



#ThisisLfs

Towards a whole setting approach
to Learning for Sustainability:
Inspiration & Insights



Newlands Primary School

Local Authority: Scottish Borders Council

83 pupils in four composite classes (4 teachers + head teacher)



Summary

Newlands Primary School is a small, four class school in the Scottish Borders. The school shares a head teacher with Broughton Primary School. The school is currently running two poly-tunnels with support from parents and staff - part of the produce grown gets eaten by the children and is used in the school kitchen. The children make and dig in compost, prepare beds, sow, weed, water and harvest.

There is a rotation of classes to look after the fruit and vegetables in and around the poly tunnels throughout the year. The pupils look after the wider school grounds as well, maintaining flower pots and flower beds. The school has a two year rolling programme in which learning for sustainability issues are addressed, including visiting farms in the local community.

'The outdoors is seen as a learning resource and we aim to have the children outside to learn on a daily basis.'

How did Newlands Primary develop its whole school approach?

1. The school community has worked together to develop its policy document stating how it engages with learning for sustainability as an integrated part of the curriculum and life of the school.
2. As part of this, outdoor learning activities are now a regular part of the curriculum for all the classes in the school
3. Resources have been developed by the Principal Teacher (PT) to support the teachers' role.
4. The school engages with awards such as the [John Muir Award](#) and the [Eco-Schools Green Flag Award](#) which help to support its ongoing Learning for Sustainability activities
5. There is a rolling programme which is constantly reviewed and revised.

How did you get there?

PT, Marcel Kalijee, took part in a British Council Learning for Sustainability ten week course run by Edinburgh University and Learning for Sustainability Scotland. This encouraged him to share what he had learned with his colleagues, including the importance of Learning for Sustainability in Curriculum for Excellence and the GTCS Professional Standards for teachers. This sharing of resources and ideas has created a culture in school in which Learning for Sustainability, including outdoor learning, is encouraged and normalised as part of everyday teaching practice.

The school's rolling programme is still being improved but is supporting their teachers with delivering LfS. Their local organic farm stopped their learning programme so they had to look for an alternative. They found the [Royal Highland Education Trust Scottish Borders](#) to assist them and are continuing to progress.

How do you know it is working?

- The children regularly experience an outdoor learning environment and have given the school feedback that they enjoy it and that it encourages them to learn in a different way.
- School 'learning talks' have shown that pupils' awareness of the importance of looking after our environment reducing waste and using local produce has improved.
- A measurable change is the times that the pupil are outside to learn. This is almost daily now for most classes.

Newlands Primary School's top tips for achieving a whole setting approach:

- Show the benefits of using the outdoor environment as a class room; model it.
- Involve parents and the community; it makes it easier than doing it all yourself.
- Get support from your senior management, so you get time to prepare and encourage other staff.

What is next?

The school plans to continue with supporting its rolling programme, keeping parents and the community involved and extending it even further to include further aspects of learning for sustainability including global citizenship

Thanks to Marcel Kalijee, Principal teacher, Newlands Primary School
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