

November 2016

Report on a Consultation with Children and Young People on *Education for Sustainable Development*



The world is for everyone and everything in the future and present so be more careful and respect the world we live in (Student Recommendation)

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Executive Summary

A key recommendation from the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (2014-2020) states that pupils and students should be consulted on the issue of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in order to inform future policy (Department of Education and Skills, 2014). This report presents findings from a consultation with pupils and students facilitated in a collaboration between the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). The DCYA has a dedicated Citizen Participation Unit, which takes the lead national role in ensuring that children and young people have a voice in the design, delivery and monitoring of services and policies that affect their lives. The DES developed a child friendly explanation of ESD, in collaboration with the Citizen Participation Unit of DCYA: “Education for Sustainable Development means what you learn in school to make the world a fairer and better place for everyone”. This definition was informed by definitions used by the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development; UNESCO; Global Education Network Europe; and the publication from United Nations on the Sustainable Development Goals “The World We Want: A Guide to the Goals for Children and Young People”. The consultation adopted a qualitative methodological approach encompassing brainstorming sessions, ranking exercises, World Café placemat discussions and a recommendation wall. A total of 72 children and young people (42 pupil and 30 students) participated in two consultative sessions (one for primary pupils and the other for post-primary students) in October 2016.

Both primary school pupils and post-primary students indicated the times during the school day where they learned about making the world a better and fairer place (Table 1).

Table 1 Pupil and Student Engagement in Education for Sustainable Development Across the School Day

Pupil and Student Engagement in ESD Across the School Day¹			
Primary School²		Post-Primary School	
Geography*	Religion*	Religion*	CSPE*
History*	SESE	Geography*	SPHE*
SPHE	Maths	History	Biology
Art	Science*	Science	Chemistry
Gaeilge	English	English	Psychology
Reading	Football		
Drama	Break time		

Prioritisation of the areas (highlighted in Table 1) resulted in the primary school pupils choosing to explore Religion, Geography, History, Science and Co-Curricular areas at 5 tables for the World Café session. Post-primary students identified Religion, CSPE, Geography and SPHE for discussion at 4 tables at the second consultative workshop. Findings regarding the topics the pupils and students learn in each of these areas and how they apply them to making the world a fairer and better place in their daily lives are presented in the main body of the report.

Key Recommendations

The pupils and students identified key recommendations on how to make the world a fairer and better place in three areas: (1) for friends at home and abroad, (2) for human rights and (3) for the environment.

¹ Listed here are those times which had 2 mentions or more. Further details are outlined later in the report. Those marked with an * were chosen for further exploration. The primary school pupils chose 5 categories and the post-primary chose 4.

² The primary pupils decided to choose a more open category for their fifth topic which has been referred to as “co-curricular areas” in this report.

Recommendations by the pupils and students on *learning to make the world a fairer and better place for friends at home and abroad* are illustrated in Table 2.

Learn about the different perspectives on contemporary issues in other countries
(Student Recommendation)

Table 2 Recommendations: Learning to Make the World a Fairer and Better Place for Friends at Home and Abroad

Recommendations: Learning to Make the World a Fairer and Better Place for Friends at Home and Abroad	
Primary School Pupils	Post-Primary School Students
To have a pen pal	Law
To learn more languages	Cultures
Learn about diseases	Rights
Stop wars	
Help	
Climate Change	
Geography	
Sending videos to countries around the world	

In addition to the recommendations outlined in Table 2, the students highlighted the importance of learning more about law (*different laws in other countries and what we can learn and take from them*), cultures (*what customs other countries have and how they live as well as about how religion and culture are two different things. And the way they influence society and the way people think*) and rights (*rights in different countries*).

Recommendations about *learning to make the world a fairer and better place for human rights* (Table 3).

We should learn more about our rights and policies that we could use in our lives when we're older (Pupil Recommendation)

Table 3 Recommendations: Learning to Make the World a Fairer and Better Place for Human Rights

Recommendations: Learning to Make the World a Fairer and Better Place for Human Rights	
Primary School Pupils	Post-Primary School Students
Equal Rights	CSPE for Leaving Certificate
Fairness	Sex Education
Rights for girls	Rights

Recommendations about *learning to make the world a fairer and better place for the environment* (Table 4).

The world is for everyone and everything in the future and present so be more careful and respect the world we live in (Student Recommendation)

Table 4 Recommendations: Learning to Make the World a Fairer and Better Place for the Environment

Recommendations: Learning to Make the World a Fairer and Better Place for the Environment	
Primary School Pupils	Post-Primary School Students
Recycling and littering Renewable energy Pollution Walk more	Environment Pollution

Post-primary students recommended learning more about the environment (including *how to actually help the environment-actions to take*) and pollution (*understanding of pollution*).

A Note of Thanks

The DES and the DCYA would like to thank all the pupils and students who took the time to attend and participate in the consultations. Their frank and honest contributions will help inform the continued implementation of the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland. We would also like to thank the teachers, parents and guardians who facilitated their attendance on the day.

Background and Context

Report Background

The publication of the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Ireland (2014-2020) by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in 2014 provides a framework to support the education system in working towards a more sustainable future. Within this framework the strategy seeks to;

Ensure that education contributes to sustainable development by equipping learners with the relevant knowledge (the ‘what’), the key dispositions and skills (the ‘how’) and the values (the ‘why’) that will motivate and empower them throughout their lives to become informed active citizens who take action for a more sustainable future (DES (DES), 2014, p.3³).

It is within this context that key principles underpinning education which contribute to sustainable development have been identified.

Key Principles

ESD in Ireland will aim to:

- balance environmental, social and economic considerations;
- promote lifelong learning;
- be locally relevant while also linking the local to the national and international;
- engage all sectors of the education system, as well as the non-formal education sector;
- be interdisciplinary and recognise interdependence and interconnectivities across other sectors;
- use a variety of pedagogical techniques that promote active and participatory learning and the development of key dispositions and skills;
- emphasise social justice and equity;
- focus on values and promote active democratic citizenship and inclusion as a means of empowering the individual and the community.
- be an agent for positive change in reorienting societies towards sustainable development.

(DES, 2014, p.4)

Eight priority action areas to contribute to education *for* sustainable development have also been identified within this strategy.

³ DES (2014) ‘Education for Sustainability’ The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland, 2014-2020, Dublin: Stationary Office

Priority action areas

1. Leadership and coordination
2. Data collection and baseline measurement
3. Curriculum at pre-school, primary and post-primary
4. Professional development
5. Further Education and Training
6. Higher Education and Research
7. Promoting participation by students
8. Sustainability in action

(DES, 2014, p.4)

Recommendation 29 in the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development directly addresses children and young people's participation stating that;

The DES (supported by the DCYA) should consult children and young people directly on the issue of Education for Sustainable Development. This consultation process will take place before 2017. It will be used as an evidence base to inform the development of future policy in this area (DES, 2014, p.27).

With studies identifying the quantifiable impact that Education for Sustainable Development can have in schools on sustainability consciousness among students (Boeve-de Pauw et al., 2015⁴, McNaughton, 2012⁵) it is important to identify Irish pupils'/students' understanding of ESD and how this is impacting on their interaction with their physical and social worlds. Furthermore, considering the voice of the child/young person is enshrined within the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that;

States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
(Article 12 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC))

This report presents the findings from a consultation with pupils and students facilitated through a collaboration between the DES and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) in October 2016.

⁴ Boeve-de Pauw, J., Gericke, N., Olsson, D., Berglund, T., (2015). The effectiveness of education for sustainable development. *Sustainability*, 7(11), 15693-15717 doi:10.3390/su71115693

⁵ McNaughton, M. J. (2012). Implementing education for sustainable development in schools: Learning from teachers' reflections. *Environmental Education Research*, 18(6), 765-782. doi:10.1080/13504622.2012.665850

Education for Sustainable Development within the Irish Context

The key objective identified in the publication of the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development is to “provide learners with the knowledge, dispositions, skills and values that will motivate and empower them to become active citizens and take measures to live more sustainably” (DES, 2014, p. 12). The realisation of this objective within education is to be achieved through existing curriculum and pedagogical approaches in order to develop key skills, dispositions, knowledge and values (DES, 2014, p.3). The approach to ESD promoted within the Irish context encompasses both (a) the integration of ESD across the curriculum and (b) the provision of ESD specific programmes and courses in school (UNECE⁶, 2005, 2, 6) (DES, 2014, p.12). The strategy indicates areas where elements of ESD are evident within subjects already implemented at both primary and post-primary level as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Education for Sustainable Development Across Individual Curricular Areas at Primary and Post-Primary Level



(DES, 2014)

⁶ UNECE (2005) UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

The DES (2014) has acknowledged that although the integration of ESD into the post-primary curriculum is more difficult, there is now an opportunity to promote the principles of ESD in the new Framework for Junior Cycle (p.13, 2015). Indeed, as illustrated by Table 5, 4 out of the 24 statements of learning set out for the Junior Cycle refer specifically to the principles of ESD.

Table 5 Junior Cycle Statements of Learning related to ESD

Statement	Definition
Statement 6	[the student] appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives
Statement 7	[the student] values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts
Statement 9	[the student] understands the origins and impacts of social, economic, and environmental aspects of the world around her/him
Statement 10	[the student] has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably

(DES, 2014, p.13)

The new Leaving Certificate Politics and Society syllabus, which is currently in the first year of its implementation in post-primary schools⁷, seeks to strengthen ESD within the Senior Cycle, with the first students taking it as an exam subject in summer 2018 (DES, 2014).

The primary aim of the consultation with pupils and students was to identify what they are learning about Education for Sustainable Development and how this impacts on their everyday lives. This report presents the outcomes and views from a relatively small number of pupils and students expressed in a consultation using qualitative methods with children and young people that took place over two half-day periods with expert facilitators from the DCYA. The findings can be seen as indicative of young people's experiences of Education for Sustainable Development at both primary and post-primary level.

⁷ 41 post-primary schools were implementing the new Leaving Certificate Politics and Society syllabus in 5th year at the time of this consultation in October 2016

Section 1 Consultation Methodology

The consultation with pupils and students was conducted at the request of the DES in order to address Recommendation 29 of the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland⁸. The consultation was funded by the DES and facilitated by the Citizen Participation Unit of DCYA, which has significant expertise in the participation of children in decision-making. The consultation adopted a qualitative approach in order to explore pupil and student experience of Education for Sustainable Development in school. The DES developed a child friendly explanation of ESD, in collaboration with the DCYA. This definition was informed by the definitions used by the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development; UNESCO; Global Education Network Europe; and the publication from United Nations on the Sustainable Development Goals “The World We Want: A Guide to the Goals for Children and Young People”. This agreed definition used to define Education for Sustainable Development and used with the pupils and students on the day of the consultation was:

What you learn in school to make the world a fairer and better place for everyone

Consultation Participants⁹

A total of 72 children and young people (36 male and 36 female) participated in two consultative sessions facilitated over the course of the day, the first one with the children (primary pupils aged 8-12 years old) and the second with the young people (post-primary students aged 12-17 years old).

Participants aged 8-12 years old were recruited from a cross section of schools¹⁰ with one representative from each class 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th in attendance. 40 pupils (21 male and 19 female) attended the consultation. Pupils were assigned to the roundtables by facilitators to ensure a mix

⁸ “The DES (supported by the DCYA) should consult children and young people directly on the issue of Education for Sustainable Development. This consultation process will take place before 2017. It will be used as an evidence base to inform the development of future policy in this area” (DES, 2014, p.27).

⁹ While efforts were made to invite pupils and students across different representative cohorts to participate in the consultations through purposive sampling, this report provides a snapshot of pupil/student perception and experience of Education for Sustainable Development.

¹⁰ Pupils attended the consultation from 10 schools, 8 located in Leinster, 1 in Ulster and 1 in Munster. School types represented included 2 all boys’ schools, 1 all girls’ school, and 7 co-educational schools. 2 schools were classified as DEIS (addressing and prioritizing the educational needs of from disadvantaged communities) while one school was an all-Irish speaking Gaelscoil.

