

Primary Ideas

Leo Care



Primary Ideas was an architectural project for seven-year-olds and over.

TARGET GROUP, AGE AND SIZE: Primary school head teachers, teachers and pupils aged between 7 and 11 years old

DURATION AND RESULT: Primary Ideas has been going on for two years and is due for publication in spring 2004

FINANCING: Primary Ideas is sponsored by the Department for Education and Skills [DfES]

TEAMWORK: I am working with Prue Chiles - a senior lecturer at the University, post-graduate students doing their diploma in architecture and with Ballfield Community Primary School in Sheffield.

Brief background

Primary Ideas is a toolkit of ideas and environmental projects in primary schools. The idea for the book came from another DfES initiative entitled 'Classrooms of the Future' - a series of projects from around the country exploring what a classroom in the 21st century should be like. Working with teachers and pupils on the brief and early design for the classrooms brought to light a whole host of small problems with school buildings that seem to be endemic in schools today.

Responding to the schools' desires to improve their environments and solve some of these maintenance problems led schools to display this creativity in plays, performances, art and craftwork and written work. The actual physical fabric of the schools is one place where creativity is not so visible.

Primary Ideas provides the basic framework for realising projects and encourages the further development of ideas through classroom experimentation and collaboration. The participation of different groups is important for the fulfilment of the projects in 'Primary Ideas'. Children are seen as a precious resource capable of being part of creative maintenance of school buildings by acting as members of the team. Through the process of designing, making and applying, children will see their own work have a direct impact on their school surroundings.

Primary Ideas strives to make the process of design and construction understandable and accessible to pupils by investigating alternative construction techniques and materials. Projects like these could be keyed into the national curriculum and so improve school environments whilst meeting and even surpassing educational requirements.



Personal future:

I would love to see architectural/ environmental education in England become an established part of an informal curriculum. I believe that this area of education could be enriched and nourished by similar projects around the world.

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