisation and has grown to be very controversial in schools. Critics position it as using schools as sites of surveillance, and teachers almost as *'spies'*, being asked to report on what are disproportionately Muslim pupils, resulting in increased Islamophobia - which can be seen as a form of cultural violence. This runs counter to education's values of freedom of expression, and schools as sites of peace and safety. Whilst the intention of Prevent may have been to stop violence, it has caused it. Reports from schools suggest it

²¹⁹ Behr, H., Megoran, N. & Carnaffan, J. (2018) Peace education, militarism and neo-liberalism: conceptual reflections with empirical findings from the UK, *Journal of Peace Education*, 15(1), 76-96

has too often enabled discrimination and disempowered teachers to support critical thinking and active citizenship on questions of conflict and injustice.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence recommends that schools '*foster an ethos that promotes mutual respect, learning and successful relationships among young people and staff [and] provide a safe environment which nurtures and encourages young people's sense of self-worth and self-efficacy, reduces the threat of bullying and violence and promotes positive behaviours*'.²²⁰

Within the curriculum, niches for peace education exist, with '*conflict management skills*' appearing in Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) guidance, and the conflict in Palestine & Israel available to study in GCSE History. Citizenship education, which includes topics like '*the UK and its relations with the wider world*', supports and overlaps with peace and non-violence, although the subject remains peripheral for many students. Teachers also use curriculum jumping-off points such as war poetry in GCSE literature, or '*religion peace and conflict*' at A-Level to explore peace education, but this will not reach a plurality of students. Behr et al. describe two case studies of schools who had located their 'Peace Days' mainly as part of either PSHE or Citizenship, but with elements of both Music and Religious Education.²²¹

3.2 Examples of Peace education practice

There are many examples of excellent peace education practice in schools. Particularly popular themes and areas are mindfulness²²², conflict resolution²²³, peer mediation²²⁴, and addressing youth violence²²⁵.

One particular example that focuses on restorative practice is Carr Manor Community School. The school has embedded relational practices over fourteen years and used restorative practices for over eight years. They have a high number of pupils in school who are trained as '*restorative practice*' representatives. This means they have received specific training on how to facilitate restorative conversations. These representatives put these skills into practice with their peers by supporting self-regulation, facilitating repair, encouraging problem solving, creating connections and building relationships.²²⁶

The teaching of peace competencies cannot be done in isolation. As well as teaching, schools and educational institutions need cultures and systems that enable all learners to practice peace-making and peacebuilding.

²²⁰ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph20/chapter/1-recommendations/>

²²¹ Behr, H., Megoran, N. & Carnaffan, J. (2018) Peace education, militarism and neo-liberalism: conceptual reflections with empirical findings from the UK, *Journal of Peace Education*, 15:1, 76-96. DOI: 10.1080/17400201.2017.1394283

²²² The Mindfulness in Schools Project offer training for schools. Cases Studies <https://mindfulnessinschools.org/case-studies/>; Video: Emily, a teenage survivor of the Manchester bombing, talks about how mindfulness helps her. <https://vimeo.com/285824683>

²²³ CRESST provide peer mediation training in primary and secondary schools, restorative training for staff and teaching materials like "Curious about conflict"; Lesson resources: <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/CRESST-curious-about-conflict-KS3-lesson-pack>; Evidence from schools: <https://www.cresst.org.uk/cresst-is-celebrating-five-years-of-peer-mediation-success/>

²²⁴ Video of Peer Mediators' conference: <https://youtu.be/pWGib7C28JI>; At Bacon's college, an award winning and professionally trained Peer Mediation Team of students provide support for fellow students in resolving conflict and promoting forgiveness. They are professionally trained by Calm Mediation (formally Southwark Mediation). Video: <https://youtu.be/eVsT0SEDqrE>

²²⁵ Minus Violence Plus Peace, addressing youth violence | Peacemakers. Funded by the Home Office, Home Office report on Anti Knife Crime Community Project. <https://peacemakers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/07/Home-Office-Report.pdf> ; Feedback from the Positive Peace Groups: <https://peacemakers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/07/Appendix-to-Home-Office-Report-feedback1.pdf>; Video: <https://youtu.be/nm1Ry4Uplp0>

²²⁶ <https://carrmanor.org.uk/restorative-practice/> ; Video: <https://vimeo.com/526232273>

Behr et al note that peace education is transdisciplinary and therefore *'cannot and should not be bound to, or limited by, disciplinary paradigms.'* The literature posits the need for a comprehensive curriculum structuring all subjects, thus promoting peace education as not just one discipline, and not just as a single day per week or year, but as an organising focus for the whole curriculum and all subjects. Thus, throughout subjects – such as biology, mathematics, sports, religion, languages, physics – peace and non-violence respectively become the central attention and pedagogical goal under and alongside which their contents are structured and presented.

Interestingly, Behr et al (2018) also raise the importance of a pedagogical approach that would potentially serve this outcome. They state that:

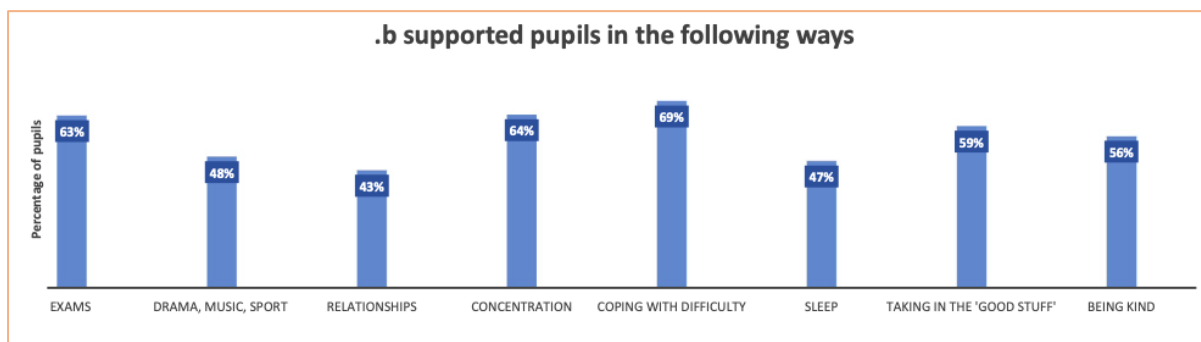
*'Peace education frequently stresses that it is, however, not only what is taught that matters, but how it is taught. Many peace educators posit that hierarchical and authoritarian structures which produce violence in society are replicated in traditional transmission-reception models of teaching. If this is the case, they contend, peace education should be a democratic process of questioning and challenging authority.'*²²⁷

4.0 Key Themes

There is a wealth of school-led initiatives and civil society support for peace and non-violence in education in England. Although schools often invest funds and capacity, many organisations rely on charitable support. Revisiting the layers of peace provides a useful framework for analysis.

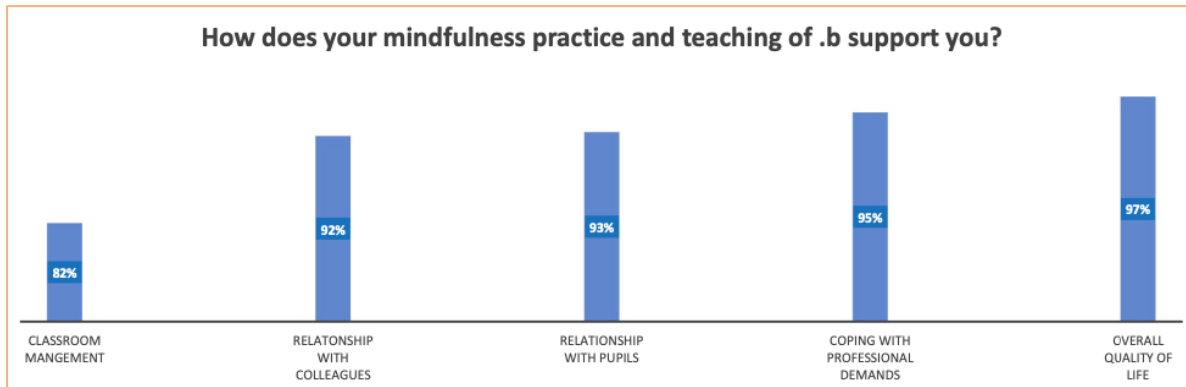
4.1 Intrapersonal peace engagement

Although services can be hard to access, awareness of mental health has increased in schools. Practices like mindfulness and meditation have increased. The Mindfulness in Schools Project surveyed 537 teachers and 15368 pupils between 2016 and 2020. Their '.b' programme showed the following impact across several layers of competence for pupils and then teachers.²²⁸



²²⁷ Hartmut Behr, H., Megoran, N. & Carnaffan, J. (2018) Peace education, militarism and neo-liberalism: conceptual reflections with empirical findings from the UK, *Journal of Peace Education*, 15:1, 76-96, DOI: 10.1080/17400201.2017.1394283

²²⁸ <https://mindfulnessinschools.org>



The Values Based Education movement has helped many schools and young people with tools. Their exploration of the *'inner curriculum'* helps learners understand their internal world of thoughts, feelings and emotions, leading to greater critical thinking, positive relationships, consideration for others and the world, leading to a positive contribution and an inner wisdom²²⁹. Further, more educators are bringing a trauma-informed understanding to their work with young people. Cornwall's local authority have been pioneers in this area and their Trauma Informed Schools initiative has involved the implementation of mental health training for teachers in every school in Cornwall²³⁰. However, key to this intra-personal work is understanding its limits: inner peace cannot by itself upend violence or injustice, further illustrating the need for the other layers of peace.

4.2 Interpersonal peace

The *'interpersonal layer'* of peace is supported by dozens of organisations offering training in peer mediation and conflict skills. For example, educators from the Peer Mediation Network, now partnered with the Civil Mediation Council, train and support conflict resolution led by young people in schools²³¹. Many schools also adopt a whole-school restorative approach to dealing with conflict that works with all the parties involved, and the Restorative Justice Council provides a Quality Mark. The largest academy chain in England, Oasis, uses a combination of restorative approaches and other measures in every school, and many local authorities support these approaches. Outcomes are markedly improved where the whole school or institution seeks to build a restorative culture, rather than discreet or peripheral interventions.

Restorative practice struck a chord with many schools during the COVID-19 pandemic as many schools searched for ways to build back peacefully. Warin and Hibbin (2020) carried out an evaluation of restorative practice in schools across a range of settings which included 5 Primary Mainstreams, 2 Secondary Mainstreams, 1 Specialist SEN College, 1 SEND Academy and 1 Pupil Referral Unit. They found that, whilst measures of success varied across settings dependent on their context, *'over the two years that RP [in the mainstream secondary] had been implemented, pupil aggression had been significantly reduced to the level of verbal rather than physical conflict'*. Further, there was a positive impact on attendance in the SEND school with high levels of urban deprivation, greater identification of safeguarding concerns across settings, and a significant reduction in levels of exclusion. Further, *'In schools that still felt the need to exclude in some capacity, the "massive reduction in fixed-term exclusions" (Head/Setting 7) from 250 per year to 14 that was reported in Setting 7 (Secondary Mainstream), was pinned directly to the use of RP and a broader relational ethos in school, that qualitatively changed the way that exclusion was used in school.'*

²²⁹ <https://valuesbasededucation.com>

²³⁰ <https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/cornwall-paves-way-mental-health-3908416>

²³¹ <https://www.peermediationnetwork.org.uk>

4.3 Intergroup peace

Peace education also plays an active role in reducing youth violence, with organisations such as Peacemakers and LEAP Confronting Conflict training young people at risk. In LEAP's 2020 impact report, among other initiatives working with youth workers and training partner organisations, 150 young people have completed their programmes. 94% of these have a better understanding of conflict, 91% feel more confident at dealing with conflict in their lives and 81% feel more confident in themselves.²³²

Organisations like Equaliteach, the Faith and Belief Forum, and Protection Approaches bring the lens of equality and group identities, intersecting with work challenging discrimination based on gender, sexuality, race and religion. RJ Working have developed ways to apply the relational learning from restorative practice to questions of racism. In 2019-20, RJ Working worked with 1156 young people across 19 secondary and FE settings in Cornwall and delivered further in-depth training to 125 young people and 76 adults. Quotes from the young people include: *'it gives you an idea of what conflict is and how to prevent it. It makes people understand more about one another.'* Furthermore, 100% of their participants felt more able to challenge injustice when they saw it.²³³

Facing History & Ourselves UK take a rigorous approach to teaching history to understand choices and challenge bigotry. Through external evaluation, 93% of Facing History students agree/strongly agree that it is important to get involved in improving their community, and 96% agree/strongly agree that it is important to challenge inequalities in society.²³⁴

A further initiative aimed at teaching peace education in schools are off-timetable peace days. Behr et al (2018) describe case studies of two schools. In one case, Comberton School in Cambridge delivered peace education to 3000 year 11 students from 2003-2014. In the other case, Benfield school in Newcastle delivered peace education to various age groups, the most successful being to 60 year 12 students in 2014 and 60 year 11 students between 2013-2015. Whilst both programmes were subsequently ceased due to logistical reasons, partly relating to timetable pressures, and notwithstanding the emphasis in the wider academic literature that peace education should be an organising focus and not a one-off day, there is evidence that the days in these schools had impact. Focus groups held after the days at Benfield school show that pupils realised there was more than one way of talking about conflict and *'indicated that students had grasped the main principles of the day – the contention that war is not inevitable, different notions of peace, and the power of nonviolence.'*²³⁵

4.4 National and International Peace

In England, many organisations engage in peace education that promotes understanding and critical thinking. These include Peace Education Network members such as Peace Jam, Veterans for Peace, Peace Pledge Union, CND Peace Education, Pax Christi UK, Quakers in Britain, Coventry Cathedral Cross of Nails, Circles of Salam, We Stand Together and the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Peace Foundation. These organisations promote a global outlook and active citizenship.

