

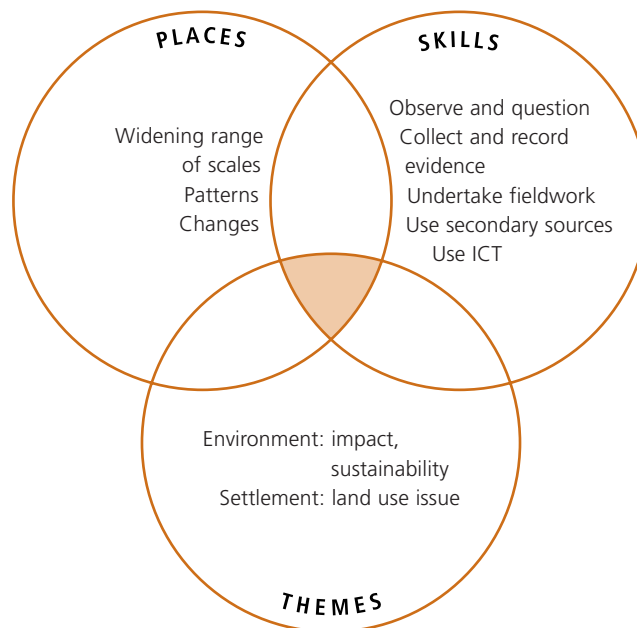
Unit 8 Improving the environment

ABOUT THE UNIT

This is a 'long' unit. In it, children use the school buildings, grounds and immediate locality to investigate environmental issues and improvements. It encourages children to become actively involved in improving their local environment.

The unit may also be shortened to a medium unit by retaining the work on litter in the classroom and omitting the work in the school grounds.

The unit offers links to literacy, mathematics, IT and environmental education.



VOCABULARY

In this unit, children are likely to use:

- environment, issues, environmental quality, community, air pollution, vehicles, waste, recycling, compost, litter, derelict, planning, land use

They may also use:

- conserve, sustain, urban, rural

RESOURCES

- clipboards
- a base map of school and grounds
- weighing scales
- litter-pickers and gloves
- spreadsheet and simple graphing software
- a camera
- local authority contact details

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if the children have:

- investigated the school buildings and grounds and immediate locality, as in Units 1 and 6, for example
- started to develop a range of geographical concepts, *eg location, place, environment*

EXPECTATIONS

at the end of this unit

most children will:

begin to account for their own views about the environment, recognising that other people may have reasons for thinking differently;
 identify how people affect the environment and recognise ways in which people try to manage it for the better;
 ask and respond to geographical questions while undertaking tasks set by the teacher, offering their own ideas appropriate to the situation;
 use a range of simple equipment, maps and resources to carry out tasks supported by the teacher

some children will not have made so much progress and will:

express their own views about the environment and begin to recognise that some people think differently;
 identify how people affect the environment;
 ask and respond to geographical questions while undertaking tasks set by the teacher

some children will have progressed further and will also:

identify and explain the different views held by people about an environmental change;
 describe different approaches to managing the environment;
 draw on their own knowledge and understanding and awareness of topical matters to suggest geographical questions/enquiries;
 use a wide range of equipment, maps and resources to carry out independent investigations and tasks supported by the teacher

FUTURE LEARNING

Children can extend their knowledge and understanding of environmental change and issues by studying local issues in depth, *eg Unit 12.*