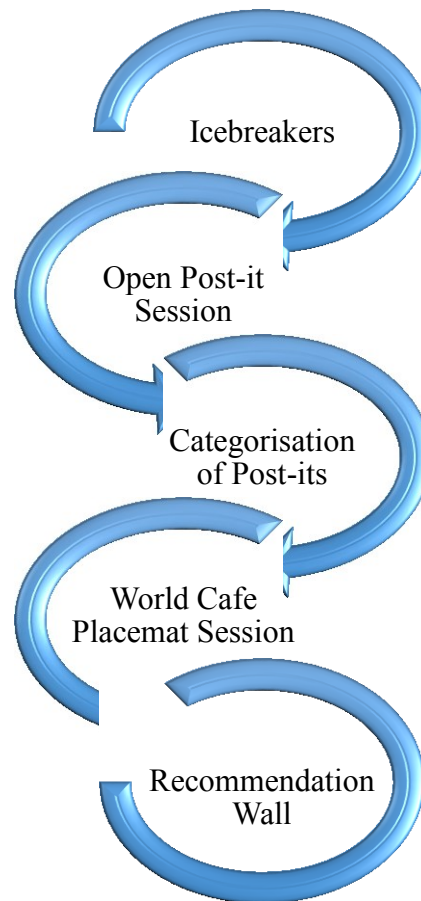
across schools and classes, with one pupil from each school and class (3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th) assigned to each of the 5 tables.

Participants aged 13-18 years old were recruited from the Comhairlí na nÓg across the country¹¹. A total of 32 students (15 male and 17 female) attended the consultation.

Methodology

The methodologies employed by the DCYA on the day of the consultation are illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 Consultation Methodology



¹¹ The Comhairlí na nÓg represented included Cavan, Dublin City, Galway City, Galway County, Kilkenny, Longford, Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, Wexford, and Wicklow.

Ice breaker games were facilitated with the pupils and students in order to put them at ease and introduce them to the consultative process. Having welcomed the pupils and students to the consultation, the DES read out a definition¹² of Education for Sustainable Development;

Today is about “Education for Sustainable Development” and that really means ...
what you learn in school to make the world a fairer and better place for everyone

Additional statements were included as a means for stimulating pupil and student understanding and thinking around Education for Sustainable Development and what that looked like in their lives;

We all want to make the world a better and fairer place. We want to look after our families and our neighbours. We want to look after the environment so everyone can have clean air and water. We want all children to have a chance to go to school, have enough to eat and be healthy. We want everyone to be treated fairly and have human rights. We want children in other countries to have the same chances as us.

The reason for listening to what the pupils and students had to say was also stated;

Today we want to find out what you are learning in school that helps to make the world a better and fairer place. We also want to hear about how you use this information in your own life at home and with your friends.

The DCYA welcomed the children and young people to the consultation and highlighted the importance of listening to them when considering how to improve their lives. A working definition of Education for Sustainable Development was projected onto a wall in the room for reference for both the pupils and students, and the facilitators working with them during the World Café session:

What you learn in school to make the world a fairer and better place for everyone

Open Post-it Session

The pupils and students were encouraged to think of particular times during the school day or certain subjects where they identified working on issues relating to Education for Sustainable Development and note them on post-its. They were allowed to use as many post-its as they required. These post-its were then displayed on a post-it wall prepared for categorisation.

One pupil/student from each roundtable was invited up to the ideas wall to help categorise the post-its into different themes. In collaboration with the facilitator, the pupils (n=5) and students

¹² This definition was developed in collaboration between the DES and DCYA, informed by UNESCO definitions and deemed to be child and youth friendly.

(n=4) then identified the top themes (5 for primary and 4 for post-primary) to be explored in more depth at each of the placemats during the World Café.

World Café Placemats

The pupils and students were invited to participate in the World Café. They circulated around the tables in the room and contributed to discussion at each table focussed on exploring two aspects of Education for Sustainable Development: (1) things you learn and (2) how you use this in your everyday life.

The pupils and students focused on one subject area per placemat, identified in collaboration with the participation team during the categorisation of post-its. Discussion at the first placement lasted for 20 minutes and 10 minutes was spent at each subsequent placement. A member of the participation team facilitated discussion at the placemats while the pupils rotated around each table. The pupils made a total of five rotations, and the students made four.

Recommendation Wall

To conclude the consultation, and to consolidate the discussion, the pupils and students were encouraged to approach the recommendation wall and indicate what they would like to learn in school to make their world a better and fairer place particularly for (1) their friends at home and abroad, (2) their environment and (3) for human rights.

Section 2 Primary School Pupils' Experience of Education for Sustainable Development

The pupils were asked to identify and record on post-its the different times throughout the primary school day where they learned about how to make the world a fairer and better place (Table 6).

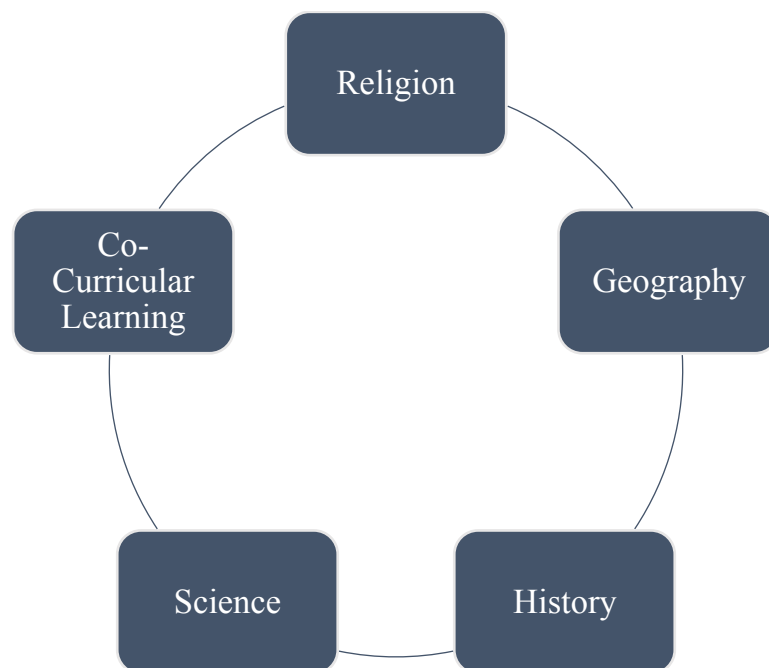
Table 6 Time for Learning about Making the World a Better and Fairer Place Primary School¹³

Time to Learn about ESD	Number of Mentions	Comments
Geography	22	
Religion	21	
History	18	
SESE	12	
SPHE	7	
Maths	7	
Art	7	<i>Art because we think what we could do to make it a better place and draw it I feel like art can help you because it means you can express who you really are and you can't do anything wrong</i>
Science	5	
Gaeilge	4	
English	4	
Reading	3	
Football	2	
Drama	2	
Break time	2	
<i>Other Areas</i>		
Knitting	1	
Circle Time	1	
Nature Walks	1	
Teachers	1	
Art	1	
Equality	1	
Biodiversity	1	<i>Learning about animal habitats and plants</i>
Green Schools	1	
PE	1	<i>I feel like PE can help you because you get time to play with your friends and you can even get (to) know other people better 😊</i>
Psychology	1	
Walk Tall Programme	1	<i>Being a good friend to make the world a better place</i>

¹³ Although primary school pupils identified Science, Geography and History as individual subjects, they come under the umbrella of the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) curriculum and, as such, overlap in the themes identified by the pupils may be evident.

One pupil from each table (5 in total) was invited to work with the facilitator to categorise the post-its and select the 5 areas to be explored at each placemat for the World Café discussions. The 5 areas chosen by the pupils for more in-depth discussion at the placemats during the World Café were Geography, Religion, History, Science and Co-Curricular learning¹⁴ (Figure 3).

Figure 3 Areas for Exploration during World Café – Primary School Pupils



Geography

Things You Learn

The pupils identified Geography as an important subject for learning about how to make the world a better and fairer place. Figure 4 illustrates the themes covered in Geography identified by the pupils.

¹⁴ The pupils, in collaboration with the facilitator, discussed the possibilities for exploring each curricular area. They believed that Science (although not one of the higher ranking subjects in the post-its) was a time when ESD was taught during the school day and warranted further exploration at the World Café. Instead of choosing a specific fifth subject area to explore, the pupils decided to have a mat which explored all areas (outside of Geography, Religion, History and Science) where ESD was in evidence.

Figure 4 Geography and ESD - Things You Learn in Primary School¹⁵



The predominant topics identified by the pupils covered during Geography in primary school relating to making the world a better and fairer place included war, climate change, global place, recycling, population, and pollution.

Climate Change and Weather

I want to learn more about climate change

The pupils identified climate change and weather as an important topic covered in Geography which explores how to make the world a better and fairer place. This included learning about the *weather and climate change, holes in the ozone layer, global warming and ice caps melting.*

A Sense of Place – Continents, Countries, Counties

It teaches us about many different countries and it says to try help somebody in need.

Learning about *countries and different cultures around the world* helps them understand how to make the world fairer. One pupil suggested that *we learn about traditions and cultures in different*

¹⁵ Themes that were mentioned most are represented with larger font size in the Wordles used within this report. The font size depicting each identified theme decreases in correlation to a decrease in the number of mentions by pupils/students.

countries – it helps us learn and respect other countries and their culture. Learning about local place *Eire* and *counties* in Geography also helped pupils understand how to make the world a better place.

War

War = sadness, death, bombs, destruction

The pupils indicated they learned about war (such as *in Syria-people have to flee their homes because of war in Syria, terrorists and pupils in trouble*) during Geography which helped them explore how to make the world a better and fairer place.

Pollution

I find it interesting to see how some parts of countries are very polluted.

Learning about pollution helped the pupils understand how to make the world a better and fairer place. Themes included *pollution, recycling* including *keep(ing) the world tidy* and *pick(ing) up litter*, and *Green Schools*.

One pupil commented¹⁶ at the table that within Green schools they have *biodiversity teams and waste management teams*. Pupils learned about improving the environment and promoted *walking to school* and *cycling to school*. *Don't use fossil fuels*. One pupil commented that they learned that *India has loads of rubbish and water is polluted*.

Natural Environmental Features

We learn about natural disasters (hurricane, volcano, typhoons, storms, tornados)

The pupils indicated that learning about natural environmental features, such as *volcanoes, natural disasters, stalactites, waterfalls, mountains, deserts* and *landmarks* in Geography allowed them to explore how to make the world a better place.

Additional Topics

Some countries don't have good water and a lot of rubbish

Additional topics identified by the pupils in which they explore how to make the world a fairer place in Geography included development education (learning about *starving countries* and *taps that can't be giving water*), *population* (including *refugees* and *immigrants*), *society* (such as *rights and politics* and *the American election*) and being active (including *walking, cycling* and *more exercise*).

¹⁶ Comments made at the tables by pupils were recorded in researcher field notes

How You Use Them in Your Everyday Life

The pupils identified areas in their lives where they believed their learning about making the world a better and fairer place in Geography contributes to how they live their everyday lives. Figure 5 illustrates the main themes identified.

Figure 5 Geography and ESD in Pupils' Daily Lives



The pupils indicated that they use their learning about recycling (including *don't litter, recycle to make the world a better place* and *getting families to recycle*), transport (such as *bringing other people to school, walk or cycle to school* and *carpool(ing)*) and environmental awareness (including *don't waste your electricity, use low water, don't burn fossil fuels* and *battery collections*) in their everyday lives.

Other areas where Geography has impacted on how pupils apply their learning about how to make the world a better and fairer place in their daily lives includes being active, charity, development education, and war/conflict. They are active by taking *exercise, cycling, walk(ing)* and engaging in sports such as *Football, Tennis, and Hurling*. The pupils indicated that they engage in *charity*

such as *help charities after learning about something bad happening in other countries, give your personal things to people – pupils from war and we send shoe boxes to poor people*. Activities associated with charity work included *sponsored walk, marathons for charity, shoebox appeal, donate away money, non-uniform day and jersey day*. The pupils also indicated an awareness of *developing countries* and the need not to *waste food*. They indicated an awareness of war and conflict, particularly in relation to *terrorist attacks* and *getting families to walk away from trouble*.

Religion

Things You Learn

Religion was identified by the pupils as one of the predominant subject areas in school where they learn about making the world a better and fairer place. Topics identified by the pupils included, from most mentioned to least mentioned; equality, friendship, kindness, love, sacrifice and charity (Figure 6 below).

