

# Putting the World into World-Class Education

An international strategy for education,  
skills and children's services

A supporting paper for head teachers

November 2004

# **Contents**

Introduction	3
What is already happening in schools?	5
What does an international dimension mean in practice?	6
The challenges and incentives for school leaders	8
What can we do in the classroom?	9
Managing the introduction of an ‘international dimension’	12
Resources	15

## Introduction

We know the world is changing fast. New ideas, new technologies and new economic and social imperatives at work are bringing nations and regions closer together both as partners and as competitors.

But what does it mean in real terms? What is actually happening ‘out there’? Here is just one example.

The newest European passenger aircraft, the 550-passenger A380 is selling strongly against American competition. It’s built by Airbus, a single company that has 50,000 employees in sixteen manufacturing sites across Europe. The wings are built in Broughton, UK; cockpits in St Nazaire, France; cabin systems and lighting in Buxtehude, Germany, tails in Cadiz, Spain, and the final assembly is in Toulouse and Hamburg. Some aircraft have British Rolls Royce engines. Some have Pratt and Whitney motors from the USA. In addition, there are 1500 component suppliers across the globe from Kobe, Japan to Aurora, Colorado.

It’s not just the geographical spread of the work that is important. Think for a moment of what all of that means in terms of languages, engineering traditions, work and management practices, information technology systems, communications, travel and social and cultural assumptions. And this is just one example of a more international world, commercial in nature. There are other less commercial examples, too, many of them.

Now take one further step, and reflect on whether, and how well, our schools are preparing children for the world that has created an international project like the Airbus – and, remember, it’s not “the world of the future”. It’s the world of right now – and certainly the world into which our children and students will enter.

If the United Kingdom is to continue to be a significant global player – economically and culturally – then our education system has to look increasingly outward. We are in the business of preparing our children and students to leave our schools for a globally interconnected world, where a customer, a partner, an adviser, a competitor, a colleague, a collaborator is just as likely to be in Tokyo or Brussels or Houston as in Edinburgh or Swindon.

Equally, if the United Kingdom is to remain a stable society our children will need an increased knowledge about other cultures, systems and practices and the skills to work with and respond to their similarities and differences. If we

are to contribute to maintaining a stable world our children need similar knowledge about cultures and societies other than their own and the skills to work with them.

For our children to be comfortable in a socially inclusive world, where they see diversity of language, culture and race as enriching rather than threatening, urgent classroom issues have to be addressed, now rather than in the future.

## What is already happening in schools?

The good news is that schools are not starting from scratch. Already, ninety percent of secondary schools, and sixty percent of primaries have links with schools abroad, just one example of a range of activities that can be called 'international'. Were you to look across a group of schools – a partnership, perhaps, of one secondary school and a group of primaries, you'd undoubtedly find some or all of the following:

- An exchange teacher from Canada teaching English in the UK on the League of Commonwealth Teachers (LECT) scheme.
- An email correspondence going on between the Canadian teacher's home school and her "adopted" UK classes.
- A class planning a Diwali assembly, with Bhangra music and dance.
- A primary head away on a Comenius sponsored two-week visit to a group of Scandinavian schools.
- A steel band rehearsing with a tutor from the authority music service, learning about the background to the music as well as how to play it.
- A parents meeting hearing the plans for a Year Six visit to Normandy.
- Two sixth formers doing a presentation to governors about their last summer's Raleigh expedition to South America.
- A group of teachers applying to go on a study visit to Sri Lanka organised by their local authority.

There's no doubt at all – and you might take a moment to do this, at least mentally if not on paper – that this list could be added to from your own school and your knowledge of other schools around you. All of these activities are good, and deserve to continue.

Now, though, it's time to do more – to give clarity and focus to the thinking that lies behind our international activities, and then to embed that thinking throughout the school curriculum. If we're really serious about preparing our children for a global future, then we need to help them not just to have international experiences but to think deeply about international issues.

