

St Peter's RC High School, Manchester

Global learning at St Peter's Roman Catholic High School has developed over many years, building on layers of success to incorporate work with the Co-operative on Business and Enterprise, the environment, community work, school links and charitable activities. Revolving around simple but effective structures, supported by an external consultant, award schemes and strong use of the Global Dimension, work at St Peter's has developed through an organic drip-feed process.

School ethos and motivations

St Peter's has a strong Catholic ethos, with a focus on care and community support. Therefore global learning was a natural development which instinctively fits into this approach, helping to better prepare and engage pupils from diverse and challenging backgrounds.

'In this area, in this community, this is what we should be about. Supporting families, helping people to be given opportunities and being sensitive to where they are.' - *John McNerney, Head Teacher*

It is therefore important to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) that the school connect their pupils to the wider world, helping to raise awareness and aspiration, and prepare young people as active and engaged citizens. This supports a key goal to nurture a sense of caring for each other and the wider global community, and is less an explicit aim than something that comes naturally.

The school approach is underpinned by a strong moral purpose. Led by the head teacher, John McNerney, St Peter's has a broad view of the purpose of education with shared values and ethics, which engagement with global learning supports.

'The inspection regime in schools is very narrow and the danger is schools just do that... There's a heck of a lot more to schools than data. I think global learning has developed here because it does *feel* right that we're supporting young people to better understand the planet and their responsibilities within it.' - *John McNerney, Head Teacher*

The structure of activities

Michelle Ames, Assistant Head, explains that a whole school approach is important at St Peter's to communicate the value and importance of global learning. This means it is infused into everything, beyond and most importantly within the curriculum, ensuring that pupils hear the 'message' multiple times.

At St Peter's there is no 'master plan' – things tend to happen organically. A variety of staff coordinate different aspects of the school's global learning, including the International Coordinator, Sustainable Schools lead and staff from RE, Citizenship and Geography. The Global Dimension's '8 key concepts' give a framework to structure activities across every aspect of the school, linked to the Business and Enterprise specialism.

St Peter's in context

St Peter's RC is an average-sized mixed secondary school in an economically disadvantaged area of Manchester. It is highly diverse with pupils from 73 countries with 66 languages spoken. Over half of pupils are eligible for free school meals, with a higher than average number with special educational needs.

This is supported by James Ridgway, an external consultant in sustainable development and the global dimension. His role is to coordinate work across the school, and help staff plan global learning activities that meet their own school targets responding to the needs and interests of teachers.



Pupils in Year 9 D&T created games for primary schools to improve carbon literacy.

'The global dimension really lends itself to reducing workload, because you can do one piece of work with it and hit the targets of three different staff.' - *James Ridgway, Sustainability Education Consultant*

To integrate work structurally into the curriculum, the school uses cross-curricular theme weeks for Years 7 and 8. Of the six per year, two have a global focus. Two subject leaders are chosen to lead, plan and coordinate themed projects for these weeks for all subjects, supported by James Ridgway. This enables teaching staff to engage with global learning and develops their confidence and planning skills.

The school has an array of national and international links connecting them to schools in China, USA, Spain, India and Nigeria, set up through projects such as the Co-operative and the British Council's Connecting Classrooms project. The school is currently working in partnership with the City of Manchester to develop new schemes of work on public carbon literacy targets. This project gives pupils the opportunity to earn a carbon literacy certificate which will soon be recognised by employers.

The school also has a variety of extra-curricular opportunities for young people, using the International School Award (ISA) to help drive these, as well as other initiatives such as Eco-Schools and Fairtrade. It engages with organisations like CAFOD on their recent Thirst for change campaign and carries out many charitable activities, linked to a strong 'faith in action' programme within RE. They also run a successful annual International Evening, and work closely with their feeder primary schools.

Michelle Ames and James Ridgway conduct an annual audit and review of progress, and use this to plan targets, for example gaining reaccreditation for the ISA.



St Peter's therapeutic horticulture

Helping young people understand environmental sustainability has provided a therapeutic outlet for pupils. The school introduced 'therapeutic horticulture' which supports some of the most challenging young people in the school from very troubled backgrounds. It provides a safe and tranquil space for pupils who may not otherwise engage in other areas of school life.

St Peter's global learning journey

The catalyst for St Peter's global learning journey was forming a partnership with the Co-operative in 2006 to become a Business and Enterprise specialist school. This was a responsive move to shifts within the local community and fitted in with the school's ethos.



Pupils running a Fairtrade stall

Working with the Co-operative helped the school to think more openly about partnerships, the wider global community and fostering ethics related to fairness and equity. With a highly motivated assistant head, Michelle Ames, this led to growing amounts of global learning taking place through this lens.