Britain also has a tradition of conscientious objection enshrined in law dating back to the First World War, which connects the individual with the national layer of peace. This remains relevant as citizens today respond to questions of conscience related to war as well as economic, social and

²³² <https://leapconfrontingconflict.org.uk>

²³³ <https://restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice-workplace>

²³⁴ <https://www.facinghistory.org/uk>

²³⁵ Behr, H., Megoran, N. & Carnaffan, J. (2018) Peace education, militarism and neo-liberalism: conceptual reflections with empirical findings from the UK, *Journal of Peace Education*, 15:1, 76-96, DOI: 10.1080/17400201.2017.1394283

environmental violence, which can be linked to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies. Individual learners will have their own deeply personal response to contemporary questions as they are increasingly exposed to conflict and change in the world. Peace education provides a framework and vocabulary for reflection and action on these questions.

UNESCO's 'The World in 2030: Public Survey', showed that a majority of respondents across the world felt that teaching peace and non-violence would help solve the issue of conflict and violence.²³⁶ Since active citizens need to be able to engage democratically with their nation's foreign policy and use of military force, peace education can play a key role. Noting the United Kingdom's assiduous involvement in the international arms trade, as well as its active military posture, peace education can equip learners with the knowledge of the impact of war and the critical thinking skills to grapple with the ethical questions that arise. Peace educators note that arms companies, the armed forces, Ministry of Defence cadets, and 'military ethos' organisations all receive funding and privileged access to schools, which in effect militarises education. Many recognise this makes it harder to provide learners with a balanced treatment of issues related to war. A further risk to children's rights and welfare arises because the UK remains one of sixteen states to conduct military recruitment below 18 years of age, unlike every other European nation.

4.5 Environmental Peace

The overwhelming theme in the area of environmental peace is climate justice. Climate justice introduces '*the possibility that in tackling climate change we can also tackle social injustice rather than seeing the two as being at odds*' (Knox 2019²³⁷). However, it is a term that is new to many teachers (McGregor and Christie 2020) which offers a clue to the degree to which climate justice or climate change education is prioritised in schools. In fact, groups like Teach the Future have highlighted how an understanding of climate breakdown and its impact on equality and human rights is often marginalised in the curriculum. They state that only 4% of students say they know a lot about climate change, that 68% of them want to know more, but that 75% of teachers have not received adequate training to educate students about climate change. Groups like Forest Schools seek to integrate a lived experience to invigorate students' relationship with nature.²³⁸

5.0 Conclusion

In summary, the following themes for peace and non-violence can focus our thinking:

We can all look for peace within, drawing on a combination of spiritual and cultural resources, self-insight, and conscious steps towards good mental health. Pursuing inner peace does not imply zero dependency; people need support and connection. Some learners are affected by trauma, and their pursuit of peace will need special support such as counselling.

We can all be peacemakers, taking responsibility and using skills in conflict, taking advantage of restorative approaches, and preventing violence. Conflict is a part of everyday life, which brings a wealth of learning opportunities. Everyone has a relationship with conflict. Conflict can be both uncomfortable yet necessary to right a wrong. Peer mediation makes playgrounds safer and happier and reduces lost learning time due to unresolved conflict. Restorative approaches are more

²³⁶ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375950.locale=en>

²³⁷ McGregor, C. & Christie, B. (2020) Towards climate justice education: Views from activists and educators in Scotland, *Environmental Education Research*, 27(5), 652-668

²³⁸ Ibid.

successful and fairer because they are owned by people in conflict rather than top-down punishments.

We can all learn to resist violence, building the critical thinking, compassionate empathy and personal commitment to negate dehumanising narratives. Dehumanising narratives can thrive in a gang, a social class, or a nation state. Culturally violent narratives include militarism, racism, misogyny, and other identity-based hatred.

We can all be peacebuilders, non-violently challenging cultural and structural violence to effect justice in the world around us. Peacebuilding means taking action for a more just world. Structural violence such as inequality or climate breakdown can be hidden, but there still needs to be transformation. Peace Education offers real promise for positive change.

UNESCO's "World in 2030" global survey showed that most people across the world feel that teaching peace and non-violence would help address conflict and violence. However, peace education goes beyond violence-reduction. The evidence outlined in this report shows that peace education can help us understand ourselves, transform conflict, resist hateful narratives, and build a more just society. The layers of peace described, and the skills developed as a result provide a positive framework through which a global outlook can be developed. Themes of anti-racism and decolonisation plus personal wellbeing, for example, can be constructively and honestly tackled. Peace education relates concepts learned to the individual and to the community and it demands participation to achieve the peaceful resolution of conflict.

England has many green shoots to grow which can lead to a thriving education for peace and non-violence. It can benefit every individual learner and wider society.

Connecting it all Together

- Peace does not mean the absence of violence, but the active pursuit of disrupting violence with compassion. Existing on several interrelated levels from the personal to the global, peace education provides a lens through which to perceive a more just and sustainable future
- A high level of personal reflection and active engagement in debate is required in order to effect the change needed to embody peace. This can only happen through a learner centred participatory pedagogy
- Understanding their own and other's rights, independent and critical thinking, community participation, the seeking of action and social change, an ethos of global social justice and a response to issues of political, social and environmental interdependence are all elements of the purpose of a 21st Century education that can be found within Peace Education
- The SDGs are interrelated. For example, linked to SDG 4.7 is SDG 16 which any learning community can pursue for itself: *Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*

Theme 4

Human Rights Education

1.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines how human rights education has become an important feature of international education policies and agreements. It will also clarify how the terms human rights and children's rights have been defined, and demonstrate how human rights and children's rights UK charters have become the framework for much of the practice and evidence for the field.

In summarising research in the field, this chapter notes particularly the work of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the impact of UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Award Programme.

Finally, like some of the other chapters, the chapter notes the distinctions in the evidence between seeing education *about*, education *for*, and education *through* human rights.

The area of human rights education has had strong international support for a number of decades, particularly through the United Nations (2006), UNESCO, and the Council of Europe. The field was helped by the UN Decade of Human Rights Education (1995-2004) and the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education, which was launched in 2006. This Programme defined Human Rights Education (HRE) as '*education, training and information aimed at building a universal culture of human rights through the sharing of knowledge, imparting of skills and moulding of attitudes.*'²³⁹

This international agreement and support for HRE was further enhanced by the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (UNDHRET) which the UN General Assembly adopted in 2011²⁴⁰. The United Nations Office for the Commission on Human Rights (OHCHR) has since taken over from UNESCO in overall UN responsibility for HRE, and has organised an ongoing programme of HRE which has gone through various phases and priorities, with the one from 2020-24 focusing on equality, diversity and inclusion.²⁴¹

The other major international driver for human rights education has been the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child²⁴². Although this Charter does not have the same binding agreements on nation states that declarations on human rights have, it has been very influential in framing and promoting children's rights within education.

The third major international influence has been a series of declarations and initiatives by the Council of Europe since 1984, with a re-affirmation of commitments in 2010 which located human rights as central to programmes around democratic citizenship²⁴³.

²³⁹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/education/training/pages/programme.aspx>

²⁴⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/education/training/pages/undhrededucationtraining.aspx>

²⁴¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/OHCHRreport2020.pdf>

²⁴² <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

²⁴³ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/charter-on-education-for-democratic-citizenship-and-human-rights-education>

2.0 Terminology

2.1 Human Rights Education

Human rights, as suggested by Struthers, should not be an abstract, global and aspirational framework, but a concept relevant to all people at all stages of their lives. Struthers further suggests that human rights education can help in building a *'universal culture in which human rights values and principles are central including freedom, equality, dignity and justice.'*²⁴⁴

Others, such as Osler, locate human rights as part of a common humanity, as cosmopolitan, and as promoting solidarity with our fellow human beings regardless of race, nationality or religion.²⁴⁵

There may be differing views as to the extent to which educational initiatives should be framed with a rights-based approach, but what is evident is that learning about human rights international declarations has been a steppingstone to developing a social justice based approach to learning²⁴⁶.

Osler does however warn that human rights within schools can be used as encouraging conformity and obedience, part of the *'modern civilising mission of schools'*, and using rights as a way of managing behaviour in the classroom. She also notes there is a risk that human rights education might ignore power relations - and it is by encouraging rights to be linked to real world situations, where connections can be made to local and global issues, that it can be most transformative.²⁴⁷ Osler suggests that human rights education needs to be based on a pedagogical approach that encourages participatory forms of learning, recognizes different cultural perspectives, and includes self-reflection and critical thinking.

Osler and Starkey²⁴⁸ state that learning for rights involves empowering young people to make a difference and equipping them with the skills for change. It involves seeking human rights education as a means of transformation. At its core, Osler states that human rights can be understood as an expression of the human urge to resist oppression.²⁴⁹

There are other perspectives which suggest that there is a danger of the concept of human rights being seen as a western construction²⁵⁰ and also question where it should be located alongside other educational traditions such as citizenship, anti-racist, anti-sexist, cooperative, global, intercultural, inclusive, peace, and sustainable development education. Mai Abu Moghlli addresses this in their research by defining human rights education as:

'an ongoing process built on universal human rights standards and rooted in the praxis of people, struggling for their rights, aiming to raise consciousness, dismantle structures of

²⁴⁴ Struthers, A. (2019) *Teaching Human Rights in Primary Schools*, Abingdon, Routledge

²⁴⁵ Osler, A. (2016) *Human Rights and Schooling*, New York, Teachers College Press

²⁴⁶ Osler, A. & Starkey, H. (2010) *Teachers and Human Rights Education*, Stoke-on-Trent, Trentham; Banks, J. (2008) Diversity, Group Identity and Citizenship Education in a Global Age, *Educational Researcher*, 37(3), 129-39

²⁴⁷ Osler, A. (2016) op.cit.

²⁴⁸ Osler, A. & Starkey, H. (2018) Extending the Theory and Practice of Education for Cosmopolitan Citizenship, *Educational Review*, 70(1), 31-40

²⁴⁹ Osler, A. (2016) op.cit.

²⁵⁰ <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2018/10/are-human-rights-a-western-concept/>; Mende, J. (2021) Are Human Rights Western—And Why does it Matter? A Perspective from International Political Theory, *Journal of International Political Theory*, 17, 38-57

*domination and oppression and build a space where subalterns have the opportunity and ability to make meaningful changes to their lives'*²⁵¹

HRE, it has been argued, can also be seen as making an important contribution to citizenship education. What human rights can do within this area is move discourses and practices around citizenship onto a global and international context²⁵². Jerome and Starkey suggest that, if citizenship is seen as a feeling, a state of being, belonging to a community, then children should be seen as citizens with schools as communities of citizens.²⁵³

2.2 Education for Children's Rights

Perhaps most relevant here are debates in and around the relationship of human rights education to children's rights education. There are a range of viewpoints here - from them being seen as two separate educational fields, children's rights being part of human rights education, or the need to re-frame all of the debates around rights to take account of different viewpoints²⁵⁴.

Isenstrom and Quennerstedt (2020)²⁵⁵ summarise these debates as follows:

- Children's rights are part of human rights and that a general human rights vocabulary of civil, political and social, economic and cultural rights should be employed when discussing human rights for children
- Children's rights conceptualised in terms of protection, provision and participation rights
- Rights in trust model - rights that children are entitled to but are not yet available
- Children's rights are very different from adult rights

Their research on recent literature on and around children's human rights identified five different rationales for teaching and learning:

- Children's competence is insufficient for human rights
- Teaching and learning of children's human rights challenges traditional values and ideas
- Children learn about their human rights through experience
- The school setting transforms children's human rights
- The successful human rights teacher is ontologically transformed²⁵⁶

These differing perspectives are important when reviewing literature around educational practice in England because children's rights education has tended to have its own distinct approach which has in the main gone beyond the more legalistic and internationally agreed definitions of human rights.

²⁵¹ Abu Moghli, M. (2016) *The Struggle to Reclaim Human Rights Education in Palestinian Authority Schools*, Unpublished PhD thesis, UCL Institute of Education quoted in Jerome and Starkey, p.32

²⁵² See Kiwan, D. (ed.) (2015) *Human Rights and Citizenship Education*, Abingdon, Routledge

²⁵³ Jerome, L. & Starkey, H. (2021) *Children's Rights Education in Diverse classrooms*, London Bloomsbury, p.15

²⁵⁴ See Jerome and Starkey, op.cit.; Hantzopoulos, M. & Bajai, M. (2021) *Education for Peace and Human Rights*, London, Bloomsbury; Osler, (2016) op.cit.; Robinson, C., Phillips, L. & Quennerstedt, A. (2018) Human rights education: developing a theoretical understanding of teachers' responsibilities, *Educational Review*, 72(1), 1-22

²⁵⁵ Isenstrom, L. & Quennerstedt, A. (2020) Governing Rationalities in children's human rights education, *International Journal of Educational Research*, 100, 1-13

²⁵⁶ Ibid. 6-8

3.0 Overview of Evidence

3.1 Schools and the Curriculum

Although the UK government has signed up to the main UK instruments on human rights, the extent to which it has promoted them within education is much more questionable.

Struthers has suggested the UK government is not fulfilling its obligations to the international agreements on human rights with regard to education²⁵⁷ and that human rights is only mentioned in the school curriculum at key stage 3 and then only within Citizenship²⁵⁸.

But there are wider references to rights in a range of curriculum documents²⁵⁹.