## **What does an ‘international dimension’ mean in practice?**

To help you see the context for all of this, the DfES has produced a paper, “Putting the World into World Class Education – an International Strategy for Education, Skills and Children’s Services”. The document you are reading now supports it by adding practical guidance and examples aimed specifically at school leaders and management teams.

### *Three Key Goals*

The paper identifies three inter-related key goals, which can be summarised as:

- Equipping children and adults for a global society and economy.
- Working with other nations and regions to their benefit and ours.
- Maintaining an education system that can further our global economic objectives.

It is difficult to deny the importance of all three of these goals. If we are to achieve all of them, though, we need what the paper calls “a change of mind-set: thinking globally in all that we do nationally and locally.”

### *Eight Key Concepts*

Importantly, for the purpose of curriculum planning, the paper takes eight key concepts from the earlier guidance document “Developing a global dimension in the school curriculum”. Taken together, both documents go a long way towards creating a school curriculum which is influenced by international thinking and action. The eight key concepts are:

- Citizenship
- Social Justice
- Sustainable Development
- Diversity
- Values and Perceptions
- Interdependence
- Conflict Resolution
- Human Rights

We will return to these later but three important points need to be made about them at the outset.

- I. They clearly go well beyond the “international activities” in which most schools are already involved.

2. They include, but again go beyond, already familiar classroom ideas such as multi-culturalism, the environment and “Fair Trade”.
3. They also include issues which are not, at first glance, predominantly international but which, on second glance, are actually key elements of developing an international dimension; issues such as handling interpersonal relationships, for example, which place great emphasis on coming to terms with the viewpoints of others.

# **The challenges and incentives for school leaders**

‘Putting the World into World-Class Education’ raises a number of challenges and incentives for school leaders including:

## *Languages*

A globally ambitious nation must speak the languages of its partners and competitors. ‘Putting the World into World Class Education – An international strategy for education, skills and children’s services’ outlines the government’s plans to further the teaching of languages in primary and secondary schools over the coming years.

## *Incentive*

To encourage schools to develop an international dimension, the paper gives details of an International School Award – “a major prize for aspiration, endeavour and excellence in this field.”

## *Learning from...learning with*

Our schools are world class in many areas, but there are gaps – too few young people staying on beyond the school leaving age, too few opportunities for vocational education and training. In these, and other areas, we can usefully measure ourselves against our international counterparts. The paper reminds us of the challenging EU – wide targets for educational attainment set at the 2000 Lisbon Conference. These are designed to make the EU, “ the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world.”

## *Thinking internationally through the curriculum and classroom*

At school level, what is required is a curriculum which, at all levels, recognises and explicitly defines an international dimension, management and resources that support that curriculum and, above all, the willingness to put it into action in the classroom. It means that children and students have to *think* internationally and not just *do* international things.

## *Building partnerships*

If we’re to go beyond international activities, and on into thinking internationally, we can usefully start by building on the links that already exist between schools and communities here and abroad.

## **What can we do in the classroom?**

What does internationalism mean in terms of the day-to-day school experience for children and students?

### *Embedding*

The key principle is that internationalism should be embedded into the curriculum, where appropriate, rather than tacked on to it as a separate activity or area of study.

### *Tracking*

If embedding is to work, it has to be tracked. That means asking the question, for all curriculum areas and units, “Where’s the internationalism in this?”

Then, the eight key concepts contained in ‘Putting the World into World-Class Education – An international strategy for education, skills and children’s services’ should be used to ensure broad coverage – each unit in a syllabus can be checked against the eight concepts, so that there’s complete coverage over a term or a year.

Importantly, each of the key concepts should be introduced differently according to the age group (and thus developmental level) of the children. The concept of “Social Justice”, for example, is as real to a five year old as it is to a student of eighteen, but the way it is presented to the first child will be markedly different than it is to the second.

### *Classroom Practice*

Here are some examples of an international dimension at work in the curriculum. What is common to all of them is that they go beyond the ‘food, festivals and fashion’ approach to internationalism that is still common. All children and students, even the very youngest, are asked to think about the issues at an appropriately deep level. What they also have in common is that children and students find this kind of work exciting, dynamic and lively.

