

Using the Schools' Global Footprint Resource

Case study Glencryan Special School, Cumbernauld

No. of pupils	160
Local Authority	North Lanarkshire
Co-ordinator	Margaret Fannon, Depute Head
Pupils involved	Whole school - mainly S3 & S4

A healthy way to reduce a school's food footprint

Glencryan Special School, which provides support for young people with additional support needs, used the Schools' Global Footprint resource to raise awareness about the concept of footprinting and build on existing healthy living enterprises in the school grounds. The project gave the young people an opportunity to contextualise their learning about food and the environment, while allowing them to contribute as responsible citizens and confident individuals.

1 Introducing the idea

The concept of footprinting was introduced through the "Measure your Footprint" quiz - an engaging and simple questionnaire which pupils completed at home with their families. S3 and S4 pupils analysed the results and found that most families had a "three planet lifestyle". This means that if everyone in the world lived like them, we would need three planets to support ourselves. From this, the pupils realised that it is important that we all start reducing our footprint to move towards a sustainable, "one planet lifestyle".

2 Gathering information

The school decided to concentrate on its food footprint because it could build on existing school projects: there was already a vegetable patch, plans for a polytunnel and the school hosts a community Bistro where older pupils



A school lunch menu travels
360,000
food miles

learn about producing and serving food to the public.

S3 and S4 pupils looked at the questionnaire results and decided that first they needed to do some research about what they eat in order to reduce their food footprint. They had identified that the distance food travels - its "food miles" - is one of the factors affecting the size of a food footprint. Packaging was collected from the kitchen and pupils learned how to use the bar codes to find out where the food is from. They found that the rice they eat comes from the USA while chips come from Canada, and that when they added up the distance travelled by every item in one of the school lunch menus,



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it came to a massive total of 360,000 food miles!

In contrast, fresh food produced in the school grounds had less than one food mile attached - and doesn't come with wasteful packaging.

3 Creating and implementing an action plan

The pupils planned what they could do to reduce their food footprint. As well as making more informed food choices at home, they decided to grow their own environmentally sustainable, low impact food for use in the home economics class and in the Bistro.

With help from the wider community, they grew



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Pupils grew and then cooked their produce.

potatoes, rhubarb, herbs, raspberries, blackcurrants, plums and apples in the school garden and they used their produce to make pies in home economics class. An added bonus of the project was that children tried out new foods - a challenge for some children with additional support needs.

In the autumn term, the potatoes were used by the Bistro. Other classes used the produce as well.

The results of the project were shared with the whole school through displays, photographs and a scrapbook.

Next steps

The school plans to expand its allotment and orchard and erect a polytunnel.

Spare plants and produce will be sold to provide funds for a new local community/school-based business in association with the Bistro. The plans are for this facility to allow further enterprise and healthy eating opportunities to develop. It will allow pupils to learn practical skills suited to their capabilities and establish stronger links with the wider community.

Linked to this initiative, the school is setting up a new horticulture department in association with Oatridge College in West Lothian. This has the potential to provide fresh produce to local schools, making a real difference in reducing the food footprint of North Lanarkshire - as well as associated reductions in transport, waste and energy footprints.

"This was a great cross-curricular project which resulted in good discussion and much more awareness of food. Pupils were very surprised at just how far their food had travelled, which helped them understand why the food they grew has such a low footprint."

Heather Martin, S5 teacher

APPROACH AND RESOURCES

- > The project was approached as a topic web integrating number and language work, sciences, expressive arts, technologies, personal and social education and citizenship outcomes in a holistic way.
- > Teachers adapted materials from the Schools' Global Footprint resource to suit the capacity of the pupils. In this case, the Schools' Footprint calculator was not used, as it was felt that it would not benefit this particular group of young people.

Reducing our food footprint

- ◊ Eating less processed food is healthier for us and the planet
- ◊ Local food or home grown food has far fewer food miles
- ◊ Composted waste can be used to help our fruit and vegetables grow
- ◊ By thinking about portion size, we can waste less food
- ◊ Vegetables have a lower footprint than meat
- ◊ For food like tea, coffee and bananas, which don't grow here, buying Fair Trade products ensures that the growers get a fair deal.

Download resources from www.LTScotland.org.uk/schoolsglobalfootprint

Schools' Global Footprint Resource

Resources and training are available to help schools to examine, measure and take action to reduce their impact on the environment locally and globally as part of the Eco Schools programme.

For more information visit www.LTScotland.org.uk/schoolsglobalfootprint

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Local Footprints Project

The purpose of the Local Footprints Project is to help local authorities and schools make an effective contribution to reducing Scotland's global footprint through the use of footprint analysis to inform policy and practice, to raise awareness, and to change behaviour.

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