



Year 1 Impact Report

September 2021 - 2022

Preface

“The Ministry of Eco-Education started as a conversation with the head teacher at Minchinhampton school about how we need to prepare the kids for the challenges of the climate crisis - it’s something that kids are asking for and teachers too - but totally absent from schools. We worked together to create this sustainable curriculum, it’s been embraced by schools up and down the country and as this report shows - it’s having a measurable impact already.

From schools in Plymouth to Liverpool, our pilot has gone down really well and shown how prioritising the environment has a positive impact on society. Teachers feel more confident about what to teach our children about the climate crisis and most importantly, the curriculum has inspired children to creatively tackle environmental issues around them - The fashion shows, bird hides, solar panels, wild flower meadows have all been outcomes of the Ministry of Eco Education lessons. The curriculum is making a difference for young people.

Partnerships with the Premier League and Local Authorities as well as the Young Green Briton Challenge mean we’re on track to mainstream sustainability and have half of all schools engaged by 2025.

And if you like what you read in this our first impact report, then please tell all the schools that you know, share it with your network of teachers and parents and become part of this movement”

Dale Vince OBE - Founder of Ecotricity



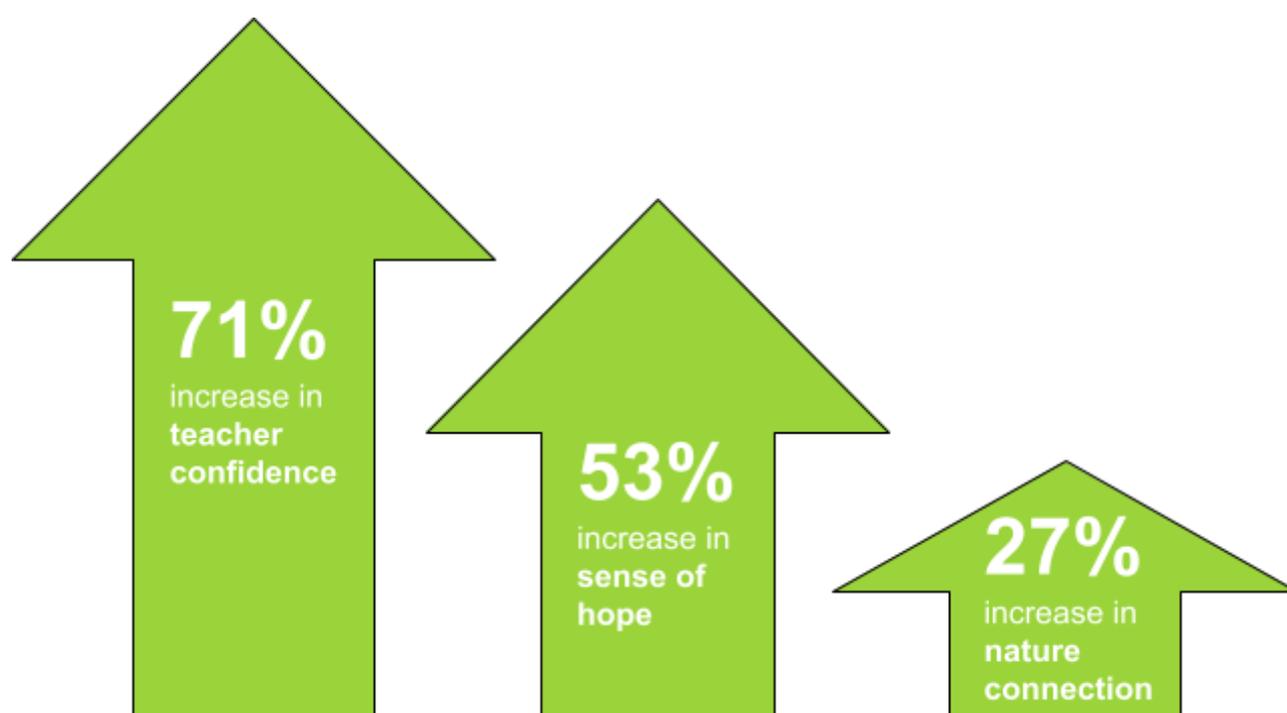
Executive Summary

The Ministry of Eco Education was established by Dale Vince in the Summer of 2021 with the aim of greening up the curriculum. Initial activities included mapping the environmental education landscape and compiling free resources that were weaved together into more than 50 series of lessons, framed around broad enquiry questions.

Minchinhampton Academy in Stroud led the journey by taking part in a process of collaboration between staff, pupils and the wider school community to help craft and refine the curriculum. For the academic year Sept 2021 to 2022 the Ministry of Eco Education supported 15 pioneer primary schools, in an initial trial, embedding sustainability across their curriculum. Schools gained access to support materials, in person visits, assemblies and staff training. Through a reflective process, schools provided feedback and shared best practice to help inform and develop the curriculum.

Across the schools we witnessed a significant impact on young people, staff and wider initiatives in the community. Young people developed a deeper connection with nature and increased knowledge and understanding of the climate and nature emergency. Young people experienced increased positive engagement with the local community. Teachers felt more supported and confident to teach education for sustainability. Throughout the year the Ministry of Eco Education actively sought relationships to build the scope of the curriculum as well as enlist more schools to take part.

In the summer of 2022, we began the process of extending and adapting the curriculum for a secondary school audience. We now have more than 100 schools engaging with the Ministry of Eco Education materials and support. As an organisation we have a mission to reach 10,000 primary and secondary schools by 2025.



Key Impacts

Schools participating in the Ministry of Eco Education project experienced:

-  *Increase* in **nature connection**
-  *Increase* in **pro environmental behaviours**
-  *Increase* in young people's **positive engagement with local community**
-  Teachers feel *more* **supported**
-  *Increase* in young people's **knowledge and understanding**
-  *Increase* in feelings of **hope for positive change**

“Within environmental education your programme is one of the most radical and respected.”

Jenny Thatcher. Head of Youth and Families - Friends of the Earth

Key Statistics



15

Pioneer Schools



4.8k

Young People



450

Teachers



50

Enquiry Questions



400

Lessons



160

Partner
Organisations



34

Supporting Videos



185k

Social Media
Impressions

Introduction

The Ministry of Eco Education (MEE) began as a conversation between Dale Vince (Founder of Ecotricity) and Nick Moss (Headteacher of Minchinhampton Academy). With the Youth Climate Strikes, and actions of Greta Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion shifting public discourse around the climate and nature emergency, Nick and Dale felt an increasing sense of urgency to help support change in education. The staff at Minchinhampton Academy, were also keen to build on their focus of empowering their students with a greater sense of agency to affect positive change in the world.

In 2021, Paul Turner (Curriculum Author), joined the team to guide and support the development of a cross curricular eco curriculum, taking the seeds of ideas established by Minchinhampton Academy and developing this into a holistic curriculum available for schools to use for free across the country.

This report outlines the organisation's activities over the last year and reflects on our impact in schools and the wider community. The report also reflects on the lessons learnt and outlines our plans for the future.



