

An educational view of Ethics of Climate Change

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Green-Schools Travel





Green Coast Award



Green-Schools



NATIONAL SPRING CLEAN



Green-Campus



PULCHRA



LEARNING ABOUT FORESTS



Young Reporters for the environment



GreenHome



Blue Flag Ireland



Environmental Education Unit



An Taisce

The National Trust for Ireland

Green-Schools Programme

- international programme (Eco-Schools)
- 10 themes
- 2 years programme awarded with a Green Flag
- whole school approach
- 7 practical steps
- awareness raising (education)
- behavioural change (actions)
- tailored to fit into curriculum on all levels



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

is simple

"Students' connection to nature, their family values toward nature, self-efficacy and previous experience in nature all have a direct influence on their interest in environmentally-friendly practices."

Cheng, J., Monroe, M., (2012). Connection to nature: Children's affective attitude toward nature. Environment and Behavior

According to studies done by Stephen R. Kellert in the middle of the '80s, there are 3 major age groups to consider when looking at the development of environmental awareness in children:

- Early school years 4-7 are characterised by a major increase in emotional concern and affection for animals
- Children from 8-11 – relates to a dramatic improvement in factual knowledge and cognitive understanding of nature, but also an expansion in ethical and ecological concern for animals and nature
- Age 12 onwards – increase in ethical and ecological appreciation to the stage of formal operations, in which adolescents begin to conceive an abstract universe of relations

connection with nature

ethical reflection

factual knowledge



Environmental education in relation to climate change and biodiversity crisis

- needs to consider stages of child development in relation to the natural environment (age appropriate, from local to global, from my garden to the world)
 - needs to be sensitive (well-being of a child AND educators)
 - needs to tackle directly challenges of marasmus, eco-anxiety, defeatism
 - needs to address fake news and misinformation
 - teaching facts, understanding the relationship between human actions and the crisis (curriculum, teacher training, resources for teachers and children)
 - focusing on positive solutions (actions, projects, innovation)
 - give a sense of agency to children
 - must consider a global perspective
- should include reflecting on values, responsibility and ethical aspects of the crisis, interconnectedness (enquiry-based learning, project-based learning)**



Building perspective through Green-Schools programme

- understanding the science behind manmade climate change
- aligning teaching resources with SDGs
- contrasting Ireland with other countries in the world (Ireland being one of the biggest contributors to global warming per capita vs developing countries)
- learning about Ireland-specific issues (ie. poor cycling and walking infrastructure, great potential of wind energy)



EXAMPLE
Global Citizenship
Travel Programme



GREEN-SCHOOLS

SAVINGS

2021/2022



642 schools awarded

LITTER&WASTE



- 53 first green flags awarded
- 77% of schools reduced their landfill waste
- 57% carried out a community clean up

WATER

88% of schools had excellent awareness about water
77% have a water butt and/or a rainwater harvesting system and 56% carried out a cleanup of a beach/river/canal



TRAVEL



- 86% of schools recorded an increase in sustainable travel
- 20,725 students participated in 855 WOW days

BIODIVERSITY

77% of the students understand how to help biodiversity.
3608 trees planted and 304 new bug hotels



GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

30,000 students increased knowledge on global citizenship to good and even excellent
528 Irish students participated in the Global Classroom project



MARINE ENVIRONMENT

- 95% of schools investigated marine litter prevention
- 59% of schools investigated Global Goal 14: Life Below Water

FOOD AND BIODIVERSITY



- 100% of schools grew crops on their school grounds
- 52% of schools did Cooking Skills Workshops
- More than 95% of schools took part in two or more cooking activities

