



Open Futures

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“An amazing picture of the initiative instigated by the Helen Hamlyn Trust has emerged through our experience in schools and through interviews – everyone loves it.

If we were to design schools according to good learning principles I am confident that they would be places where Open Futures would be completely at home. Within the programme, **askit** provokes talking, listening, thinking and questioning; growing food and cooking, encouraged through **growit** and **cookit**, are vitally important activities which also act as portals to science, natural history, design, human health, language, culture and more; and the filmmaking engendered in **filmit** is quintessential story-telling activity with a technological twist.”

PROFESSOR DAVID LEAT IS PROFESSOR OF CURRICULUM INNOVATION AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE RESEARCH CENTRE FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING AT NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

What is the Open Futures Learning programme?

Open Futures is an effective strategy to develop, extend and complement a schools curriculum. The *Open Futures* approach seamlessly integrates with the schools existing curriculum and provides teachers with new skills, contexts for learning and approaches which support children’s learning and achievement in core subjects and ensure that every child is able to develop their full potential.

Established in partnership with 64 Primary Schools over a period of 5 years, together we have developed a flexible framework, which addresses schools’ unique needs and diverse contexts. Their hard work, innovation and inspiration has shaped *Open Futures* into the fast-growing and relevant programme that it is today.

What Open Futures offers

Open Futures offers senior leaders a strategic framework to achieve their vision. The framework connects with deeply held values amongst teachers and school leaders. *Open Futures* sits at the heart of the curriculum underpinning it both in ethos and in practice. In engaging with the four strands of *Open Futures*, teachers can involve pupils in fresh, motivating, highly practical learning experiences which:

- fulfil the aims of the Primary Curriculum – successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens;
- fully support its essentials for learning and life – literacy, numeracy and ICT, skills and attitudes, personal development;
- help to develop partnerships between schools and their communities, drawing in skilled adults to work alongside teachers in providing and delivering the curriculum. *Open Futures* encourages community involvement in young peoples learning and thus supports community cohesion. Links with schools in India supports and promotes community cohesion in an international context.

Based on extensive research into engaging, meaningful, relevant and effective approaches to learning and working closely with Primary Headteachers, the Pilot schools have shown how involvement in *Open Futures* has helped them to improve attainment, behaviour, attendance and physical and emotional well-being.



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What do Heads say about Open Futures?

“We have seen a consistent improvement in our yearly results at the end of Key Stage 1 and I would put a lot of that down to Open Futures and the benefits of enquiry and skills-based learning.”

Phil Hunt,
*Petersgate Infant School,
Waterlooville*

“Open Futures gives us an ideal approach to broaden the curriculum and embed a wider range of skills in our pupils’ core learning, rather than as additional activities.”

Kate McGee,
*Manor Primary School,
Newham*



Open Futures is a transformative curriculum development programme, providing children with life-enduring and life-enhancing skills.

Many schools across the country are now seeing its impact within their primary curriculum. Find out more about what is being said . . .

What does the Wakefield Local Authority say about Open Futures?

“A number of schools that have been inspected by Ofsted have been Open Futures schools. These have had a curriculum which has come out to be either good or better compared to some of the non Open Futures schools.”

School Improvement Adviser, Wakefield Local Authority

What does Ofsted say about Open Futures schools?

“One of the key reasons for the improved standards since the last inspection is the schools’ imaginative and creative curriculum. This is exceptionally well planned to ensure that the curriculum is broad and links aspects of learning, for example, by providing real, relevant contexts for pupils to develop their writing skills.”

Ofsted Inspection Report
*St John The Baptist CE Primary
School, West Sussex (1.6.09)*

What do Governors say about Open Futures schools?

“Everyone involved in the Open Futures programme has become more and more enthusiastic. They all agree that it is informative, instructive, involving and invaluable.”

Chair of Governors
*South Hiendley Junior, Infants and
Early Years School, Wakefield*



What do children say?

“It makes us feel good about ourselves - makes us feel proud that we’re good at something.”

**Craig, Year 6 Pupil, Tangemere
Primary School, West Sussex**

What do teachers say?

“The children have huge enjoyment of everything they do in Open Futures. We now have enthusiastic children who never want to stop learning.”

**Kirsty Golds, Tangmere Primary
School, West Sussex**

“The impact of Open Futures is everywhere, providing children with interesting, motivating contexts for learning through which they are developing as young people and seeing the relevance of what they do and learn in school.”

**Sally Adams, Gawthorpe
Community Primary School,
Wakefield**



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Open Futures Impact Data

Open Futures independent evaluation by The Centre for Teaching and Learning, Newcastle University - Director, Professor of curriculum innovation, David Leat.

