

## Developing a Whole-School Approach to Global Learning

*'We prefer global learning as it's more relevant to us. There's more practical stuff. It's much more interesting.'* Pupil, Headley Park Primary School

The purpose of this document is to:

- explain what a whole-school approach to global learning in the GLP means
- provide a model showing pathways to how a whole-school approach to global learning can be developed, and linked to examples from the GLP whole-school case studies
- outline a set of questions to help schools use this model to further develop their own whole-school approach to global learning.

This document can be used by individual teachers or school leaders and to promote discussion and sharing within Global Learning Programme (GLP) Expert Centre networks. It is aimed at schools that have done some global learning already, but want to increase its range and depth at a whole-school level within (or outside) the GLP.

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### 1) Introduction

The GLP is encouraging schools to take a whole-school approach to global learning. This is because the experience of schools and practitioners suggests that such approaches are key to ensuring that global learning achieves the greatest impact on learners, and as a result, maximise the contribution of global learning towards school improvement.

*'This kind of work motivates and engages pupils, makes them feel that what they are doing in school is worthwhile and valuable, and helps them to grow in confidence.'*

John McNerney, Head Teacher, St Peter's Roman Catholic High School

This guidance is based upon the experiences of the schools featured in the GLP whole-school case studies. These schools have already embedded a whole-school approach to global learning, even though the pathway to achieving such an approach, and the resulting practice, is distinctive and unique for each school.

However, despite this diversity, there are similarities in the development of work in each case which mean common principles and processes may be identified. These have informed a 'model' to help illustrate to other schools the pathways schools could take. This should be considered as a route map with helpful signposts rather than a predetermined path to follow.

*'You feel more immersed in the learning, and then you learn more. You want to delve deeper into the subject.'*

Year 10 pupil, Kingsford Community School

## 2) What does a whole-school approach to global learning mean?

*'It's like ivy that's grown over everything. It's integral to everything.'*

Claire Robins, Head Teacher, Sir John Lawes

Based on the experience of schools and practitioners, a whole-school approach is key to maximising the impact of global learning within the school. It results in pupils developing the full range of [global learning pupil outcomes](#)<sup>1</sup> in deeper ways, because they are exposed to them with more regularity and with more emphasis. By involving all stakeholders, supporting pupil and staff leadership, and connecting to key school priorities, a whole-school approach will also maximise global learning's contribution to school improvement.

But what does a whole-school approach mean? Broadly, it means embedding the key knowledge, skills and values (the global learning pupil outcomes) that enable young people to engage with an interconnected, complex and challenging globalised world holistically throughout the school. Like a whole-school approach to anything, doing this successfully requires elements of the following:

- a vision for global learning in the school, connecting with wider school aims
- a cyclical planning process to reflect on global learning within the school as part of an ongoing development journey
- the use and connecting of different spaces within the school – including the curriculum and other formal or non-formal learning spaces (form time, assemblies, school clubs, etc.)
- the involvement of people across the whole school community – including pupils, staff, parents, governors, and the wider community – and building relationships between them
- a strong leadership of what is being promoted
- the integration of interventions with existing school priorities and staff development.

Doing this will necessarily involve different stakeholders, promote pupil leadership, engage pupils with the curriculum, support skills and values development, help promote critical and participatory teaching approaches, and build relationships with parents and the wider community. Therefore such an approach will support greater outcomes across four core areas of school life: **pupil achievement, teachers' practice, behaviour and relationships, and school leadership**. By impacting on these areas, such approaches will lead to significant contributions to wider school improvement.

