

Sustainable Schools, Biodiversity and Global Dimension. Looking for links to School performance.

Everyone involved in education across England is aware of the current emphasis on achieving school improvements that can be evidenced and quantified year on year. Achieving this kind of verification has always been problematic for organisations engaged in education for sustainable development, biodiversity and global education. Project evaluations frequently offer positive feedback for funders and participants but comparability between programmes from different organisations is rare, methodology is not always robust and often funding does not cover such 'beyond programme' bigger issues that impact on the sector as a whole. Such inconsistency compares unfavourably with OFSTED inspections of schools that do provide an approved and recognised framework for whole school inspections. These are acknowledged by the wider public and political audiences and are the benchmark assessment used for school performance.

As a contribution to the collection of evidence being gathered about the impact of this whole sector of education, Chris Southwood has undertaken a piece of un-commissioned independent research and matched 1500 EcoSchool Green Flag schools with their latest OFSTED rankings using publicly available data. Chris has split her working life between teaching, third sector education and her own independent consultancy. She is passionate about environmental and development education at all levels and has a wealth of experience across the sector.

Key findings.

	Average % schools per ranking category**		
	Good/outstanding	Requires improvement	Inadequate
OFSTED Data Overview All schools 31.12.2013*	80	18	3
EcoSchools Green Flag Schools 30.04.2014*	89	9	1

Quote from Learning 2B Sustainable (11/06/2014)

It should not be assumed that this analysis is suggesting a cause and effect relationship and interpretation of this data must be the responsibility of each individual. This research provides just a simple snap shot picture to add to current discussions although the size of the sample and the scale of the differences do seem to indicate some connection. It is hoped that these results will stimulate additional research and encourage all organisations contributing to school sustainability and global education to undertake and share equivalent comparisons. Credible and consistent sector wide data that is recognised and accepted by the wider education audience will support the work of everyone involved.

(Chris Southwood Director Learning 2B Sustainable)

Quote from Eco-Schools (11/06/2014)

It is encouraging to know that around 9 out of 10 of our Green Flag Eco-Schools in England are rated good or outstanding by OFSTED and that Eco-Schools is an important part of the mix for making those schools successful. The next step seems to be to research exactly how big a contribution Eco-Schools work is making towards the success of the 1,500 or so schools currently at Green Flag level in England.

(Dr. Morgan Phillips, Education Manager Keep Britain Tidy).

Chris Southwood welcomes comments and enquiries about the analysis and can be contacted via her website at www.learning2bsustainable.co.uk where a copy of this statement can be found.

*with acknowledgement to <http://www.eco-schools.org.uk/schoolsearch> and <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report>

** Some schools included are involved in academy conversions and ranking categories have been changed by OFSTED during the period covered by the latest school reports used in the analysis.