

schoolzone *newsletter*

educational intelligence

message from the editor..

If you were to hear the phrase 'Education for Sustainable Development', what would immediately spring to mind? Replacing your school's light bulbs with energy-efficient alternatives? Your school's waste recycling programme? Or do you just feel an overwhelming sense of fatigue at the thought of another government initiative, with targets to meet and forms to complete?

With the recently-stated DCSF target of every school being sustainable by 2020, this is indeed another performance measurement for schools, and if you've been involved in your school's SEF for your next Ofsted, you'll be aware that this requires you to report on your current sustainability agenda. However, according to recent research carried out by Schoolzone amongst SLT members and teachers from a range of schools, there is simultaneously a lack of awareness of the range of environmental and sustainability programmes that schools can choose to become involved in, and widespread confusion about 'what counts' as working towards being a 'sustainable school'.

The DCSF's self evaluation tool for sustainability, S3 (available to download at http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainable-schools/upload/s3_self_evaluation_tool.pdf) sets out eight 'doorways' against which you should evaluate your school's sustainability agenda. Many of these link very closely with the 'Every Child Matters' agenda - such as healthy eating, being safe, and making a positive contribution to your school and local environment. In fact, when questioned more closely, many teachers found that sustainability was at the heart of much of school life - such as primary schools creating a vegetable garden to supply their school kitchen with fresh vegetables for their healthy eating campaign, or secondary schools employing Sixth Form students to clean the school buildings.

The other important message that environmental organisations are keen to emphasise is that in schools where sustainability has become embedded in school life, the real drivers behind this are the students themselves - albeit with the firm backing of the SLT. With 'pupil voice' another key government initiative, this is a way to engage students in taking responsibility for their school's sustainability agenda, contributing to the future of their planet, and - let's face it - relieving teachers of the day-to-day burden of another government initiative.

Schoolzone is currently working with various organisations to explore how aware schools are of the government's target. This month, we're going to be running a teacher and pupil survey into awareness of sustainability, areas of current engagement, and the barriers to becoming involved. The link to this will be in the January Newswire, and on the Schoolzone website from the middle of this month, so please do keep a watch out for this.

And, on a slightly different note, thanks to those teachers who took part in Schoolzone's annual review of its own services and website. It was good to hear that we still seem to be on the right track with regards to the look and feel of the site, and the services we're providing. Work is ongoing on this, so again do keep on visiting the site and volunteering to take part in our research. We've a number of really interesting consultancy opportunities at the moment which require reviewing voluntary-sector and charities' materials. This is not only the chance for you to earn a bit of extra cash at a rather expensive time of year, but, according to one Headteacher attendee at the 'sustainable development' focus group, this was the 'best bit of CPD I've done all year'.

And, with that, I'd like to wish everyone a Happy New Year, I hope you all enjoyed a very well-earned rest over Christmas!

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Make the best even better.

Our webguide of 50,000 education websites is now open to registered users to add your own comments about each entry. Just follow the resource link in the results then click on the 'Add a Review' link at the top of the page.

Evaluations News

In the last two months schoolzone has published 10 new evaluations, the majority of which we have hosted online in December. Below are two examples of the good work our independent evaluators have done for us in the last couple of months.

Kahootz 3



'Kahootz 3 is an astonishingly versatile animation programme. It can be used to cover and greatly enhance a great many areas of the curriculum. Aimed essentially at students between the ages of 7-15, Kahootz 3 is an exciting tool for teachers who are looking for new ways to engage and communicate with their students throughout the curriculum. It is an excellent platform for literacy as it can easily be used for story-boarding to produce animated storylines. In Art children can explore the possibilities of light, shadow, perspective and features of landscapes.'

To read the full evaluation visit: <http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/resources/evaluations/evaluation.asp?evalid=5024>

Crime and punishment Through Time CD-ROM 1: Dynamic Learning Network Edition

'Once again Hodder Education are back with another entry in their ever expanding Dynamic Learning range of software! Having dealt with Medicine through Time and Germany 1918-1945 it was logical that Crime and Punishment through Time would be next to receive the Dynamic Learning treatment. For those who have already seen Dynamic Learning in use then go no further; you know what you're going to get! (But as always it just keeps getting better...I really do pity the people who have to come up with something to improve on this piece of software!) For everybody else, read on.'

To read the full evaluation visit: <http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/resources/evaluations/evaluation.asp?evalid=5037>



interact Schoolzone interact

Schoolzone Interact currently has 3223 schools as registered users. The service allows full access to publishers' educational content on a 'try before you buy' basis. There is a 'new to Interact' section for those who would like an introduction to what is on offer and there is no commitment to buy at the end of the trial period.

To access this free digital content please go to: www.schoolzone.co.uk/community/interact/login.asp

Schoolzone has recently changed the criteria for inclusion into Interact which means a wealth of new resources will be available through the system in this coming spring. Keep your eyes peeled and take advantage of this great 'try before you buy' feature.

Interact feedback:

In a pre-launch Interact focus group teachers stated:

"This is a way to interface with bits of software that I am interested in and cut out the dross, I can find directly what I want."

Don't forget ... to have your say

Last month we asked our website users the following question...

Has new technology improved teachers' work/life balance?



Of the respondents, 49% voted YES and 51% said NO.

This month we ask:

Is sustainable development high on your school's agenda?

Please go to our News pages at <http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/community/news.asp?Action=search> to cast your vote or email your comments to the Editor: melissa@schoolzone.co.uk.

Each month the Schoolzone website brings you details of events of interest to the education community: www.schoolzone.co.uk/eventsandtraining/index.asp

For example:

Good to Excellent - achieving outstanding lessons

Date: 30th January 2009

Time: 09:30 -15:30

The course gives a thorough understanding of Ofsted's criteria for good and for outstanding lessons and their contribution to whole school judgements. It explores the new Professional Standards for Teachers and their relationship with Ofsted's criteria and the Excellent Teacher and Advanced Skills Teacher requirements. More details are available here: <http://www.schoolzone.co.uk/eventsandtraining/events/moredetails.asp?id=10443>

Email: admin@pbm-group.co.uk
Telephone: 01889 567014

Further details on the website.