*'You hit it from lots of different directions. If you hit internationalism once you might miss, if you hit it six or seven times by different people and different structures in the school, then you'll succeed.'*

Mike Summers, International Dimension Assistant Vice Principal, St Francis of Assisi Secondary School

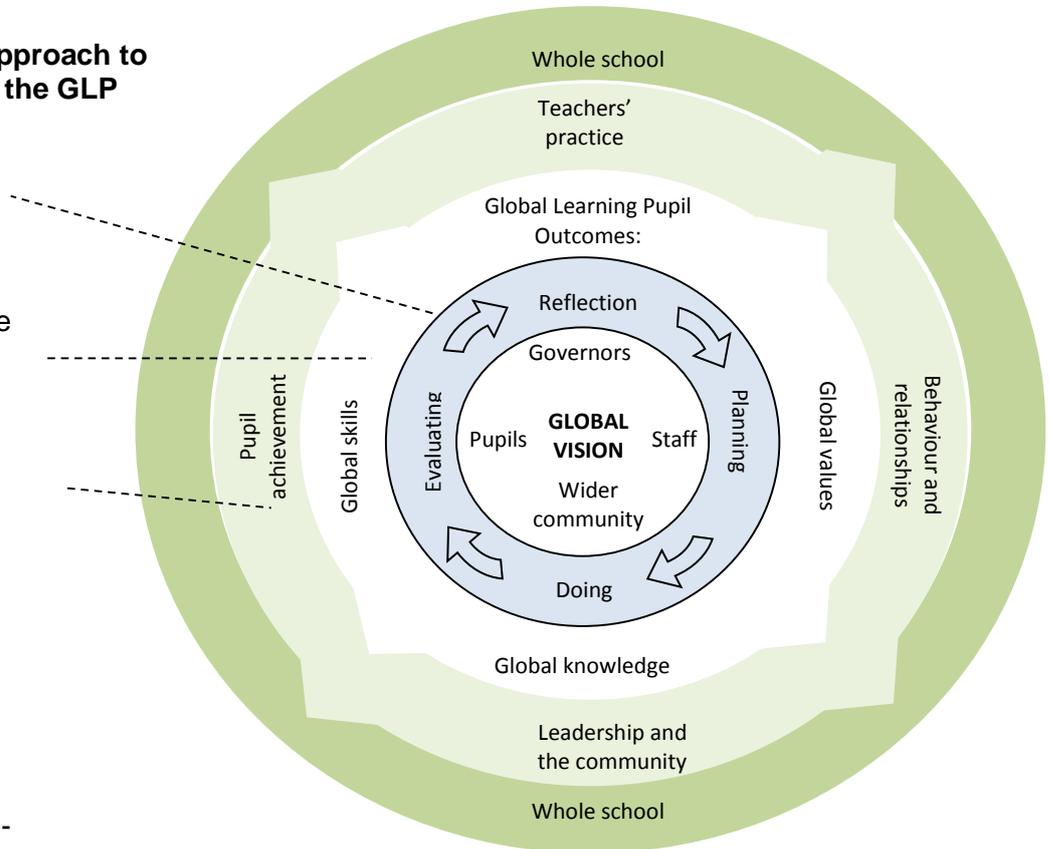
<sup>1</sup> See <http://globaldimension.org.uk/glp/page/10724>

The link between the approach, outcomes and impacts is outlined in Figure 1 below.

*'It helps the staff because you challenge your own ideas about pedagogy and philosophy.'*  
 Laura Shirley, Reception teacher, Woodlands Primary School

**Figure 1:**  
**A whole-school approach to global learning in the GLP**

This links the **approach** (a reflective process with a wider vision, involving key stakeholders) to the **outcomes** with pupils (their knowledge, values and skills) to the resulting **impact** across the school (on pupil achievement, teachers' practice, behaviour and relationships, and leadership and the community). Collectively this represents a whole-school approach.



*'It's been really good for me to come into a school that teaches through this holistic approach... It's also had a big impact on our support staff, bringing them into the curriculum teams and wanting to be part of it.'*  
 Alexa Vickem, Year 4 teacher, Culture Team, Headley Park Primary School

### 3) Pathways to achieving a whole-school approach

Achieving a whole-school approach to global learning is not necessarily easy. When and how it happens depends on a range of contextual and contingent factors unique to an individual school. Examples of schools that have embedded global learning at a whole-school level, illustrated through the GLP case studies, demonstrate this diversity. However, it is possible to draw out some common themes and processes that have taken place in some or all of these schools. These have been used to create a model representing pathways to embedding global learning across the whole school, although each school will chart its own journey.

This is shown in Figure 2 on page 5.