Figure 6 Religion and ESD - Things You Learn in Primary School



Equality and Discrimination

not everyone is friends but everyone deserves respect

The pupils indicated that they learned about equality and discrimination when they explore how to make the world a better and fairer place in Religion. *Equality* included learning about *being treated equally* and *letting everyone play*. Indeed *you should be treated because of your personality not your religion or skin colour or your preference toward men or women or both*. Other pupils highlighted the issue of racism where *skin colour means nothing* and the suggestion *don't be racist*. Not being treated equally resulted in *discrimination* and *judgement* with the pupils suggesting not to *discriminate different people* or *judge people*.

Kindness and Sharing

Kindness – be kind to everyone

Learning about kindness and sharing in Religion helps pupils learn about making the world a better and fairer place. The pupils emphasised the importance of *kindness*, *sharing* and *help(ing) each other*. Religion allowed pupils to learn about *kindness – to make friends – to get to know one another like we're all family*.

Sacrifice and Appreciation

Appreciate – you only appreciate it when you miss it Lent¹⁷

Learning about *sacrifice* and *appreciation* in Religion, particularly when *you appreciate things more after lent*, helped pupils understand how to make the world a fairer and better place.

Friendship and Love

Religion teaches us about love and friendship – it tells us about how you should treat others how you would like to be treated.

Learning about *friendship* and *being loved* in Religion helped pupils to understand how to make the world a better and fairer place. Indeed *making new friends* and *being friends with everyone* was as important as *when something is bothering your friends, help them*. *Knowing that we are loved* and knowing that *love helps us remember that we are not alone* was something the pupils learned about in Religion class, a topic they felt helped make the world a better and fairer place.

¹⁷ Lent is a religious observance in the Catholic faith perceived as a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for Easter.

Additional Topics

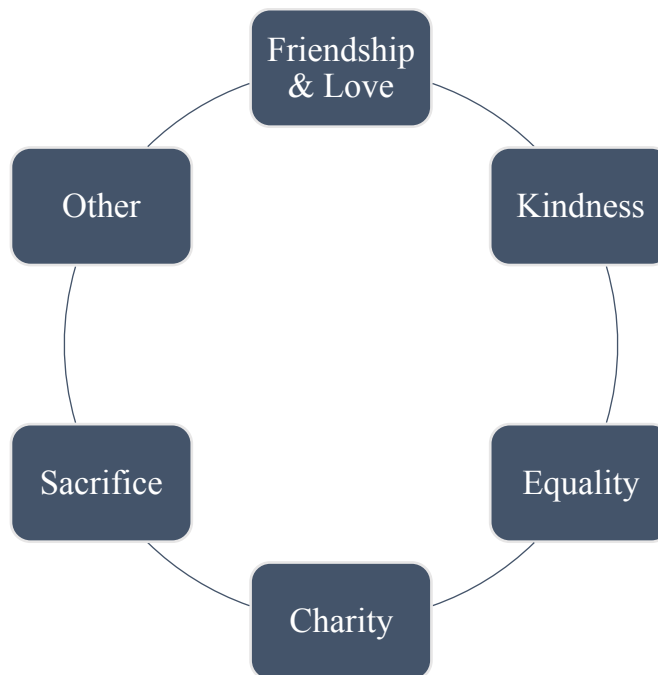
Help anyone that looks like they need help – people sometimes struggle to join in so go over and ask them to join in your game.

Additional topics identified by the pupils included charity, happiness, forgiveness, sacraments, self-esteem and belonging. The pupils indicated that learning about charity helped them understand how to make the world fairer and better. Religion was seen to *tell us to try and help someone in need – they need it more than you do*, including doing things such as *share money, charity work and give old clothes to charity*. Indeed, one pupil suggested *don't be mean to the poor*. Learning about forgiveness, particularly from God, was considered important to creating a fairer world as *it's good to give people a second chance – forgiving people when they do something wrong because everyone makes mistakes*.

How You Use Them in Your Everyday Life

The pupils indicated the different ways in which their learning in Religion about making the world a better and fairer place impacts on their everyday life (Figure 7).

Figure 7 Religion and ESD in Pupils' Daily Lives



The pupils indicated that learning about friendship and love impacted on their everyday lives including highlighting issues around bullying. They also indicated the importance of *love* and

school friendships while emphasising that it is important that pupils *DON'T BULLY*¹⁸. *Kindness* and *be(ing) kind to other people* was identified as important to the children in their everyday lives. Issues of *equality* highlighted by the pupils included *don't discriminate of skin colour*. The pupils indicated that being charitable in their everyday lives included *giving up food and giving it to others*. 5 pupils indicated that they *sacrifice* in their lives, particularly during *lent*. Other areas where pupils believed that their learning in Religion influenced how they lived their daily lives included ensuring to *treat people right*, while one pupil stated that learning about the sacrament of Confirmation and the *gifts of the Holy Spirit lead me the right way*.

History

Things You Learn

History was identified by the pupils as an important subject through which they learn how to make the world a better and fairer place. The main themes identified are illustrated by Figure 8.

Figure 8 History and ESD - Things You Learn in Primary School



¹⁸ This phrase was written in capital letters on the placemat

Predominant themes identified by the pupils, from most mentions to least mentions, included the 1916 rising, war, learning from mistakes, recycling, transport, technology, littering, and protecting the environment.

Equality and Rights

We didn't let women do stuff men did 100 years ago – remember that everyone is equal

The pupils indicated that learning about equality (including to *remember that everyone is equal* and to *respect all cultures and religions*), rights (*women's rights* and *we deserve our own rights*) and racism (through *Martin Luther King*) in History helps them understand how to make the world a better and fairer place.

Conflict and War

Wars – to learn that too many people die in wars

The pupils indicated that learning about the 1916 rising and wars in History helped them understand how to make the world a better and fairer place. Suggestions included *don't start wars – don't try to be like bad people, it will kill innocent people, too many people die in war and nukes should never be repeated.*

Specific Periods in History

Learning about specific periods in History, such as *Vikings, 1916 rising, the Famine, World War 1 & 2, Marco Polo, Reformation, The Stone age, Normans and Kings and Queens - leadership* helped the pupils to explore how the world can be better and fairer.

Protecting the Environment

I think we should not litter because people used to litter and that made a hole in the ozone layer – don't litter.

The pupils indicated that learning about littering and *recycling (recycling – don't put things in the wrong bin)*, conservation (*old buildings could be used as exhibits*), protecting the environment (*save water by turning off the tap after you wash your hands* and *when Edison invented the lightbulb – when you walk out of the room you turn off the lights*), and *green schools (save water and energy)* in History helped them understand how to make the world a better and fairer place.

Additional Topics

History helps you learn about the great things that people have done so it helps inspire you to do great stuff too!

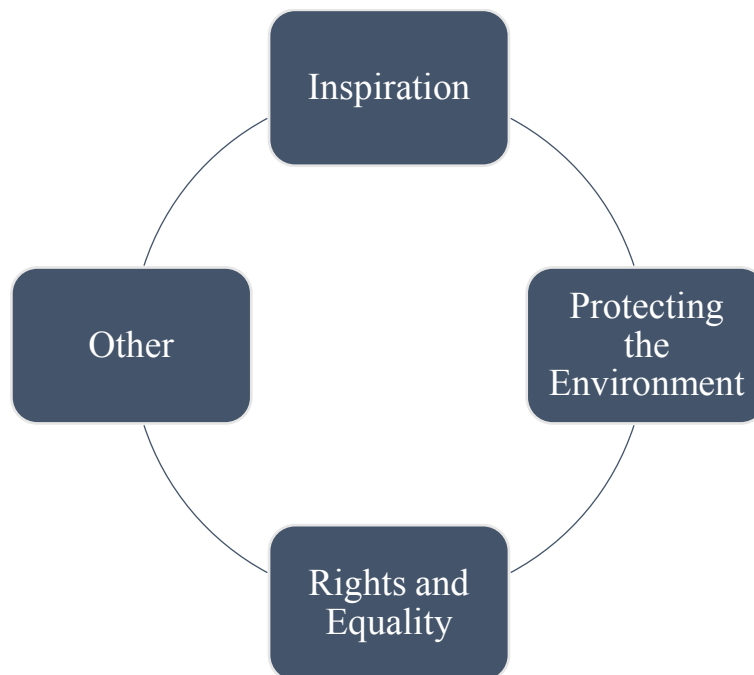
Other areas identified by the pupils where they learn about how to make the world a better and fairer place during history lessons include learning from mistakes, money, getting inspiration, transport and technology. *Learning from Mistakes* was identified by the pupils as an important aspect of History when considering how to make the world better. It was suggested that *you should learn from your mistakes, as History has some mistakes in the past for us to learn from – make less mistakes*. Indeed one pupil suggests that *if everyone could try to be a bit nicer the world would be a better place – thinking how people were ill-treated years ago*. The pupils believed that History *helps you realise that anything is possible* ☺. Learning about money, in History, was also seen as an opportunity to understand *people in developing countries-we are really lucky* while also learning that *back in the 60s and 70s there wasn't a lot of money – we shouldn't be greedy and ungrateful*. Learning about transport (such as *electric cars* and when *Henry Ford invented the motor car*) and technology (such as *Instead of using modern day technology live old simple life – use water mills instead of electronic/fossil fuel powered factories*) in History helps the pupils understand how to make the world a better and fairer place.

How You Use Them in Your Everyday Life

Martin Luther King –STOP racism NOW! – I hate racism

The pupils identified how they applied their learning in History to making the world a better and fairer place in their everyday lives, illustrated by Figure 9 below.

Figure 9 History and ESD in Pupils' Daily Lives



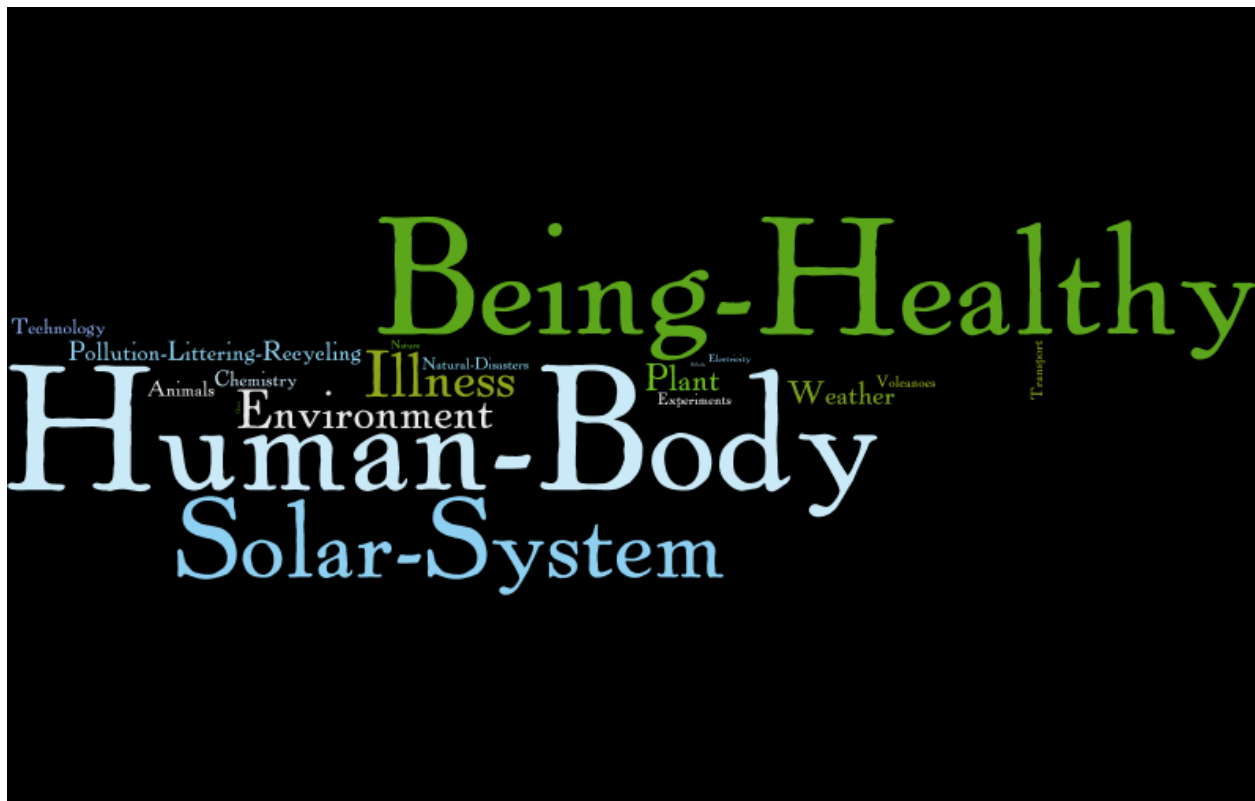
The pupils indicated that history made them feel inspired as *you can do anything*. It also *helps you realise the things that you could do* while encouraging you to *think outside the box*. The pupils also indicated that they learn to protect the environment in History including learning *don't litter* and to *save electricity*. Exploring rights and equality in History encourages pupils *not (to) be(ing) cruel to each other*.