### **Early Years**

A child is tearful because a group of her friends have deliberately excluded her from a playground game.

The teacher gathers the children for Circle Time. She leads them first to describe the playground events, and then, importantly, to think about the feelings of the children involved – the child who cried, the children who

rejected her. The aim is to help children see an event from another person's point of view.

On the face of it, this isn't obviously "internationalism". However, it's clear that international mindedness has to begin with an ability to see the world from another's point of view. As this child and these children move through the school they will begin to look at different points of view on a broadening canvas, moving from local to national to international.

Key Concepts – Social Justice, Values and Perceptions, Conflict Resolution, Human Rights. Interdependence.

### **Key Stage 1**

A unit from The International Primary Curriculum encourages a group of children to talk about visiting each other's houses. They describe differences between the "rules" and 'customs' in each other's homes. (In one house the dog is allowed on the furniture, but in another it isn't. A child is allowed to find a treat in the fridge, or is not. Children go to bed at 19.00 in one house and 20.00 in another.) They talk about how they deal with these differences. The teacher encourages children to see that each family may have its own reasons and logic; that differences do not necessarily involve value judgments, of right or wrong; and that differences can be interesting and ultimately enriching. Where possible the teacher begins to bring to this discussion brief examples of parallels in the wider world.

Key Concepts: Diversity. Values and Perceptions, Conflict Resolution, Interdependence

### **Key Stage 2**

A class studies the QCA Geography Unit 12 for Year 5 "Should the High Street be Closed to Traffic."

They focus particularly on seeing events and consequences from the point of view of people on different sides of the argument.

The teacher then leads them, in subsequent lessons, to a related issue in a place in another part of the world – for example, Sicily where a proposed bridge across the Straits of Messina linking Sicily to the Italian mainland, will have a range of impacts on the lives of local people. Or Venice, where a road and rail bridge has brought increasing number of tourists and contact with the mainland but caused an exodus of residents who can't stand the crowds.

Key Concepts: Sustainable Development, Values and Perceptions, Interdependence, Conflict Resolution.

## **Key Stage 2**

Using another unit from the International Primary Curriculum, a class transforms their classroom into a holiday shop with the children taking the roles of travel agents.

Working in threes, the children choose a country and research information about their chosen country – how it is similar to or different from their own and other countries; what the country is famous for or does well; what people like about the country they have been researching and what they find difficult at the beginning of their experience.

Children then prepare a stand/display area for their part of the travel agents. Each group hosts their stand, prepared with enough information to give advice to different ‘customers’ with different needs about how to have an enjoyable time in the country they represent.

Key Concepts: Citizenship, Sustainable Development, Diversity, Values and Perceptions, Interdependence

## **Key Stage 3**

A class studies the Year Eight Geography Unit 14 “Can the Earth Cope”, on Ecosystems. The teacher concentrates on one aspect – food production – and studies world patterns, emphasising the global nature of the food industry, and the effect on local food production systems (small farms and plantations) in UK and, for example, in banana growing in the Caribbean.

Key Concepts: Sustainable Development, Diversity, Values and Perceptions, Interdependence, Human Rights.

## **Key Stage 3**

In Design Technology, students look at the construction of the Airbus 380. They focus not on the detailed building process but at the Europe and worldwide systems that bring it together. They use a detailed map of Europe and a map of the world to trace routes and to examine the logistical problems that have to be solved. They anticipate and research the cultural and social issues that arise.

Key Concepts: Social Justice, Diversity, Values and Perceptions, Interdependence, Conflict Resolution, Human Rights.

## **Key Stage 4**

A maths set revisits the concept of the zero and of “place value” by learning the contribution of early Arab mathematicians, who used the idea of place value – and a zero for an empty place. In doing so they are reminded of the

importance of moving away from a Western perspective on science and mathematics. In other subjects, teachers spend time with the students discussing how some of the key knowledge, skills and understandings of their own subject have been previously developed in a variety of cultures and societies.

Key Concepts Diversity, Values and Perceptions, Interdependence.