The model shows a process **of repetitive, expanding cyclical growth**. This is achieved through schools taking a key initiative or theme, using certain key processes to work on this and demonstrate success, subsequently involving other key people. This helps reinvest time and resources into work, demonstrate further success and therefore further spread work across the school. We have shown this as the **what**, the **how**, the **why** and the **who** for developing a whole-school approach.

#### The what

This refers to the core things the school has done. Experience has shown that successful schools have focused initially on one or two key themes or initiatives – such as sustainability, a school link or global citizenship (depending on school/staff priorities) – and focused their resources on these themes through things like CPD, achieving an award framework, enrichment days, clubs or external projects. As work grows, new themes may be added.

#### The how

This refers to the processes schools have used to develop work around their theme or initiative. Successful schools have generally done this by planning carefully, reflecting and learning, but most importantly by using internal school curriculum processes and/or high-profile pupil-led projects to then show success to others. Successful cycles of this have led to global learning being integrated into existing school routines and policies, assisted by the use of key moments around curriculum changes, inspections or changes in leadership.

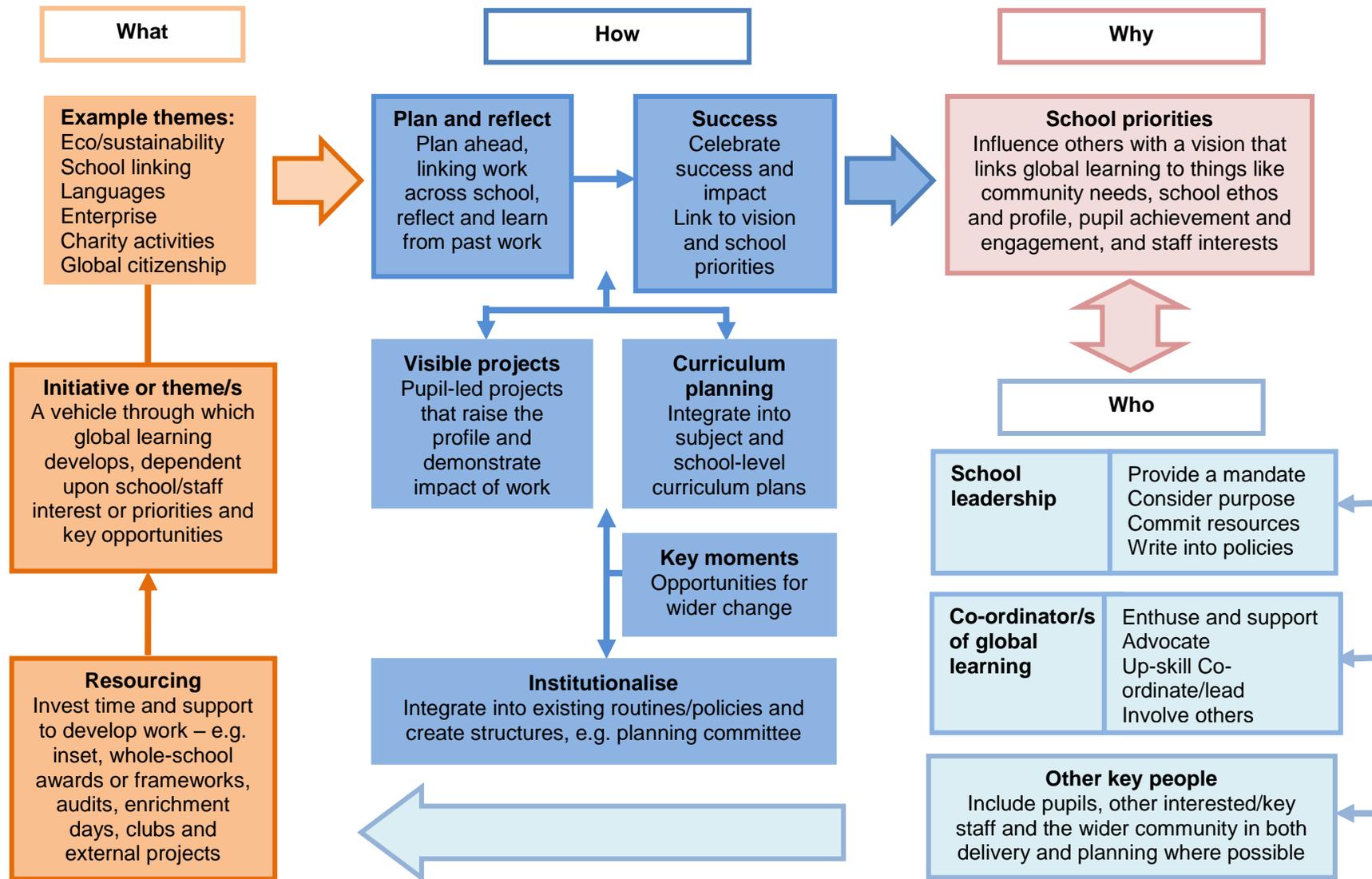
#### The why

Schools that have achieved a whole-school approach have, through deliberate advocacy or a natural process of evaluation, supported key people in the school to understand the value of global learning. This has been achieved by having a vision for global learning that links to any of a number of key school priorities. Recognising value has led to more people being involved and work spreading.

#### The who

In all cases, schools who have achieved a whole-school approach have done so with key support from senior leaders (who recognise the value), and one or many committed passionate co-ordinators of global learning. They have influenced others (using the 'why') and got pupils, key staff and the community involved, and led to more resources and time being allocated to reinvest in the key initiative or theme that the school is focused on.

Figure 2: Developing a whole-school approach to global learning



## Key reflections on the model

Here are some potentially useful reflections to help schools understand the model:

- How different schools' practice maps onto this model varies, and even within a school it may evolve and change over time as staff and priorities shift.
- For example, in some schools there has been an explicit and co-ordinated effort to embed work very quickly in formal ways. In others, things have grown and evolved more organically and more slowly.
