

Woodlands Primary School, Birkenhead

With an emphasis on its 'outstanding' curriculum, Woodlands has developed a whole school approach to global learning that supports the needs of its diverse community. With an emphasis on tailoring external resources and support to their needs, Woodlands engage many organisations including the Fairtrade Foundation, Oxfam and UNICEF. This creates a coherent approach driven by pupil-led opportunities both within the curriculum and beyond.

School motivations and ethos

At the heart of Woodlands is an ethos of nurture and support for all pupils, both in school and in the wider community. Central to this philosophy is a value and respect for diversity, celebrating the multicultural nature of the school.

Woodlands therefore embraces global learning to help develop care and respect from pupils and as a vehicle to draw in wider community cultures and experiences, helping to link the global to the local.

'Global learning has been at the heart of our curriculum planning for some years, reflecting the rich and diverse school population, children and families.' - *Gill Lindfield, Head Teacher*

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at Woodlands also believes fundamentally that learning must be relevant and active for pupils, preparing them for life beyond school. Global learning is therefore essential, helping focus on real-life issues, build political awareness, develop knowledge of the world and enable pupils to recognise themselves as active global citizens.

'Education is holistic and it's about the world. Children *need* to have a voice and be proactive. They can see the curriculum in action. They *need* to know things like this.' - *Angela Tindall, Deputy Head*

The structure of activities

For Woodlands, taking a whole school approach means making global learning part of what they do, and making sure enough time is devoted to it. Putting global learning at the heart of curriculum planning is essential to the SLT and this focus is reflected in the school development plan.

Ofsted judged our curriculum to be outstanding at the last inspection, reflecting our underpinning philosophy around the importance of global learning.' - *Gill Lindfield, Head Teacher*

Staff meetings are critical to curriculum planning at Woodlands, and this forum is used to set and agree priorities for global learning. These are then written into schemes of work for each year group through curriculum team meetings, enriching the curriculum and supporting academic progress.

Woodlands in context

Woodlands is a large primary school in the centre of Birkenhead, Merseyside. Pupils are from a variety of backgrounds, with a third having English as an additional language, and a large Bengali population. The area has high levels of unemployment, and a high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. A higher than average number of pupils has special educational needs.

'Activities are not an 'add on' but are planned with academic rigour.' - *Gill Lindfield, Head Teacher*



Linking the community into the curriculum

The school's strong community links to Bangladesh allow teachers to use this as a focus for curriculum work. A topic on rivers has drawn on issues of flooding and climate change in Bangladesh, inspiring the class to write a letter to the environment minister about the issue. Pupils are also encouraged to lead lessons based on their own cultural experiences, such as Islamic pupils leading RE lessons. When pupils visit their extended family in Bangladesh they are given cameras to record daily life to show pupils on their return.

Various staff support this work, including Angela Tindall the Deputy Head, working with an International Links coordinator and Global Citizenship Coordinator. They help drive initiatives and support other teachers.

Woodlands make careful use of resources and initiatives from external organisations to support the global agenda. The Oxfam Calendar is used to structure and plan relevant activities. The school uses UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award framework and works with Traidcraft, the Fairtrade Foundation, Eco-Schools and the International School Award (ISA). It also has a variety of international links, including Sierra Leone and Japan, supporting work within and beyond the curriculum.

'You have to know what's out there. You have to dip your feet into Rights Respecting, Fairtrade and Traidcraft. You have to go out there and look for it. They are pegs to hang global citizenship on.' - *Angela Tindall, Deputy Head*

Woodlands also provide active opportunities for pupils to engage more deeply with global issues. It runs an Environmental, Rights Respecting and Fairtrade 'ERF' committee which manages daily 'eco' tasks around the school, carries out issue-based projects, updates global displays and decides and plans bigger events, such as organising the schools Send My Friend to School campaign to and engaging with the local MP. The school council also considers global issues and builds a strong dialogue between staff and pupils, allowing pupils to have a voice within the school. There are also 'playground councillors' which implement ideas from UNICEF's Rights Respecting framework, with an annual focus on anti-bullying introduced through a rights-based lens.



Pupils visiting a local mosque

The school also uses global lenses to engage the local community, for example looking at slavery with the help of the local museum, and building strong links with the local mosque. It holds international days, inviting parents in to celebrate the 'global in the local' community through food, music and dress. This community focus is enhanced through the school's focus on language support for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL), being an EAL hub for other local schools.

Woodlands' global learning journey

'It evolved. You've got to get your feet wet first. It's organic.' -
Angela Tindall, Deputy Head

Woodlands' global journey began in 2008, when five staff received a British Council grant to visit Soweto. This trip highlighted the need to incorporate international issues and show how other people lived within the learning at Woodlands.