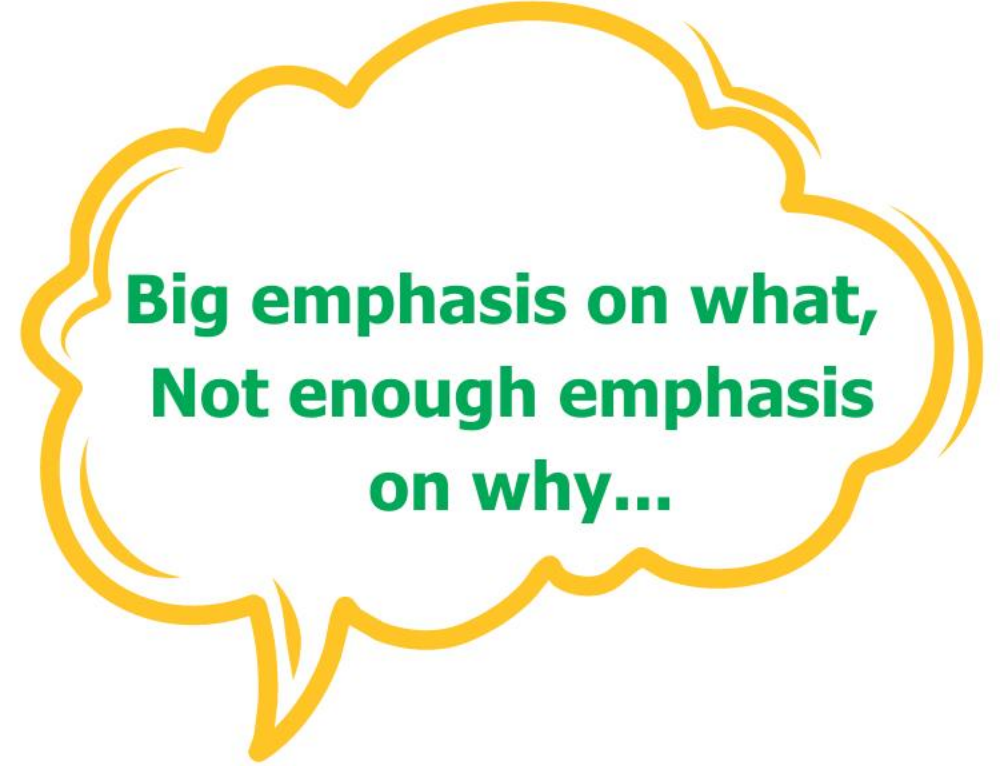
www.greenschoolsireland.org

**BIG CHANGE OVER LAST DECADE
IN PERCEPTION OF THE PROBLEM
MORE EMPHASIS ON THIS TOPIC IN EDUCATION**

BUT IS IT ENOUGH?



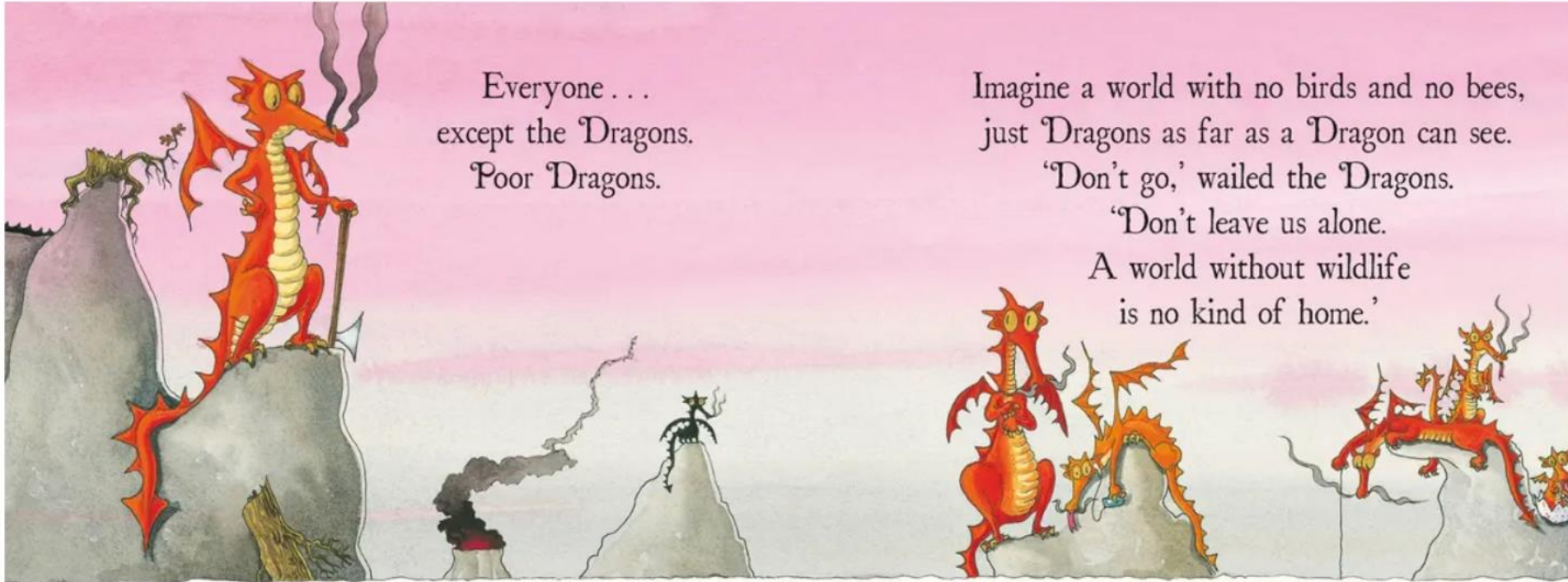
**If burning fossil fuels is the problem,
what is the solution?**