- Work can start very small – even with one person in one classroom – but can slowly build up. What is important is **doing what you do very well**, so you can demonstrate success and kick-start the upward cycle in the model.
- How long it takes will depend upon school circumstances and how supportive the environment is. The important thing is to consider what might improve the level of support from the environment: in other words, why it might matter and who to involve.
- Therefore, anyone wanting to move successfully to a wider whole-school approach should consider carefully in their school context what their **key priorities** are to link to. This will be specific, but could include:
  - Wider community needs: many schools do global learning because it helps meet the needs for example of a diverse (or un-diverse) community.
  - School ethos: for many schools global learning can make an important contribution to achieving a moral or spiritual purpose and can help schools to evidence the work they do to support SMSC and values education.
  - School profile: differentiating a school locally can be important, and therefore creating an 'international' profile and achieving awards can help.
  - Pupil achievement: global learning can raise achievement because it helps motivate and engage pupils – this should be perhaps the widest and most important priority for many schools.
  - Staff interests: even a simple thing like what certain staff might be interested in (e.g. travelling) could be a good hook to build allies and create momentum.
- The process can be led by either SLT or a committed and passionate teacher initially, but ultimately both will need to be involved to be successful.
- Equally, to be successful **other people** need to be involved. This can begin with a small number of other teachers/pupils, but needs to widen. Having a key theme can therefore maintain coherence and ensure that activities are linked across the school.
- It is an **internal process**. Wider initiatives and external organisations may help through projects and support, but in themselves they will not achieve whole-school change.
- Similarly, key activities like running an inset session, enrichment day or award scheme will not in themselves drive a whole-school approach – it is how they link to certain processes and people that matter – but they can help drive work forwards.
- Successfully achieving a whole-school approach is dependent upon key staff (SLT or passionate teachers) **recognising and understanding the school context**. In some schools, a key geography teacher may be a great ally for a passionate global co-ordinator. In others, talking about how global learning will support pupil achievement may help engage whole staff teams to write it into their curriculum plans.
- Also because work is context dependent, schools **may not explicitly refer to the term global learning**, but instead use the principles and outcomes it represents (as encapsulated in the **global learning pupil outcomes**) through what they embed and achieve, using terminology suited to them, their interests and their priorities.

