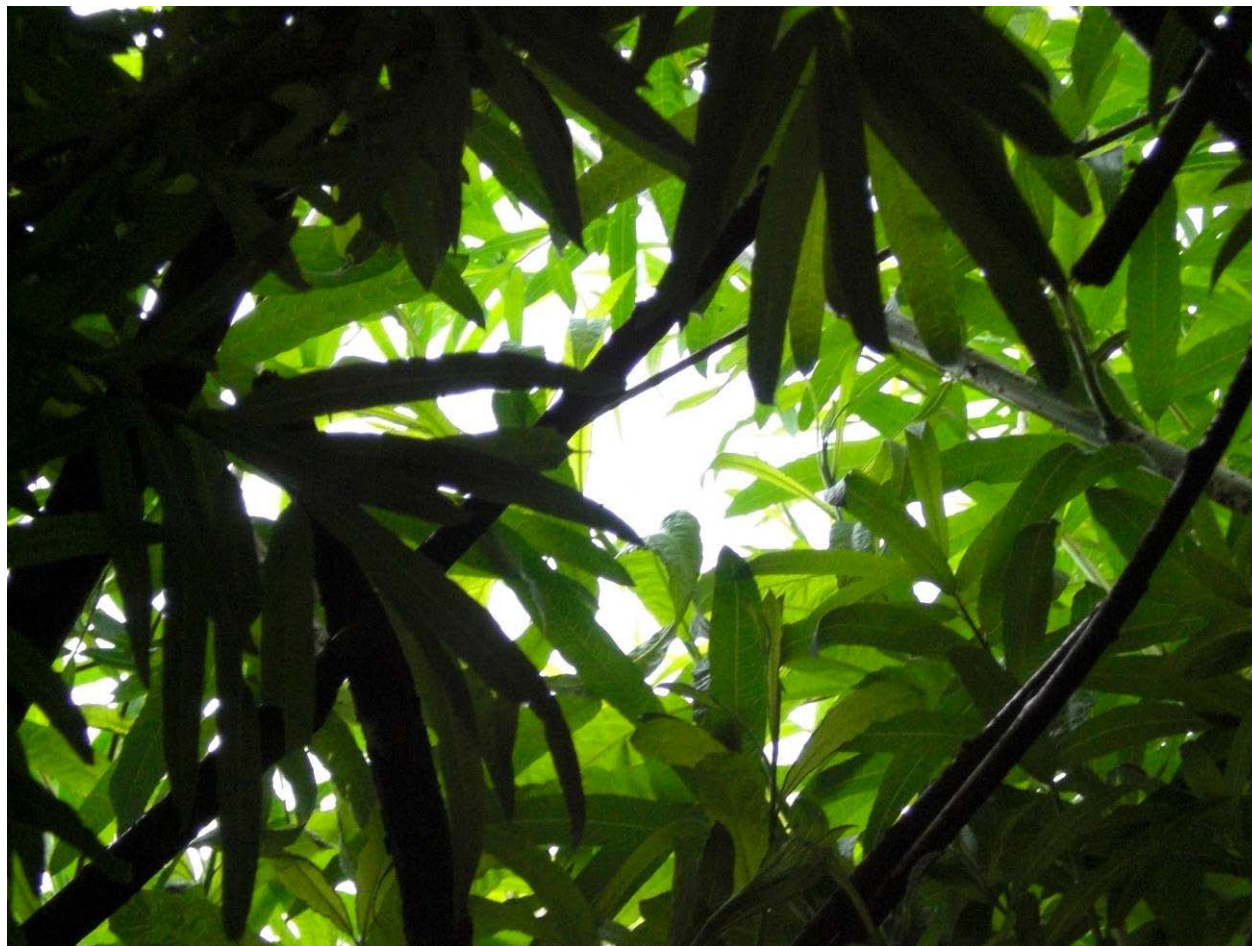


# Enquiry Schools Case Study Slides



Oxfordshire from the Ground

Didcot Girls' School, Oxfordshire & John Cairns –photographer

May 2008 to July 2008

Enquiry Question	Context	The Story	Young People's Creativity	Other impacts on young people	Adult Learning	Whole School Change	Learning from the work	Revisiting the Enquiry Question	Next steps
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**How can the production of photographic images develop students' individual and collective understanding of sustainability issues and affect their interaction with their local environment?**

- Can we use images rather than words to convey scientific understanding?
- Does working with images rather than text inspire students?
- Does searching for and capturing images by students give deeper engagement with the subject of the images?

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**Previous experience** (with role play and film) has suggested that working with images in a science context can be a highly enriching experience. How much learning can be achieved using still photos and without mediation via written text?

## Can we:

- Link direct practical experience with scientific ideas
- Question and discuss issues that may affect their own lives
- Fire pupil curiosity about phenomena and then find explanations (Science National Strategy –secondary)
- Stimulate the creation of some novel ICT projects (School Development Plan)



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**What** - Ten girls (years 7, 8 & 10) spent six full school days over the summer term (May to July) producing photographs and supporting fact sheets to communicate their choice of environmental and sustainability issues.