There have however been champions of human rights education within schools. These include the Children's Commissioner²⁶⁰ and the Equality and Human Rights Commission Report²⁶¹, which is discussed later.

Human rights can and is taught within a range of curriculum areas including PSHE, Religious Education as well as Citizenship. The relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum states that pupils should know the legal rights and responsibilities regarding equality and their rights, responsibilities and opportunities online²⁶²

It is also a feature of the life of many primary schools. Themes such as fairness, tolerance and respect for others, which form part of the natural life of many schools, can have an added importance and influence if they are framed within broader discussions on human rights²⁶³.

The two areas that have heavily influenced where and how human rights is taught within schools have been Citizenship and UK government guidelines on Fundamental British Values. The Crick report on citizenship education, whilst giving some nods to human rights, did not establish HRE as an important element of citizenship. It put an emphasis on duties over rights.²⁶⁴

Fundamental British Values (FBV) has been used by imaginative teachers as a way of bringing in human rights themes²⁶⁵. The FBV guidelines refer to the promotion of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance, and there is considerable evidence to show that many teachers have turned these guidelines into noting that British Values are Universal Values.²⁶⁶

HRE, over the past two decades in England, has received very little funding from government. What however has been the case is that, through bodies such as UNICEF UK and NGOs such as Amnesty

²⁵⁷ Struthers op.cit

²⁵⁸ The citizenship curriculum states that teaching should develop pupils' understanding of democracy, government and the rights and responsibilities of citizens (DfE, 2014, pp. 83-84). It also states that pupils should be taught about 'human rights and international law' and 'diverse national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding' (ibid).

²⁵⁹ These include references within PSHE, Religious Education and Citizenship curriculum and the initiatives around Fundamental British Values, See Struthers op.cit. and Jerome and Starkey op.cit.

²⁶⁰ UK Children's Commissioners, Report of UK Children's Commissioners 92016

²⁶¹ Culhane, L. & McGeough, E. (2020) Respect, Equality, Participation: exploring human rights education, London, Equality and Human Rights Commission

²⁶² DfE, 2019, p. 28

²⁶³ Hunt, F. (2012) The Global Dimension in Primary Schools, DERC Research Paper no.9, London, Institute of Education

²⁶⁴ See Struthers op.cit.; Osler, A. (2016). op.cit

²⁶⁵ http://www.lifeworldslearning.co.uk/Resources/British_values_and_GLP.pdf

²⁶⁶ Vincent, C. & Hunter-Henin, M. (2018) The problem with teaching 'British values' in school, *The Conversation*, 6 February. Available online: <https://theconversation.com/the-problem-with-teaching-british-values-in-school-83688>

International, Plan UK and Save the Children and a range of smaller organisations, a range of educational programmes have been produced for schools. There also remains a strong grouping of organisations under the broader Citizenship banner which include reference to human rights.²⁶⁷

3.2 Influential External Programmes

UNICEF UK's programme is by far the most influential and wide-reaching programme with a HRE focus. It focuses directly on children's rights, and their work is framed by the UN Convention. It has engaged well over 200,000 pupils and 20,000 staff across the UK. Within England it had 2922 schools registered for the Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) Programme.²⁶⁸

A feature of their programme is the professional development courses it offers to teachers. 1300 teachers took part in CPD courses in 2018, 1200 in 2019, 660 in 2020 and during the lockdown periods under COVID-19 restrictions, its e-learning programme had over 4000 users.

In addition to producing a range of resources and a youth led campaign, its RRSA programme has had a major impact upon schools in England. The Award aims to improve the lives of children in the UK by taking a whole school approach to putting children's rights at the heart of school policy and practice. Their 2018 survey results showed that child rights education plays a key role in developing children and young people as active, engaged local and global citizens.²⁶⁹

Rights have been described as a '*heartbeat*' in school life; like a '*golden thread*' or '*stick of rock*' that underpins and informs their practice. In a Rights Respecting School, a child rights-based approach underpins school culture, ethos and relationships as well as the more tangible changes to practice, policy and environment.²⁷⁰

As well as becoming aware of their own rights as children, pupils in Rights Respecting Schools learn to consider the rights of other children in the UK and globally. To UNICEF, this knowledge of child rights can help '*children develop an understanding of, and compassion for social justice issues and understand how actions can promote and protect the rights of others*'.²⁷¹

There are three levels to the Rights Respecting Schools Award: Bronze: Rights Committed; Silver: Rights Aware and Gold: Rights Respecting.

Currently about 20% of the schools are at registration stage, 39% at Bronze, 28% at Silver and 13% at Gold. Its transformative and rigorous approach means the journey to the highest stage can take up to four years. There are four key areas of impact for children at a Rights Respecting school: *wellbeing, participation, relationships and self-esteem*.

The evidence from the impact of the Award on schools can be seen in the way that empowers pupils:

'Our views are taken very seriously. Our opinion matters because we are the pupils, we know what it is like in the school and their (adults) perspective is different from ours.' Primary pupil from a Rights Respecting School²⁷²

As one headteacher has commented:

²⁶⁷ These include Young Citizens formerly called the Citizenship Foundation; Association of Citizenship Teachers. See: <https://www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk/rights-responsibilities-law/human-rights-responsibilities>

²⁶⁸ This figure was provided by UNICEF UK staff in March 2021

²⁶⁹ UNICEF UK (2018a) *Rights and Respecting Schools Impact Report*. Available online: https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/07/Impact-Report-2018_Final-170719.pdf

²⁷⁰ UNICEF UK (2018b) *Theory-of-Change-Evidence-Booklet*. Available online: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/01/RRSA-Theory-of-Change>

²⁷¹ <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/the-rrsa/what-is-a-rights-respecting-school/>

²⁷² UNICEF UK (2018a)

*'I am incredibly proud of the empowerment that [Rights Respecting Schools] has given to the pupils. Pupils have gone home, created their own campaigns in their areas e.g., pollution/recycling plastic linked to rights. The pupils have really taken ownership of their learning and understanding of their role on a local and global scale.'*²⁷³

Another commented:

'During our campaigning for Outright'²⁷⁴ [one child] passionately took on the rights of others and wanted to take the lead as a prime minister to change the world for the better. He actively researched and extended his own learning at home. This demonstrated that he was a passionate world citizen. He took it upon himself to learn the articles at home and was then able to teach others in his class how they link to each other and the different lessons he was learning.'

Whilst other evidence²⁷⁵ supported the value of this rights approach as a good basis, they also noted that the quality of the teaching was varied, as was how teachers and school leaders interpreted human rights education responsibilities.

More recent evidence, however, as suggested from UNICEF's own studies, shows that their programme is not only very popular, but it has had a major impact on empowering children and young people to take action for social change based on a social justice approach. What has also helped is that their Award programme is framed around a well-developed training programme for teachers as well as a well-organized support service for teachers linked into to the school's progression through the award process. This evidence and commitment to professional development by UNICEF has shown that the Award programme has made significant progress in addressing shortcomings identified by earlier research by Robinson, Tibbits and Kirchsclaeger:²⁷⁶

'It's about putting children's rights at the heart and centre of all of our policy. We try to use the convention, the language of the convention, the philosophy of the convention to inform and direct our practice. It's on our walls, it's in our policies, it's on our doors, it's in our lesson plans so it's everywhere.' Teacher in England²⁷⁷

Amnesty International (AI) has a strong teacher and supporter network and this has helped to sustain its work. As well as producing resources, AI promotes the concept of the 'Human Rights Friendly School' which places 'human rights at the heart of the learning experience and makes human rights an integral part of everyday school life'. Amnesty take a whole school approach to their work based on the principles of equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation.²⁷⁸

3.3 The Equality and Human Rights Commission

In addition to the evidence of the practice of a range of organisations, one of the most important pieces of recent research and evidence has been The Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) research report on HRE in Great Britain by Culhane and McGeough (2020)²⁷⁹. This report explores: how a human rights approach has been implemented in schools across the three nations of

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Outright is a specific UNICEF campaign which has engaged large numbers of schools

²⁷⁵ Robinson, C. (2017) Translating Human Rights Principles into Classroom Practices: Inequities in Educating about Human Rights, *The Curriculum Journal*, 28 (1): 123–136; Dunhill, A. (2018) Does teaching children about human rights, encourage them to practice, protect and promote the rights of others?, *Education*, 3-13, 46:1: 16–26

²⁷⁶ Tibbits, F. & Kirchsclaeger, P.G. (2010) Perspectives of Research on Human Rights Education, *Journal of Human Rights Education*, 2(1): 8–29

²⁷⁷ UNICEF 2018a

²⁷⁸ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/human-rights-education/human-rights-friendly-schools/>

²⁷⁹ Culhane, L. & McGeough, E. (2020) Respect, Equality, Participation: exploring human rights education. Equality and Human Rights Commission

England, Scotland and Wales; the challenges and opportunities that schools face in implementing such an approach; what best HRE practice looks like; and the impact of HRE on schools and pupils. The research involved 10 secondary schools that have adopted a human rights approach: four in England, three in Scotland and three in Wales. The evidence relies heavily on schools who have been accredited with the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA).

The research suggested that, for schools to be effective in delivering a human rights approach, they needed to change their culture, foster pupil participation, incorporate human rights into their teaching and create an environment where all pupils are treated equally and fairly. The Commission report however noted the challenges in developing a human rights approach in that it needed strong leadership, resources, support from key stakeholders, and a supportive curriculum.

As this report covered the three nations of Great Britain, a marked difference was noted in terms of support for HRE, with the Scottish and Welsh Governments having introduced some measures to support HRE compared with no engagement in England by the Department for Education.²⁸⁰

The research outlined four key areas that were needed to be developed if a rights agenda was to be successful within a school:

- Create a rights-respecting ethos across all areas of school life
- Integrate human rights across the curriculum
- Foster pupil participation
- Create an inclusive and fair school environment with opportunities for all barriers to learning being eradicated²⁸¹

As well as identifying strong senior management support and resources to deliver HRE within schools, the research also identified the need for both teachers and children to know more about various international agreements on human rights. Having a greater prominence in the curriculum was another recommendation, like it is in Scotland - where it's part of the Curriculum for Excellence and Education Scotland's inspection framework.

In terms of the impact of HRE within the schools that took part in the research, the most common indicators of progress were:

- Improved attainment and attendance
- A reduction in prejudice and discriminatory attitudes.
- Improved pupil behaviour
- Improved pupil well-being and engagement
- Improved teacher recruitment and retention²⁸²

At a broader pedagogical level, teachers from the participating schools reported that having a HRE approach had an empowering impact upon the pupils, of fostering a broader and deeper outlook on the issues they are facing and how they relate to wider world questions, particularly in terms of challenging prejudice and inequality. The evidence showed that once the school had taken on board a rights-respecting ethos, the culture of the whole school changed. One of the most significant

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

findings from the research was the value of ensuring there was effective pupil participation within the school, that children's voices were heard, and that Pupil Councils were effective. A human rights approach was also seen as leading to schools rethinking their approaches to discipline and introducing restorative approaches to conflict.

It was however noted that, within the academies and trusts model in England, securing a human rights approach was sometimes more difficult as they tended to argue they had other priorities. Another challenge the research identified, and this has been echoed in other relevant research, is the possible resistance from some staff who did not see the value of a HRE approach. There was concern that HRE would result in challenges to the teachers' authority and status and lead to worse, not better behaviour.

But the main challenge was the position of the UK government, and that HRE promoted a very different narrative to that of educational priorities from the Department for Education. It was hoped, however, that the September 2019 changes to the OFSTED inspection framework might help.

What was clearly evident was the positive impact of an HRE approach. Amongst the numerous examples of progress from schools, this one is perhaps the most stark:

*'We've gone from, in this area, the lowest-performing school five years ago to the highest performing non-selective school in the area. And being a rights-respecting school has been a big part of that. [...] For pupils to attain better, they first need to at least appreciate the importance of education'. Teacher in England*²⁸³

It was also evident that the RRSA programme from UNICEF was a major reason for many schools' improvement.

4.0 Key Themes

4.1 Approaches to Human Rights Education

A feature of a number of studies on human rights education has been the extent to which it is about learning about rights or reflecting a more discrete pedagogical approach. There have also been debates about whether the focus should be on legal definitions of rights, and international agreements, or posing a radically different relationship between teachers and pupils.

Jerome and Starkey in their discussion on children's rights summarise this as:

1. Legalistic world view with the emphasis on learning about rights as framed by international agreements
2. Reformist world view within progressive educational traditions and more child centred but still working within the framework of international agreements
3. Radical world view which sees the field as one of political contestation with competing ideologies and the teachers been seen as active agents for change.²⁸⁴

Variations of this approach can be seen in some of the evidence from the Commission on ways in which HRE can be introduced within a school:

'Teachers from all 10 schools reiterated the importance of teaching about, through and for human rights through a 'whole-school approach.' As well as pupils being taught human rights

²⁸³ Struthers op.cit: 71

²⁸⁴ Jerome and Starkey op.cit. 195-6

through the curriculum, teachers stressed that a human rights approach must also be embedded across every aspect of the school and at the heart of the school's ethos, policies and practices. HRE was not, therefore, the responsibility of one person or subject, rather, it was a series of practices, schemes of learning and behaviours which made up the culture of the school. HRE was also based on the premise that children's rights are upheld within the school and that learning takes place in an environment which is based on human rights principles of participation, inclusivity, respect and dignity'.²⁸⁵

These three approaches to human rights were noted by Osler and build on approaches she identified. To her, education *about* rights is a knowledge-based approach, learning particularly about specific legislation or agreements either national or international. Education *through* rights is more of an experiential or skills-based approach and can often be seen within various initiatives around citizenship education. Education *for* human rights is more likely to have a more activist approach, making a linkage between learning about specific rights and calling on governments or international bodies to fully implement agreements such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child.²⁸⁶ It is this education for human rights that brings in themes of solidarity with peoples elsewhere in the world and the protection of democratic rights.