Fairtrade became an initial key focus when deputy head Angela Tindall was successful in gaining a loan from the Co-operative to buy Fairtrade cooking materials for a creative cookery day. Pupils created business plans and sold cakes and Fairtrade goods to parents, donating the proceeds back to the Co-operative for their charity trust, winning a local award.

This demonstrated the potential of active pupil involvement, spurring further work to develop the school's international links, and also winning further awards for their work on Fairtrade. This motivated staff further and the ERF group was set up to develop pupil participation.

The school then widened its activity to include assemblies with Oxfam and the International School Award to help embed school link work into the curriculum.



Letters from Year 6 pupils for their local MP on climate change, used to develop literacy skills.

Key links from Woodlands

International School Award

[schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/
International-School-Award](http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/International-School-Award)

UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools

www.unicef.org.uk/rrsa

Traidcraft

www.traidcraft.co.uk/

Send my Friend to School

www.sendmyfriend.org

Oxfam Education

www.oxfam.org.uk/education

With global learning well established, Woodlands worked more closely with a few organisations, helping bring new ideas and approaches. In 2010 Woodlands introduced UNICEF's Rights Respecting framework as a lens to engage more deeply with values underpinning global learning across the school. It also got actively involved in the Send My Friend to School campaign, leading to further work with Oxfam on global citizenship. This developed in 2012 to wider curriculum development work as an Oxfam 'lead' school. Through trying out different initiatives and building on success, global learning has evolved to become a key part of Woodlands' curriculum, and help cement its ethos and philosophy.

The impact of global learning

For the pupils at Woodlands, global learning has developed their knowledge about other cultures and connections between local and global, fostering a greater understanding and appreciation of difference.

‘Even though their country’s different, it doesn’t mean they are not the same as us.’ – *Year 2 pupil*

Engaging with real-life issues has motivated pupils, and enabled them to develop their questioning, and be able to think critically, deeply and creatively. Both teachers and pupils identify that the school’s approach to global learning has also developed key literacy, speaking and listening skills, supporting their academic achievement.

‘In this school, we have our own opinions about what we want to do and what we think.’ – *Year 2 pupil*



Year 5 pupils’ work on Bangladesh and climate change which was shown at the local library.

Pupils’ personal development has also been impacted by global learning, with a greater sense of responsibility and ownership towards their actions and place within the world. Pupils say their confidence and independence have grown, and they feel they can express their thoughts openly, work independently and take ownership of their ideas. They are proud of their achievements.

‘It makes you feel more independent which can help you later on in life. You are capable of doing things on your own without having to rely on other people.’ - *Year 6 pupil*



Global displays from the ERF group

own ideas and philosophies in order to embrace the ethos fully. Staff also report that they feel they are learning from and with the pupils.

The focus on cultural diversity and engaging with the Rights Respecting framework has enhanced mutual respect and a desire to help other people. Staff and pupils say this has impacted on behaviour, with a caring mentality amongst the pupils and a sense of mutual respect, which is taken home with them to parents and families.

‘They become better citizens because of it – they are very caring.’ - *Angela Tindall, Deputy Head*

Teachers at Woodlands enjoy the challenge of global learning due to its positive impact on their own development. By drawing from wider resources and sharing practice with others, teachers feel that they are able to develop their

'It helps the staff because you challenge your own ideas, about pedagogy and philosophy.' - *Laura Shirley, Reception teacher*

Global learning at Woodlands has helped bring a diverse community into school life and also built up a strong sense of community locally. For example, activities like mosque visits and family workshops help build trust and confidence, and the use of Bengali geography and culture in lessons and school events helps make the whole community 'feel wanted'. Additionally, through work with organisations like Fairtrade, pupils engage with parents and carers to raise their awareness of global issues, increasing mutual learning and parental involvement. Global learning has helped the school to become more open and inclusive. This in turn has enhanced its public perception and increased its popularity. And by working with other schools in the area, Woodlands has been able to promote its ethos more broadly.

'The fact that it's such an open school and everyone is invited in and everyone can take part means that there's a better sense of community. Everyone's ideas are valued. It draws on the strengths we've got in the community, and there's a sense of us all belonging together.' - *Andrew Cowderoy, International Partnership Coordinator*

Woodlands' advice for other schools

Talk to others who will be able to provide support, such as Oxfam and UNICEF, other teachers and other schools. Consult with the school council to get them involved and thinking about what they'd like to do. Start with one initiative, like an international link, and then think how you can build on it moving forwards. And make sure your SLT are involved and on board!

'You've got to have an engine driver, and it's got to be senior leadership. Without that, it's not going to take off.' - *Angela Tindall, Deputy Head*