Project summary

- This practice links the curriculum to the child’s real world, starting with the school building and surrounding grounds and leading on to dealing with issues in the community and beyond. Our starting point is the education of the child. From there we spread out to his/her immediate surroundings, explore, stimulate, learn, create, then use the skills and ideas acquired to venture further into the 'outside world'.
- The very nature of the project implies that development is ongoing. One initiative leads on to another. An idea can be formed by pupil or staff, tossed around, followed up on and developed further. Initiatives can rest then be taken on again and improved or used in a different way. Whichever way the project develops the curriculum becomes richer, more relevant to pupils and more inspirational to staff.

Specific aspect of practice to be accredited?

- Linking the curriculum to the child’s real world - initially the school building and surrounding grounds - leading on to dealing with issues in the community and beyond.

What were the initial success criteria?

- Children learning for life
- Children learning a living curriculum which has a meaning for them
- Using the whole of the School - building, grounds and staff in the learning experience

What was the starting point for the practice?

- Earliest recorded starting point in the 1930's - Copp children looking after the school gardens. Current practice built up over the last 30 years.
What were the significant milestones and actions in its development?

- Recycling newspapers (1970s onwards), cultivating the gardens (vegetables), introducing planters, designing playground markings, designing playground areas, developing further links with the Church, attaining permanent Eco-Schools status, linking with the community through the Village Centre, Gardening Club, Britain in Bloom members, local prison, local businesses

Which members of the school and/or wider community have been involved and what was their role?

- Children - in the form of classes, committees, individuals
- Teachers - linking work to the curriculum
- Banks - giving business advice
- Local prison - giving practical assistance and working with children's ideas
- Village Centre - listening to the views of the children
- Gardening Club - showcasing children's work and offering workshops
- Britain in Bloom Committee - providing an opportunity for children to be involved in village initiatives
- Church groups - designing a stained glass window, linking with church garden members to plant bulbs, using church and church grounds for curriculum activities in art, history, science and music, Church and School Summer fete
- All school staff and pupils joining hands around the school for a great school hug

How has the practice been modified or improved during development?

- By its very nature the practice is continually modified and improved. The original recycling of newspapers has now led to the recycling of many more items (see evidence) with the various processes incorporated into the curriculum e.g. Science - Materials, Geography - Unit 8 - Environmental Issues, Art/DT - making paper, Music - making musical instruments
- The playground areas are continually being refined and added to, each area providing a rich environment for further curriculum work e.g. playground skipping games, clapping rhymes, P. E. games areas, Maths. markings, compost and leaf mould areas and curriculum resources e.g. roadway for Reception large play, Infant play house, tree identification labels, willow huddles.
- Our links with the community tend not to be 'one offs' but offer opportunities to link to subject areas each year.
- Our children's work is valued and many examples are used as learning materials for future years, so giving the children some ownership of their own curriculum.
- Teachers, as part of their Continual Professional Development, impact greatly on the curriculum on offer at Copp e.g. members of staff use their specialist area of knowledge for teaching different year groups - Music, French, P.E., R.E.. A variety of teaching approaches is used including team teaching.
What has been the impact of the project on pupils’ learning, achievement or enjoyment and how has this been measured?

- Children have many opportunities to practise what they learn e.g. Citizenship - children’s council, links with the church, links with the village, links with the local council
- Maths. - using outdoor markings, trail and areas.
- English - using outdoor areas, providing services for Church, writing letters, ideas for story writing
- Science - using outdoor areas, practical experiments outside (e.g. straw bale culture), Environment Trail, living willow huddles
- Geography - using outdoor areas and markings, Environment Trail, grounds used by visiting schools each year
- History - school buildings, dated areas - seat, sunshelter, building stones
- P.A. - athletics, outdoor pursuits, football, netball, games skills, playground games
- Art - working with nature, sketching, sculpture, designing
- All this can be measured by the fact that all the above and more is now embedded in the curriculum in the form of lessons and resources

What are the next stages in the development process?

- The very nature of the project implies that development is ongoing. Looking back at what has taken place so far it can be seen that one initiative leads on to another. An idea can be formed by pupil or staff, tossed around, followed up on and developed further. Initiatives can rest then be taken on again and improved or used in a different way. Whichever way the project develops the curriculum becomes richer, more relevant to pupils and more inspirational to staff.
- The next stages at Copp are:
  - Further development of play areas to incorporate a wooden train for creative play, creative writing, citizenship and practical gardening
  - Networking with other schools to address the more able pupils through our Maths. Trail and core subjects
  - History Trail
  - Linking with a school in Zambia
  - Building of an ICT suite

Do you believe this practice could be replicated or developed in other schools? In what ways?

We do believe that the idea and principle for the project could be replicated, the starting point being the education of the child. Spread out from the child to his/her immediate surroundings, explore, stimulate, learn, create, then use the skills and ideas acquired to venture further into the 'outside world'. Continual Professional Development, School Development and Improvement plans, Governors and outside agencies are an ideal way of involving all parties. Use the talents and creativity of the entire school workforce to achieve a whole school area for learning.