This included partnership projects, such as an EU funded Comenius project engaging with universities and schools from across Europe to develop shared teaching resources, and developing into a range of other school links. It also engaged with other external projects, such as Oxfam's Water Week project.

In 2007 James Ridgway was appointed to help support develop and embed this work. This helped coordinate activities across the school supporting teachers' confidence and use of the Global Dimension.

Since then awards have helped St Peter's develop their whole school approach, bringing tools to help plan and reflect. They began working on the Eco-Schools award as a lens for global work, achieving silver in 2009. They also received the SSAT Cultural Diversity Quality Standard Gold Award in 2011, Fairtrade status in 2012, and full ISA accreditation in 2013. The school has also now extended its work linking with the local authority a useful source of inspiration and ideas.

Working with interested staff through a variety of lenses has led to the gradual evolution of a host of varied activities, underpinned by SLT support spanning the whole school community.

Working with the Cooperative

St Peter's continues to engage with the Cooperative, for example through Co-operative Fortnight. This annual initiative is a national campaign that raises awareness of cooperative businesses under the slogan of Local, Loved, Trusted. This initiative enables the school to draw on its ethical ethos to raise awareness of sustainable business through the lens of global learning.

The impact of global learning

Global learning helps make learning real for pupils at St Peter's, and pupils say learning about world issues is very important for them. They have become active and aware of the impact that they have on the world, building their sense of responsibility as global citizens. The holistic approach is an important part in what the school does, not only engaging pupils but also challenging them.

'It's about your impact on the world. What you're doing yourself to other people and what other people are doing to you. It makes you self-aware.' - *Year 9 pupil*

Key links from St Peter's

Co-operative Schools

www.school.coop/

Connecting Classrooms

connectingclassrooms-learning.britishcouncil.org

Eco-Schools Award

www.eco-schools.org.uk/

The Fairtrade Foundation

www.fairtrade.org.uk/schools/

The Global Dimension

globaldimension.org.uk/pages/8444

Thirst for Change, Cafod

www.cafod.org.uk/News/Campaigning-news/Your-thirst-for-change-actions

The sense of entrepreneurship that comes through from the sustainable business focus has helped pupils feel confident in putting forward their own ideas and working together to put them into practice. Learning to work with others has helped build confidence and team working skills.

Adding a dimension of reality is highly motivating, allowing pupils to connect to issues in a different way and develop higher order thinking skills as they debate open-ended real issues.

‘This kind of work motivates and engages pupils, makes them feel that what they are doing in school is worthwhile and valuable, and helps them to grow in confidence.’ - *John McNerney, Head Teacher*

Pupils express the importance of learning about this in the school environment, as for young people it can be hard to be aware or engaged with world issues only through their personal lives.

‘A lot of kids don’t really know about world issues. But then when they come to school and they learn about them, it’s good as it’s not just focused on mundane things. They know about things that are important and will affect them.’ - *Year 7 pupil*

The focus in the school on understanding diversity has also helped pupils challenge the perceptions they have of others and pupils say they like learning about different cultures and ways of life. This focus has also helped pupils reconnect with their own heritage and have pride in what they bring as individuals.

Pupils say that this approach to learning has helped them get along better with others, having an impact on behaviour with greater tolerance and respect being seen in the school. This environment makes a safe space for young people supporting improved attendance.

Teachers have seen the impact in the whole school global learning approach through a cohesive approach to projects that can reduce workload as they can hit multiple targets. Alongside this the creativity in curriculum planning allows them to engage with their own values and opinions, a real motivating factor in developing their own pedagogy.



Artefacts from the global prayer relay in 2012

St Peter's approach to global learning has helped engage with the local community. Charity events, such as coffee mornings, enable the school to link its fair trade work into wider community outreach. The school's annual International Evening brings the community together to celebrate its cultural diversity and supports local performers.

'The event is so popular with the whole community: pupils, parents, governors and staff. The sharing of food from the different ethnic groups is very popular. The whole community will come together, share and appreciate diversity. This is an excellent example of community cohesion. It is always a successful event.' - *Stephanie Jennings, Head of Geography*

St Peter's advice for other schools

You're missing a trick if you're not doing it! It's a great way to break down barriers and link to the community. Start by auditing what you're doing already, as you're probably doing global learning in some way, for example in Geography or RE. This will give you an idea about what is already working well and how you can expand that. Find your nearest Development Education Centre and see how they can support you. And it's important to remember that global learning doesn't just apply to diverse schools like St Peter's; it's just as important, if not more so, if your school isn't as diverse.