1. Speaking and Listening

Over 70% (71.1%) of teachers responding to the survey question reported that Open Futures had a strong to very strong positive impact on the speaking and listening outcomes for pupils in their class.

2. Emotional

Over 80% (81.9%) of teachers responding to the survey question reported that Open Futures had a moderate to very strong positive impact on the emotional outcomes for their class.

3. Motivation

Over 95% (97.2%) of teachers responding to the survey question reported that Open Futures had a moderate to very strong positive impact on the motivation of pupils in their class.

4. Self Confidence

Over 95% (97.3%) of teachers responding to the survey question reported that Open Futures had a moderate to very strong positive impact on the self-confidence of pupils in their class.

5. Writing Skills

Over 84% (84.3%) of teachers responding

to the survey question reported that Open Futures had a moderate to very strong positive impact on the writing skills of pupils in their class.

6. Life Skills

100% (100.0%) of teachers responding to the survey question reported that Open Futures had a moderate to very strong positive impact on the life skills of pupils in their class.

7. Science

Over 85% (86.4%) of teachers responding to the survey question reported that Open Futures had a moderate to very strong positive impact on the science outcomes for pupils in their class.

8. Technology

Over 60% (61.1%) of teachers responding to the survey question reported that Open Futures had a moderate to very strong positive impact on the technology outcomes for pupils in their class.

9. Numeracy

Nearly 70% (68.5%) of teachers responding to the survey question reported that Open Futures had a moderate to very strong positive impact on the numeracy outcomes for pupils in their class.



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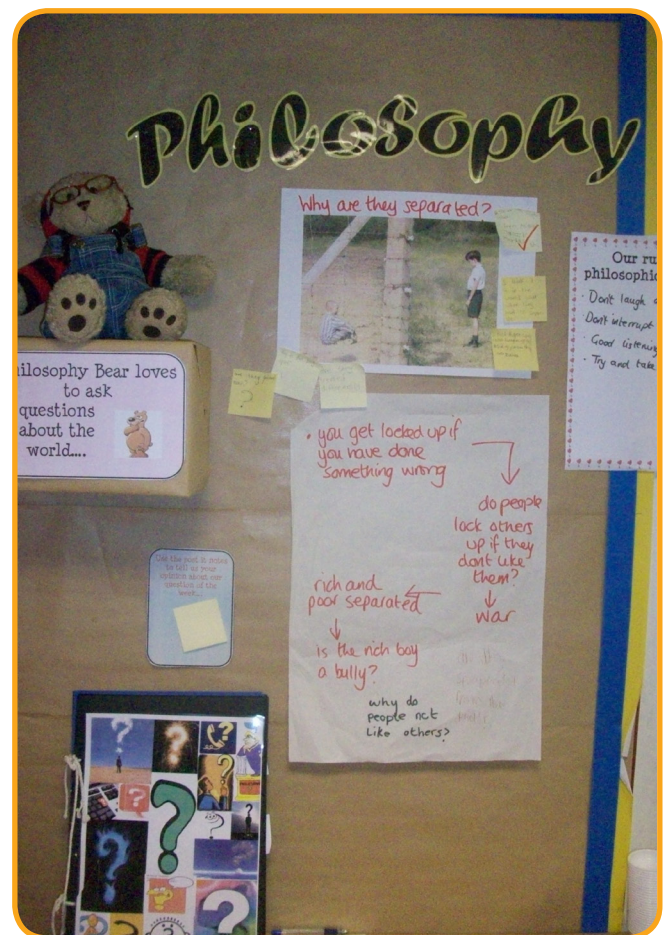
askit strand

Of the four Open Futures strands, askit is that which most closely defines the programme as a whole. By helping children to develop their ability to question, to reason, to hypothesise and, above all, to communicate, askit has a meaningful role to play not just in terms of primary level personal development, but also in the way in which it enriches their approaches to, and experiences of, growit, cookit and filmit.



askit equips children with the ability to explore options and to make decisions more effectively as a team. It engages children with their learning and, by offering them the chance to explore important new concepts, helps to improve thinking, appreciate points of view and develop a rational approach to critical judgement. The strand contributes particularly well towards literacy, citizenship, RE, PSHE, science and the humanities.

askit was developed from the well known and highly respected Philosophy for Children programme, which has been proven to improve a wide range of learning outcomes, including behaviour, collaboration and writing across a broad age range. It aims to build 'Communities of Enquiry', where pupils develop the 'Four C's': creative, critical, caring and collaborative thinking skills.



growit strand



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Schools do not even need a large and ready plot of available land to take part in *growit*. Indeed, many of the *Open Futures* schools have exploited some truly unexpected places to create their garden, all of which are now flourishing and providing a steady stream of food for the kitchen. The techniques employed can be adapted to growing in a traditional style allotment, raised beds, classroom patios or even simply containers.