Environmental education may be developed through other units, *eg Units 10 and 15.*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES	LEARNING OUTCOMES	POINTS TO NOTE
CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN			
What is the environment like in school?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to ask and respond to geographical questions to recognise patterns to collect and record evidence to answer questions fieldwork skills how people affect the environment to use ICT to present findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with the children different environmental problems in and around the school and how people's views differ. Discuss with the children how noise affects people in school and identify which noises cause the most problem, <i>eg the noise of children moving around the school.</i> Divide the children into small groups and ask them to tape the noise of children moving and undertake 'children counts' at set points around the school at different times of the day. Arrange for the groups to present their findings using ICT. Ask them to discuss their main findings, identifying busy and quiet areas of the school at different times during the day. Ask them to use a plan of the school to suggest reasons for the patterns, <i>eg time of day, 'land use' around the school.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recognise and understand variations in the flow of children around the school 	<p>To answer the enquiry question, focus activities on specific questions, <i>eg How does noise affect us? Which places around school are busy and quiet, and why?</i></p>
What do we throw away in the classroom? How could it be reduced?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to ask and respond to geographical questions to collect and record evidence to answer questions how people affect the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the end of each day for a week, collect all the classroom rubbish, estimate how much there is and then weigh it. Ask the children to produce a cumulative graph, for an interactive display, that shows the weight of rubbish throughout the week. Arrange for a small group to sort the rubbish into different types and produce a tally chart to add to the display. Discuss with the children which types might be recycled and how to go about it, <i>eg using bottle banks, newspaper collection, compost heaps, jumble sales, aluminium collection.</i> Discuss with the children why recycling is important. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> become aware of the amount of waste within the classroom and how and why it should be reduced express a view on an environmental issue and justify it 	<p>To answer the enquiry questions, focus activities on specific questions, <i>eg How much do we throw away? Can we recycle some of it? How and why?</i></p>
How much do we throw away in the school grounds? How could it be reduced?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to collect and record evidence to answer questions fieldwork skills how people affect the environment how and why people seek to manage and sustain their environment to use ICT to present findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divide the children into small groups and ask each group to investigate litter in part of the school grounds, with a view to finding out if people use rubbish bins properly. Ask each group to: identify the bins they are responsible for on a plan; weigh the rubbish in these bins at the end of the day; collect and weigh rubbish that is not in the bins, marking the main areas of litter on the plan; compare the results. Ask each group to present their findings, using spreadsheets and simple graphing software. Ask the children to examine their findings, discussing the location of bins, number of bins and the issue of litter, and submit their proposals to the headteacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> become aware of the amount of waste in the school grounds and how and why it should be reduced express a view on an environmental issue and justify it 	<p>To answer the enquiry questions, focus activities on specific questions, <i>eg How much do we put in the bin or drop on the floor? Where are the bins? Where is litter dropped? How can we reduce the amount of litter dropped on the floor?</i></p>
What is this place like and why? How can it be improved?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to investigate places to collect and record evidence to answer questions fieldwork skills how people affect the environment how and why people seek to manage and sustain their environment to use ICT to present findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a class, identify an area in the locality that has not been cared for, <i>eg a park or a shopping centre.</i> Visit the area and gather evidence, <i>eg photographs, sketches.</i> Discuss with the children how the area might be improved and who is responsible for improving the environment. Divide the children into small groups, and ask each group to use word-processing software to write a report about the area to send to the local authority, describing how the environment is being affected and asking if there are any plans to improve the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> appreciate the need for improvement in some places are aware that particular groups of people have some responsibility for improving environments 	<p>To answer the enquiry questions, focus activities on specific questions, <i>eg What evidence is there that this place has not been 'cared for'? How can we improve this area? Who is responsible for looking after this area?</i></p> <p>Literacy: writing to the local authority can be used as an opportunity to show children how to distinguish between the most and least important details in a report. They can also look at different types of writing, <i>eg by comparing their letter with a newspaper report on an environmental issue.</i></p>
<p>Where teachers want to shorten the unit, the sections under the question in the more lightly shaded band are those that may be omitted.</p>			<p>Mathematics: the first three sections provide opportunities for work on classifying, representing and interpreting data, and understanding and using measures.</p> <p>IT: the first three sections offer opportunities to provide links with IT through the use of data handling and graphing packages (Unit 4D).</p> <p>Environmental education: all of these activities provide links to environmental education.</p> <p>SAFETY – All off-site visits must be carried out in accordance with LEA and school guidelines.</p> <p>Children should not handle litter directly. They should use litter-pickers and wear gloves. If rubbish bins in the school grounds are fixed, it is a good idea to put plastic sacks in them during the week of the investigation.</p>