One of the main research studies on HRE in English primary schools by Struthers uses this threefold framework to review the extent and ways in which they were being implemented.

4.2 Education about Human Rights

Struthers' research showed that over 60% of primary school teachers said they were teaching about human rights, but that it was greater in KS2 than KS1 and early years²⁸⁷. As to where it was taking place, it was seen to be most common in PSHE, then RE, and then citizenship. Nearly 50% said that 'Fundamental British Values' was also an area through which human rights introduced. Nearly 40% also saw human rights introduced through more informal teaching, such as assemblies and themed off timetable weeks²⁸⁸. Headteachers seemed to suggest there was more human rights education taking place than the evidence gathered from the teachers. This perhaps reflected the different ways in which the term was being interpreted.

What was also evident from Struthers' research, and this can be seen from other research with primary schools²⁸⁹ was that rights were seen to be part of the broader values base of the school, with tolerance and equity being the most common concepts mentioned, followed by resilience, courage, teamwork, happiness, humility, perseverance, self-worth, acceptance, love, kindness and forgiveness.

Struthers' research also found some confusion around the difference between *values* and *virtues*. Her research showed that only a minority of teachers are educating about specific human rights and international instruments and that a greater proportion of KS2 teachers are teaching expressly about human rights than at early years and Key Stage 1.²⁹⁰

Struthers also identified that there were a variety of views as to when and how what might be interpreted as controversial issues, which human rights were seen as being by some, should be

²⁸⁵ Culhane and McGeough (2020) op.cit.

²⁸⁶ Osler, A. (2016) op.cit.

²⁸⁷ Struthers op.cit.p,71

²⁸⁸ Ibid. p.61

²⁸⁹ Hunt. (2012) op.cit

²⁹⁰ Struthers op.cit.

introduced in the classroom²⁹¹. What this research did identify were the many different ways in which human rights were interpreted, with some seeing them as a series of basic rights and entitlements such as right to food, water, shelter, liberty, whilst others saw them more in terms of values, such as the right to be happy, to be looked after and loved, of fairness, freedom.

What this evidence suggests, and this can be seen from other research²⁹², is that teachers' usage of the term human rights tended to be much broader than those in international agreements. There was also a sense that, all too often, human rights were promoted in abstract terms and that schools would do better to promote human rights in much more personal and immediate terms to the pupils. Struthers' view was that there was still a tendency to shield primary school children from controversial areas, and yet they can and do find out about many such issues via the internet anyway. The research from Struthers and others²⁹³ also identified that in some teachers' minds, human rights was a political as well as a controversial area and that it was trying to promote a particular perspective.

Research by Jerome and Lalor²⁹⁴ shows the dangers of children being offered ways to address rights issues which can be reduced to simplistic solutions without an understanding of the complexities around rights.

Another example is the Robert F. Kennedy Centre for Justice and Human Rights education programme Speak Truth to Power which showed the value of starting with specific examples rather than international agreements²⁹⁵. Students learnt that human rights can be a way of fighting injustices, rather than some distant agreement.

This evidence suggests that a major theme of much of the teaching within HRE is teaching about human rights with the emphasis on pupils acquiring factual and conceptual knowledge and the development of competences to interpret different situations²⁹⁶.

4.3 Education for Human Rights

This approach is identified in a number of examples in Struthers' research, including ways in which human rights can contribute to improving society. At one level the UK government's initiative on Fundamental British Values could be interpreted in this way, but it can also be seen in a broader context related to a sense of empowerment and involvement in community activities.

Struthers found that, whilst there was evidence of empowering learners to translate human rights into social and political reality, there was also less evidence of making connections between rights with critical reflection, equality and social justice - particularly in terms of community engagement.

Reflecting themes from earlier comments, Struthers found that *'some teachers have inbuilt resistance with both the theory and practice of HRE at primary level'*. Teachers were often reluctant to draw upon express terminology of human rights, and were more comfortable educating about the values that learners are likely to experience in their day-to-day interactions.²⁹⁷ Struthers concluded

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Jerome and Starkey op.cit.

²⁹³ Struthers op.cit.p.64; Jerome & Starkey op.cit.

²⁹⁴ Jerome, L. & Lalor, J. (2016) Citizenship Education North and South: Learning and Progression (CENSLP) Final Project Report, Dublin, SCOTENS

²⁹⁵ See Jerome and Starkey op.cit.

²⁹⁶ Jerome, L., Emerson, L., Lundy, L., & Orr, K. (2015) Child Rights Education: A Study of Implementation In Countries With A UNICEF National Committee Presence, Geneva, UNICEF PFP

²⁹⁷ Struthers op.cit.p.94

that, as a consequence, by focusing on pro-social dispositions and skills, it wasn't really HRE because it does not promote a critical awareness that results from exploring human rights theory.²⁹⁸

4.4 Education through Human Rights

This approach is seen through the creation of rights-respecting learning environments imbued with human rights values in which the practice of rights, including voice and participation, are encouraged²⁹⁹. As already noted, much of UNICEF UK's work in this area would include this approach through the culture created within the classroom and the wider school. It also can mean that pupils understand and use the language of rights in their day to day lives.

Within a school, this approach to HRE is also often seen in terms of Pupil Councils. What was also evident from Struthers' research was that, if combined with teaching about human rights, the culture of the school not only changes, but there is a huge impact upon the pupils' behaviour³⁰⁰.

A good example of the range of ways children's rights can be reflected within the classroom is through the use of picture books in primary schools. Kucharaczyk & Hanna (2020) note how a picture book by Shaun Tan entitled *The Arrival* can be used as a way of reflecting on children's experiences. Influenced by Freirean thinking, they suggest that, through creative literacy approaches, a book can open up a child's mind, leading to the co-construction of knowledge with the teacher.³⁰¹

Research by Jerome et.al. (2015) looking at how religious freedom was perceived in schools in England, as part of Deliberative Classroom project, showed some relevant data for discussions on HRE. Amongst the themes to emerge were: the danger of starting from students' own emotional responses, which might inadvertently restrict capacity for engaging with other perspectives and prevent deeper understanding. Secondly, seeking a consensus-based approach can discourage students from taking more critical perspectives.³⁰²

5.0 Conclusion

The field of human rights education poses important questions about approaches towards teaching, the extent to which pupils have a voice, and extent to which the curriculum content should be framed and influenced by national and international policy agreements. There is also the issue of the extent to which human rights education should connect to pupil's own lives and the nature of the school community.

Jerome and Starkey suggest that there are a number of potential pitfalls within HRE, and these include the danger of focusing on responsibilities without engaging in rights, and putting the emphasis on behaviour rather than processes of learning. Another is to see rights as about somewhere else and not the pupil's own lives and their own community. Finally, there are a few key questions: to what extent should the student voice be considered, and to what extent should the school community be run along democratic lines?³⁰³

²⁹⁸ Struthers op.cit. 112

²⁹⁹ Struthers op.cit.119-120

³⁰⁰ Struthers op.cit. 129.

³⁰¹ Kucharczyk, S. and Hanna, H. (2020) *Balancing Teacher Power and Children's Rights: rethinking the use of picture books in multicultural primary schools in England*, *Human Rights Education Review*, 3,1, 49-69

³⁰² Lee Jerome's study of 26 countries revealed none of them ensured adequate coverage of human rights through teacher training programmes (Jerome et. al 2015 – *Teaching and Learning about child rights*. Today HRE is part of professional competency standards in Scotland and Sweden

³⁰³ Jerome and Starkey op.cit.

These points all pose questions regarding the role of the teacher and the extent to which they should be promoting a distinctive values base.

The evidence identified suggests that human rights education poses wider questions about pedagogical approaches, the culture of the school, the expertise and experience of the teachers and the nature of the national context in terms of political views. There is some debate as to the extent to which policy recommendations should be top down or bottom up.³⁰⁴ Robinson³⁰⁵ notes that, in England, human rights education was often taught in many different ways, *'depending on how they socially construct notions of children, the related values, beliefs and prejudices they hold, and how they are encouraged at school level'*. What however is evident from the research are three main conclusions:

- Human rights education can make a significant contribution to the personal, social, and emotional development of children and the culture of a school
- For human rights education to be effective and not just contingent on the presence of passionate and enthusiastic teachers, there needs to be a supportive policy environment
- Any programme supporting HRE has to be well resourced, and put much of its energies into the professional development of teachers - as well as being incorporated into initial training courses

What is evident is that human rights education has an important role within the life of a school. It has a contribution to make to the content of the curriculum, but also to pedagogical approaches and more widely to the whole ethos and life of the school. A challenge for this field therefore is to consider the extent to which schools embracing human rights should move beyond the more technical and legalistic approach to one that embraces a distinctive pedagogy that can be empowering to both teacher and pupil.

What is clear is that some of the major social issues of today, be they climate change, anti-racist work, or the threat of global pandemics, need a human rights educational approach. As Jerome and Starkey state in the conclusion to their book:

*'If the right to education is an enabling right, opening the door to the realisation of other rights, then teaching might be said to achieve a multiplier effect, through which one person's optimism and commitment to make a difference can be multiplied through their students.'*³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ See Jerome and Starkey op.cit.

³⁰⁵ Robinson, C. (2017) *Translating Human Rights Principles into Classroom Practices*

³⁰⁶ Jerome and Starkey op.cit. 252

Connecting it all Together

- Human Rights are a concept relevant to all people at all stages of their lives. HRE is central to concepts of democratic citizenship and a common humanity and seeks personal and collective transformation for a more just and sustainable world.
- Where rights are linked to real world situations, connections can be made to local and global issues. Learners are empowered to be agents of change. HRE encourages participatory forms of learning, recognizes different cultural perspectives, and includes self-reflection and critical thinking.
- Focusing on a common humanity, HRE supports the purpose of education as a common good. Learners are active citizens understanding social change as people powered. They understand how actions can promote and protect the rights of others.
- HRE is rooted in personal action for collective wellbeing. It therefore complements Cultural Education, Global Citizenship Education, Peace Education and Environmental and Sustainability Education, who in turn complement each other. Thus, SDG target 4.7 underpins all of the SDGs. They are all working towards the same end – a more just and sustainable future for all peoples on this one planet.

Theme 5

Culture, Creativity and Arts Education

1.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the field of culture and the related areas of arts and creativity within education. It looks particularly at a range of initiatives within this field over the past decade, and then at some of the recent academic literature around evidence and research. Following that, it looks at a series of themes such as quality of teaching and learning, creativity, and well-being through evidence from schools and relevant research. The themes of diversity and inclusion, and their relationship to decolonising the curriculum, are also discussed. Finally, the section also looks at the relationship of culture to the themes of sustainability and the SDGs.

Culture can be interpreted in many ways. Its usage can be seen to relate to '*cultural education*' as well as the '*culture of education*' more broadly. Issues such as structural racism, climate change, children's rights, and how to address conflict and violence all have cultural connotations.

An approach taken by organisations involved with promoting the Culture element within Our Shared World have suggested the need for a major re-think of the field, and it is this approach that underpins this section. The approach can be summarised as:

Culture is the medium within which human life imagines and understands itself and can evolve. Culture manifests in practices and organisations for the arts, innovations and inventions, traditions, daily lives and values of people.

It has often been reduced to 'the arts', which are hugely valuable in themselves and help to enliven the school curriculum. However, such a limited focus misses the significance of the following dimensions:

- design and innovation of the built environment and transport systems, product design and technology
- the stewardship of heritage (historical sites, natural heritage, artefacts and intangible practices)
- cultures outside the mainstream or emerging from young people including hybrid forms and popular culture
- the cultural riches of sciences, languages, wider humanities and interdisciplinary studies

Over the centuries, culture has increasingly been defined in a limited way as the arts favoured by the most dominant groups, and those that are separated from the natural environment. Yet, for human groups to thrive, their cultures must respect and adapt to the laws and limits of the ecosphere. Any new definition should go beyond the idea of educating people to be cultural practitioners or consumers, and open up to embrace culture in a more inclusive way.

Underpinning this approach to Culture is that the area should cover all aspects of the curriculum, be inclusive of all value systems, and reflect a diversity of views and perspectives. Culture should be seen as part of a more creative approach to the curriculum, that ignites in learners an imaginative imperative to '*make the world a better place*' with all teachers seeing themselves as cultural educators.

But how does this approach relate to existing definitions and usages of the term?

2.0 Terminology

The interpretation of the area of culture within the SDGs covers both its contribution to what should be taught and how it should be taught, and also its relationship to the other themes such as social justice, cultural understanding, and the environment.

At one level, the field of culture and education could be understood in terms of how certain strategic bodies in this area have defined the term. For example, the Culture Learning Alliance (CLA) defines the area as:

'An active engagement with the creation of our arts and heritage.

- *'The arts' is a broad term that includes a wide range of disciplines from theatre, dance, literature, storytelling, music, circus and street arts, craft and visual arts to film, spoken word, digital media, film, photography and beyond.*
- *The term 'heritage' encompasses an individual's understanding of themselves, their material culture and the world around them and how past events have shaped this'.*

Culture, 'in all its richness and diversity, can be experienced as listening, playing, seeing, watching and interacting, performing, devising, designing and composing, making, writing and doing'.³⁰⁷

This approach to culture implies that, as well as being part of school subjects such as English, Drama, Art and Design, Music, Dance, History and Performing Arts, it also has relevance across all subjects. To the CLA, *'cultural learning involves both learning through culture, and learning about culture. It involves critical thinking, creativity and the development of original ideas and action'.*

It could also be interpreted more broadly to cover creativity. The most recent and influential example of this approach can be seen in the Durham Commission on Creativity.