**Where** - Local nature reserve and in school grounds

**Adults** – JC, External partner (photographer) and LN, Science HLTA (with occasional support from Environment coordinator and science technician)

**Curriculum subjects** - Science, geography and maths

**Art form** – photography

The project created an atmosphere in which all felt able to contribute ideas and express opinions

### Outcomes

- dedication and maturity
- teamwork
- communication
- new skills
- environmental evangelism
- photographs and fact sheets
- raised awareness across school of creative working and sustainability issues
- inviting input from peers



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Our project began with a day in a local nature reserve taking photos – of whatever students chose. The Creative Partner gave basic training on use of cameras and feedback on images produced.

“At first I was nervous, not many ideas. By the end of the day I had started taking more photos ( I had more ideas).”

Students decided the nature reserve was unrepresentative. They chose to spend the remaining days in school in the real world of litter, buildings and people.

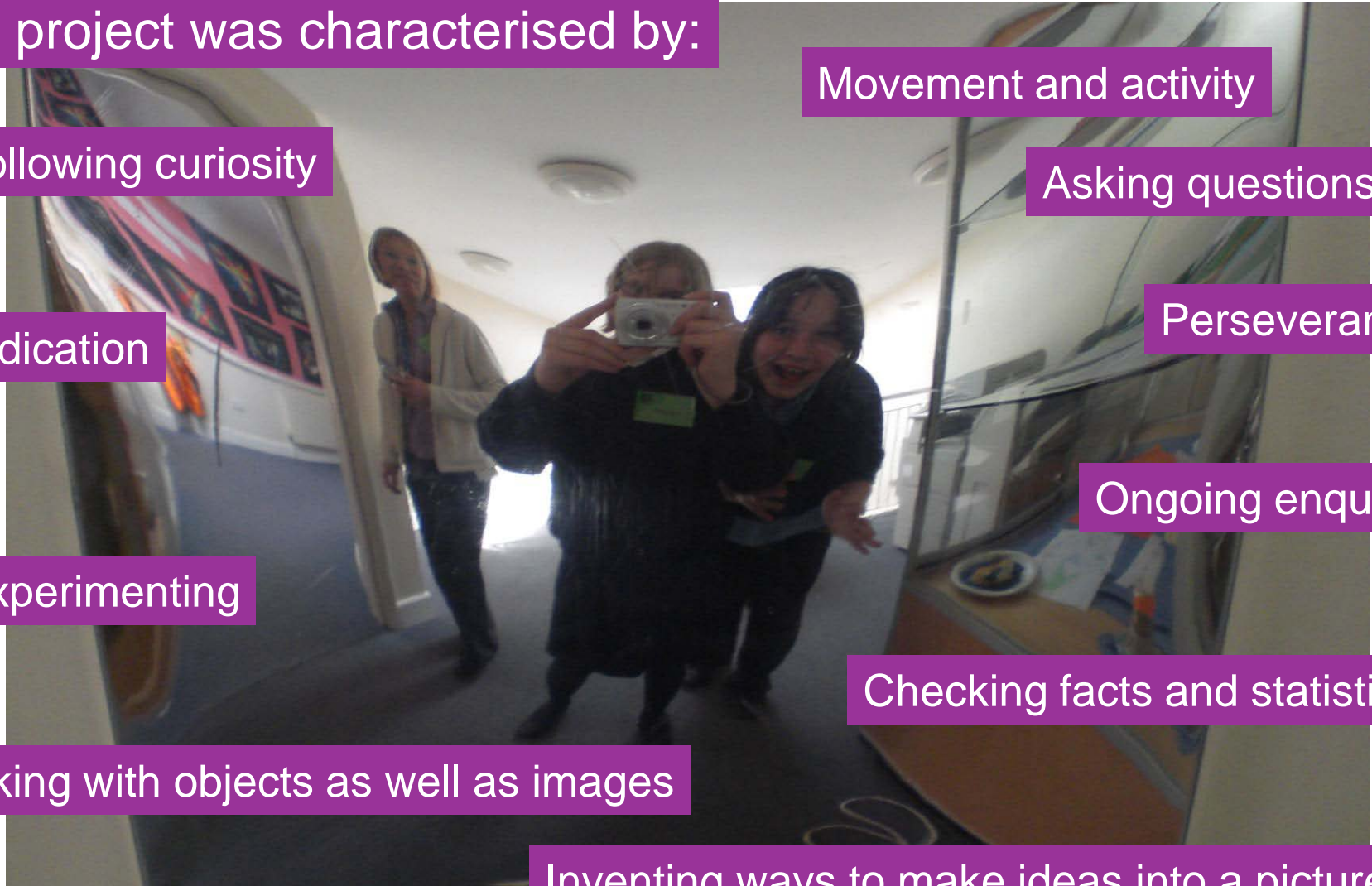
It started as photography but became much more

In order to share their passion for the environment they chose to create images to communicate a message. The 10 girls formed small groups – each concentrating on a theme (litter, biodegrading of rubbish, recycling and food miles) Each group worked independently to brainstorm ideas, previsualise images (e.g. sketching), then used trial and error to make these real. They found supporting information by research (and began to query and check the validity of this). Each session ended with sharing of the session's images and feedback /brainstorming. The project concluded with selection of a set of images for exhibitions to communicate the students' ideas both within and beyond the school.