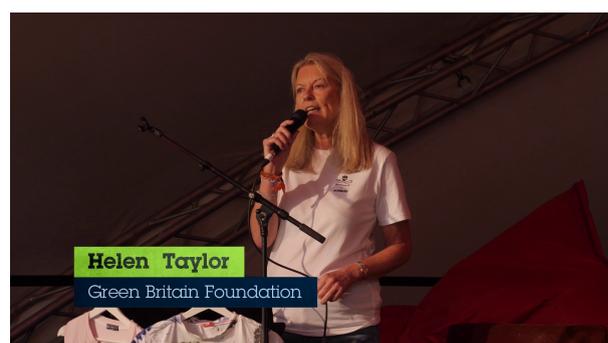
Eco Day at Wychwood School / Photo Credit Ed Nix

About us

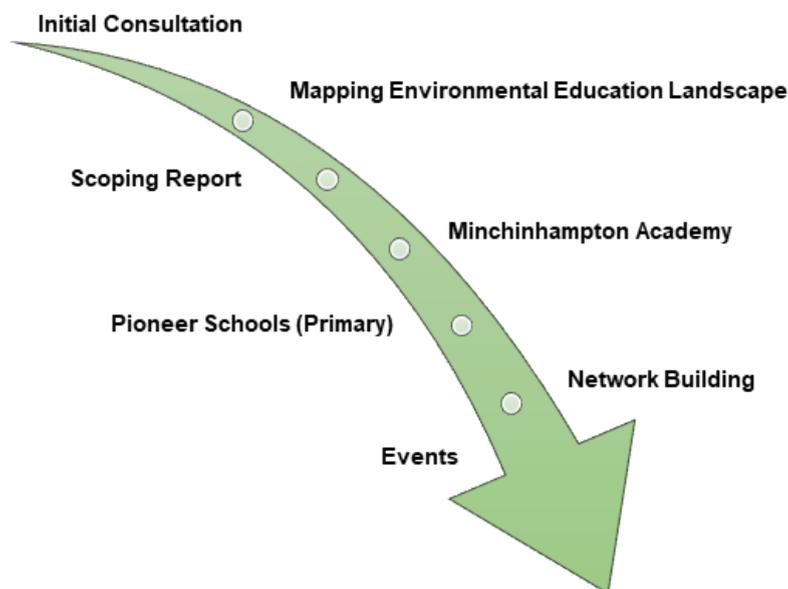
MEE is funded by the Green Britain Foundation with donated support from TLT Solicitors. MEE works closely with Ecotricity, Forest Green Rovers' Community Trust (FGR Community), as well as the wider Green Britain group. The MEE team consists of 2 part-time staff.

Thanks

Many thanks to all the staff and young people from the pioneer schools, without their enthusiasm and willingness to participate none of this would be possible. Thanks to Olivia Ellis for her support and enthusiasm over the past year and especially her help in gathering data from schools. Thanks to Isobel Barlow for her support in compiling this report.



Our Journey



The MEE journey started in the summer term of 2021. Initial meetings were held with staff, students, parents and governors at Minchinhampton Academy. The school community trialled a variety of questionnaires and surveys and took part in workshops and focus groups to help develop the curriculum. Alongside the work with Minchinhampton Academy, we mapped the current environmental education landscape. Exploring the organisations working in this space as well as the frameworks and approaches used. This research formed the basis of our initial scoping report setting out the rigorous foundations of the MEE approach, which can be found [here](#). Early on we connected with people who had run similar programmes, with the hope of not falling into the common pitfalls. David Dixon was invaluable in sharing his past experience and providing guidance.

The **MEE Curriculum**

We've built a curriculum focussing on **four key principles**.

1 **Enquiry**

Learning through discovery and experience.

2 **Adventure**

An attitude to the world.

3 **Balance**

Between humans and the rest of nature.

4 **Systems Thinking**

Seeing the complexity and connections in the world.

The MEE curriculum is built around 4 key principles which underpin our approach. MEE brings together the best free resources and weaves them together into series of lessons framed around broad enquiry questions such as ‘Is carbon a magic ingredient?’ ‘Should we all go vegan?’ ‘Does anything ever go away?’ The lessons are linked to the national curriculum and encourage cross curricular teaching through an environmental lens. The programme is free and available to all schools. Our approach fits within the current education framework and is designed for schools to easily integrate the plethora of opportunities from a wide variety of organisations.

MEE brings together all the best sustainability teaching resources available into **one cohesive and holistic curriculum for all primary schools in Britain.**

We have rearranged the national curriculum around broad enquiry questions to provide the kind of education that’s needed today.

it works within the current curriculum

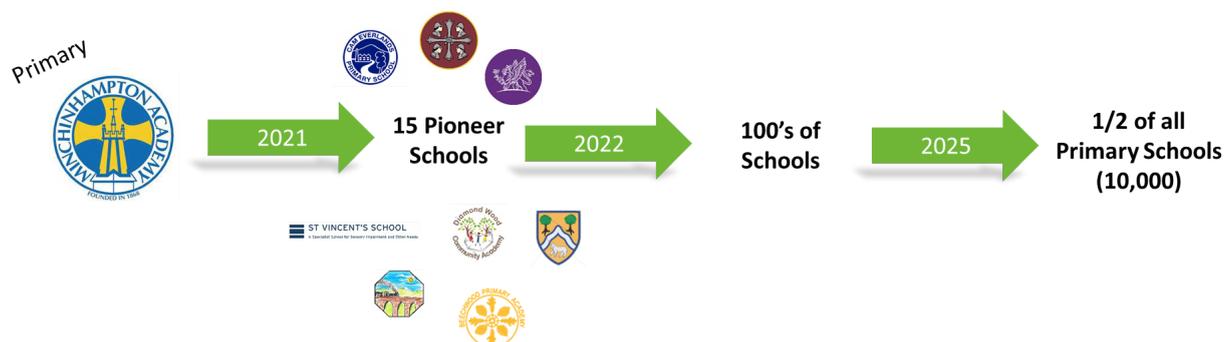
“Embedding the environment [into the curriculum] using the Ministry of Eco Education approach is very do-able.” **Nick Moss** - Headteacher



**THE GREEN BRITAIN
FOUNDATION**



Pioneer Schools

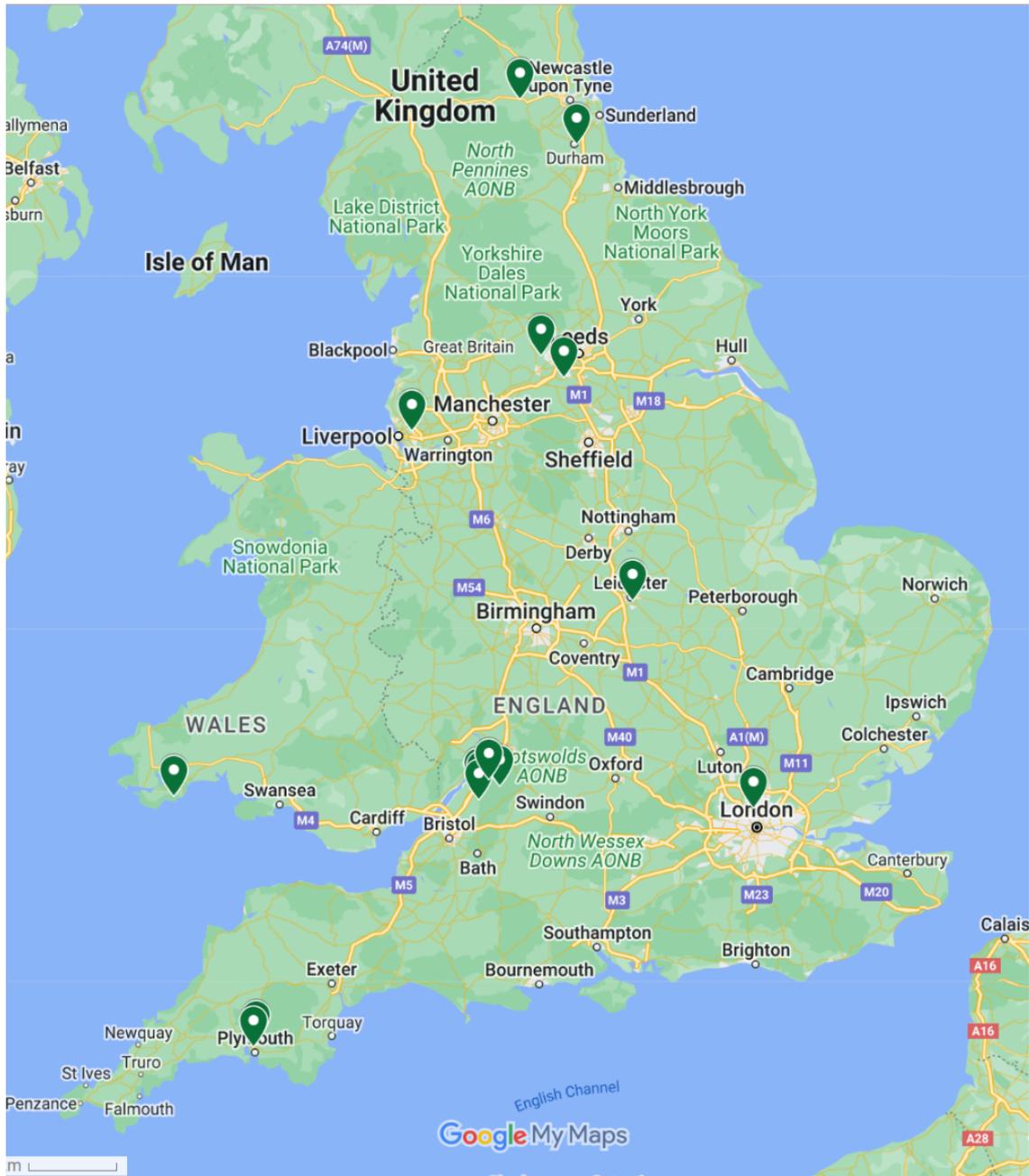


During the summer of 2021, we recruited 15 primary schools from across England and Wales to participate in the 1st phase of the project. These schools were chosen for a variety of reasons including their varied geography, demographics, amount of green space on the school site and varied levels of staff environmental knowledge and experience. Pioneer schools were given access to the MEE package of materials as well as wider support and guidance.