Science

Things You Learn

The pupils identified Science as a subject area within which they learn about how to make the world a better and fairer place. The predominant themes identified by the pupils are illustrated in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10 Science and ESD - Things You Learn in Primary School



Topics identified by the pupils from most to least mentions included the human body, being healthy, the solar system, illness and the environment.

Living Things

Plants help us get oxygen

The pupils indicated that learning about living things (such as *plants, animals, and other life*) in Science helps them learn about making the world a better and fairer place.

The World around Me

Space - to help astronauts get a better understanding of space

Learning about the world around me, such as the *solar system, volcanoes, earthquakes, nature and weather* in Science helps the pupils explore how to make the world better.

The Human Body and Health

Science helps cure illnesses – less people die

The pupils identified that learning about the human body and health helps them understand how to make the world a better and fairer place. Themes included the human body, being healthy and illness. Science was predominantly seen by the pupils as a means for exploring how to improve our physical and mental health in order to make the world a better place. The pupils identified learning about the *human body* as important as *so when people get sick we can give them the right medicine*. As well as learning about the parts of the human body, including *lungs, your heart, bones in your body, elbow, kneecap, stomach, toes, the brain, and hands*, the pupils indicated that they learned *how our body works*, including *breathing, running makes heart beat and the heart pumps blood around the body*. Building upon this learning, the pupils indicated that they learned about *being healthy*, including *get fit, stop smoking, everything in moderation, what you should eat, not too much fats and oils and sweets, unhealthy foods are bad-don't eat them at school-only a few on special occasions, to get lots of exercise, stay hydrated, and eat fruit*. Mental health was also highlighted with suggestions that *you need 3 positive feelings to weigh out a negative – you can make yourself happy when you're sad and healthy body healthy mind*. The pupils also connected health with illness and indicated how Science can make the world a better place in this regard. They suggested *mixing different ingredients together to make cures – helping people, help us cure diseases and stop cancer*. Indeed one pupil highlighted the importance of *Chemistry – we need to make antibiotics. People will get immune to them and in the future people will get very ill and may die*.

The Environment

Using science we make more efficient technology – we use it in our cars, home and many other things

Science encouraged the pupils to learn about the environment and how it can be improved to make the world a better and fairer place. Themes included the environment, pollution, littering and recycling, transport, technology, green schools and natural disasters. The pupils believed Science allowed them to explore how to make the environment better. Integral to this was learning about the *environment, atmosphere, to not litter, biodiversity, ozone, and deforestation*. Indeed, the pupils learned about *pollution, recycling and don't litter*. Engaging in green schools (*having a green school committee*) was also seen as a means for exploring how to make the world better.

Learning about transport (*electric cars, new petrol, to walk or cycle more-it stops pollution*) and technology (such as the development of *solar panels, electric cars and more efficient technology*) in Science helps pupils learn about improving the world.

Additional Topics

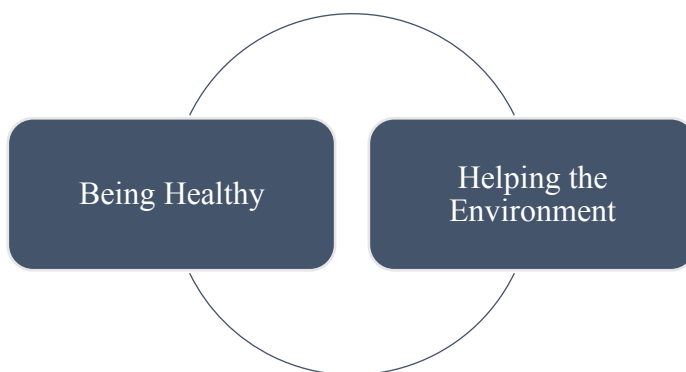
Experiments to see it in action

Additional topics in Science identified by pupils where they explored how to make the world a better and fairer place included *Chemistry, Experiments and Electricity*. Other suggestions included to *ban nuclear bombs and it helps you express who you really are-you can't do anything wrong as long as you have fun*. One pupil suggested that in Science they learned to *give monies to charities – if one seventh of the earth's population give it would make 1 billion*.

How You Use Them in Your Everyday Life

The pupils identified ways in which their learning about making the world a better and fairer place in Science impacted on their everyday lives (Figure 11).

Figure 11 Science and ESD in Pupils' Daily Lives



The pupils believed that *plants can help you to eat healthy and you can grow your own. So you can save money*. The learning in Science applied to their everyday lives included to make *healthy choices (keeping healthy – eating fruit-keeping bones healthy-lungs-no smoking)* as *eating healthy can make you live longer*. Science also helped the pupils apply their learning about how to make the environment a better place as *we know how to help animals, to respect each other and to save electricity and less risk of pollution*.

Co-Curricular Learning

Things You Learn

The pupils identified the things they learn in engaging in co-curricular learning across the school day which helps them learn about making the world a better and fairer place (Figure 12).

Figure 12 Co-Curricular Learning and ESD - Things You Learn in Primary School



Themes included helping the environment, children's rights, stop littering, relationships, voice, equality, bullying, green schools, charity, and human rights.

Rights and Equality

I think everybody should have their own right and should be able to do what they want and have as much of a chance as other kids

The theme which obtained the most frequent mentions on the placemat related to rights and equality both across and outside of the curriculum. These included *children's rights and human rights –everyone has a right to speak, women's rights...they are humans too, equality, and animal rights*. One pupil indicated the belief that *we should learn about our basic rights – this could help us in the future*.

The pupils wrote about how lucky they felt when they compared their experience of rights to other pupils across the world.

Sometimes you think of things and you draw or write them down and it makes you feel lucky when you think other kids don't have as much rights.

Children's rights- think how lucky you are.

Comments¹⁹ made about rights highlighted an awareness of advocates of children's rights such as *Malala fought for children's rights and girls going to school. One of the classes in our school did a project and explained it to our class. Indeed, in some countries pupils don't get an education. We are really lucky.* Another pupil indicated that *teachers tell us everyone is equal in class.*

The pupils also identified names of people associated with fighting for people's rights, particularly in relation to education and gender, including Michelle Obama (*Michelle Obama has a charity for girls' rights of education*), Malala (*Malala fought for girls education in other countries*), Rosa Parks, Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King.

Many people don't get a good education in Ireland or in other countries. People fight for an education and want to go to school. Michelle Obama has a campaign to give girls an education. I think education is worth fighting for.

Pollution and Littering

I think we should not pollute the world because that causes climate change.

The pupils indicated that learning about pollution and littering (*stop littering, reduce, reuse, recycle*) in school helped them understand how to make the world a better and fairer place. Indeed one pupil highlighted the main issue with *pollution – it makes the world too hot but if we limit driving and gas coming out of chimneys it wouldn't happen.*

Racism/Bullying and Safety

No racism because we are all people.

The pupils highlighted the importance of *stopping racism* and we should have *no racism because we are all people*. Addressing *safety* and *bullying* including *cyberbullying* in order to make the world a better place was also highlighted with one pupil suggesting *stop bullying – you can do a poster which people will read and they might stop!!!*

¹⁹ Recorded in field notes by researchers

Charity Work

Help people in the community

Learning about charity (including *charity fundraising – more of these for charities that really need it*) in school helped the pupils understand how to make the world a better and fairer place. The pupils gave examples of how they engage with charity in school including *jersey day*, *Bóthar – raise money by cake sales – sponsors a cow*, *free dress day – goes to charity*, *lost clothes- send to St Vincent de Paul* and *give money to charity for animals*.

Using Your Voice and Building Confidence

You learn to use your voice.

The pupils indicated that they learned to build confidence and to use their voice in school, with direct reference to the student council, which contributed to making their world a better and fairer place. The pupils highlighted their learning around using their voice, predominantly through the *student council*, and *building confidence* in school. Comments made by the pupils at the tables also indicated that they were encouraged to *give our opinion* while student councils *do projects to make school better*.

Protecting the Environment and Biodiversity

Biodiversity – conserve energy, save our animals.

The pupils indicated that learning about biodiversity (*Biodiversity- different types of plants and animals. Bio – short for biology – knowing to take care of the environment*) helped them understand how to make the world a better place. Learning about taking care of the environment in school was also seen as important including *making more wind turbines – helps environment*, *reading books about cleaning the environment*, *grow plants more often – any chance you get*, *saving water- turn off taps when you are done*, and *saving electricity – turn off the light when you are finished in the room*. The pupils indicated an awareness of issues of *deforestation* including that *we know limits on deforestation and that animals lose homes and it causes landslides*. Engaging with *green schools* was also identified by the pupils as an important way to learn about how to make the world a better and fairer place. Comments²⁰ made by the pupils about their

²⁰ Recorded in researcher field notes

engagement with green schools included *we go around picking up rubbish in the area and we have a box for batteries and we bring in our used batteries to recycle.*

Health, Well-Being and Being Active

Well-being - positive emotions – better mood

The pupils indicated that learning about *Active Schools (we have an active school committee), well-being (positive emotions-better mood, mindfulness) and health (running and exercise, medicines and doctors – keep healthy)* in school helped them understand how to make the world better and fairer. This included improving health and well-being. Pupils suggested that *mindfulness* provides them with an opportunity to *stand around our classroom and get to know each other.* Circle time was seen as *a time when you express your feelings* with one pupil suggesting that *we were learning about well-being and positive emotions and how to improve our well-being.*

Subject and Curricular Areas

The pupils identified additional subject and curricular areas across which they learn about making the world a better and fairer place (Table 7).

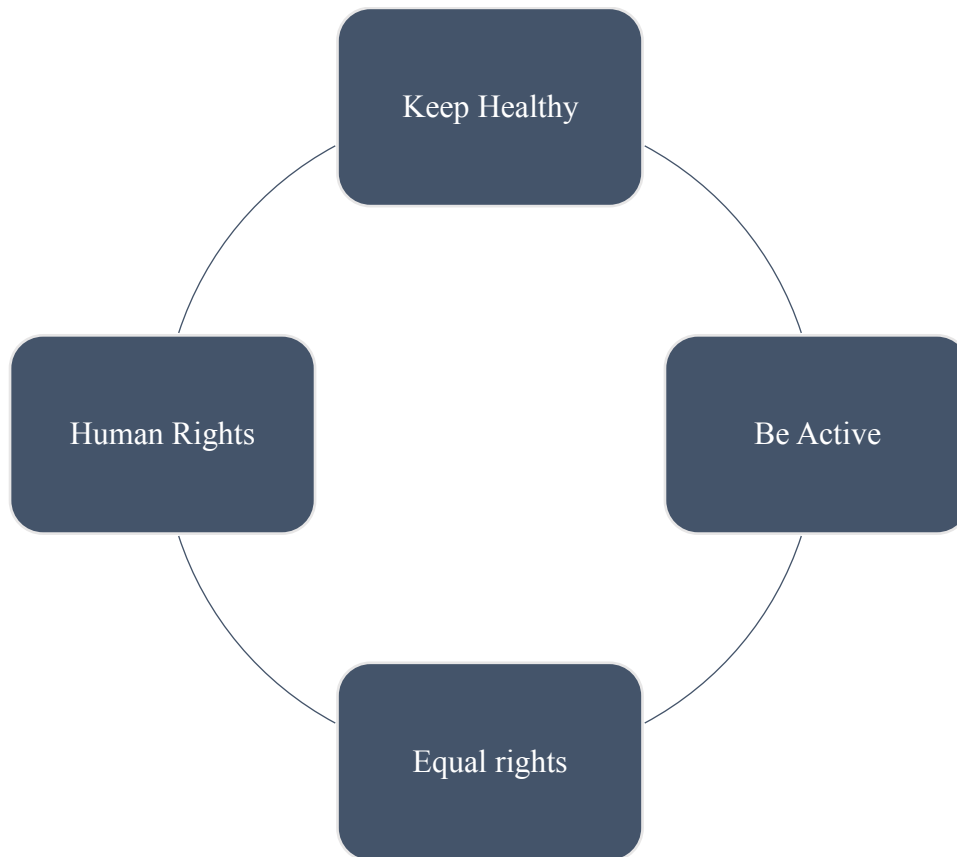
Table 7 Subject and Curricular Areas - Thematic Overview

Subject/Curricular Area	Number of Mentions	Subject/Curricular Area	Number of Mentions
Art	2	Religion	3
Reading	6	Maths	2
Drama	4	P.E.	3
Debating.	1	Circle Time	3
Socialising. Helps form opinions.			