#### 4) Snapshots from the GLP whole-school case studies

The following snapshots illustrate how the evolution of whole-school approaches in different schools maps onto the pathway model shown above. They are taken from the [GLP whole-school case studies](#).<sup>2</sup> This is to help schools understand the model, and potentially recognise how they can use it to develop their own practice.

##### The what

Across the seven schools there was a variety of initiatives or themes initially, which then evolved to lead to a whole-school approach to global learning, supporting pupils to develop a range of global learning outcomes. This often took a number of years. Here are some examples:

- At Sir John Lawes Secondary School in Harpenden, work was initially focused on a school link with Zambia and the International School Award, which got pupils and staff involved early on. The ISA framework supported widening work, leading to International Enrichment Days, before work broadened to include Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).
- St Francis of Assisi Secondary School in Liverpool had an initial focus on sustainability and the environment, which developed into a number of high profile pupil-led projects including international trips, before widening work to include growing school links.
- Kingsford Community School in Newham initially focused on languages and internationalism to support their diverse community, before developing work around the International Schools Award and Confucius Classroom.
- Woodlands Primary School in Birkenhead initially focused work on Fairtrade, before widening this to create an Environmental, Rights Respecting and Fairtrade (ERF) club and deliver global citizenship projects with Oxfam, as well as achieving the International Schools Award and the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA).

##### Big Days at Headley Park

Run by different teams on rotation, 'Big Days' crystallise whole-school global learning. The 'Big Culture Day' turned the school hall into an airport, where everyone met before jet-setting to different classrooms to explore countries. With their own Headley Park passport, pupils picked up a stamp from each class as they moved around the world discovering different cultures and religions. A 'Big Green Day', run by the Changing the World team with the school Eco team, enabled the school to explore environmental issues and promote sustainability.

To develop work in these areas, schools in the case studies have therefore all variously used awards and frameworks (such as ISA or RRSA), clubs and groups (such as ERF), gained time for inset, used enrichment days (such as Big Days) and worked on projects with external organisations (such as Oxfam).

##### The how

In various ways, schools in the case studies have used the key processes outlined in the model to develop their work successfully and take this across the whole school. For example:

- **Planning and evaluation**

All case study schools have grown work through planning their activities carefully, and reflecting on success. This may be through formal forums, such as Headley Park's 'Changing the World' team, or the annual reviews of global learning

*'Activities are not an 'add on' but are planned with academic rigour.'*

Gill Lindfield, Head Teacher, Woodlands Primary School

<sup>2</sup> See <http://globaldimension.org.uk/glp/page/10567>



- **Institutionalising**

All case study schools have found ways to integrate global learning into existing routines and policies. At Kingsford Community School, the normal 'quality assurance' process is used for global learning as in every other curriculum area, and at Headley Park, Torriano and Woodlands, it is part of regular curricular processes. At Sir John Lawes, work is written into the school development plan, and at St Peter's RC, work is reviewed and evaluated annually with the senior leadership.

### The why

*'We don't just care about SATs results, we genuinely care about a rounded education.'*  
Neil Todman, Governor, Headley Park

A strong rationale for global learning is evident in all the case study schools, ensuring support from senior leaders and buy in from other staff. Rationales differ by school, and may contain a number of complementary elements. In all the case study schools, this feeds into the wider aims, purpose or ethos of the school. For example at St Francis of Assisi and Headley Park, how global learning can support an appreciation of diversity and broadening horizons in relatively un-diverse communities is seen as important. Conversely in Kingsford, Woodlands and St Peter's RC, global learning is seen to support the celebration of diverse communities. In most schools, including Sir John Lawes, the contribution of global learning to developing more caring, active citizens (linked to moral or spiritual purpose) is important. And underpinning this in all schools is an appreciation of how global learning can encourage the personal and academic development of pupils themselves, supporting a more real and relevant learning experience.

*'Global learning has been at the heart of our curriculum planning for some years, reflecting the rich and diverse school population, children and families.'*  
Gill Lindfield, Head Teacher, Woodlands

### The who

In all the case study schools, there has been both support from senior leadership and from one or more committed teachers co-ordinating work. They have all also spread work beyond small enclaves to include wider staff, pupils and the community over time.