List of Schools

1. Avenue Primary School (Leicester)
2. Beechwood Primary Academy (Plymouth)
3. Cam Everlands Primary School (Gloucestershire)
4. Coldfall Primary School (London)
5. Corbridge Middle School (Corbridge)
6. Diamond Wood Community Academy (Dewsbury)
7. Dursley CofE Primary Academy (Gloucestershire)
8. Manorbier Church in Wales VC School (Tenby/Greenhill)
9. Minchinhampton Academy (Gloucestershire)
10. Pennycross Primary School (Plymouth)
11. St Oswald's CofE Primary School (Durham)
12. St Vincent's School (Liverpool)
13. The British School Wotton-under-Edge (Gloucestershire)
14. Thornton Primary School (Bradford)
15. Wycliffe Prep School (Gloucestershire)

Map of Pioneer Schools



“Great work ... part of the solution.”

Matt Lawsen-Daw, Head of Education - WWF

Pioneer Schools - Demographics

In total, 4,800 pupils participated in lessons informed by the MEE resources. The 15 pioneer schools included; a special school, an independent school, and 13 state primary schools including academies.

Demographic data presented below is the latest data available (2021) from the Government's Find and Compare Schools database.

School	Postcode	No of pupils	*SEND pupils %	*EAL pupils %	*FSM %
Avenue Primary School	LE2 3EJ	550	12.90%	37.60%	23.60%
Beechwood Primary Academy	PL6 6DX	378	16.90%	9.80%	43.70%
Cam Everlands Primary School	GL11 5SF	208	10.10%	4.30%	27.90%
Coldfall Primary School	N10 1HS	360	7.80%	26.60%	10.80%
Corbridge Middle School	NE45 5HX	355	11.00%	1.10%	8.70%
Diamond Wood Community Academy	WF13 3AD	387	7.50%	81.70%	19.10%
Dursley CofE Primary Academy	GL11 4NZ	292	19.90%	6.20%	16.80%
*Manorbier Church in Wales VC School	SA70 7SN	51	29.00%	Unknown	23.20%
Minchinhampton Academy	GL6 9BP	338	11.50%	0.90%	8.00%
Pennycross Primary School	PL2 3RL	391	15.10%	8.40%	31.70%
St Oswald's CofE Primary School	DH1 3DQ	136	9.60%	11.80%	8.80%
St Vincent's School	L12 9HN	41	100.00%	0.00%	29.30%
The British School Wotton-under-Edge	GL12 7JU	177	5.10%	3.40%	17.50%
Thornton Primary School	BD13 3NN	560	10.90%	5.50%	23.60%
Wycliffe Prep School	GL10 2JQ	334	26.90%	0.00%	0%
National averages (England):					
SEND pupils %	12.60%				
EAL pupils %	20.90%				
FSM %	23.50%				
*National averages (Wales):					
SEND pupils %	22.00%				
EAL pupils %	Unknown				
FSM %	21.00%				

*SEND pupils refers to pupils with SEN (Special Education Needs) support and is different to pupils with a SEN education, health and care plan

*EAL pupils refer to pupils whose first language is not English

*FSM refers to pupils who are eligible for free school meals at any time during the past 6 years

Other Schools

During the academic year 2021-22 we also shared the materials and support with a wider number of schools, as and when schools expressed an interest and signed up to the programme. By Sept 2022 we had shared the materials with more than 100 schools. Some schools took inspiration from individual lessons whilst others made use of the entire series of lessons.

“Beautiful series of lessons.”

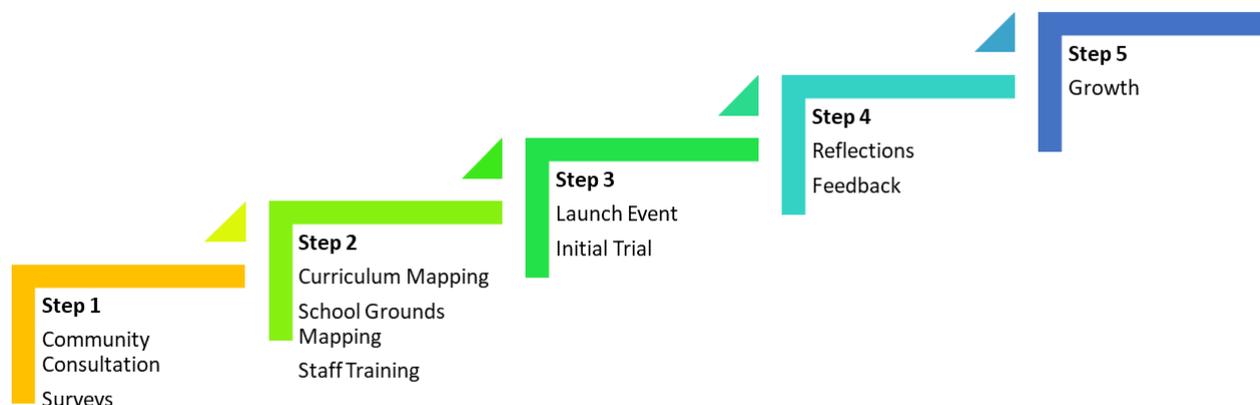
Rachel Musson. Founder - Thoughtbox Education



Minchinhampton Academy / Photo Credit Rob Bradshaw

Resources

5 Step Journey



Schools follow a 5 step journey which guides them through the whole school process of embedding sustainability. The curriculum acts as an anchor to ensure the long term sustainability of initiatives and ensures their longevity rather than the environment being a bolt on. Throughout the 5 steps, schools are signposted to the resources from third party organisations and directed how best to use them. An example is the [trees for schools resource](#) which is 1 of 3 that we recommend for schools to map their school site.

The steps take schools through a progressive journey which allows them to consult the whole school community, map their curriculum and site, explore staff training opportunities and then begin trialling the curriculum resources. Many schools use a collapsed timetable day or whole school event to launch the initiative. The final steps support schools in reflecting on their achievements and using the MEE structure to create their own enquiry questions.