The Commission saw creativity as: *'the capacity to imagine, conceive, express, or make something that was not there before.'*

Creative thinking was seen by the Commission as:

'A process through which knowledge, intuition and skills are applied to imagine, express or make something novel or individual in its contexts. Creative thinking is present in all areas of life. It may appear spontaneous, but it can be underpinned by perseverance, experimentation, critical thinking and collaboration.'

Finally, the Commission saw teaching for creativity as: *'Explicitly using pedagogies and practices that cultivate creativity in young people.'³⁰⁸*

More broadly, the term creativity has been seen as a key element of promoting an approach to learning that moves beyond just reproducing bodies of knowledge. For example, Sir Ken Robinson, in a range of publications and TED talks has called for more emphasis on creativity within schools. To him, creativity is about imagination, self-expression and divergent thinking. It is something natural that everyone was born with. He sees creativity as equally important as literacy and numeracy.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ <https://culturallearningalliance.org.uk/about-us/cultural-learning-key-terms-and-definitions>

³⁰⁸ <https://www.dur.ac.uk/creativitycommission/>

³⁰⁹ https://www.ted.com/talks/sir_ken_robinson_do_schools_kill_creativity ; <https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/40217/sir-ken-robinson-creativity-is-in-everything-especially-teaching> ; https://pdo.ascd.org/LMSCourses/PD11OC136M/media/Brain_Habits_M4_Reading_Why_Creativity_Now.pdf

But as Dylan Wiliam has said, creativity would mean different things in different disciplines.³¹⁰ Bill Lucas has perhaps one of the most imaginative approaches to this area and poses a five-dimensional model of creative thinking: *imaginative, inquisitive, persistent, collaborative* and *disciplined*. He suggests that each of these themes are habits of mind and are all applicable to a range of real-world types of creative activity. Creative thinking, Lucas notes, improves outcomes for learners, improves well-being, makes learners more employable, is increasingly valued internationally, and is essential in an internet-based world. Above all he suggests, *'the modern world provides plenty of problems in need of creative solutions'*.³¹¹

As a result of the close association between the SDGs and UNESCO, culture is seen to have an important dimension to international development agendas. By making explicit reference to culture, the SDGs imply a different way of interpreting the term:

*'Culture is who we are, and what shapes our identity. Placing culture at the heart of development policies is the only way to ensure a human-centred, inclusive and equitable development.'*³¹²

Culture is therefore seen by bodies such as UNESCO as contributing to all aspects of sustainable development including cultural heritage and creativity.

These interpretations, together with the definition of culture explained in the introduction to this section, suggest that culture should be seen as a broad term and closely linked to creativity. It is as much about a pedagogical approach as it is about content of the curriculum. To what extent however have these broader interpretations been reflected in policy statements within England in the past decade?

3.0 Overview of Evidence

3.1 Policy

Since 2010 there have been numerous major reports on cultural education in England. They reflect a general concern about the lack of national educational policy commitment to cultural education and creative approaches to learning more generally.

Name	Title of Report	Main Recommendations
Warwick Commission 2015	Future of Cultural Value ³¹³	Government and the cultural and creative industries need to take a united and coherent approach guaranteeing equal access for everyone to a rich cultural education and the opportunity to live a creative life.

³¹⁰ http://dylanwiliam.org/Dylan_Wiliams_website/Welcome.html

³¹¹ Lucas, B. (2020) Crank up efforts to get creativity blooming, *Times Educational Supplement*, 27-29; Lucas, B. & Spencer, E. (2017) *Teaching Creative Thinking: Developing learners who generate ideas and can think critically*, Carmarthen: Crown House Publishing Ltd; Lucas, B & Venckutė, M. (2020) *Creativity - a transversal skill for lifelong learning. An overview of existing concepts and practices. Literature report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

³¹² <https://en.unesco.org/courier/april-june-2017/culture-heart-sdgs>

³¹³ <https://europaregina.eu/2015-warwick-commission-report-on-the-future-of-cultural-value>

		The Commission further suggested that creativity should be seen as a human right. Like many other reports, it raised with concern the decline in arts subjects.
Arts and Humanities Research Council 2016	Cultural Value Project ³¹⁴	Highlighted importance of the arts and culture in terms of engaging citizens, development of cities and urban life, peace building, improving health and wellbeing. Also, arts have impact on other areas of learning in terms of the development of transferable skills, cultivating confidence, motivation and pro-social behaviours as well as cognitive abilities.
Kings College 2017	Towards cultural democracy: Promoting cultural capabilities for everyone ³¹⁵	Raised the importance of a broad interpretation of the area and called for the recognition of 'everyday creativity', 'the enormously diverse range of cultural and creative practices that take place outside of the publicly funded arts and the profitmaking creative industries'.
BBC Survey 2018	Creative Arts in Schools ³¹⁶	This called for more resources for arts subjects within schools and noted the extent to which the creative arts are being cut back in many secondary schools. Of the thousand+ schools that responded to the survey, nine in every 10 said they had cut back on lesson time, staff or facilities in at least one creative arts subject. Reflecting the findings of other reports, teachers commented that arts-based classes developed in pupils a wide range of skills much in demand from employers such as "collaboration, creativity, self-expression and control".
Cultural Learning Alliance	Imagine Nation 2017 revised ³¹⁷	Focused on four values of cultural learning: social, educational, economic and personal. It made reference to the linkage between cultural learning and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Key findings include the positive impact learning through the arts and culture has on improving attainment in Maths and English, as well as improvements in mental health and general well-being.
Arts Council	Arts and Cultural Education in	Evidence was gathered from a survey with about 50 schools and case studies of 20 of

³¹⁴ <https://www.artshealthresources.org.uk/docs/understanding-the-value-of-arts-culture-the-ahrc-cultural-value-project/>

³¹⁵ <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/resources/reports/towards-cultural-democracy-2017-kcl.pdf>

³¹⁶ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-42862996>

³¹⁷ <https://culturallearningalliance.org.uk/about-us/imagenation-the-value-of-cultural-learning/>

<p>In March 2019, the Royal Shakespeare Company was commissioned by Arts Council England to undertake a national research study into arts and cultural education in Ofsted rated Outstanding schools.</p>	<p>Outstanding Schools – written by J O’Hanlon, P. Cochrane and M. Evans³¹⁸</p>	<p>them. The top 12 ranked responses from 50 surveyed schools suggested that these schools give a high prominence to the arts through performances, events and celebrations, believe that the arts make a positive difference to the wellbeing and happiness of their children and young people and that the greatest impact of the arts is on developing children’s creativity. Many felt that the arts have played an important role in generating positive behaviour and relationships.</p>
<p>Durham University and Arts Council</p>	<p>Durham Commission on Creativity 2020³¹⁹</p>	<p>Evidence from the report suggested that improvements in academic standards within the English education system had been achieved often ‘at the expense of nurturing the creativity of our young people, neglecting the development of the skills, knowledge, understanding and experiences which they will need in the world beyond school, and which our economy, culture and society need to flourish’.</p>

There are a number of common themes in these reports. Whilst recognising the value of a broader perspective to the arts and culture field, major themes were: concerns about the decline of the arts within the school curriculum, the value of resourcing external partners, and the contribution themes in and around culture play to enhancing well-being of pupils and improving the quality of learning.

But the majority of these reports have a narrower sense of cultural education than that suggested earlier in this section. They focus more on arts education than on the whole of our culture in which the arts, humanities, sciences and technology all play an interlinked part.

3.2 The National Curriculum

This focus on arts can also be seen within two of the major English education initiatives over the past decade. The rationale for the initiatives outlined below was to address the perceived low status given to arts and culture themes within many schools. Whilst most schools would have some form of arts and culture provision, it is not seen as part of the core national curriculum, particularly after the age of 14.

As Thomson, Hall, Earl and Geppert (2019) have stated, with the arts having a lower status than some other subjects, the area is proving to be increasingly unattractive for schools and students.³²⁰ The two major initiatives have been: Creative Partnerships which ran from 2002 to 2011, and the current ArtsMark programme managed by the Arts Council.

³¹⁸ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Arts%20and%20Cultural%20Education%20in%20Outstanding%20Schools.pdf>

³¹⁹ <https://www.dur.ac.uk/creativitycommission/report/>

³²⁰ Thomson, P., Hall, C., Earl, L. & Geppert, C. (2019) *Re-imagining Education for Democracy*, Abingdon, Routledge

Creative Partnerships

Creative Partnerships had a number of research studies which looked at the programme's contribution and impact to arts, culture and creative education. The programme engaged over 5,000 schools, supported 54 national schools of creativity, and 1500 change schools. This initiative was much broader than 'the arts' and more about creativity. The overview of the evidence from the programme showed that it contributed to the development of more reflective individuals within the school, that it helped in the production of engaged citizens, broadened their horizons, and facilitated and encouraged community links. Its advocacy of a student voice was important. There was evidence that Creative Partnerships improved school attendance, increased motivation, improved learning, strengthened 'soft skills', supported schools to develop better relationships with parents and communities, and made schools better places. Particularly noted was the impact on pupil's well-being and teacher development.³²¹

Kinsella's research on '*Transforming Creative Classrooms: Contradictions Through Activity Theory Analysis*' showed the impact of creative teaching and learning practices on KS3 art and design. It showed that creative and innovative approaches, whilst welcomed by pupils, were constantly faced with a restrictive curriculum and an emphasis on testing and examinations.³²²

A weakness of the Creative Partnerships programme identified by Thomson and Hall was that its impact was often limited to the school environment. Whilst initiatives mentioned broader social issues such as the environment and race, this was done in a rather 'soft' way. This therefore suggests that the SDGs could be a vehicle for encouraging a broader and more socially relevant approach to cultural education³²³

ArtsMark

Like other initiatives outlined in this report, awards programmes for schools have become a popular feature in promoting and encouraging specific themes and approaches. For the field of cultural education, this is the Artsmark Award which is the only creative quality standard for schools and education settings, accredited by Arts Council England. In 2015, the programme was refreshed to align with School Improvement Plans and core curriculum priorities, giving the curriculum breadth and balance.

The aims of the Award are:

- Build young people's confidence, character and resilience through arts and cultural education
- Use Artsmark's clear and flexible framework to embed creativity across your whole curriculum and use it to address school improvement priorities
- Celebrate your long-term commitment to cultural education with pupils, parents and your local community

Artsmark is awarded at three levels: Silver, Gold and Platinum. Support for the award is provided through CPD courses and a regionally based 'bridging' or support organisation, appointed by Arts Council England through a competitive process. Over 4,000 schools are involved in the programme.³²⁴

³²¹ <https://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/programme/creative-partnerships/>

³²² Kinsella, V. (2018) *Transforming Creative Classroom Contradictions Through Activity Theory Analysis* in Snepvangers, K., Thomson, P. & Harris, A. (eds.) *Creativity Policy, Partnerships and Practice in Education*, London, Palgrave

³²³ Hall, C. & Thomson, P. (2017). *Inspiring school change: Transforming education through the creative arts*, London, UK: Routledge

³²⁴ <https://www.artsmark.org.uk>

3.3 Role of Arts Organisations and Professional Bodies

To support many of these initiatives, there are a number of well-respected and influential bodies.

These include the Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA) which brings the diverse elements of the cultural sector together – including museums, film, libraries, heritage, dance, literature, new media arts, theatre, visual arts, and music – to work within education. It is supported by a membership of around 10,000 organisations and individuals.

In a range of policy briefings, the Alliance has emphasised the value of arts and culture to the personal and social development of children and young people, as engagement ‘*fosters creativity, innovation, empathy, and resilience*’.

In one of its briefings, the Alliance noted that:

*‘the arts enhance the life chances of a child: a wealth of research shows that children with an arts deficit experience disadvantages educationally and economically, while their more fortunate peers are more resilient, healthier, do better in school, are more likely to vote, to go to university, to get a job and to keep it’.*³²⁵

Another is the Royal Society of Arts. In 2017 it launched Learning About Culture, the UK’s largest ever study into understanding the value and impact of arts- based learning, particularly for children experiencing disadvantage. Working with the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), Arts Council England (ACE), the Department for Education (DfE) and Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF), the RSA developed three distinct projects:

- Evaluating five promising arts-based learning projects by measuring whether they improve the literacy, non-cognitive and creativity skills of participating pupils.
- Establishing an Evidence Champions Network (ECN), bringing together more than 100 educators and arts practitioners to learn about the role that evidence can play in improving the quality and effectiveness of arts-based learning.
- Visiting ‘arts-rich’ schools across the country to improve our understanding of what enables and motivates some schools to put the arts at the heart of learning.³²⁶

Building on this research, the Tracking Arts Engagement and Learning (TALE) project, led by the RSC and the University of Nottingham, defined an arts and culture-rich school as one where all students have access to, and participate in, arts and cultural education with specialist teachers in the field and allocation of appropriate resources to the area.³²⁷

3.4 Quality of Teaching and Learning

Recognising that the field could have been seen as difficult to measure, arts educators and policymakers therefore sought evidence that creative pedagogies and arts education improve academic attainment, develop employment related skills, and enhance school experience. But finding in-depth evidence was not always easy, as can be seen from research by Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). There has however been criticism that this research ignored the work of Creative Partnerships, for example.