- **Senior Leadership**

In schools such as Torriano Juniors, Headley Park Primary and St Francis of Assisi Secondary, school leaders both support work and play a more active role in assisting the co-ordination and delivery. However in every school, senior leaders support the work, and allocate key resources and time.

- **Global learning co-ordinator/s**

With support from senior leaders, all case study schools have one person or a team of people co-ordinating learning activities. For example at Sir John Lawes or St Peter's RC, there are key individuals who play a critical role planning, facilitating, upskilling and motivating other staff and pupils. In schools such as Headley Park, Kingsford or St Francis of Assisi, planning and co-ordination through curriculum-based teams has been prevalent.

*'Our global learning is like an earthquake with an epicentre. There is a frenzy around [our co-ordinator] but the shockwaves are felt all across the school.'*

Jonathan Mountstevens,  
Assistant Head, Sir John  
Lawes Secondary

*'They are preparing us so we can have a greater voice and have a greater impact.'*

Pupil, Sir John Lawes Secondary School

- **Other people**

In all schools, either through a more 'top-down' process of curriculum-led growth (such as in Torriano, Headley Park or St Francis of Assisi), or through a more organic 'bottom-up' process led by passionate and skilled co-ordinators (such as in Sir John Lawes or St Peter's RC), other staff, pupils and the community have been drawn into work:

- **Pupils:** Pupil leadership is demonstrated strongly in many schools. For example, Sir John Lawes (through campaigns-related groups with Send My Friend and Oxfam) and Woodlands (through Fairtrade and their ERF club) have made use of very strong non-formal opportunities for pupils to get involved; the success of which has encouraged other staff and pupils to participate in work.
- **Other staff:** The use of curriculum teams in schools such as Headley Park or St Francis of Assisi has helped wider staff groups to get more involved in global learning and create a supportive environment. In other schools, finding other teachers with an interest who want to get involved has been successful – for example, St Peter's RC asks two teachers per year to help plan their globally themed weeks.
- **Wider community:** All the schools have linked projects to the wider community. For example at Headley Park, pupils work with the local church through a school governor link. At Woodlands, parents help host and run international days, celebrating cultural diversity in the local community, and they use the strong Bangladeshi community links to enrich RE and Geography lessons. Torriano involves parents in learning activities, and community celebrations are also a feature at St Francis of Assisi and Kingsford.



Pupils at Headley Park Primary building a greenhouse out of plastic bottles



Pupils asking parents to complete a survey while learning about the Millennium Development Goals at Torriano Juniors

*'The whole community will come together, share and appreciate diversity. This is an excellent example of community cohesion. It is always a successful event.'*

Stephanie Jennings, Head of Geography, St Peter's Roman Catholic High School

We hope that these snapshots will help schools understand the pathways model to achieving a whole-school approach. We recommend that schools revisit the full case studies in light of the route map to help understand the unique journey each school has taken.

## 5) Key questions to support whole-school development

The key questions below, based on the pathways model, are prompts to support whoever is leading global learning to examine their current practice, and identify ways to embed it more holistically across the school. Not all questions will be relevant, but we hope each school can take something of use from them whatever their stage of development.

Schools can also use **Figure 3: Key questions to help develop a whole-school approach to global learning**, which summarises questions on each area of the model.

- **What is already happening?**

Perhaps the first question anyone should ask is what is already going on. The GLP Whole School Audit will support this, but we suggest schools should use this question as an opportunity to reflect on what is happening and who is involved. This will help answer the subsequent questions and work out your next steps.

- **Do you have a key initiative or theme?**

After reflecting on your practice, think about whether you currently have a vehicle driving global learning, such as sustainability, school linking, global citizenship or rights. The [GLP Curriculum Framework](#)<sup>3</sup> may help schools define a focus and the [GLP curriculum & resources](#)<sup>4</sup> can also provide support. Having something to focus on can help, as it can draw in other staff, pupils and parents in a co-ordinated way. Alternatively, if you have already done work around a specific initiative but feel it has become stale or reached a ceiling, consider what the next focus could be that builds on and complements existing work. When choosing a theme or initiative it is good to be contextual – what are the school’s interests and priorities you could build on?