Focusing directly on philosophical/ethical questions helps:

- by supporting personal reflection (instead of relying on 'shoulds' and 'oughts')**
- finding one's own perspective and forming an opinion**
- consider consequences of given worldview**
- to hear the perspective of others, challenges one's own thinking**
- to understand and internalise motivation (Why to do it? instead of What to do?)**

Examples of resources focusing on global perspective, ethics, responsibility, motivation



**The Trouble
With Dragons**

Examples of resources focusing on global perspective, ethics, responsibility, motivation



*Journeys to school
around the world*

St Louis Secondary School, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo



Enquiry-based approach

P4C or PhiE model
for philosophical enquiry



Session 1

Motivation



- for the sake of the children
- for the sake of our planet Earth
- because compassion requires it
- because justice demands it
- because moral integrity requires it
- to honour the rights of future generations of all species
- to avoid massive violation of human rights
- for the survival of humankind
- to steward God's creation
- for national security

Question:
Why
should
we act?

Session 2

Tragedy of the commons

Warm-up questions:

- Did it solve the problem?
- Do you think everybody respected the new rule?
- What do you think the others did when they left the village?
- What happens when there is no more place left to go?
- How is this like the climate change problem?
- Is it different from the problem with climate change?



How can we ensure that everyone follows the rules that they have all agreed on?



Session 3

The Strike

Warm-up questions:

- Did your school take part in a Climate Strike?
- Why did you take part?
- Why did you not take part?

Main questions:

- Is civil disobedience justified to help solve the climate change crisis?
- When is civil disobedience justified?



Session 4

Fairness and responsibility



- Who should take care of Kiribati's nation?
- Who is responsible for Kiribati's tragedy?

- Is it fair to demand that developing countries stop using fossil fuels?
- Should the countries who are now using 100% renewable energy be held responsible for climate change?
- Should we hold our parents and grandparents responsible for climate change?
- What would be a fair solution to the responsibility problem?
- What human values are needed to help act together on climate change?
- What is fairness?



Session 5

Carbon Credits

Warm-up questions:

- Do you see any problems with Carbon Credits?
- Should individuals also be forced to purchase Carbon Credits?
- Who should have Carbon Credits? Everyone? Some? None?
- Do individual people have CO₂ emission rights?
- Are there people who should be forced to purchase personal Carbon Credits?
- Is Carbon Credit trading taking responsibility for climate change?

Main question:

- Who should be responsible for acting on climate change?
- Individuals or institutions, corporations? Why?





SUMMARY

- at younger age focus on building relationship with nature and on role modelling (positive actions)
- introduce more time for reflection and discussion focusing on the topic of ethics by building global perspective, discussing values, and enquiring into the interconnectedness of humans and nature
- more collaboration with students of from other countries, especially those that are affected by the climate change
- creative thinking, innovation and problem-solving focused education rather than content focused (very much the domain of philosophical thinking)
- emphasise urgency of the problem, need for action, and help realise it is their future they take the action on

THANK YOU



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