What however can be found is evidence that brings together ways in which creative pedagogies have had a direct impact on teaching and learning. One example of this is the article by Cremin and

³²⁵ <https://culturallearningalliance.org.uk>

³²⁶ <https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/pdfs/reports/rsa-arts-rich-schools.pdf>

³²⁷ <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/research-centres/tate-research-centre-learning/tracking-arts-learning-engagement>

Chappell (2021). They looked particularly at the impact of this approach on students. They found seven different kinds of pedagogies that focus on teaching for creativity:

1. Generating and exploring ideas. A focus on the generation and exploration of ideas is a key characteristic. This can be encouraged by creating a climate of openness with teachers accepting young people's ideas and giving them opportunities to explore ideas in a stimulating environment.
2. Encouraging autonomy and agency. Teaching that appeals to students' interests and offers them opportunities to initiate activities is important.
3. Playfulness. Purposeful play would seem to be a key element of creativity.
4. Problem-solving. Creativity involves coming up with novel or different ideas and a good way of engaging students is the use of real-world problems.
5. Risk-taking. Learning by making mistakes and taking risks is central to the creative process. Such experimentation helps to build resilience.
6. Co-constructing and collaborating. Being creative typically involves working with others - students and students and students with teachers.
7. Teacher creativity. Teachers are powerful role models; when they demonstrate their own interests in creative processes this can be helpful³²⁸

Cramman et.al.'s findings suggested that the OFSTED inspection framework did not value or give sufficient consideration to the value of creativity. Their study also indicated the challenges of a more creativity-based approach to the curriculum, with the current focus on core subjects and the perceived lack of interest and engagement in these areas from government. This study also identified that there were mixed views anyway as to whether creativity could be assessed. What their study did also propose was the need for a programme of professional development, from initial teacher training through to ongoing support to staff and senior leaders - and that this should be across all of the curriculum.³²⁹

For effective implementation of teaching for creativity within schools, the Durham Commission (2019) recognised that senior leadership confident in the value of teaching for creative thinking within a broad, balanced and progressive curriculum was required.³³⁰

The Cramman study had found that, within many schools, creativity was a low priority with a school's senior leadership. They tended to be risk averse and reluctant to change. This suggested there was a need for stronger evidence to get buy in from senior leadership, and also from school governors.³³¹

The Durham Commission found that teaching for creativity was an area of pedagogy and practice that is lacking, in the experiences of many teachers (Durham Commission, 2019). The report highlighted that creativity and creative thinking flourish in environments where critical thinking is encouraged, and that in order to build resilience for creative learning, students must have space for 'safe failure', critical reflection and trying again. The Commission recommended that, in order to enable high quality teaching for creativity in schools, it is essential to form '*strong and productive relationships with other schools, cultural institutions, Local Cultural and Education Partnerships (LCEPS) and employers*' as well as '*engaging with families and communities through collaborative*

³²⁸ Cremin, T. & Chappell, K. (2021) Creative pedagogies: a systematic review. *Research Papers in Education*

³²⁹ Cramman, H., Moger, P. & Menzies, V. (2021) The impact of Covid-19 on the English education teaching and learning environment and how this relates to sustaining and developing creativity, creative thinking and teaching for creativity - A literature review. School of Education, Durham University

³³⁰ <https://www.dur.ac.uk/creativitycommission/>

³³¹ Cramman.op.cit

activities involving creativity’. It highlighted the *‘value of creativity in promoting social engagement, community identity and cohesion is strongly associated with the concept of creative placemaking.’*³³²

The importance of support networks and maximising the enthusiasms and expertise of teachers can also be seen in the Thomson et.al. research for the TALE initiative. Their research also identified the value of *‘arts broker teachers’* - those with expertise and experience in the field who could motivate and influence others within their schools.³³³

3.5 Creativity in the Classroom

A feature of many of the studies was a tendency to emphasise creativity within the arts, and not as part of the whole life of the school. There are however many examples of schools who have taken a more creative approach to learning. From the Creative Exchange website, the following examples demonstrate very effectively the value of a creative approach:

Duchess Community High School

In 2019 the Duchess Community High School wanted to embrace enquiry-based learning through Key Stage 3 through a specially created curriculum based on thematic enquiry across Art, Music and Textiles.

The teachers wanted to create an *‘authentic real-world experience within the classroom, to give a sense of authority and ownership for student’s ideas and values’*. They explored family heritages and created banners to show their own cultural diversity and used various forms of visual arts to demonstrate their learning. As Ruth Brown Head of Creative Arts, at the school commented:

*‘Through empowering students to work with their creative capabilities, rather than the perceived traditional skills set for each discipline, we have broken free of the boundaries and barriers which often held back our most vulnerable or disengaged young people. What is striking is the positive empowerment of students and teachers in our approach to teaching for creativity using enquiry. Lessons are full of diverse conversations, busy hives of activity with students spilling into the facility areas to compose and perform. Mark making and creative inquisitiveness is practiced without fear of failure and dialogue is rich, seamlessly crossing over the invisible boundaries traditionally held by subjects within a rigid curriculum structure. Attainment is high and continuing to rise, particularly for boys, pupil premium and less advantaged students’.*³³⁴

Ryburn Valley High School

Ryburn Valley High School, a secondary school in Sowerby Bridge, puts creativity at the heart of their school ethos:

‘Our school breaks boundaries to create a fertile culture where creativity flourishes. A creative circle which constantly reinforces itself; a whole school approach, driving creative teaching, community and students.’

Ryburn is known for cultivating creativity as a priority, a strength recognised by its Artsmark Platinum.

‘It gives our students life skills, creating innovators and problem solvers who will succeed in a changing world. It builds confidence and wellbeing, helps students withstand academic pressures, and enriches lives. And, as our results show, improves performance.’

A new focus on Identity is one of the means by which creativity is cultivated:

³³² <https://www.dur.ac.uk/creativitycommission>

³³³ <https://researchtale.net/author/patthomson/>

³³⁴ <http://creativeexchange.org/projects/>

'In 2017, we exploded PSHCE, replacing it with our Identity Curriculum. In iGen, classes read a novel together, creatively exploring key themes. Everyone teaches it, so the impact across school has been huge, developing an expressive confidence in teachers. Students build greater knowledge of the world, expanding their cultural capital, compassion, and gaining insights that help their own mental health.

*At Ryburn, we want to share our story of how enabling creativity to flourish inspires the innovators needed in our ever-changing world.'*³³⁵

Thomas Tallis School

Using Winchester University's Centre for Real World Creative Habits, Thomas Tallis School developed six practical ways to embed creativity in lessons:

- Building opportunities to explicitly develop the 'habits' into schemes of work and lesson planning.
- Focusing on a particular 'habit' as a starter or plenary in a lesson.
- Developing opportunities for students to engage in extended learning enquiries in order to exercise a range of 'creative habits'.
- Rewarding students in Year 7 and 8 for demonstrating progress in acquiring Tallis Habits and reporting this progress to parents.
- Encouraging Year 7 students to keep a Tallis Habits Journal.³³⁶

These examples demonstrate the many ways schools are approaching culture and creativity and putting these themes at the heart of their learning.

4.0 Key Themes

These initiatives demonstrate how culture, the arts and creativity within formal education can contribute to the quality of learning and teaching. They capture the pupils' imagination, enable them to explore their own sense of identity and place in the world, help to improve their well-being, and provide ways in which they can make connections between the needs of the curriculum and real-world experiences.

Whilst activities about the arts can be valuable to the learner, the evidence suggests that where learning takes place through the arts, pupils' imagination and sense of wider social purpose is enhanced, as can be seen from the school examples given later in this section. However, it could be argued that there has been insufficient attention given by policymakers and key arts-based organisations to the wider question of the culture of the whole curriculum.

Therefore, the remainder of this section looks at arts within the broader framework of culture and creativity, and at how they encourage a broader approach to learning that captures pupils' imagination and enables them to express their own views and opinions on wider social, environmental and cultural issues.

This means that, with regard to the other themes from Target 4.7 of the SDGs, culture provides a means of demonstrating how areas such as human rights, peace, sustainability, and global

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid.

citizenship relate to a pupil's outlook on the world and how they can make a contribution to ensuring a more just and sustainable world.

The evidence of the contribution of culture related themes is now explored through the following themes:

- Fostering children's imagination
- Wellbeing
- Making a direct contribution to addressing questions of diversity and inclusion
- Empowering pupils to demonstrate their own voice and views on wider social and environmental issues, and understanding and applying the SDGs

4.1 Fostering Children's Imagination

A feature of creative approaches to learning should be to encourage a sense of imagination in children and young people. An interesting example is the activities of House of Imagination (HOI), a research organisation that focuses on creative and critical thinking, undertakes research, and delivers innovative programmes that enable children to shape their lives through creative activity. HOI is driven by a desire for change in both children's lives and in schools, focusing on an exploration of the possibilities that creativity offers. A feature of their work is to research different learning environments that may encourage more creative processes, such as their *Forest of Imagination* initiative, which aimed to provide spaces for creative making, performance and discussions. Their 2019 event involved extensive collaboration between the co-designers and Holburne Museum and Sydney Gardens, with 55 organisations and over 100 artists and designers participating overall. They worked directly with 20 schools with over 500 children from local schools and over 8,000 children and adults over the whole weekend.³³⁷

There have been a number of projects led by civil society organisations that demonstrate the value and links to culture and creativity. These include the Creative Communities: Developing Learner-led Active Citizenship Initiatives in Tower Hamlets. Using the Sustainable Development Goals as a framework, the project *'places children at the heart of the action as they respond to their community's needs through tried and tested global citizenship approaches and methodologies'*, and invites children to free their imaginations in order to lead with practical action in responding to the crisis. From engaging with mutual aid groups, designing food bags with messages of resilience, to singing about hope to those most isolated, our children can make meaningful creative interventions as active citizens in their community.³³⁸

4.2 Well-Being

As highlighted in the Durham Commission (2019) Report, *'participation in cultural and creative activities has been shown to improve wellbeing. There is a growing body of evidence that shows how creativity and the arts can contribute to children's health and well-being and their interaction with friends'*.³³⁹ A range of reports have identified this as being increasingly important. For example, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Arts, Health and Wellbeing, in 2019 noted that there was a

³³⁷ <https://forestofimagination.org.uk/tag/house-of-imagination/>

³³⁸ <https://globallearninglondon.org/project/creativecommunities/>

³³⁹ <https://www.dur.ac.uk/creativitycommission/>

recognition of the importance of creative activity and self-expression to building confidence and resilience.³⁴⁰

This area has become even more important as a result of COVID-19. Developing plans which include teaching for creativity as an approach could support both curriculum learning and the health and wellbeing of students. However, schools have highlighted that support would be useful to do this e.g., through partnerships with cultural organisations and practitioners alongside curated creative learning resources.

As one head teacher quoted in the Durham Report noted:

'One of our aims was to improve mental health, and it is shocking how lacking in confidence lots of young people are, and I can't help feeling that creative arts offers opportunities to build confidence... So, I do see creativity as a route into healthier lifestyles and more balanced individuals. I think there's a risk to the wellbeing, mental health and future prospects of young people if we don't do something with them that they enjoy and that taps into the creativity that's within them all...' (Headteacher, West Midlands, Academy, Secondary & 16+)³⁴¹

These examples demonstrate that, by teachers thinking in terms of creativity and culture in its broadest sense, they can have a direct impact not only on pupils' learning, but also their sense of identity, place and confidence in themselves. This is particularly the case when there is a recognition within schools of the need to understand that different cultures make up societies, but that this multicultural nature is to be seen alongside an understanding of historic power and structural influences which have resulted in some cultural perspectives being either ignored or silenced. This is why the theme of diversity and inclusion needs to be seen within an approach to cultural and creative education that recognises these wider social and economic forces.

4.3 Diversity and inclusion

The arts and cultural education communities have been leading voices in encouraging an approach within schools to reflect more the diverse nature of schools. For example, Nightingale and Sandell's edited volume on Museums, Equality and Social Justice, 2012, noted:

'The last two decades have seen concerns for equality, diversity, social justice and human rights move from the margins of museum thinking and practice, to the core.'

They further noted that:

'there is increasing professional and scholarly interest in the potential for museums to take up an explicitly activist moral standpoint on human rights issues – one that aims to actively shape the conversations that society has about difference.'

However, they added a word of caution as to the extent to which the progress was meaningful and deep.³⁴²

Whilst The Black Lives Matters initiative has quickened the pace of this call, there is still concern of the extent to which the calls for a more diverse approach to culture has been implemented. This is despite teaching unions local authorities, museum education bodies and community organisations

³⁴⁰ <https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/who-we-are/appg>

³⁴¹ <https://www.dur.ac.uk/creativitycommission/>

³⁴² Sandell, R. & Nightingale, E. (eds.) Museums, Equality and Social Justice, Abingdon, Routledge

calling for schools and teachers to not only reflect the diverse nature of schools, but also to address directly questions of power and inequality and the underlying causes of racism.

Teachers at Cotham School in Bristol for example, during the 2019-2020 academic year, completed a detailed audit of the Key Stage 3 curriculum with the intent of decolonising the curriculum and ensuring that the content is diverse, representative, and contextual at the same time as being knowledge rich and challenging. After the review process, all teachers and leaders used Cotham School's Principles of Curriculum to plan and resource a new curriculum that develops cultural capital, recognises Bristol's diverse local history and achievement, provides enriching experiences to level up the social playing field, links learning to the wider world - including current affairs and social issues, and engages students in thinking about 'big ideas' outside of their life experiences. In addition to this, the new decolonised curriculum served to encourage disadvantaged students to diversify their interests e.g., taking up arts-based subjects and widening their extracurricular opportunities.³⁴³

These initiatives have faced opposition from some within the policy making side of education such as OFSTED's announcement of a plan to inspect cultural capital. This has raised concerns that this might be a refocusing on a traditional canon meaning young people's access to the full breadth of visual and material culture is restricted

Arts Council England aware of these dangers in 2020 published 'ACE in a hole?', an alternative cultural strategy for England which focuses on challenging injustices, being accountable to a wider demographic, adopting the role of an advocate for the arts, encouraging risk-taking and experimentation. Despite numerous reports and calls for engagement in these areas by the broader arts and cultural education community, there is a danger that the progress that has been maintained is not retained if there is little broader support from policymakers.³⁴⁴

What has been evident is that, where themes of cultural diversity and decolonising have been linked to identities and subject areas such as history, there has been some movement in recent years. For example, evidence from a study with groups of teenage black and ethnic minority students, mostly female, and their teachers, in five secondary schools across London showed the potential value of a decolonising approach to history, and how connections could be made to personal identities and family histories.