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The project was characterised by:



Following curiosity

Movement and activity

Asking questions

Dedication

Perseverance

Ongoing enquiry

Experimenting

Checking facts and statistics

Working with objects as well as images

Inventing ways to make ideas into a picture

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## Ideas.....

**“Are hard to have.”**

**“We got better at having ideas as the project went on- by the end I had lots.”**

**“We had enough help – everyone helped each other.”**

## Time.....

**“We didn't have enough time – we needed more days.”**

**“Missing lessons was a problem.”**

**“It was nice to do something different to exam subjects – where we could experiment without pressure.”**



## Photography.....

**“Most of it was new to all of us.”**

**“We have all taken more photos after the project ended.”**

**“I showed my family what I learned.”**

**“I use my camera in other lessons now – like business studies”**

**“I'm going to enter a photography competition.”**

**“I can't do this on my own, come and look at my photos and help me choose” (yr 10 to yr 8)**

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“I was more tired than after a normal school day”

“It allowed us to be independent”

“If I could I would do this all again”



“I was really shocked by some of the statistics I found”

“Everyone listened to me”

“We would talk about one idea, and it would change but be better than at first”

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I learnt that it takes a lot to make the picture great but the final result is worth it in the end.

“Can we stay after school to finish this?”

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“In lessons there is only one way of getting to the big picture, but here it didn't matter how we did it as long as we got there in the end.”

“A lot of lessons is just copying stuff down and you don't have to think – we had to think in this project.”

### Adults noticed:

- Mature behaviour
- Project ownership
- Responsibility
- Sustained concentration



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A special feature of the project was that children and adults were all partners and felt that they were working together for a common goal. I also appreciated having enough time to allow pupils to make mistakes.

LN

## JC and LN Shared:

- Being co learners
- Experiencing pupil's point of view
- The buzz of generating new ideas & being creative
- Teamwork
- Challenge and excitement
- Renewed enthusiasm for working with pupils

We must not expect all students to have an equal experience.

JC



Our open door approach and the way that much of the work took place in communal spaces around the school gave many adults a chance to contribute. We welcomed this and found that all adults who took an interest found themselves drawn in to the creative process.



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## Learning in our school is already changing by:

Greater use of photography by students – examples have been seen in chemistry, biology, applied science, business studies and catering.

More direct sharing of information via images by staff, rather than using written text or verbally (example, using pictures to show changes in land use over time - A level biology)

## These issues will be examined further by the Leadership Team:

Explore extended timeslots for effective curriculum delivery



Ways to create a more environmentally friendly school

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## For next time:

Mixed age group worked very well (but it was harder to arrange release from lessons)  
Would prefer a solid block of time to keep up momentum rather than separate days.  
Projects should not be near the end of term, to avoid clashes with other events.  
Timescale – needs to be a lot longer to study issues like biodegrading.  
School computing facilities were insufficient on occasions.



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## Other outcomes:

Students veered from the original question. We expected them to focus more deeply on the objects etc they photographed. Instead it made them look wider and want to share with others. The project enabled them to communicate their own passion for sustainability issues to a wider audience.

Students realised that photography is a powerful medium of communication. They wanted to use it to change the behaviour of others and raise awareness of environmental issues.



The mixed aged group worked excellently

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## Unexpected outcomes:

- There were few situations which led to opportunities to go into the *science* behind them.
- There were many more instances of using *maths* (when looking at statistics, numbers etc (from the web) and *geography* (food miles, where food is grown)
- Many discussions of ethical issues/ individual responsibility and politics re environmental concerns.
- Students' vocabulary developed significantly as they described and critiqued images
- **Dyslexic pupils were most willing to use unusual camera angles – do they have a different way of seeing?**



## Revised question:

How does the production of photographic images develop students' ability to make connections and develop understanding across subject borders?

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## What we plan to do next:

### Girls:

- Champion the use of photography in lessons as a way for students to collect and record information or to bring back to share with others.
- Enter a photography competition
- Make a book about our project
- Hold an exhibition in school
- See our photos in a public exhibition

### Staff:

- Use more images to convey information
- Encourage pupils to record information via photography
- Try other creative ways of teaching science
- Consider mixed age teaching groups
- Welcome more creative partners into school