How You Use Them in Your Everyday Life

The pupils indicated how they apply their learning in co-curricular activities to making the world a better and fairer place in their everyday lives (Figure 13).

Figure 13 Co-Curricular Learning and ESD in Pupils' Daily Lives



Keep(ing) healthy and be(ing) active was important in pupils' everyday lives. They believed they had greater understanding of *equal rights* (including *some girls don't get to vote in foreign countries*) and *human rights* (*everybody has a right to speak*).

Section 3 Post-Primary Students' Experience of Education for Sustainable Development

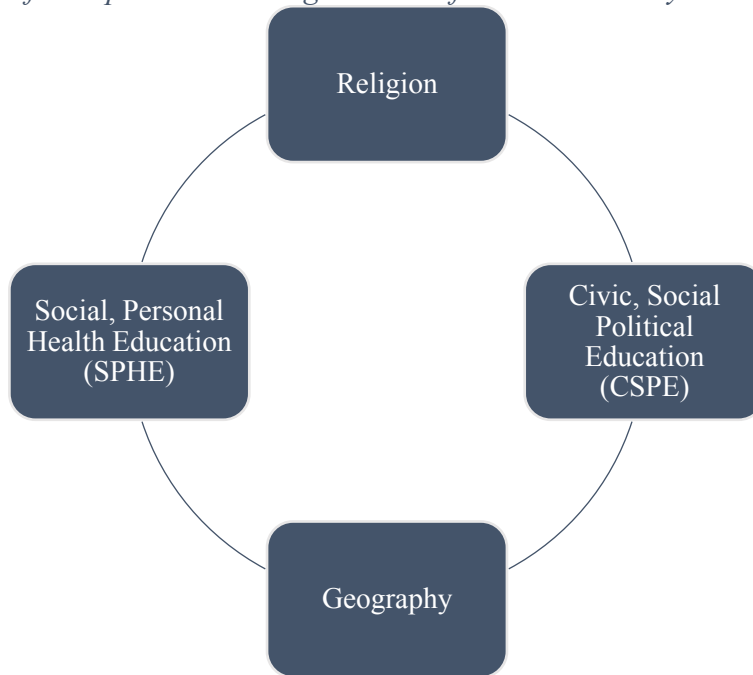
Students were asked to identify the subject and/or times during the school day when they had the opportunity to learn about how to make the world a better and fairer place. The students wrote their ideas on post-its and presented them on the wall. 4 students worked in collaboration with the facilitator to categorise the post-its and identified 4 themes which were discussed at each of the tables during World Café. Table 8 below illustrates the areas identified by students where they have an opportunity to learn about how to make the world a better and fairer place in second level school.

Table 8 Time for Learning about Making the World a Better and Fairer Place Post-Primary School

Time to Learn about ESD	Number of Mentions	Comments
Religion	23	<i>how to respect others treat everyone equally and consequences of war different cultures and morally how to treat others</i>
Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)	19	<i>Concepts - stewardship</i>
Geography	16	
Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)	10	
History	10	
Biology	7	<i>learn about ecology and environment</i>
Science	2	
Chemistry	2	<i>learn about medicine</i>
English	2	
Psychology	2	
Other		
Environmental Studies	1	
Agricultural Studies	1	
Economics	1	<i>Be sensible and cautious with money</i>
Engineering	1	
Construction	1	
Woodwork	1	<i>treat environment well and don't kill loads of trees</i>

Figure 14 illustrates the 4 areas chosen for further discussion at each of the placemats during the World Café by the students.

Figure 14 Areas for Exploration during World Café – Post-Primary School



Religion

Things You Learn

The students identified Religion as an important subject for exploring how to make the world a better and fairer place. Figure 15 illustrates the emergent themes from the exploration of Religion with the students during the World Café.

Figure 15 Religion and ESD - Things You Learn in Post-Primary School



Themes identified included war, religious diversity, morality, abortion, racism, euthanasia, and mental health.

Morality and Ethics

“The Global golden rule” – treat others as you want to be treated

The students identified how they explored morality and ethics through their learning in Religion class and how this has impacted on their understanding regarding making the world a better and fairer place. Learning about *morals* and *how to be a better person – could be made more interesting*. In exploring morality the students explored issues of war and conflict. One young person indicated that *in religion we learn about war, what the causes of war are and why people feel they need to use violence in order to get their point across. Also the other side of it, we learn that some people don't believe in violence*. Indeed the complexity of war was highlighted by one student who stated that *all religions promote love and so hate crimes affect religious people but is not inflicted by them*. Learning about *religious violence in N. Ireland* and *bringing an end to*

conflict –Middle East and Northern Ireland in Religion provides students with an opportunity to explore how to make the world a better and fairer place.

Racism and Rights

Discrimination & learning the understanding of others

Learning about issues of racism and rights in Religion contributed to students' understanding of how to make the world a fairer place. One student *watched Malala about standing up for your right to girl education*, while others indicated that covering topics such as *discrimination and learning the understanding of others* and *racism* meant students could explore fairness in the world.

Controversial Societal Issues

Abortion (it's very biased though)

Exploring more controversial societal issues such as *death row, euthanasia* and *abortion* in religion allows the students to explore ways to make the world better. However, one student indicated that teaching around these topics is *very biased though*.

Additional Topics

The different religions view on the LGBTQ +community

Religion allowed the students to explore issues related to mental health (*spiritual health, meditation*), religious diversity (including *Islam, Syrian White Helmets, taste Jewish food at Passover* and *science vs religion*) and sexual minorities (*same sex marriage and LGBTQ+ community*) which contributes to their understanding of how to make the world more equitable and fair.

Recommendations for what students would like to learn in Religion

racism, different religions, how that can affect people and relationships, what are the consequences of certain actions in different countries, effects of drugs in the body and mind, sexual education, controversial topics like abortion

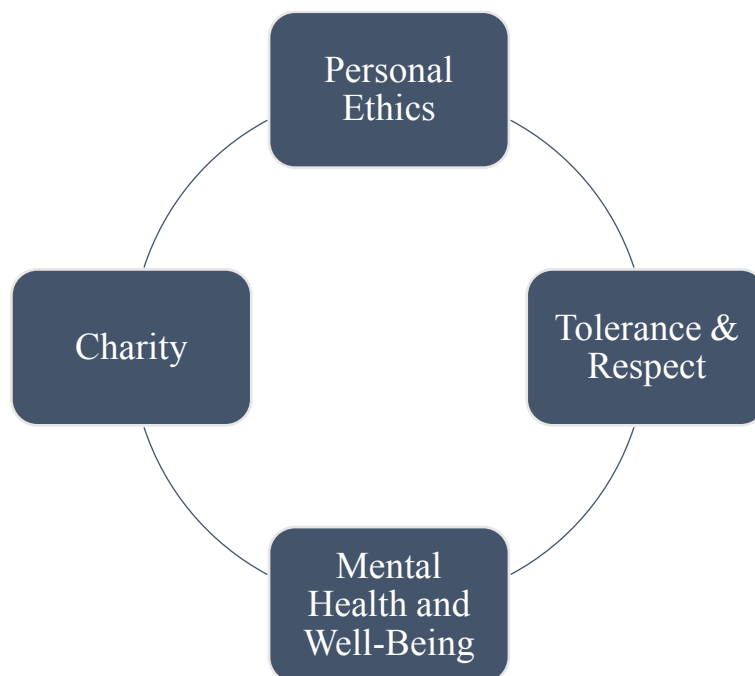
Issues students would like to see addressed in Religion in order to explore how to make the world a better and fairer place include *mental health (where to receive help on this! Bullying and the consequences of this)*, *sexual education (LGBTQ+ and learn/educate students on teenage pregnancy/consequences of not using contraception)*, *abortion*, and cultural/religious diversity

(cultural traditions, different world religions views on contemporary topics and about current war taking place in the world caused by religion (Middle East/Refugee Crises)).

How You Use Them in Your Everyday Life

The students indicated how they apply what they have learned in Religion about making the world a better and fairer place in their everyday lives (Figure 16).

Figure 16 Religion and ESD in Students' Daily Lives



Students apply their learning in Religion to their everyday lives in areas such as personal ethics, tolerance and respect, mental health and well-being, and charity. Learning about personal ethics helps students *know what's right what's wrong, learn about personal morals and helps you practice discussion*. One student suggested that learning Religion made them *more aware of the laws and the options you have when it comes to abortion*. Students believed that learning Religion taught them tolerance and respect which they apply in their daily lives. This included *more understanding about different religions and cultures, respecting others no matter the religious beliefs, you learn to understand people that every person is equal and not to judge people on their religion, race or looks*. Furthermore, Religion contributes to *deeper knowledge of the outside world, while also realising that religion shouldn't play a part in war, terrorism etc. and that violence isn't the answer if you want to tackle the issue*. Religion also contributes to students'

understanding of mental health and well-being in their daily lives including *help(ing) find balance, spiritual, mental health* and *how helping is greatly appreciated by the recipients*. Religion also teaches the students about charity, something they practice in their everyday lives including *building schools, building houses for people in Africa, fundraising for charity* such as *Trócaire, GOAL* and *Niall Mallon trust*.

Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)

Things You Learn

The students identified CSPE as a subject in which they learn about making the world a better and fairer place (Figure 17).

Figure 17 CSPE and ESD - Things You Learn in Post-Primary School



Topics identified by the students, from most to least mentioned, included political systems, equality, human rights and environmental awareness.

Human Rights and Equality

Human Rights + interdependence teaches you about how being tolerant of different cultures + nationalities can work to your advantage

Learning about *human rights* and *children's rights* in CSPE allows the students to explore how to make the world a better and fairer place. Encompassed within this are issues pertaining to *interdependence* which *teaches you about how being tolerant of different cultures and nationalities can work to your advantage*. The students made specific reference to *the declaration of human rights* and *the UN convention of the rights of a pupil* as topics they explore in CSPE. Issues relating to *human dignity and equality* (such as *disability, races, settled people, travelling people and treating everyone equal*) were highlighted.

Politics and Political Systems

System of government, electoral process

Exploring politics and the political system in CSPE allowed the students explore how to make the world a better and fairer place. Within this, the students emphasised the importance of *EU parliament, the political system in Ireland, political ideas, representations in the E.U.E., systems of government* and the *electoral process*. Other topics covered included learning *how the county council does politics, how to vote-what polling stations look like/how they work* and engaging in *mock elections*. The students also identified law as an important topic when considering how to make the world a better and fairer place. Indeed, one student indicated that *law and democracy should be a Leaving Cert exam subject*. Learning about *citizenship* and *democracy* also contributed to students' understand of politics and the political system.

Additional Topics

Stewardship- looking after the planet

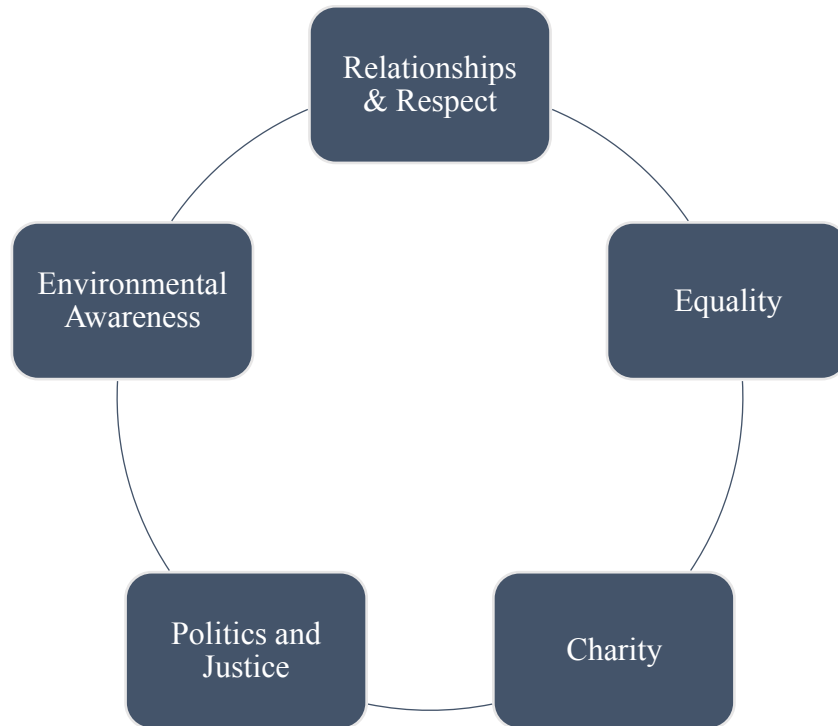
The students identified additional topics covered in CSPE which helped them explore how to make the world a better and fairer place including environmental awareness, charity and sustainability. These included *morality (the awareness of things you say/do to people and what's right and wrong), mental health, sustainable development/envirnonments, environmental awareness (stewardship) and charity (the importance of charities, homelessness and aid given to war zones)*.