The research noted that the '*ability to identify with those at the receiving end of empire, colonisation and even decolonisation, gives them (students) an enhanced sense of perspective and significance.*' There were also signs that the teachers were making every effort to construct syllabuses that are relevant to the demographic of their students.³⁴⁵

The evidence also challenged the perceptions behind the history section of the Home Office's *Life in the UK* booklet, which demonstrates a rather old-fashioned view that the host-society has a fixed history which has to be learnt. Conversely, what emerges from the exchanges in these five schools is that the positive and deliberate accommodation of new narratives 'from below' organically '*enriches, contests and unsettles the old canon*'.

The arts and culture communities have therefore often been seen at the forefront of these debates.

³⁴³ <https://www.cotham.bristol.sch.uk/students/curriculum>

³⁴⁴ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/our-strategy-2020-2030>

³⁴⁵ Guyver, R. (2021) Doing justice to their history: London's BAME students and their teachers reflecting on decolonising the history curriculum, *Historical Encounters*, 8(2), 156-174

In a podcast interview, Lavinya Stennett, founder and CEO of social enterprise The Black Curriculum, and Kwame Bakoji-Hume, director of African Activities CIC, a collaboration of African artists in the UK, shared their own experiences. Stennett reflects on her own experience of black history in UK schools and the lack of creativity within it:

“It was only done once a year during Black History Month and focused on issues like the transatlantic slave trade routes,” she says. “It was not very creative at all. It wasn’t really engaging, or it didn’t offer a chance for young people to feel empowered.”

Bakoji-Hume talks about his work in schools and how positively children react to hearing old stories passed down through generations.

“Sometimes it’s very new to them – they are quite shocked,” he says. “I tell stories a lot about Africa, and they ask me, ‘Wow! Is it true?’ There’s a lot the children are missing in England’s schools. Every child in Africa knows their history – it’s on their shoulders, strung through their bones. Our stories must be told. That’s what motivates me to go into schools.”³⁴⁶

There are many other examples trying to address the lack of space for black voices within the curriculum. For example, The Black Curriculum delivers arts focused Black History programmes, teacher training and support for young people to campaign for change.³⁴⁷

The London Theatre Consortium have been working to ensure that in Drama ‘schools study a diverse – inclusive of race, gender, ability – range of texts and practitioners that are relevant to current practice and British society’. The group has run teacher CPD, spoken with exam boards, prepared lists of texts and developed resources.³⁴⁸

A range of schools are consciously addressing these themes in the vision statements, their classroom practices and what they teach. For example, at Rathfern Primary School in Lewisham in South London, the head Naheeda Maharasingam has stated:

‘We teach Black History all year round at Rathfern. Our curriculum is designed to reflect and celebrate our local community’s culture and history. We empower all our pupils by exploring the role that key black people and others have played in challenging racism and shaping a more just and equitable world today. We strongly believe that black history is British history and the teaching of it should not be designated to a single month.’

She further stated:

‘The school is working with others across Lewisham on a project called ‘Your Voice Can Change the World’. It is a connecting schools project with South Africa – a country whose anti-apartheid struggle is globally recognised as a fight against a brutally racist regime. ‘All participating schools and pupils will learn how we can stand up and oppose racism’ When I developed the project, I was determined to find a way for all our pupils but especially our Black pupils in Lewisham schools to see the power we all have to change the world.’³⁴⁹

Another example is the ways in which the Leeds Museums and Galleries service have responded to calls to address Decolonising the Curriculum. The staff in this service were conscious of the dangers of a school responding to an issue in ad hoc way and not addressing wider social issues. They noted:

³⁴⁶ <https://everywomanforum.com/mpage/tech-hub-podcast-black-history-just-october-meet-woman-challenging-uk-schools>

³⁴⁷ <https://theblackcurriculum.com>

³⁴⁸ <https://culturalllearningalliance.org.uk/the-cultural-learning-landscape-summer-2020/>

³⁴⁹ <https://www.rathfern.lewisham.sch.uk/2020/10/british-black-history-at-rathfern-primary-school/?shared=email&msg=fail>

'It didn't sit comfortably with us. Just 'dropping in a Windrush topic', does not address some of the wider, deeper changes we would like to support schools to make using cultural learning, although it can be a good start. But it did open up a conversation with those teachers about making the changes together.

We did some thinking. With our collections colleagues, we thought about how there is no single story related to most of our objects, and that to tell just one story about something doesn't give the full picture. We thought about the language we use in terms of commemoration of the past and current celebration of our diverse city, and the language that schools use. We thought about where there are gaps in the voices in our collections, gaps in topics taught in schools and the gaps in our workshop programmes.³⁵⁰

Whilst the examples addressed above focus mainly on areas of ethnicity, and mainly through the arts and history-based areas of school life, the themes could be said to have value across all subject areas, and that equally important to the content of the curriculum was the pedagogical approach and the value of creativity. For example, the natural sciences and subjects such as Mathematics can play an important role by highlighting the stories of leading ethnic minority figures, examining the ways in which these subjects have in the past re-enforced racial stereotypes, and look at how they can today play a positive role in addressing discrimination and inequality.

If cultural education is seen in this broadest context, it can therefore play a role not only in addressing issues of racism, but in empowering all pupils to recognise the value of diversity and a more inclusive curriculum where connections can be made to identity, personal histories and a sense of place in the world. This section has focused on issues of diversity with regard to race and ethnicity, but the themes equally apply to questions of gender, disability and sexuality.

With regard to gender equality, there has been increased emphasis with a number of educational initiatives to link this area to addressing sexual harassment within a school. This means going beyond the orthodoxy of sex education being seen as a biology subject, but instead one that has broader social and cultural relevance. Gender equality is one of the SDGs and, whilst there have been a range of initiatives about promoting the value of this internationally, it is rarely discussed in relation to cultural questions within the English education system.

A creative classroom means therefore opening to varying ways of understanding the world rooted in different forms of cultural understanding and expression. This is where and why relating the themes of Culture to the SDGs are so important.

4.4 Supporting the Global Goals

4.4.1 Sustainable Development

This final section on Culture therefore looks explicitly at the evidence on the relationship between culture and the SDGs. Culture has become recognised as an important component of sustainable development and has been suggested as the fourth pillar of sustainable development alongside environment, economy, and society.

It has also been suggested that one possible way of addressing the relationship between culture and sustainable development is through the following:

³⁵⁰ <https://museumsandgalleries.leeds.gov.uk/engagement/learning-engagement/decolonising-the-curriculum/>

1. Culture in sustainable development parallel with ecological, social and economic aspects or pillars. This means that diverse cultural understanding needs to be considered in the development processes alongside the ecological, social and economic pillars in order to fulfil the criteria of sustainability.
2. Culture for sustainable development. Culture can mediate between the three classical pillars of sustainability. In other words, it is acknowledged that culture processes, facilitates and translates sustainable development, and therefore cultural aspects should always be present in the sustainability assessments, policies and planning.
3. Culture as sustainable development. This implies that culture is an overarching concept, which contains and influences social, environmental and economic actions within sustainable development. In other words, sustainability needs to be embedded in the culture and cultural transition is needed on our way to a more sustainable society.

There are numerous examples of how the arts specifically have been used to promote creative and expressive approaches to sustainable development. Torriano Primary School in North London is a school that has engaged in a wealth of activities that link sustainability themes to the arts. The school secured an Arts mark Award, and with a performing arts lead and artist in residence, put sustainable development themes at the heart of a lot of their cultural activities. One area of learning that particularly improved at this school through the involvement of partnership work with arts and cultural groups was the pupils' speaking and listening skills.³⁵¹

Many schools, in their promotion of sustainable development and the SDGs in particular, adopt cultural pedagogical approaches. There is evidence from a number of schools of the ways in which the arts are used as a tool to teach the environment. These include Gomersal St Mary's CE primary school in Cleckheaton, near Bradford, through making Fairtrade footballs. *'The children make footballs out of recycled paper, carrier bags and elastic bands, and they discuss global issues around poverty, fairness and fair trade'* explains Cindy Sheard, a teacher at the school.

What is noticeable is how a range of cultural forms can be a way of capturing the pupils' imagination. But its success often depends on the support and engagement of external bodies who can help with resources, workshops, and access to places to visit.

The following examples show how sustainability themes can also make connections to areas highlighted in this section, notably creativity, encouraging a sense of imagination and building confidence and resilience.

An example of this is Elm C of E Primary School in Cambridgeshire that links the SDGs to cultural capital through engaging initiatives such as Forest Schools and Votes for Schools, which is based around 3 'I's: *Intent, Implementation and Impact*.

Another can be seen at West Rise primary school, situated next to an Eastbourne council estate and with some 450 pupils. It leased 100 acres of floodplain next to the school from the local council. The head teacher decided to use the land to look after a herd of Asian water buffalo, alongside its already existing bee and reptile sanctuary - as well as farm animals including sheep, ducks and chickens. To support these educational experiences the school, like others mentioned above, used artists and external organisations. The school has a strong outdoor learning focus, and this has helped to develop the pupil's creativity and imagination.

³⁵¹ <https://www.torriano.camden.sch.uk>

4.4.2 Social Change

Screenwriter and SDGs advocate Richard Curtis has spoken about the importance of Culture to social change and the SDGs. He has stated:

'Art and artists and Culture endlessly re-present lives, truths and injustices. So, I passionately believe in their power to change the world.'

But he went on to state that arts and culture could do much more to put the SDGs into practice.³⁵²

There have been a range of initiatives around the world that have been calling for culture to have greater prominence in the SDGs. However, much of this engagement has taken a more arts-based interpretation.

One body that has tried to have a broader interpretation has been the British Council. With specific regard to the relationship between culture and the SDGs, the British Council in 2020 produced a report entitled 'The Missing Pillar'. Although the report covers more than just the UK, it is an important document in that it explores the place of culture in the SDGs through research, policy and practice. It analyses *'where arts and culture as a sector and as a creative process can fit within a number of goals, including their targets and indicators'*, and covers issues such as sustainable fashion, creative inclusion, and cultural heritage protection.

But even here, much of the focus is on engaging the 'cultural' community in the SDGs. The recommendations from the report called for the SDGs to be embedded in the delivery of cultural initiatives based on local needs, and for their impact to be measured accordingly. An important feature of the report was that, whilst noting the connections between the aims of the SDGs and those of the arts and culture, the language used was often very different. Moreover, it noted:

'Arts and cultural organisations and professionals do not always associate their work with the language of development and the ambitions of agendas such as the SDGs'.

*The report recommended there was a need to build and strengthen the 'evidence base around arts and culture's contribution to the SDGs'.*³⁵³

If a broader interpretation is taken of culture that particularly relates to societal issues, then the themes of identity and social change come more to the fore.

An example that brings many of these themes together is an initiative in Birmingham coordinated by TIDE (a development education network of teachers). The group identified a number of themes that showed the interconnectedness of sustainability, culture and the arts. They found that both sustainable development and arts and culture are about change and transformation. They found that, through a series of creative exercises such as using paper to make sculptures, pupils developed thinking skills and a sense of imagination, alongside awareness of broader social concerns.³⁵⁴

The SDGs provide a valuable framework for culture and the arts because they give children and young people a way of making linkages between their creative experiences and wider societal concerns.

³⁵² <https://www.looktothestars.org/news/14202-richard-curtis-talks-global-goals>

³⁵³ https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/the_missing_pillar.pdf

³⁵⁴ <https://www.tidegloballearning.net/primary-early-years/thinking-through-making-art-and-sustainable-development>

5.0 Conclusion

A challenge remains in encouraging connections between the broader interpretation of culture suggested in this section to practices within schools around the SDGs. The themes of diversity and inclusion have often been seen as distinct from, for example, environmental matters. Many schools find it easier to engage in activities around the natural environment than, for example, issues relating to diversity and inclusion. If the SDGs are interpreted in a broader sense that includes themes of equality, social justice, and more inclusive societies, then culture can and should become a central focus of school activities in this area.

What is evident throughout this section is that, despite lack of clear direction, guidance and resourcing from policymakers, there is a wealth of creative, imaginative activities happening in many schools in England that make direct connection to social, environmental and cultural issues.

Through the efforts of teachers, support organisations, local authorities and professional groups, the theme of culture is clearly important to the life of all schools. It provides a direct way of linking a pupil's own learning development to their sense of who they are and how they see their role in the world.

