

What does Ofsted say about environmental responsibility?

(Source: *Geography in secondary schools*, Ofsted, February 2004)

Some schools have gone beyond raising environmental issues to addressing the implications of environmental responsibility. Geography provides a rich context for students to recognise that people have rights and responsibilities to participate in environmental stewardship and decision-making. This can make a tangible contribution to the citizenship curriculum, as in this example:

One Year 9 class, on hearing that an area of industrial waste land close to the school was going to be redeveloped to provide a range of leisure amenities for the local community as well as retail and small business premises, contacted their local planning department to request an opportunity to discuss the proposed development. The planners invited the students to inspect the site and put forward their suggestions. A building on the site was converted into an impromptu classroom and the students were invited to a presentation from the planners. They listened to the planning proposals and were asked to submit their own suggestions. They were provided with maps and models of the proposed development and, during the course of the morning, they worked in groups to develop their own responses. The planners were impressed by the students' knowledge of environmental issues and their ability to apply geographical skills to a real-life situation and valued their suggestions. Students from the school are now frequently invited to provide a personal perspective on other proposed developments affecting the local area.