How You Use Them in Your Everyday Life

Being able to fight your own cause with words, knowing your rights, knowing what you can and can't do

The students indicated how learning about how to make the world a better and fairer place in CSPE has impacted on their everyday lives (Figure 18).

Figure 18 CSPE and ESD in Students' Daily Lives



Themes identified by students included relationships and respect, equality, charity, politics and justice and environmental awareness. The students indicated that their learning regarding relationships and respect in CSPE is applied in their everyday lives. Integral to this is *accepting everyone, gender, sexuality, background*. Students commented that it *taught me compassion, humanity, justice, how we treat people and not to judge people*. CSPE taught *how we perceived disability and race, as well as what is right and wrong in life*. It also encouraged them to be an *active citizen and to know what you are entitled to*. Furthermore, it encouraged the students to *form your own opinion and not follow others*.

Students indicated that they are more aware of equality and rights in their daily lives having engaged with CSPE in school. This included *being able to fight your own cause with words,*

knowing your rights, knowing what you can and can't do. It created awareness around world issues (Human rights) teaches you to treat people equally while also educat(ing) people on what people deserve. CSPE also contributed to students' engagement with charity. Examples of engaging with charity included creat(ing) a group in school that is linked with our local S.V.P, do charity collections in schools, help people in need e.g. elderly people, raising money for charity and understanding that there were many people less well off than me.

Learning about politics and justice has also impacted on the students' lives as *in the future more likely to vote as they know how to vote, while also knowing that my vote is relevant and can be heard. CSPE can help nurture interest in politics whereby if you enjoyed politics part, it can lead to an interest in politics in current and past Ireland while understanding politics and knowing when people are in power are acting unfairly is important in the students' daily lives. Having an awareness about justice from a trip to jail, learned about the set up-what happens and sentences means that you learned about the life in jail, what your options are in it and once you get out.*

The students also emphasised the important role CSPE had in creating an awareness of environmental issues which has impacted on their daily lives. Embedded within this learning is an awareness around *respect(ing) the environment, not polluting our environment and don't litter or try reduce your carbon footprint. CSPE also taught the students interdependence-to help people to be more self-sufficient and how we should treat our planet and other people. Furthermore it made me consider any decision I made and how it affected my environment.*

The students made suggestions about how CSPE can be improved in school. It was suggested to *carry CSPE to Leaving Cert! Alternatively, make Politics a subject in all schools!!!! Indeed it should be for mature age group 5th and 6th year as people would take more from it. However, one young person suggested that it needs to be made into a non-leaving cert exam subject as human rights/democracy/stewardship etc. are always needed to be refreshed in students minds. Indeed one young person stated that it's probably the most important subject in school but it's not treated seriously.*

Geography

Things You Learn

The students identified Geography as a curricular area within which they learned about making the world a better and fairer place. Figure 19 illustrates the main themes identified by the students including, from most to least mentions, populations, climate change, environmental awareness, development education, and inequality.

Figure 19 Geography and ESD - Things You Learn in Post-Primary School



Environment

How the weather has an impact on the world - Global warming

The students indicated that they learned about the *environment* in Geography which helped them explore how to make the world a better and fairer place. Issues they explored included *carbon footprint, use of CFCs + harmful substances/sprays and global warming due to deforestation, burning of fossil fuels, CFCs*. Being aware of climate change also engaged the students in learning about how to make the world a better place. Topics covered included *the climate and economy, how to use renewable resources and fossil fuels and how the weather has an impact on the world-*

global warming. One young person recommended making *the effects of global warming and biodiversity more explicit* in Geography. Another young person also suggested to *actually teach people about global warming, impact of warming on the environment, wasting plastic, burning tires etc. How serious it actually is and what can happen if we don't do anything about it*. Sustainable development was also taught to the students in Geography including *world wise global schools-informal way of learning about sustainable development*, and ecotourism such as *Tourist Attractions! How places like the Burren should be respected as it provides a variety of flora and fauna*. Other topics related to ESD and taught in Geography included *pollution (Learn about local environment e.g. rivers and how easily people may pollute the environment)* and *green schools*.

One student commented²¹ that they developed an *awareness of how bad it is in the world – deforestation and pollutants in the environment* in Geography. Another suggested that they engaged in *Green schools committee* while one student stated that *my geography teacher is an eco-freak. She set up an environmental club*.

Two students critiqued the content of the ESD content taught in Geography with one student stating that *it is very wishy washy. Recycle a carton of milk and the environment will be grand* while another believed that the *biggest pollution is farming industry. They don't tell you to stop eating meat. It's there but it is tokenistic*.

Development Education and Inequality

Tired aid! Aid with terms and conditions that mean that struggling third world countries give more to first world countries than they get.

The students highlighted their engagement with development education in Geography indicating that they covered topics such as the *exploitation of poor countries such as Congo, Uganda and the lack of food and aid in 3rd world countries*. One young person indicated that they learned about *industries - how workers in developing countries can be mistreated. How industries can misuse local resources and destroy the earth*. Another suggested that they learned that *in poor countries some pupils will never have the opportunity to go to school. Different places have different culture + religions so pupils might not be allowed learn about certain topics*. When studying about *core and peripheral areas in India* one student indicated they learned that *they don't have the resources*

²¹ Recorded in the field notes by researchers

that we have in Ireland such as education. They also have many shanty towns, slums and pollution. A comment made by one young person indicated that Geography taught them to help the poor people in order to make the world a better and fairer place. Further to this exploration of development education was learning about aid, including bilateral aid. One student referred to aid as tired aid! Aid with terms and conditions that mean that struggling third world countries give more to first world countries than they get. This learning was embedded within a framework of inequality including inequality in the workplace and case studies on economical inequality.

Additional Topics

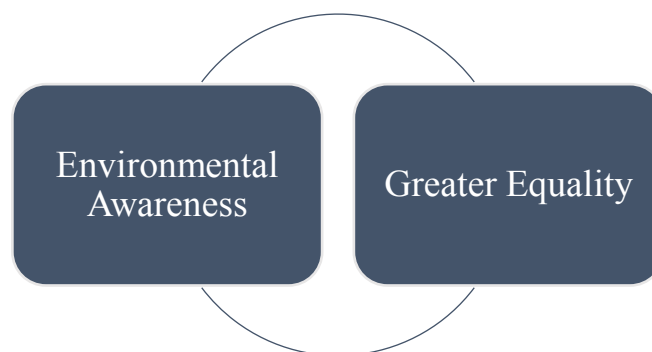
How the percentage of population affects the country.

Additional topics relating to making the world a better and fairer place and covered within Geography according to the students included issues pertaining to *charity*, including *Fairtrade* and *population* such as *population density, overpopulation and how countries deal with it, and population change factors, health services, food, natural disasters, educational services.*

How You Use Them in Your Everyday Life

The students identified how they apply their learning in Geography about making the world a better and fairer place to their everyday lives (Figure 20).

Figure 20 Geography and ESD in Students' Daily Lives



Two themes were identified as environmental awareness and greater equality. Learning about the environment in Geography meant that the students could *be mindful of how much fuel you use for heat, trying not to use sprays, be more aware about saving energy and be more aware of where you put your rubbish, how often you run water in your house, light the fire.* It also helps to inform

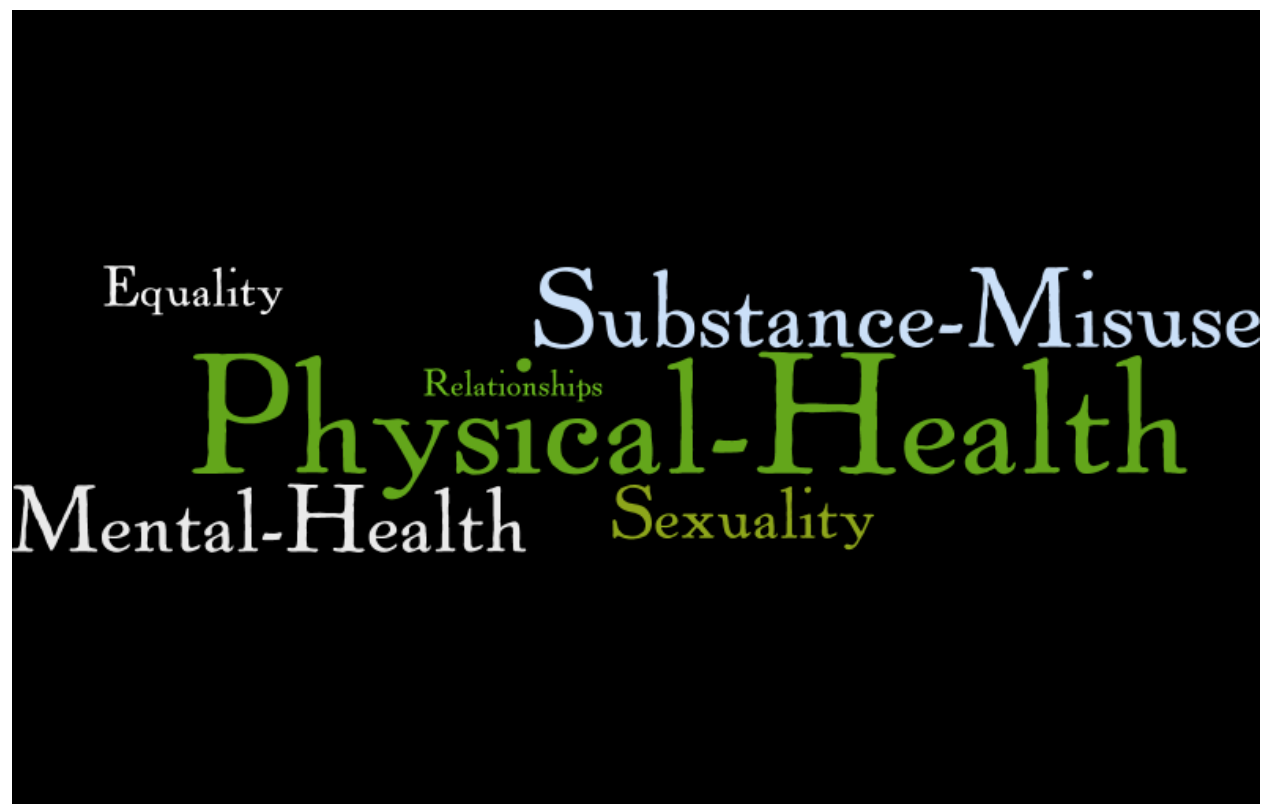
important choices like the land which you purchase, while creating an awareness of biodiversity, recycling, reducing carbon footprint and being mindful of other people and their environment. Students also indicated that their learning in Geography has impacted on how they understand greater equality in their everyday lives. This included greater understanding of how there are inequalities about men and women in the workplace, learning about places with economical inequalities and learning about different housing types e.g. homeless housing, social housing. Addressing inequalities in their daily lives was also indicated including using fair-trade products, give to charity when possible and be grateful for your life you have in Ireland.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

Things You Learn

SPHE as an important subject where they can explore how to make the world a fairer and better place. Figure 21 illustrates the themes identified by the students, from most to least mentions, including physical health, mental health, substance misuse and sexuality.

Figure 21 SPHE and ESD - Things You Learn in Post-Primary School



Mental and Physical Health

Depression and self-harm-told about it but not taught about it

SPHE allows the students to explore ways of improving their mental and physical health, making the world a better and fairer place. Issues related to mental health explored in SPHE include *suicide, depression and self-harm*, and *coping with stress*. When learning about physical health in SPHE, students explored issues related to *keeping fit and healthy, healthy eating, hygiene, protection against diseases and pregnancy*.