#### **Key Stage 4**

Students explore the issues of globalisation through debate and research. The teacher provides selected passages from Naomi Klein's book 'No Logo', *Picador 1999* and Phillippe LeGrain's book 'Open World – The Truth About Globalisation', *Abacus, 2002* which present contrasting view of the effects of globalisation.

Students consider these passages in the light of the brands they choose to wear, looking at where and how they are made, and at the protests that have taken place. Are students being selfish or are they contributing to the general good? The aim is to show the complexity of the issues rather than to promote one point of view.

Key Concepts: Social Justice, Sustainable Development, Diversity, Values and Perceptions, Interdependence, Conflict Resolution, Human Rights.

## **Managing the introduction of an ‘international dimension’**

As school leaders, how do we ensure the presence of a true international element in our school values and documentation? How do we make sure that the systems and structures of a school support the international dimension of the curriculum and its implementation in the classroom.

There are five key areas for the leadership’s attention. These are:

- The School’s stated values
- The School Development/Improvement Plan
- The School’s system of Curriculum Planning
- The School’s system of Curriculum management
- The School’s Governance

### *Your school’s stated values*

Every school has a statement of values or “mission statement”. If it’s effective, everything that happens in the school is measured against it. For example, one highly successful secondary school has a half page “Ethos and Values” statement with eleven bullet points, including for example, “...develop their natural curiosity and desire to learn”, “Achieve high standards in all areas of the curriculum,” “...Personal tutoring based on support, challenge and encouragement to succeed.”

However, not one of the points consists of, or includes, a mention of international thinking.

There are two ways to address this. One is to add an “international value” such as “To ensure that each student is introduced to, and experiences, global issues and challenges, and leaves school fully aware of the place of this nation as a European and world partner.”

The other way is to try to add an “international” phrase where appropriate. So the first bullet – “...develop their natural curiosity and desire to learn” – would become “...develop their natural curiosity and desire to learn, and broaden their understanding of the world and its peoples including their independence and interdependence.”

### *Your School Improvement/Development Plan*

The SIP is the core school document, defining how the school will improve over a given period of time. The SIP is constantly under review, and is subject to monitoring by leadership and the governors, and is a key document for Ofsted.

So, Internationalism, if it's going to exist, has to be in the SIP. A typical SIP is in the form of a table that defines clear targets, who is responsible for them, actions to be taken, resources necessary, time scale, desired learning outcomes.

For example, one school has the following general areas for development:

- School self-evaluation
- Assessment for Learning
- Teaching and Learning
- Workforce Reform
- Leadership
- Building and Site Development

The school uses this list to help it to define its key improvement priorities and, having done so, constructs its school development plan around each chosen area. One way forward for this school would be to add a heading – ‘international dimension’ – to their list of general areas.

Another way forward would be to ensure that the international dimension appears as a component within whichever of the general areas are chosen as priorities. So the school might end up with school development plan targets that focus on:

- Evaluating how international it currently is
- The students' current developmental levels of international thinking;
- Staff development about internationalism
- Specific improvements in children and students' knowledge, skills and understanding
- And so on.

### *Curriculum planning*

If a curriculum is truly to contain an international dimension then curriculum plans will need to highlight across each appropriate curriculum area exactly how internationalism can be expressed in terms of learning goals, classroom

activities and assessment. The aim in doing this is to make sure that the international dimension of the curriculum is taken as seriously as history, geography, science or any other worthwhile subject area.

This might mean looking at the current learning goals and activities described in your school, year-group or department curriculum plans and identifying where some rigorous thinking – as opposed to relatively superficial activity – related to one or more of the eight key concepts can take place.

There is some good news here.

The DfES already provides guidance in a number of documents. Some voluntary organisations, such as Oxfam, provide suggestions for activities that can work alongside an existing curriculum. There are even whole curriculum programmes, such as the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme for 16-18 year-olds or The International Primary Curriculum for children aged 4-11 that have already mapped curriculum activities containing learning goals, activities and assessment related to a rigorous international dimension. You can find references to these resources at the end of this document.