Schemes of Learning

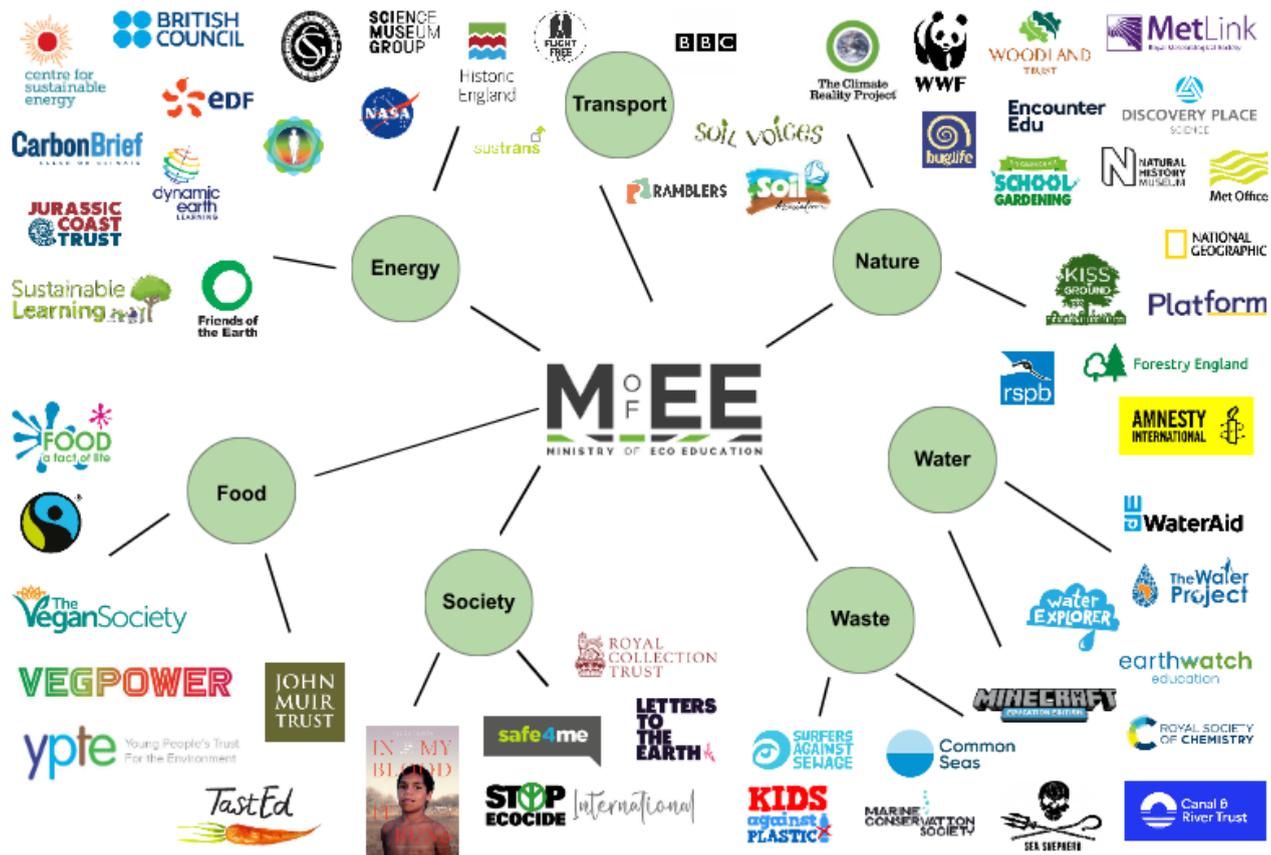
The core of the MEE approach are 50 unique Schemes of Learning (SOL) which each curate the free resources from more than 160 organisations into a series of 8 lessons. Each SOL is cross curricular in nature and framed around an enquiry question which provides a thought provoking hook for learners. Questions are organised into 7 themes including; energy, transport, food, nature, society, waste and water. Key concepts provide further direction for the focus of each enquiry question including; futures, equality, jobs, community, action, human-nature relationship and identity. Each of the 8 lessons in each series, curates a variety of third party resources, linked directly to organisations websites, with suggestions of how they might be used. Each SOL has been created with a specific key stage in mind but is adaptable for different age groups. The outcomes or *work* the students complete during the topic have a real world focus and are designed to engage

young people with their local community, encouraging schools to be a catalyst for change within their local community.

Our initial research established that there is a great volume of resources available to educators but it often requires considerable energy, time and skill to find suitable resources and then understand how best to fit these into a series of lessons. Our aim is to save teachers time and energy whilst facilitating effective education for sustainability by curating and signposting to the best resources already available.

The SOL were developed in collaboration with teachers, often using the ideas of teachers as a foundation to build upon. Engagement with academics and organisations has also led to the suggestion of possible enquiry questions. The creation of questions and SOL remains an organic and fluid process and something we will continue to facilitate.

Spider diagram showing examples of external organisations whose resources are used in the SOL



Cover Page for Example SOL

	Title	Do we live on a plastic planet?	Length	8 weeks / 8 sessions	Key Concept (s)	Action
	Key Text	<i>A Planet Full of Plastic: and how you can help</i> by Neal Layton	Year	KS2	Main Assessment	Art Installation
	NC Links	<i>Maths: Mental Maths</i>	<i>Science: Materials</i>		<i>DT</i>	
<i>Art</i>						

Key Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plastic is made from fossil fuels At least 8 million tons of plastic end up in our oceans every year Micro and nano plastics are now found in the air, the water we drink and our bodies
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	Lesson Title	Activities	Further Opportunities
1	What is plastic?	<p>Start the lesson by pouring out a pile of recycling, let it fall and cover the floor. Discuss the different materials and explain that plastic lasts forever (except a very small amount that's been burnt). Have a go at a materials sort https://www.kidsagainstoplastic.co.uk/material-sort-ks2/</p> <p>Use the Encounter Edu resources to introduce students to plastic https://encounteredu.com/teacher-resources/ocean-plastics-x-curric-5-7-lesson-1-what-are-plastics</p> <p>Show the Story of Plastic https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iO3SA4YyEYU</p>	<p>Request a workshop or assembly from the Marine Conservation Society https://www.mcsuk.org/what-you-can-do/fun-learning/primary-learning/workshops/</p>

“I thought I was pretty aware of what was going on in the big wide world, well MEE has managed to find loads of resources that I was never aware of.”

Meryl Batchelder - Science Subject Leader

Further Support

Along with curriculum development, the first year of operation included co-creation of supporting resources for schools. These included a Teacher Guide which summarised many of the important aspects of the programme for teachers. As well as a Teacher Planning Document to track aims and progress in embedding the curriculum. Further guides were developed for each step of the journey as well as videos to explain the series of lessons and each stage of the journey. All these resources are widely available for schools.

To help support the launch of the initiative in schools, we developed a short assembly introducing the climate and nature emergency. A recording of the assembly can be found [here](#). To help rationalise the plethora of opportunities for schools and help schools

understand how achieving net zero works most effectively by connecting with the MEE curriculum, we created a summary of school sustainability awards, badges and flags, illustrating how teaching specific enquiry questions supports schools in achieving external initiatives such as Let's Go Zero, Plastic Free School status and the Eco Schools Green Flag.

We attended a variety of staff meetings both in person and online to explain the approach to teachers and provide additional support. Throughout the process we met online with a lead teacher to check progress and help them to integrate the resources into their planning. To engage the wider school community we also supported the delivery of Lessons for Parents and events where young people presented to adults. We intend to continue these online aspects as MEE grows.

During the year we collaborated with Forest Green Rovers, their Community Trust (FGR Community) and the Premier League Charitable Fund (PLCF), to create new environmental teaching resources for the Premier League Primary Stars (PLPS) programme. Providing a significant opportunity to engage the vast population of primary schools in the UK, with environmental sustainability, these lesson plans focus on the themes of energy, transport, food and nature, linked to the relevance of football - with the opportunity for schools to continue their relationship with MEE thereafter. These resources will be widely available through the PLPS programme by autumn 2022.

We worked with the National College to create training videos for teachers, exploring the environment and sustainability, linking to the MEE curriculum. For Great Big Green Week we teamed up with the Climate Coalition and created teaching materials drawing on inspiration from Rob Hopkins and Letters to the Earth to create a letter writing lesson. Available [here](#). We supported A New Direction in the creation of climate change teaching materials linking to the MEE curriculum.