Comments²² made by the students included that *a lot of it's just hygiene*. One student suggested that they learned about *coping mechanisms for stress* while another stated that *we were told to go to the gym for stress relief*. Another student stated that *we did a lot of classwork on mindfulness*. Dealing with more sensitive topics was seen by one student as problematic as *depression and self-harm – they (the teachers) do it because they have to but they're uncomfortable doing it*.

Relationships, Sexuality and Gender

Relationships – good and toxic

Issues explored in SPHE, according to the students, include *relationships (good and toxic as well as bullying-how it actually impacts people)* and *sexuality (including consent, learnt how to say no, STDs, and LGBTQ-different but equal)*. Comments made by the students about their engagement in the topic of relationships, sexuality and gender included that there is *a lot on consent – can't force anyone to do anything*, while issues related to the *LGBT community and accept(ing) your sexuality* are also explored in SPHE.

Additional Topics

Peer education – Peers are trained to teach their class about alcohol and substance abuse.

Additional topics identified by students where issues related to making the world a better and fairer place can be explored in SPHE include equality and substance misuse. Students believed that learning about *equality (including gender roles and what's socially accepted)* and substance misuse (such as *alcohol and drug abuse, and drink driving*) helped them understand how to make the world a better and fairer place. One student suggested that *it's nice to be able to talk about*

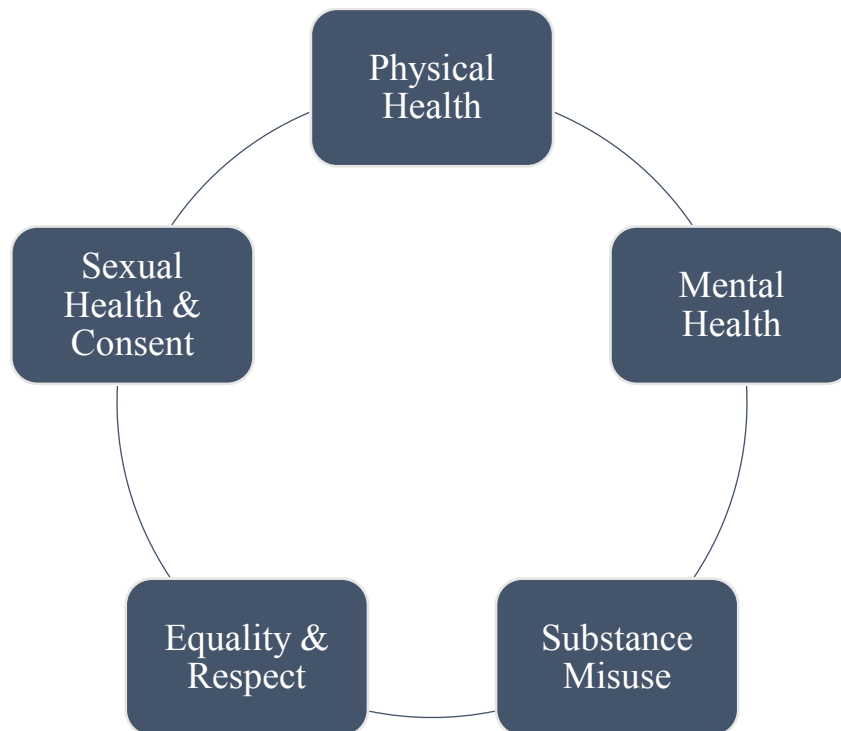
²² Recorded in the field notes by researchers

equality – any teacher just does it while another indicated that they engaged in a workshop on different but equal. In our school people have been different since that.

How You Use Them in Your Everyday Life

The students indicated how what they have learned in SPHE can be applied in their everyday lives to make the world a better and fairer place (Figure 22).

Figure 22 SPHE and ESD in Students' Daily Lives



The students indicated how they applied their learning about mental and physical health in order to make their daily lives better. This included *exercise, eat healthy and breathing exercises* for physical health and *go to gym-stress relief and not spreading gossip-mental health*. One young person indicated that *coping with stress helps with everyday stress and anxiety* while another emphasised the importance of *not (being) scared of your feelings*. Being able to deal with issues of substance misuse was also a skill learned in SPHE including *don't do hard stuff "snort stuff"* and being *more aware of drinks being spiked, units allowed, where you can drink*.

The students also indicated that their learning in relation to equality and respect in SPHE impacted on their daily lives. Issues explored included having *more respect because of equality, people do*

not judge LGBTQ people as much as they used to and sexuality is more than a label. Learning in SPHE means that you are more open for different types of people with specific focus on teaching others tolerance of other people. One young person stated that SPHE acknowledges that females can be perpetrators of a crime, those men can be victims of a female abuser and that there shouldn't be a gender bias in law/politics/career or society. Each of these were perceived to help students understand how to make the world a better and fairer place.

Teaching students about sexual health and consent in SPHE was perceived to impact on their understanding of how to make their lives better. *SPHE teaches people that even though you may not be friends with someone you should look out for them-in terms of giving consent. Students also applied learning from SPHE related to issues such as saying no, safe sex lives, contraception and sexual abuse in their daily lives.*

Comments²³ made by the students about SPHE included that *it tells you how to be in society and you're more open for different types of people. However, SPHE can be seen as a doss subject and in many ways it depends on what your teacher wants to do. Subsequently, if your school is conservative or religious there are things they won't do.*

Three students also indicated how they believed the teaching of CSPE could be improved in school including *teach(ing) LGBT History, having a state standard sex education not influenced by school ethos and giving people the option to use gender neutral pronouns in school.*

²³ Recorded in field notes by the researchers

Section 4 Pupil and Student Recommendations

To conclude the consultation, and to consolidate the discussions at each table during World Café, the pupils and students were encouraged to approach the recommendation wall and indicate what they would like to learn in school to make the world a fairer and better place (1) for their friends at home and abroad, (2) for their environment and (3) for human rights. The following section outlines the recommendations made by the pupils and students under each of these headings.

For Friends at Home and Abroad

Pupil Recommendations

The pupils made recommendations on what they would like to learn about making the world a fairer and better place for their friends at home and abroad (Table 9).

Table 9 Pupil Recommendations – Learning about Making the World a Fairer and Better Place for Friends at Home and Abroad

Recommendation	Number of Mentions
<i>To have a pen pal</i>	7
<i>To learn more languages</i>	2
<i>Learn about diseases</i>	2
<i>Stop wars</i>	2
<i>Help</i>	2
<i>Climate Change</i>	1
<i>Geography</i>	1
<i>Sending videos to countries around the world</i>	1

Student Recommendations

The students identified three broad topics they would like to learn about in order to explore how to make the world a fairer and better place for their friends at home and abroad. The first theme was concerned with *law* (3 mentions), specifically to learn *different laws in other countries and what we can learn and take from them*. The second theme related to *other cultures* (4 mention) and *what customs other countries have and how they live as well as about how religion and culture are two different things. And the way they influence society and the way people think*. The third theme focussed on rights (3 mentions) with the students indicating they would like to learn about *women's rights, LGBT rights and history and rights in different countries*. Other areas the students

would like to explore included *the different perspectives on contemporary issues in other countries, hav(ing) respect for everyone and everyone is entitled to their own opinion and way of life and to learn about the countries who suffer from themselves (e.g. Syria)*. One young person suggested *hav(ing) speakers from different groups to talk*.

For Human Rights

Pupil Recommendations

It only matters what your personality is, it doesn't matter what gender you are, what colour you are, or what abilities you have, everyone is good at different things

Table 10 illustrates the suggestions made by the pupils in relation to what they would like to learn about making the world a fairer and better place for human rights.

Table 10 Pupil Recommendations – Learning About Improving Human Rights

Recommendation	Number of Mentions
<i>Equal Rights</i>	5
<i>Fairness</i>	3
<i>Rights for girls</i>	2
<i>Other suggestions</i>	1
<i>No litter</i>	
<i>That people stop racism</i>	
<i>I would like to learn different languages!!!</i>	
<i>I think an education is worth fighting for</i>	
<i>That people with disabled pupils should get more children's allowance</i>	
<i>To be glad to go to school</i>	
<i>Everyone should be able to get a vote</i>	
<i>We should learn more about our rights and policies that we could use in our lives when we're older</i>	
<i>Politics</i>	
<i>It only matters what your personality is, it doesn't matter what gender you are, what colour you are, or what abilities you have, everyone is good at different things</i>	

Student Recommendations

The most mentioned suggestion by the students regarding what they would like to learn about human rights centred around learning in Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) and Sex

Education (6 mentions each). The students indicated that they would like to see *CSPE for LC²⁴ (optional) x3 x2 x infinity (preach!)* while *sex education* got equal weighting. The students also indicated that they would like to learn *more about what your rights actually are* particularly in relation to placing *more emphasis on Amnesty International and UDHR! (Universal Declaration of Human Rights)* (5 mentions). One student suggested that *Human rights are for ALL Humans no matter what*. Additional areas for exploration highlighted by the students included *laws in other countries, death row, euthanasia, more meditation, how to deal with things that are going to happen to everyone eventually e.g. grief, heartbreak – how to move on, LGBTQ+, gender equality and discrimination*.

For the Environment

Pupil Recommendations

Pupil recommendations for topics they would like to learn about making the world a fairer and better place for the environment are illustrated in Table 11 below.

Table 11 Pupil Recommendations – Learning About Improving the Environment

Recommendation	Number of Mentions
<i>Recycling and littering</i>	8
<i>Renewable energy</i>	6
<i>Pollution</i>	3
<i>Walk more</i>	3
<i>Other suggestions</i>	1
<i>No messing</i>	
<i>Smoking</i>	
<i>Climate change</i>	
<i>To discover how to make fuel out of salt water and pine needles and leaves</i>	
<i>Make more trees</i>	

Student Recommendations

The world is for everyone and everything in the future and present so be more careful and respect the world we live in

In order to learn about making the environment a better place the students indicated they would like to explore issues related to the environment (5 mentions) (such as *environment club, how to*

²⁴ LC refers to Leaving Certificate

actually help the environment-actions to take and to learn how forming dams etc. effect the environment) and pollution (2 mentions) (including understanding of pollution and pollution in our seas and rivers). Additional issues recommended for inclusion in ESD for the environment included learn(ing) about our government's response to Third World issues, learn more about deforestation and how to reduce your carbon footprint yourself with one young person suggesting to have a class in school just about protecting the planet.

Appendices

Appendix 1 About the Report Authors

Dr Deirdre McGillicuddy is Lecturer in Education in Marino Institute of Education and is involved in assisting with the implementation of the Development and InterCultural Education (DICE) project in the College. She currently teaches about policy and practice impacting on children's lives and has particular interest in the areas of sociology of childhood and research methodologies with children and young people. She has worked on a number of research projects exploring children and young people's experience of their lives, including participatory research, and has experience collaborating with the DCYA (DCYA). She has also published in the area of teacher effectiveness, pedagogy and children's rights.

Dr Malgosia Machowska-Kosciak, research assistant, is Lecturer in Sociology in Marino Institute of Education and has previously conducted longitudinal research with young immigrants in Ireland. She has experience in the area of children's participation, language acquisition and socialisation. She has also been involved in international research networks and projects concerning students and minority pupils.

Appendix 2 Consultation Methodology Overview

Consultation with 8-12 year old children on ESD

11.00 Games

11.20 Short explanation of Education for Sustainable Development

11.30 Open Space Post-it session

Very short definition is placed on a big poster on the wall.

Question: In what part of your school day do you learn about these things?

Each child given four post-its

11.40 Categorisation of post-its

12.00 World Café Placemat session on each category/subject area

20 minutes on first placemat

10 minutes on each of four additional placemats

1.00 Close of consultation

Consultation with 13-17 year old young people on ESD

2.00 Games

2.20 Short explanation of Education for Sustainable Development

2.30 Open Space Posit-it session

Very short definition is placed on a big poster on the wall.

Question: In what subject areas do you learn about these things?