- **Who is involved?**

Trying to involve all the key people across the school is important. At first this isn’t easy, and therefore *how* to do that relates a lot to the rationales for global learning that matter to your school and staff. Some schools achieve this by setting up a committee to help plan and co-ordinate activities (which can include pupils and parents). Starting small is also fine, but it is important that you draw on everyone.

- **Where is the energy?**

Every school is different, so the key processes to use in each school may vary. In one school the curriculum may be at a point of review, creating an opportunity to introduce global learning to enrich it, whereas in another the curriculum may be fairly fixed, but the need for exciting pupil leadership opportunities is something that would be seen as valuable and important. Similarly, looking for staff with personal or professional interests in certain aspects of global learning can help broaden the base of work, and show other staff the meaning and value of it.

- **Are you celebrating success?**

One of the best ways to create momentum is to celebrate success. Think about how you are doing that, and most importantly how pupils can be at the front and centre of anything you do. Also consider the important levers within your school and how this can support activating them for staff, senior leaders and even the wider community. This will help drive that upward cycle of growth.

<sup>3</sup> <https://globaldimension.org.uk/glp/page/10706>

<sup>4</sup> <https://globaldimension.org.uk/glp/curriculum-resources>

- **Are you using existing structures and planning processes?**

To be successful, a whole-school approach should avoid being siloed or creating additional processes to those that already exist. Global learning needs to be planned and evaluated as anything else is in school, so try to integrate it into existing processes – including at whole-school level in the school development and curriculum plans, and reporting to senior leaders and governors. However global learning can also be developed through more simple things like assembly and staff inset rotas. This will help institutionalise it as work grows, so it just becomes part of what the school does.

- **What are the key reasons for your school to do global learning?**

To some extent all schools will care about all the key reasons to do global learning listed in the model, such as community needs, school ethos, pupil engagement, staff interests and the profile of the school. However in each school there may be a greater or lesser fit in one or other of these areas; and how these things are discussed and represented will vary considerably. Therefore think about which levers potentially are most important, and how you can demonstrate the ways in which global learning supports that to whichever key stakeholder you are yet to engage. Successfully doing this will be critical to gaining support from these other key contributors. The [GLP aims](#)<sup>5</sup> can support schools in refining their purpose.

- **Is school leadership engaged?**

The support and involvement of school leaders is particularly critical to achieving a co-ordinated approach that is slowly embedded across the school. Senior leadership may already be supportive, and in many schools are the leaders and champions of global learning. However this may not always be the case, and engaging with them is vital in order to help integrate global learning into existing school structures and processes, to widen work and gain additional resource (often staff time for a global learning co-ordinator). This could be through demonstrating success, considering key levers in the process, and remembering that the best advocates are pupils themselves.

- **What is the role of pupils?**

Pupils are clearly central to embedding global learning within the school. The impact of this work on them – developing global learning pupil outcomes – is the ultimate point. However pupil leadership is one of the greatest benefits of global learning, and fostering this from the very outset can help to spread work and inspire others. In addition, it is important not to silo work with pupils either – try to engage as diverse groups as you can as quickly as possible so it isn't seen as exclusive or as a niche.