St Vincent's / Diamond Wood Community Academy / Plaque Laser Cutting

Impact

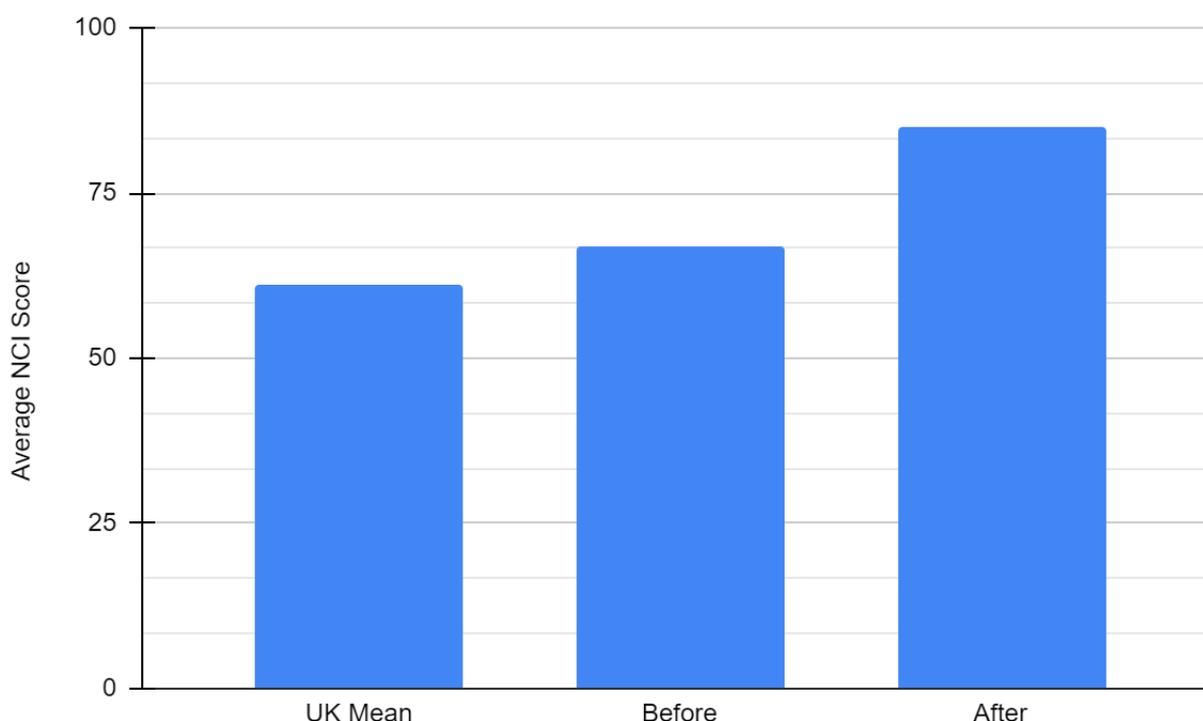
Across the 15 schools, we saw an average increase of 71% in teachers' confidence in teaching for sustainability. We also measured a 53% increase in the sense of hope of teachers. Across parents, staff and students we recorded a 27% increase in nature connection.

In May 2022 we carried out a focus group with a group of teachers and academics who explored the curriculum in detail and independently created the following list of strengths.

- Evidence Based - informed by academia / policy / practice
- Nature Connection - leads to pro environmental behaviours
- Leading Change through Affective Action
- Real World Outcomes - Creative / Big & Little / Celebration of Learning
- Cross Curricular - Every Subject
- Utility of Resources - Explaining the How To - 'Making it easy'
- Making it easier than the status quo
- Focus on Agency - Turning anxiety into action

Nature Connection

Nature Connection describes our enduring relationship with nature, including emotions, attitudes and behaviour. Research shows that people with a greater connection to nature are more likely to behave positively towards the environment, wildlife and habitats.



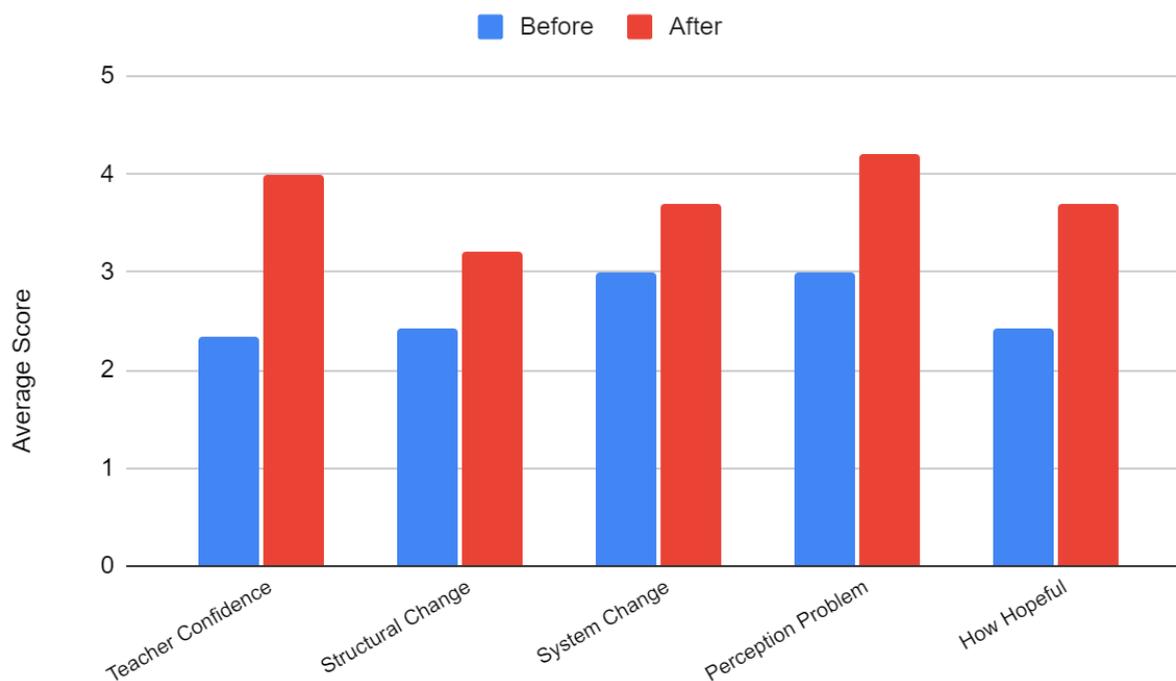
Schools completed the nature connection index, scoring their response to 5 statements. This survey was completed by 280 students, parents, staff and governors of the pioneer schools, both at the beginning of the academic year and at the end. Results show that at the beginning of the MEE journey, schools had an average score of 67, 6 points above the UK average of 61. At the end of the year, the average score for schools was 27% higher at 85. Research suggests that a score above 70 is needed to help deliver a sustainable future (<https://findingnature.org.uk/2019/06/12/teenage-dip/>).

Throughout the year we received reports of teachers witnessing a greater depth of young people's relationship with the rest of nature. Following the teaching of the 'Who lives near me?' topic which explores all living things, in the school, the air and in the community around the school. A group of students were so enamoured by the local bird life, they decided to crowd fund their own bird hide in the school grounds and establish a bird watching club to continue building connections with nature.

We spent an entire day at Minchinhampton Academy, exploring the staff and students' relationship with nature. Teachers discussed how the MEE curriculum has encouraged them to facilitate greater connections with nature, in this [video](#).

Teachers

Teachers completed pre and post surveys which explored their experience, knowledge and understanding around ideas of sustainability. We also asked for their recommendations of people, organisations, books, activities and ideas to inform the curriculum. Teachers explored their values, attitudes and confidence around the climate and nature emergency. On average, we found teachers to have relatively low levels of confidence and hope. At the end of the year, teachers' confidence increased by 71% and their sense of hope increased by 53%.



- Teacher Confidence: How would you rank your confidence in teaching about the climate and ecological emergency?
- Structural Change: The only way we'll combat climate change is through structural changes to society tackling issues such as inequality.
- System Change: Without whole scale system wide change, individual actions are pointless.
- Perception Problem: Climate change is a perception problem just as much as it is a science problem.
- How Hopeful: How hopeful are you that the world will respond appropriately to the climate crisis?

In the summer of 2022 we interviewed a number of teachers who participated in the programme. Here are some of the prominent quotes.

“I was kind of sorted. and then I found the Ministry of Eco Education and loved the idea, because most teachers are not in the sort position I am.” One teacher commented that though they were confident in embedding the climate and nature emergency, most are not and as a result the MEE curriculum is perfect for them.

“My head teacher is more and more environmentally concerned, they love what we do, they love the media attention we get, the competitions and awards we win you know, so they starting to lean towards well that's sustainability thing seemingly parents love it you know I get loads of positive feedback.” One teacher shared that their headteacher has become increasingly supportive of embedding sustainability due to the wider attention and enthusiasm from parents.