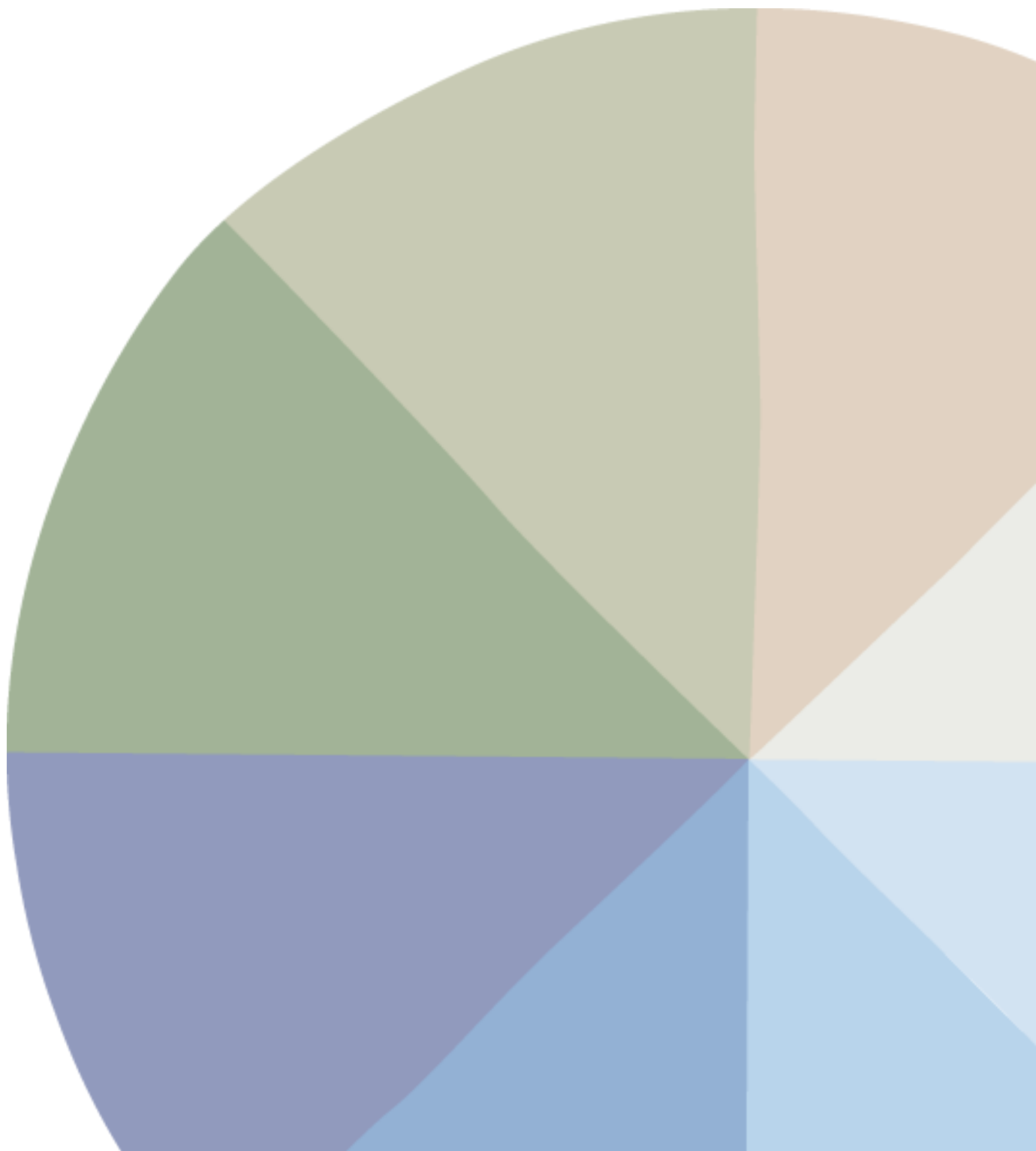
Culture should be seen, as this section has suggested, as covering all aspects of life and how we live in the world. It needs to be promoted within schools not as a subject or just the arts, but as a means of addressing wider social themes relating to the rich diversity of cultural heritages that exist in England, the causes of the inequalities that exist, and the role that the SDGs can play in bringing a diverse range of themes together. The arts field clearly has a major contribution to make, but as the evidence outlined in this section has suggested, where there is connection to broader social issues, then there is more meaningful engagement from pupils - and the school is enriched by this broader approach.

Those bodies wishing to see arts and cultural heritage gain a higher profile within schools perhaps need to consider how they can more deeply connect the global themes as suggested by the SDGs. The theme of creativity has been suggested as a way of bringing these different elements together if they are seen as part of making links to real world issues.

Connecting it all Together

- A definition of culture needs to be inclusive, reflecting all value systems and a diversity of views. It should ignite an imaginative imperative to see and make the world a better place. It involves an individual's understanding of themselves, their culture, the world and the past events which have shaped these.
- Culture appears spontaneous, but requires collaboration. It must be experienced. Cultural education must explicitly use pedagogies that cultivate the active participation of the learner, including student action and persistence resulting from a space for safe failure.
- The explicit linkage of culture to international development agendas through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has implied that the area is not only important in itself, but contributes directly to most of the Goals.

SECTION THREE CONCLUSIONS



Conclusions of this report

This report has demonstrated that many of the themes and values underpinning Target 4.7 of the SDGs can be seen within many schools in England, but not in all. Unfortunately, even where they are included, all too often the themes are covered as additional extras to the curriculum. However, the success of a range of Award programmes - from UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Award to Eco-Schools and Arts Mark programmes - are testament to the enthusiasm within many schools for encouraging learning that has a social purpose, is creative, participatory and learner centred. There is also evidence that civil society organisations have played an important role in supporting teachers to deliver these initiatives within the classroom.

What is also evident from the research is that many teachers see areas such as human rights, the environment, or peace education as more than a series of topics to cover in the classroom. This call for moving from learning *about* to learning *for*, and learning *through*, can be seen in areas such as the environment, human rights, and cultural education.

While the above is encouraging, this interest and enthusiasm from many teachers has often been tempered by the demands of examinations, testing, and frequently narrow interpretations of quality education as quantified by OFSTED.

Whilst the UK government have rightly given increased responsibility to teachers for what is taught, and how it is taught in the classroom, more could be done to value and support the creativity that takes place in many schools around the country. Much of the creativity and curriculum development support for teachers comes from civil society organisations, but the funding to support this work has sadly declined since 2015.

This report is not suggesting a radical change of direction by the UK government on the school curriculum, but more a recognition and sharing of existing strong practice and recognition of the urgent need for increased support for high quality teaching on Target 4.7 themes for all learners, in all schools. There is considerable evidence, as this report has shown, that a social purpose not only inspires pupils - it can remind many teachers of why they came into the profession.

The SDGs, and particularly Target 4.7 - signed up to by the UK government, have been seen to provide a spark that ignites latent enthusiasm to contribute to a just, sustainable and peaceful world within the teaching profession. As numerous studies have shown, many schools have developed their own vision statements that reflect a broader social purpose to education in the absence of what is perceived to be a lack of vision and direction from national policy makers.

Though inherently important, Target 4.7 encompasses more than social purpose. It also encourages an approach to education that is learner centred, participatory, and encourages critical thinking about the world informed by different voices and perspectives. It is also an approach to learning that encourages creativity, experiencing the natural environment and promoting a values base of social justice, human rights, and peace.

These themes are not new to education and have been celebrated and promoted in a range of international initiatives - from the Rio Summit on environment and development in 1992 to the Maastricht Declaration on Global Education in 2002, the Council of Europe's programmes on human rights education, and the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development from 2005 to 2014.

The third decade of the twenty-first century has brought with it an existential crisis as a result of the global pandemic, and the increased threat of climate change. Educationalists have a responsibility to promote a sense of hope, to challenge helplessness, and give learners the knowledge, skills and values base to engage in making the world a better place. One of the tasks of the educator should be to unveil the opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be³⁵⁵.

This is where Target 4.7 comes in. It is seen as the enabler of all the SDGs.

To enable schools to support their learners to work in hopeful ways towards a sustainable, just, resilient and peaceful world, the following recommendations are suggested:

- All schools should be made aware of the SDGs, particularly Target 4.7, and be encouraged to reflect them in their teaching and learning
- UK government should recognise and encourage all schools to build on their existing practices in the themes identified in this report
- The DfE should create a process to measure the progress that all schools are making on the SDGs, including Target 4.7 - which can then be used as part of the UK government's reporting on progress towards the Goals
- Bodies responsible for both the initial training and continuing professional development of teachers should be given resources and support to enable all teachers to have the knowledge, skills and confidence to include the themes of the SDGs and Target 4.7 within the classroom
- UK government should recognise the important contribution civil society organisations are making and that they could do more, with increased funding, to support schools in including the themes from Target 4.7 in their curriculum
- All schools should be encouraged to consider the extent to which they are including a social purpose in their visions and mission statements

³⁵⁵ Freire, P. (2004) *Pedagogy of Hope*. New York: Continuum

Further Reading

A number of the themes developed relating to the purpose of education are based on this article:
Bourn, D. (2021) Pedagogy of hope: global learning and the future of education.
International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning, 13(2), 65–78. Available
at: <https://www.scienceopen.com/hosted-document?doi=10.14324/IJDEGL.13.2.01/>

UNESCO's report detailing the opportunities and challenges of education to 2050:
UNESCO (2021) Reimagining Our Future Together— A new social contract for education.
Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379707.locale=en/>

A valuable book that brings together some of the underlying themes about the purpose of education
can be found in:

- Gerver, R. (2019) Education -A Manifesto for Change, Bloomsbury, London

These authors suggest that education as a common and public good can provide the right direction
for the future of education:

- Nóvoa, A. & Alvim, Y. (2020) Nothing is new, but everything has changed: A viewpoint on the
future school, *Prospects*, 49, 35–41. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09487-w/>

Engaging 1500 people across 10 countries, Reboot the Future asked how education is changing:

- Reboot the Future (2020) Rebooting Education: A conversation on how covid19 is changing
ideas about education. <https://www.flipsnack.com/FutureReboot/rebooting-education.html/>

Two chapters from this book are highly relevant: 1) Kiwan, D. (2012) Multicultural Education, and 2)
Smith, E. (2012) Social Justice and Inequalities in Education.

- Arthur, J. & Peterson, A. (ed.) The Routledge Companion to Education, Abingdon, Routledge

The Bloomsbury Handbook is a key resource when learning about global learning:

- Lehtomaki, E. & Rajala, A. (2020) *Global Education Research in Finland* in Bourn, D. (ed.) The
Bloomsbury Handbook of Global Education and learning, London, Bloomsbury, 105-120

The Climate Emergency is front and centre of many debates, and has sparked protests from young
people globally. This offers perspectives on Environmental Education:

- Reid, A., Dillon, J., Ardoin, N., & Ferreira, J-A. (2021) Scientists Warnings and the Need to
Reimagine, Recreate, and Restore Environmental Education, *Environmental Education
Research*, 27:6, 783-795

The role of charities in schooling has long been controversial. This article is a helpful contribution to
the debate:

- Simpson, J. (2019) *Learning to Unlearn: Moving Educators From a Charity Mentality Towards
a Social Justice Mentality* in Bamber, P. (ed.) Teacher Education for Sustainable Development
and Global Citizenship, Abingdon, Routledge. Available from:
<https://www.developmenteducationreview.com/issue/issue-25/%E2%80%98learning-unlearn%E2%80%99-charity-mentality-within-schools>

The Peace Education Network provides this useful contribution:

- <https://peace-education.org.uk/why-education-for-peace-is-important>

Human rights, as suggested by Struthers, should not be an abstract, global and aspirational framework, but as a concept relevant to all people at all stages of their lives. Struthers further suggests that human rights education can help in building a '*universal culture in which human rights values and principles are central including freedom, equality, dignity and justice*'.

- Struthers, A. (2019) Teaching Human Rights in Primary Schools, Abingdon, Routledge

Some have suggested changing the discourse around citizenship to move things forward. Jerome and Starkey suggest that if citizenship is seen as a feeling, a state of being, belonging to a community, then children should be seen as citizens with schools as communities of citizens.

- Jerome, L. & Starkey, H. (2021) Children's Rights Education in Diverse classrooms, London Bloomsbury, p.15

UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools is a hugely successful programme integrating Children's Rights into school culture and ethos.

- UNICEF UK (2018a), Rights and Respecting Schools Impact Report. Available online: https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/07/Impact-Report-2018_Final-170719.pdf



About the authors

Professor Douglas Bourn

Douglas is Professor of Development Education and Director of the Development Education Research Centre at IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society. He has produced numerous publications on the themes of development education, global learning, global citizenship and education for sustainable development. These include *The Theory and Practice of Development Education* (2014), *Understanding Global Skills for 21st Century Professions* (2018), editor of *Bloomsbury Handbook for Global Education and Learning* (2020) and *Education for Social Change* (2022). He is chair of the Advisory Board for the Academic Network of Global Education and Learning (ANGEL) and from 1993 to 2006 was Director of the Development Education Association.

Dr Jenny Hatley

Jenny's long interest in global education began when she worked with an international NGO to lead and develop education programmes in disease prevention education and in trauma and conflict resolution in areas of conflict, natural disaster and post-conflict situations overseas. This included program development and delivery in cooperation with the UN and working through local partners with a focus on capacity building, enabling the sustainability of projects. Jenny has also worked as a primary teacher in the UK across both the state and independent sectors with a focus on global education, social and emotional education and citizenship. Jenny now pursues this interest through Higher Education and research, where she seeks to develop a critical approach to global citizenship, social justice and how education can become responsive to changing global agendas. She is based at Bath Spa University

About the Development Education Research Centre

The Development Education Research Centre (DERC) is the UK's leading research centre for development education and global learning. The Centre conducts research on development education, global learning and education for sustainable development. It runs a Masters' Degree course, supervises doctoral students and produces a range of reports, academic articles and books. DERC is located within IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society.

About Our Shared World

Our Shared World is a broad coalition of organisations advocating for SDG 4.7 in England by 2030. It has more than 150 members including NGOs, Businesses, Universities; Teacher, Headteacher and Student Unions, Subject Associations, Youth Groups, and individuals.