### *Curriculum management*

If an international dimension is to be embedded into the school curriculum and into the children's and students experiences it has to be led and managed effectively. Where does an international dimension fit into a school's management structure? Whose responsibility is it?

There are various ways of organising this, depending on the type and size of school. Two possible models are:

A primary school might add the *international dimension* to the "Citizenship" brief already carried by one member of staff.

A large secondary school is able to take on a specialist head of international studies – a language teacher with a broad background of interests in international development work. This person works within the humanities faculty, with a modern languages timetable, but for part of the time has a cross-curricular brief to advise on the international dimension in all curriculum areas.

### *Governance*

How should governors add to their functions the oversight of internationalism? The curriculum committee of the governors should add “internationalism” to its brief. One possible model is to give responsibility to a named governor, who will take an interest in the subject and monitor and support the teacher in charge. Ideally an active and enthusiastic governor will keep the subject on the governance agenda, reporting back on activities, and organising presentations to governors’ meetings by teachers, students and visitors.

Whatever the model, the interest and enthusiasm of the head and senior management team are vital. Documentation is no good without monitoring and effective action. Whoever does the task must be supported and encouraged – in practical terms with resources, time and staff – from the top.

In all of this, head teachers, the named teacher responsible, classroom teachers and governors need to bear in mind both ‘evidence’ and ‘learning outcomes’. An activity – a visit, an email conversation – is not sufficient in itself. It must address learning outcomes as outlined in the school’s “Internationalism” policy, and there should be evidence of the learning that’s taken place. One deep activity that demands of children and students that they think is better than many more superficial activities.

## Resources

This list is not exhaustive and will be added to over time. It does, however, provide access to a range of resources that encourage children and students to think more deeply about an international dimension.

### *The Global Gateway*

The Global Gateway is a comprehensive international resource for education, which provides an international school-partner finding facility, background information, contact links and practical support, including some lesson plans, for teachers, school leaders and governors.

[www.globalgateway.org](http://www.globalgateway.org)

### *Developing a Global Dimension*

Developing a Global Dimension in the School Curriculum is a DfES booklet for heads, governors and curriculum leaders.

[http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/guidanceonthelaw/115\\_00/](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/guidanceonthelaw/115_00/)

### *The Global Citizenship Consortium*

The Global Citizenship Consortium has a useful publication 'Citizenship Education: The Global Dimension'

[www.citizenship-global.org.uk](http://www.citizenship-global.org.uk)

### *The International Primary Curriculum*

The International Primary Curriculum is a thematic, curriculum programme for primary schools containing more than 70 complete ready-to-use units of work and a full assessment programme. It has as two of its main aims the specific embedding of internationalism into children's work in all subjects and its assessment.

[www.internationalprimarycurriculum.com](http://www.internationalprimarycurriculum.com)

### *The British Council*

The British Council has a number of relevant projects that support the development of an international dimension, including school partnerships and The International School Award, given for curriculum based international work.

[www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)

### *QCA*

QCA provides helpful schemes of work, particularly in Citizenship, but it's also worth exploring across the curriculum, searching for the global and international dimension.

[www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)

### *The IBO*

The International Baccalaureate is designed both to use and promote the values and perspectives of its international users, including the development of an international dimension.

[www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org)

### *Oxfam*

Oxfam provides a variety of resources concerned with international issues. Of particular interest is 'Global Citizenship – The Handbook for Primary Teaching' and 'The Challenge of Globalisation – A handbook for teachers of 11-16 year olds.'

[www.oxfam.org.uk](http://www.oxfam.org.uk)

### *Cafod – The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development*

Cafod provides a range of resources for teachers, children and students from KS1 – KS4 including interactive games resource packs and one or two lesson plans.

[www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk)

### *Fair Trade*

Fair Trade produce an education pack – Fair Trade in Action – aimed at students in Key Stage 3.

[www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)

### *Culham Institute*

Culham Institute is a trust researching and promoting religious education. Its website has many links to RE and faith organisations.

[www.culham.ac.uk](http://www.culham.ac.uk)