“The trouble is what we have is you know the national curriculum doesn't change in 12 years, and so a lot of the teachers kind of stuck in their ways.” One teacher suggested the

challenge that many teachers are reluctant to change their schemes of learning and as a result might be reluctant to take on board ideas from MEE.

“They’ve all been thought through [the SOL], they’re all different, it’s not formulaic at all, all of the resources that are being pulled in provide a massive amount of variety from lots of different organisations.” A teacher praising the variety and breadth of the curriculum.

“I really thought ‘where do our clothes come from?’ was good. It was a proper example of children not being patronised but having an impact on the world around them.”

“My experience of working with Ecotricity and the Ministry of Eco Education, it’s all been very slick and professional so I couldn’t fault it.”

Teachers raised some concerns about Ofsted and accountability but noted that the MEE curriculum provides considerable evidence for intent, implementation and impact. The very notion of centering the environment at the heart of the curriculum creates a collective ambition and framework to hang everything on.

Young People

Class teachers at many of the schools chaired discussions with their students at the beginning and end of the process using a set of questions to help prompt ideas.

Teachers noted an increased level of awareness as well as knowledge and understanding about the climate and nature emergency from their students. Teachers evidenced this with examples of work and student outcomes. At Minchinhampton Academy students produced the fashion show outlined in this [video](#) and produced a video explaining the climate and nature emergency [here](#).

Groups of young people at 4 schools, took part in focus groups at both the beginning and end of the academic year. Young people shared their thoughts, concerns and hopes for a greater engagement with the climate and nature emergency in their everyday school lessons.

Quotes from young people:

“The lessons have been great - I’ve really enjoyed exploring things that affect us now and taking action to make the world better for everyone.”

“It’s a much better way to learn. My lessons have been more interesting. I loved learning about birds and what lives in the air.”

Parents

Parents at 3 schools were interviewed at the beginning and end of the academic year. Some parents were initially cautious of the focus on environmental activism but acknowledged the importance of education about the climate crisis. At the end of the process parents shared stories of their children's excitement and enthusiasm often carrying on work and research outside of school. Parents also shared stories of the wider impact and reflection on the habits of the family as a whole.

Quotes from parents:

"The activities my child has taken part in at school have meant we now don't buy products from the supermarket covered in plastic."

"Our child has committed to only buying second hand clothes and it's something we're all now doing as a family."

Governors

Groups of governors at 2 schools were interviewed at the beginning and end of the academic year. The general comments of governors were that the focus on curriculum and sustainability was hugely beneficial from their schools. Anecdotally governors felt the added energy had helped improve other areas of the school not directly connected to sustainability such as literacy and other academic indicators.

Quotes from governors:

"We've noticed a greater level of interest in sustainability both in the children and staff. We've changed where we get our food and had solar panels built on the school roof."

"The MEE project has been invigorating for the school. With such gloom following covid it's been refreshing to focus our attention on the environment."

Wider Community

The SOL encourage schools to facilitate student outcomes which affect positive change within the local community. Again we received considerable stories about these activities and recorded a number of videos to help share these impacts.

Schools were inspired to crowdfund solar panels or change their energy provider having taught the topic "What is really renewable?" and "Is carbon a magic ingredient?" Minchinhampton Academy and Thornton Primary School organised a fashion show and upcycling dressing days to engage their community with ideas of fast fashion.

Many schools organised Community Days which welcomed the local community to experience environmental projects or participate in activities led by students. Some excellent examples came from Diamond Wood Academy and St Vincents.

Lessons Learnt

Schools engaged with the materials and support in varied ways depending on their situation and what suited them best. Throughout the project levels of engagement varied depending on external pressures including covid-19, staffing and other school initiatives. We will continue to offer a flexible programme where schools can select what is appropriate for them and their circumstances as well as join the programme throughout the academic year.

When recruiting the initial schools we first came across teachers who were actively pursuing environmental initiatives for their schools to participate in. These staff were confident and enthusiastic and helped provide much of the initial energy and feedback for the project. However, about half of the pioneer schools were not in this situation and required a physical visit with the headteacher to bring the school into the programme. As the year progressed and MEE participated in a number of national media opportunities such as the Daily Express and Sky News we began to receive more enquiries from schools actively seeking to sign up to MEE. We will continue to pursue media opportunities to promote the programme as well as pursue opportunities to promote the programme beyond the traditional environmental education audience.



Tue 30/11/2021 17:33

To: Paul - Ministry of Eco Education



Hello Paul,

As an Ecotricity customer and as a former Friends of the Earth Local Group Coordinator (as well as many other green things), I simply wanted to extend my thanks to you, Nick Moss and Dale Vince for embarking on the Ministry of Eco Education project. I have been yearning for sustainability to be placed at the very heart of education for well over a decade, having proposed a motion for a Friends of the Earth Ecoliteracy Campaign (passed) at the 2010 Friends of the Earth annual conference. Alas, nothing was ever done subsequently to further the aims of this motion. I knew then, as I know now, that the only thing that could reinvigorate an education system drifting into the doldrums, was an eco education mission like yours. I wish you all every success and am sure that you will get it.

Let me know if there's any way that I and others like me can be of practical help.

Kind Regards

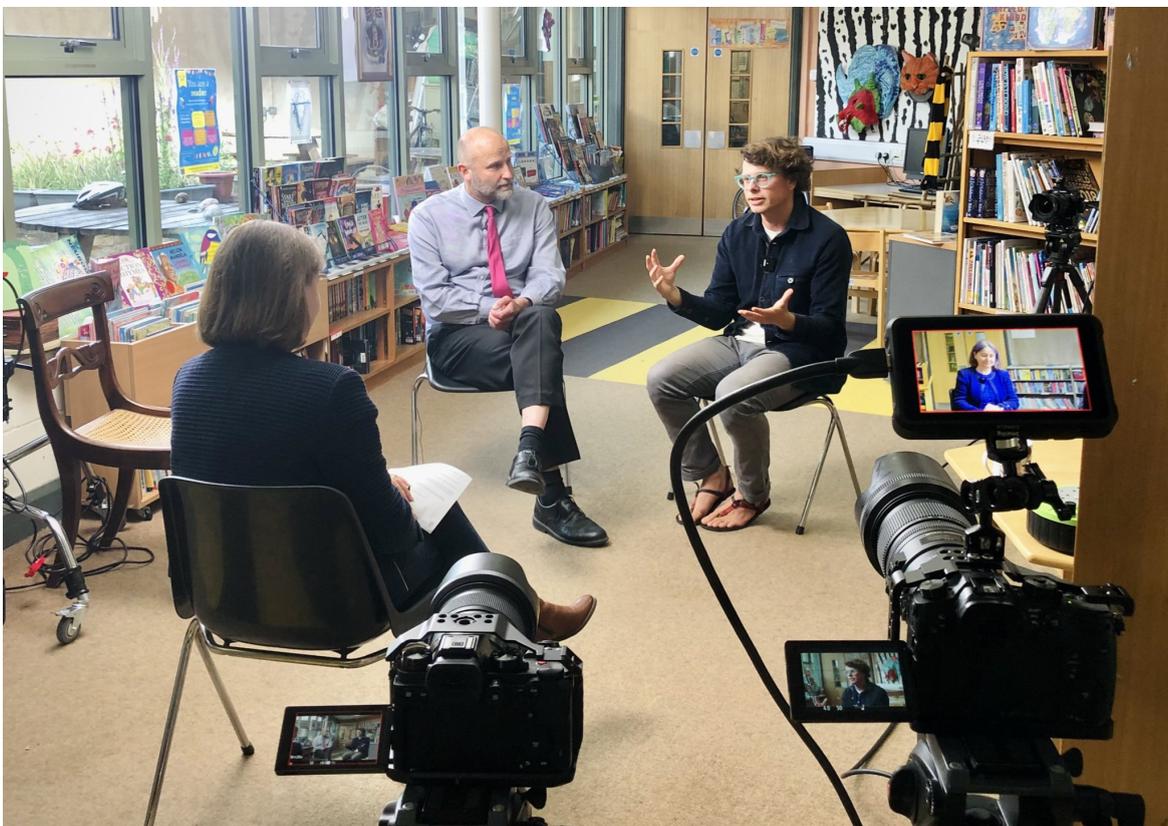


Email we received in Nov 2021

“This is such a great project. It’s about inspiring the next generation and making sustainability a natural part of their lives – so that when they step into a work environment, it’s not about making a conscious decision to be more sustainable, it’s just what they do.”