- **What external opportunities exist?**

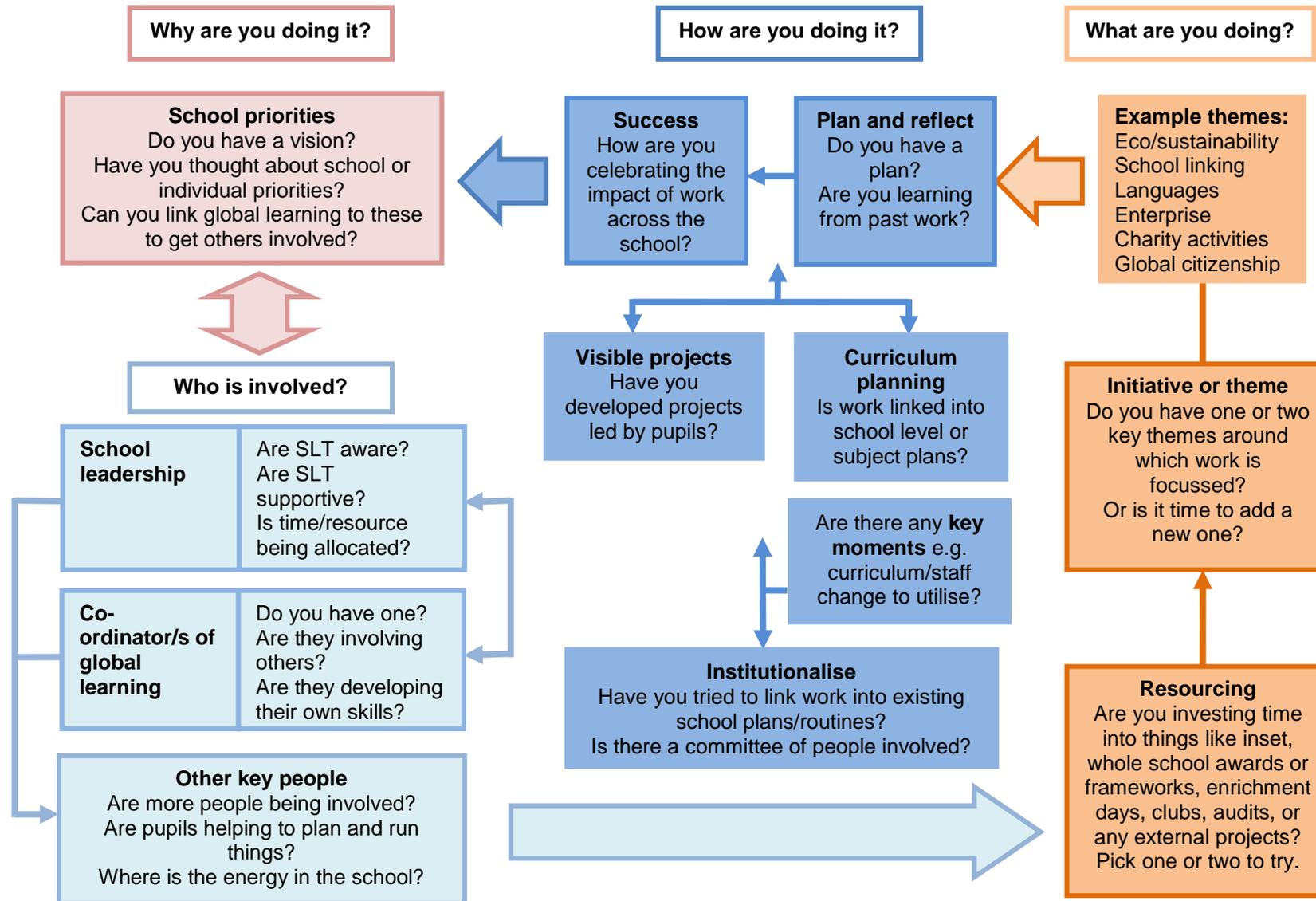
While no school has achieved a whole-school approach just through working with outside agencies, the range of project support and internal tools (whole-school frameworks, auditing, awards, etc.) has been a critical part of the journey of every school. Often opportunistic involvement in such projects has catalysed further work, so we suggest looking around at what is available that matches your school priorities and interests to help drive forward work around one key vehicle of your choice. The GLP has linked to a number of [Quality Marks and Awards](#)<sup>6</sup> that may be of interest to schools.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://globaldimension.org.uk/glp/page/10807>

<sup>6</sup> <https://globaldimension.org.uk/glp/page/10559>

Figure 3: Key questions to help develop a whole-school approach to global learning



## References

GLP Whole-School Case Studies

<http://globaldimension.org.uk/glp/page/10567>

GLP Global Learning Pupil Outcomes

<http://globaldimension.org.uk/glp/page/10724>

GLP Curriculum Framework

<https://globaldimension.org.uk/glp/page/10706>

GLP Curriculum & Resources

<https://globaldimension.org.uk/glp/curriculum-resources>

GLP Aims

<https://globaldimension.org.uk/glp/page/10807>

GLP Quality Marks and Awards

<https://globaldimension.org.uk/glp/page/10559>

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All quotes and photographs herein are taken from those case studies.

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