Each young person given four post-its

2.40 Categorisation of post-its

3.00 Open Space Placemat session on each subject area

Participants move from table to table

4.00 Close of consultation

Short definition:

Education for Sustainable Development is about you learning to make the world a fairer and better place

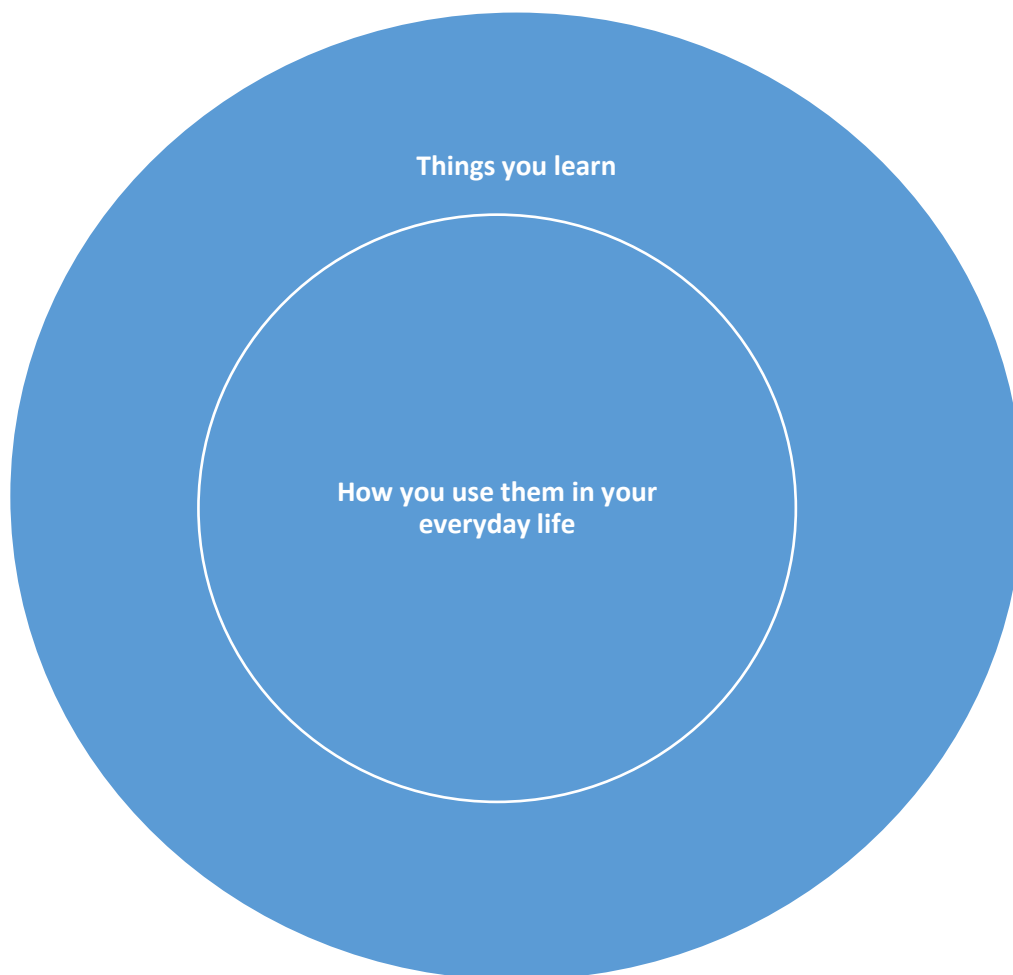
Walls of ideas:

What would you like to learn in school to make the world a fairer and better place?

- for our environment
- for our friends at home and abroad
- for human rights

PLACEMAT DESIGN

Participants link the things they learn with the way they use them in their everyday lives with arrows



Appendix 3 Methods for Recording and Documenting the Consultative Process

The vision laid out by the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*²⁵, states

Our vision is to make Ireland the best small country in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future.

Integral to this is the realisation of children's rights, as laid out in Article 12 of the UNCRC²⁶, to have a voice in decisions that affect them, particularly in relation to their local communities, schools and wider formal and informal education system²⁷. The DCYA Citizen Participation Unit have been integral to shifting Irish policy landscape to recognise children are citizens of today and not just adults of tomorrow²⁸ by ensuring that children and young people in Ireland have a say in decisions impacting on all aspects of their lives. It is within this policy context that the collaborative consultation between the DES (DES) and the DCYA (DCYA) was undertaken.

The role of the researchers within this consultation was to compile this report using the data generated by the children and young people at the consultative workshops²⁹. Reporting on the consultative process involved observation and synthesis of the data generated. The role of the researchers was defined clearly at the beginning of the consultation with children and young people so they were aware of our role in compiling the report. The children and young people were aware that they were being overtly observed³⁰ while also allowing for interaction with the researcher throughout the consultative workshop.

The following approach was adopted by the research team in compiling the data for this report on pupil and student experience of Education for Sustainable Development:

²⁵ DCYA (DCYA) (2014) *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, The national policy framework for children and young people 2014-2020*, Dublin: DCYA

²⁶ States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child (Article 12 UNCRC)

²⁷ DCYA (DCYA) (2014) *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, The national policy framework for children and young people 2014-2020*, Dublin: DCYA

²⁸ <http://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=%2Fdocuments%2FChildYouthParticipation%2Faboutus.htm&mn=chik&nID=1>

²⁹ Details on the methodology employed at the consultations are outlined above

³⁰ John D Brewer (2003) 'Observation, overt and covert' in Robert L. Miller & John D. Brewer (eds) *The A-Z of Social Research* (London: Sage) pp. 213-217.

1. Field research was recorded using field notes and photographs in order to document the consultative process, the data generated and to note any comments made the children and young people when they were exploring topics at the World Café.
2. Data generated and recorded on post-its, the placemats and the Recommendation Wall was collected and synthesised in preparation for this report.

Analysis and presentation of the data are organised under two themes which shaped the structuring of the consultation day.

1. The first theme explores pupil and student learning in school related to Education for Sustainable Development, defined as making the world a better and fairer place.
2. Secondly the children and young people were asked to identify how this learning impacted on their everyday lives.

The data generated were transcribed and organised into a thematic framework using MAXQDA. In order to preserve the authenticity of the children and young people's voice(s) and to acknowledge the complexities involved in framing what they say³¹ the researcher adopted a reflexive listening approach³² to attempt to overcome over-interpretation of the data. The report is structured around the themes identified through the collation of the data generated by the children and young people attending the two consultations.

³¹ James A (2007) Giving voice to children's voices: Practices and problems, pitfalls and potentials. *American Anthropologist* 109(2): 261–272.

³² Hohti, R., & Karlsson, L. (2014). Lollipop stories: Listening to children's voices in the classroom and narrative ethnographical research. *Childhood*, 21(4), 548-562. doi:10.1177/0907568213496655

Appendix 4 Comparative Overview: Primary and Post-Primary Curricular Areas and ESD

This appendix provides a comparative overview of pupil and student learning in ESD across curricular areas commonly identified at both primary and post-primary school. Religion was identified by both pupils and students as a subject within which issues relating to making the world a better and fairer place were identified (Table 12).

Table 12 Comparative Thematic Overview – Religion and ESD related learning in Primary and Post-Primary School

Religion (Primary Pupils)			Religion (Post-primary Schools)		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub themes</i>	<i>No of Mentions</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub themes</i>	<i>No of Mentions</i>
Equality and Discrimination	Equality	22	Morality and Ethics	Morality	4
	Discrimination	1		War & Conflict	7
	Judgement	4			
Kindness and Sharing	Kindness	10	Racism and Rights	Racism	3
	Sharing	3		Rights	1
	Helping	1			
Sacrifice and Appreciation	Appreciation	2	Controversial Societal Issues	Death Rows	3
	Sacrifice	7		Euthanasia	3
				Abortion	4
Friendship and Love	Friendship	15	Additional Topics	Mental Health	3
	Love	12		Religious Diversity	4
				Sexual Minorities	2
Additional Topics	Charity	7			
	Happiness	2			
	Forgiveness	3			
	Sacraments	2			
	Self-Esteem	2			
	Belonging	2			

Geography was also identified by both primary pupils and post-primary students as a subject where they explored issues relation to ESD. Table 13 provides a comparative overview of the themes identified by the pupils and students.

Table 13 Comparative Thematic Overview – Geography and ESD related learning in Primary and Post-Primary School

Geography (Primary Pupils)			Geography (Post-Primary Students)		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub themes</i>	<i>No of Mentions</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub themes</i>	<i>No of Mentions</i>
Climate Change and Weather	Climate Change	14	Environment	Environmental Awareness	6
	Weather	2		Climate Change	6
A Sense of Place – Continents, Countries and Counties	Local Place	12		Sustainable Development	3
	Global Place	2		Pollution	3
War	War	23		Green Schools	1
			Development Education and Inequalities	Development Education	5
Pollution	Pollution	9	Aid	3	
	Recycling	11	Inequality	5	
	Green School	3	Additional Topics	Charity	2
Natural Environmental Features	Volcanoes	2		Population	7
	Natural Disasters	4	Additional Topics	Development Education	5
Additional Topics	Development Education	5		Population and People	9
	Population and People	9		Society	2
	Society	2		Being Active	3
	Being Active	3			

Appendix 5 Thematic Overview: Pupil and Student Experience of ESD in School

Appendix 5 provides an overview of themes identified by the pupils and students where their learning in school focused on issue related to ESD. Table 14 highlights the themes identified by primary school pupils related to ESD within the History and Science curriculum. Both subjects come under the umbrella of Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) within the primary school curriculum.

Table 14 Thematic Overview – History, Science and ESD related learning in Primary School

History (Primary Pupils)			Science (Primary Pupils)		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub themes</i>	<i>No of Mentions</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub themes</i>	<i>No of Mentions</i>
Equality and Rights	Equality	4	Living things	Plants	7
	Rights	2		Animals	4
	Racism	3	The World Around Me	Solar System	21
Conflict and War	1916 Rising	2		Volcanoes	3
	Wars	9		Natural Disasters	1
Specific Periods in History	Vikings	2		Nature	2
	1916 Rising	10		Weather	6
	Famine	7	The Human Body and Health	Human Body	32
	World Wars	3		Being Healthy	30
Protecting the Environment	Littering and Recycling	5		Illness	12
	Conservation	1	The Environment	Environment	9
	Protecting Environment	4		Pollution, Littering & Recycling	5
	Green Schools	1		Transport	3
Additional Topics	Money	3		Technology	4
	Learning from Mistakes	6		Green Schools	1
	Inspiration	2	Natural Disasters	2	
	Transport	6	Additional Topics	Chemistry	4
	Technology	5		Experiments	3
		Electricity		2	

The primary school pupils also identified topics and themes across which they engaged in co-curricular learning related to ESD (Table 15).

Table 15 Thematic Overview – Co-Curricular Learning and ESD in Primary School

Co-Curricular Learning (Primary Pupils)		
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub themes</i>	<i>No of Mentions</i>
Rights and Equality	Children’s rights	5
	Human Rights	4
	Women’s/Girls’ Rights	1
	Equality	5
Pollution and Littering	Pollution	3
	Stop Littering	5
	Recycling	2
Racism/Bullying	Racism	3
	Bullying	5
Charity Work	Charity	5
Using Voice and Building Confidence	Confidence	2
	Using your voice	7
	Safety	5
Protecting the Environment	Biodiversity	2
	Helping the environment	5
	Green Schools	4
	Deforestation	2
Health, Well-being and being Active	Active Schools	3
	Well-being	3
	Health	2
Subject and Curricular Areas	Subjects including Art, Reading, Drama, Religion, Maths, P.E.	24
Additional Topics	Relationships	5
	Food	3

In addition to Religion and Geography, post-primary students identified themes across SPHE and CSPE where ESD related issues were explored (Table 16).

Table 16 Thematic Overview – SPHE, CSPE and ESD related learning at Post-Primary School

SPHE (Post -Primary Students)			CSPE (Post-Primary Students)			
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub themes</i>	<i>No of Mentions</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub themes</i>	<i>No of Mentions</i>	
Mental and Physical Health	Mental Health	5	Human Rights and Equality	Human Rights	13	
	Physical Health	9		Equality	4	
Relationships, Sexuality and Gender	Relationships	2		Politics and Political Systems	Dignity	2
	Sexuality	4			Interdependence	3
Additional Topics	Equality	3	Additional Topics		Political Systems	16
	Substance Misuse	6			Law	4
				Citizenship	1	
				Democracy	1	
				Environmental Awareness	7	
			Charity	3		
			Sustainability	2		
			Mental Health	1		
			Morality	1		