“We are looking forward to supporting the Ministry of Eco Education as it continues to grow, and hope to be able to encourage more people to find out about this fantastic project and recommend it to their schools.”

Maria Connolly, Head of Real Estate and Energy & Renewable
- TLT Solicitors



Filming video for TLT Solicitors / Photo Credit Craig Matthews

Network Building

Teachers

Many of the schools who took part in the pioneer stage were recruited through existing teacher networks including the UK School Sustainability Network. Other teachers were recruited for their enthusiasm as people recognised for significant impact in environmental education, including teachers shortlisted for TES Awards. During the year we convened zoom calls to bring teachers together, build a sense of community and share best practice. On a number of occasions we brought teachers together both within schools and across different schools to share their experiences of MEE. We recognised the need to engage beyond the 'echo chamber' of environmental education and actively sought relationships beyond these. Moving forward we plan to build on this work to bring environmental education to the masses.

Organisations

Whilst focusing on the recruitment of schools, we also invested time in developing relationships with networks and organisations who share our interest in education for sustainability. We now have an active network of more than 100 organisations actively supporting the development of MEE through collaboration. These organisations include the leading subject organisations and environmental charities. On going communication means we are able to continually build in and adapt the live schemes of work.

Academics

Whilst writing the scoping report we engaged with a variety of academics who focus their research on education for sustainability. Miles Richardson shared his experience of nature connection. John Huckle helped develop an understanding of attitudes towards nature. Verity Jones and Sarah Robertson, from UWE, provided suggestions of resources to include.

In May we recruited a team of academics from across the country to provide support and guidance through an Academic Advisory Panel. The group has met for online discussion as well as shared useful research and information via email to help inform the curriculum. We intend to continue and grow this advisory panel.

Throughout the year we have connected with and sought to draw on the experience and knowledge of a variety of academics ranging from, UWE, the University of Reading, University of Winchester, UCL, Bristol as well as many more universities. We appreciate the support and guidance of these individuals and look forward to continued relationships.

Awareness Building

WOMAD

Later in July we took part in the Ecotricity area of WOMAD festival, hosting an interactive stall as well as a panel discussion on the Ecotricity stage. A recording of the panel discussion with teachers and young people can be found [here](#). The festival was a great opportunity to connect with families and interested individuals, whilst also providing a platform for young people to share their voice.



Panel Discussion at WOMAD festival / Photo Credit Paul Turner

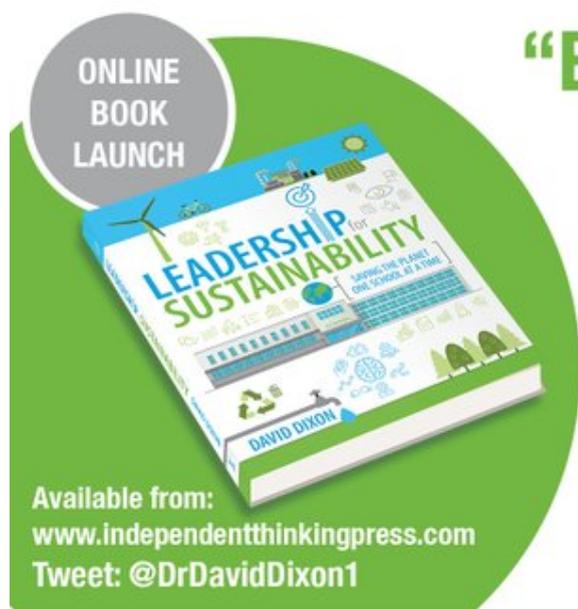
National Media

Over the past year we engaged in a variety of high profile media opportunities including Dale interviewed on Sky News. A number of features in The Daily Express, including a profile of many of the pioneer schools and the Times. As well as a variety of magazines, radio and local newspapers.

Online

During the year we took part in more than 50 online events to share news of the project with schools and other organisations. Often these were meetings of eco leads within local authorities or groups of schools as well as annual environmental events such as the London Climate Week. We participated in a handful of podcasts and featured in blogs. We also hosted a number of events including debates and discussions such as the online book launch of David Dixon's book exploring sustainability in schools.

Join us online: In discussion with David Dixon



ONLINE
BOOK
LAUNCH

Available from:
www.independentthinkingpress.com
Tweet: @DrDavidDixon1

“Exploring Leadership for Sustainability”

JUNE 14 2022 - 4pm - 5pm

An opportunity to hear from an expert on sustainability on what can be done to embed eco-friendly practices in schools.

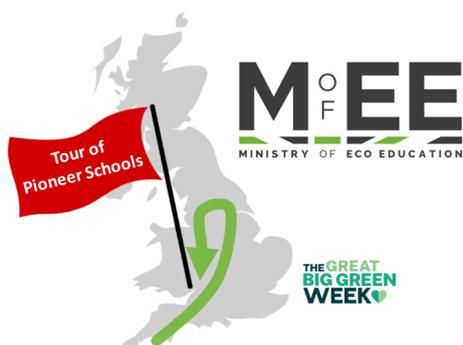


IN ASSOCIATION WITH:



Great Big Green Week

In September 2021, we visited the pioneer schools as part of the great big green week. This was an opportunity to build momentum around the curriculum and experience the enthusiasm of young people and teachers across the country. We created a [video](#) to introduce the pioneer schools and communicate their enthusiasm. We intend to continue building our relationship and school involvement with the Great Big Green Week.



Regional Eco Days

In May 2022 we worked with Wychwood School in Oxford to bring together local primary schools and host an eco day. The workshops introduced young people to the fundamental ideas of the climate and nature emergency whilst also sharing the curriculum with their teachers. More than 200 children across 6 local primary schools took part. Moving forward we plan to scale up these eco days as a way to share the curriculum with more schools.

Festival of Education

In July 2022, we took part in the Sustainability strand of the Festival of Education organised by Seed and WWF. We hosted an interactive stall as well as a workshop for teachers. The event was a great opportunity to connect with other environmental educators and organisations with similar aims. In the future we plan to foster a festival of eco education, bringing together sustainability leads from across the country.

Green Britain Partnership

The Green Britain Partnership Group is a group of like minded organisations who Ecotricity provides energy for. We regularly present at the Green Britain Partnership events, sharing progress of the project and opportunities for organisations to participate. These events helped us source the teaching materials from organisations and ensure we were in communication with key environmental stakeholders.



Screenshot from Green Britain Partnership meeting



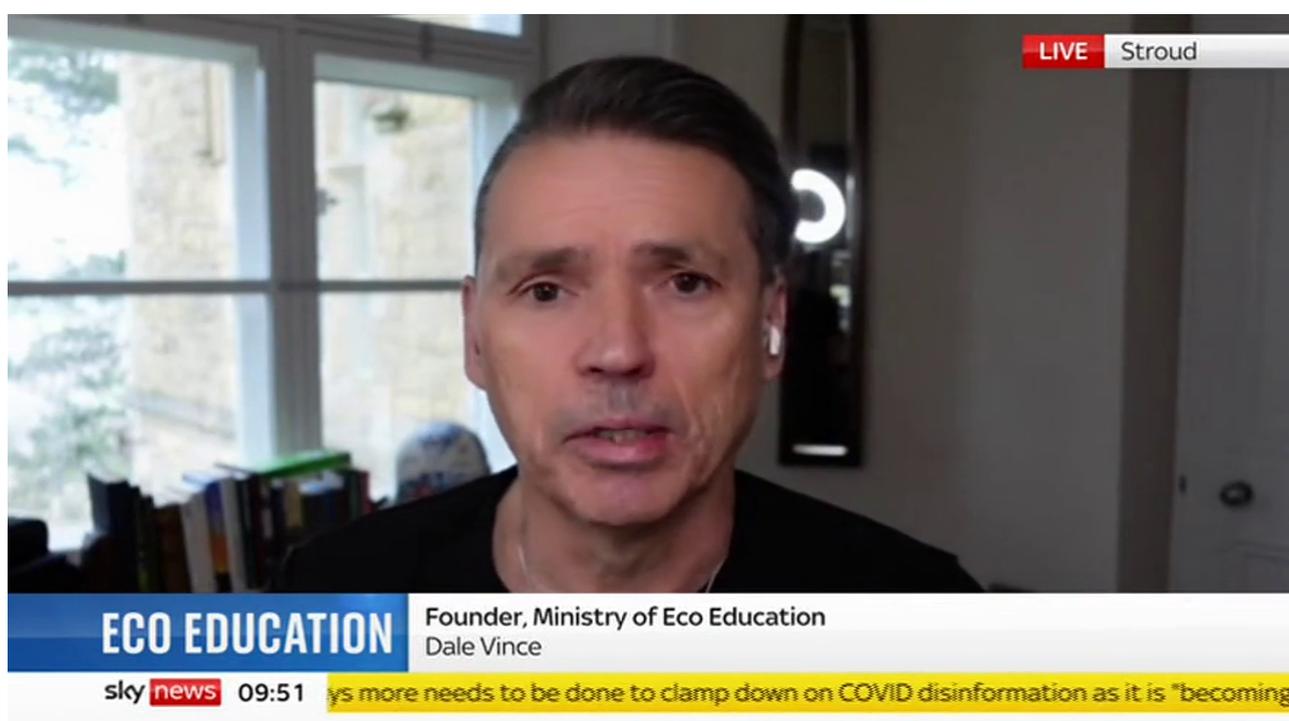
Interactive Stand at WOMAD festival / Photo Credit Paul Turner



Interactive Stand at the Festival of Education / Photo Credit Paul Turner

Social Media

Social media has been a valuable tool to share regular news, connect with schools and build a wider community of people interested in education for sustainability. Twitter continues to play a prominent role for educators and is our primary platform for social media. In Sept 2022 we had 1,350 followers. On average we posted 30 tweets a month with around 4,000 profile visits. Throughout the process we used videos shared through youtube and social media as a tool to communicate the activities of schools. The purpose of these videos was to build confidence by sharing the stories and enthusiasm of teachers taking part in environmental initiatives. [Here](#) is an example of a video from Liberty Woodland School. We created 34 videos on youtube with 1000's of views.



Dale Vince interviewed on Sky News

Future Plans

Building the Schools Network

To reach 10,000 schools by 2025, we have a multi faceted approach which includes building relationships with a number of stakeholders.

Over the last few months we met with a wide variety of local authorities and academy chains as well as other organisations. The aim of these meetings was to disseminate news of the project more widely and ultimately sign up new schools. Moving forward, we will increase our contact with climate change, environment and education officers in local authorities who have the influence at a higher level to help share the resources with schools. We will also increase our presence at regional and national school conferences and continue to build relationships with teacher unions.

Premier League Primary Stars

From autumn 2022 MEE's new environmental curriculum for the Premier League Primary Stars (PLPS) programme, designed with the Premier League Fund and EverFi, will be available to all primary schools subscribed to this programme. Each Community Trust linked to their football club will, for the first time, be able to deliver lessons on environmental sustainability within their school community, bringing football and eco together. Each school will also have the opportunity to further engage with our additional MEE resources, if they wish to deepen their environmental learning. With over 18,500 schools signed up to PLPS this will broaden our reach and impact, and hopefully rapidly accelerate our ability to develop real changemakers for the future.

Secondary Schools

In January 2022, we brought together a group of 10 secondary school teachers from across the UK to begin the process of translating the MEE approach to a key stage 3 audience. Through a number of online meetings and shared folders, teachers worked collaboratively and shared best practice. To help embed systems thinking, the key stage 3 version of the MEE curriculum requires enquiry questions to be shared between 2 or 3 subjects who each bring their own subject knowledge and expertise to exploring the question. From Sept 2022 secondary schools across the country will be engaged with the curriculum, helping to develop more key stage 3 focussed enquiry questions.

Building the Offer

We have a number of priorities we identified to help extend the support and content of the curriculum into the future.

Young Green Briton Challenge

In Sept 2022, we will launch a pilot of the 'Young Green Briton Challenge'. Working with 20 pioneer secondary schools to help build a national platform to nurture, support and celebrate youth-led, school-based climate action. The Challenge will use an adapted design thinking curriculum to enable young people to design entrepreneurial solutions to local climate issues.

The Challenge supports students aged 11-16 to learn and apply design, innovation, business and other transferable skills, empowering young people to explore local climate and sustainability issues and design entrepreneurial solutions (Eco-Ventures) or campaigns (Eco-Campaigns) to address the problems they identify.

The aim of this initiative will be to build on the community impact which began as the outcomes of many of the enquiry questions. As well as supporting outreach to secondary schools and explicitly developing key green skills.

New Website

From October 2022, schools will be able to access all the support materials through our new website. The site will also provide a management facility which allows schools to see exactly what they have taught and track their progress as well as give them the opportunity to upload evidence of their achievements. This website will become a central hub for all things MEE.

Progression

An area for further development is the explicit mapping of progression throughout the curriculum from year to year. There are a number of examples which we hope will help the development of a MEE model of progression, including the Leeds Development Education Centre who created a document outlining progression for climate education. Mapping progression is challenging because it requires explicitly defining the knowledge, skills and values we think young people should attain at each age group.

Early Years

We were extremely fortunate to have Hannah Tombling from Diamond Wood Academy involved in the pioneer stage of the MEE project. Hannah brought incredible enthusiasm

and an array of ideas and experience to the programme. Similarly the early years team at Minchinhampton Academy shared wonderful experiences about how they integrate the environment and sustainability into their teaching practice. The continuing challenge is to establish a format which communicates the MEE approach in a format and structure suitable for the early years foundation stage and brings together third party resources in the same way as the rest of the primary stage.

Funding for Schools

We recognise the importance of additional funding to support and develop the expertise of staff, buy equipment and develop the school site. Over the coming year we plan to continue communication with the Royal Society and a number of other organisations to help compile a list of funding available for schools. As with other aspects of MEE, we will link these funding opportunities to aspects of the curriculum.

Volunteering

We regularly receive offers of support and enquiries from people enquiring about volunteering their time to assist with the MEE programme. In the coming year we intend to formalise a volunteering framework to help grow the organisation and extend the reach of the MEE programme.

Staff Training

We recognise the importance of staff training in schools as well as engaging with teacher trainers. Following conversations with initial teacher trainers we hope to organise training opportunities for new teachers to understand the MEE approach and explore how education for sustainability can be embedded as part of a cross curricular framework in schools.

Building the Evidence

Academic Research

Following initial discussions, we are keen to connect researchers with schools participating in the MEE approach of cross curricular education for sustainability. We would also like to participate in long term evaluation of the impact of the MEE approach on young people and engage with academics to help facilitate research.

We will continue to offer the Nature Connection Index, and staff and student surveys for schools to complete both at the beginning and in yearly intervals.

Conclusions

Working with the 15 pioneer schools across the country has been a wonderful experience and highlighted the enthusiasm for and importance of embedding sustainability across the curriculum, in every lesson for every pupil.

The impact on young people, school staff and the wider community has been significant. Visiting schools highlighted the positive impact of the resources and support materials and the great potential of schools as a catalyst for change.

We are excited about future collaboration opportunities and the continued adaptation of the MEE approach for secondary schools. The Young Green Briton Challenge has the potential to fast track the eco entrepreneur and social change movement.

The biggest challenge continues to be how best to connect with school communities in a meaningful and efficient way so that the MEE programme can reach the majority. There is an urgency in responding to the climate and nature emergency and we need to reach every school so that 1,000's of schools engage with the curriculum. We need education for sustainability to become the norm.

“It creates botheredness in the children.
So that's high impact, that's exactly the kind of
impact that I want.” **Nick Moss** - Headteacher



Assembly at Thornton Primary School / Photo Credit Rob Bradshaw