With advice and assistance given about how to establish the garden, the children are then taught how to use tools and care for their plants and vegetables, from sowing through to harvesting, from tomatoes to potatoes.



Most fun is the fact that children get the chance to experience – via the linked *cookit* strand – the wonderful feeling of cooking and eating something that they have grown themselves, from a simple seed.

growit is a fantastic way of engaging children in the wonders of horticulture. Expert guidance helps teachers and their pupils gain the confidence to employ all of the skills and techniques required to establish and run a fully-fledged edible garden.

growit is a key feature of the *Open Futures* skills and enquiry-based learning programme and has many material benefits. Beyond the appreciation for plants, vegetables and the seasons that children gain, is the fact that kids who sow, grow and tend to their own food have shown a fantastic desire to taste and eat the fresh and flavoursome fruits of their labours.



As pupils grow and cook, they are also combining these new skills with other forms of learning: **Maths** – measuring out the beds before digging; **Biology** – looking at the insects and invertebrates they dig up; **Health** – planning what to grow in the garden; **Global Citizenship** – cooking recipes from different parts of the world; **Geography** – where does basil come from? **History** – how did tomatoes get to the UK? **Literacy** – expanding their vocabulary as they discuss the gardens and the recipes they are going to cook ... **growing and cooking can involve the whole curriculum.**



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Through cooking at school, children also explore their own and other cultures, learn about seasonality and acquire some skills that could put many adults to shame.

Open Futures experts play an ongoing and key role in showing teachers how best to teach cooking in a classroom, not simply how to produce wonderful plates of food, but also to take advantage of the array of cross-curricular benefits that *cookit* provides.



cookit strand

Closely connected with growit, the cookit strand of Open Futures gives children the opportunity of really understanding where their food comes from and how it relates to who they are, both in terms of their physical development and their well-being.

Once the class is ready to get its aprons dirty, children are taught how to use kitchen equipment properly and safely, learning chefs' techniques for slicing food such as tomatoes and onions. They are encouraged to touch, taste and smell at every stage, really getting a sense of the wonderful world of food.



The best part of the *cookit* process is, of course, the time when classes sit down together and enjoy what they have prepared.



There are a number of *cookit* Case Studies, which show some of the amazing concoctions – from flapjacks to gazpacho – that the *Open Futures* schools have made.



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filmit is an internet-video system that helps children document and share their on-going project work. It helps them to communicate with each other, to see the experiences of children in other *Open Futures* schools and, most importantly, to share their own via the *filmit* website.

Teachers are given expert instruction in how best to integrate *filmit* into their lessons and are able to work with new technologies to document their pupils' work in an innovative way. Schools simply need a computer, broadband connection and a digital camera to capture and edit the children's experiences.

filmit India is a partnership between *Open*



Futures schools in the UK and 22 schools in Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai. Working with the Indian National Trust for Art and

filmit strand

filmit was initially developed to support the *growit* and *cookit* strands, but it has since evolved into an integral component of the *Open Futures* programme in its own right.

Cultural Heritage (INTACH) *filmit* India sees children in the two countries creating short films about their lives, their schools and



their culture. By uploading them to the *Open Futures filmit* website schools across the country and the world can watch and comment on the films. The exchange has provided a means for communication between different cultures and not only helped children learn about each other's cultures but it also engages them in new ways of seeing and understanding their own.

Children are, on the whole, already relatively familiar with film as a medium – those that aren't are rapidly drawn to a new form of communication that allows them to share their excitement about their experiences.

That's a key benefit, because *filmit* is therefore both exciting and relevant for children.



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Open Futures encourages schools to work in more cross-curricular way and the four curriculum strands (*askit*, *growit*, *cookit* and *filmit*) provide schools with a raft of cross-curricular opportunities and benefits. It helps the curriculum to become a 'whole learning experience'.

Many of the current *Open Futures* schools also speak of the benefits of linking the initiative with other programmes, so that they complement and enhance one another and provide a sharper focus for planning. This ensures that time is not wasted, developments are cohesive and consistent and important cross-curricular learning takes place.



Cross-curricular benefits

Open Futures is about joined-up thinking and working right across the early years foundation stage and national curriculum. It places emphasis on the development of practical, creative, thinking and enquiry skills which help children to be more in charge of their own learning, while increasing their interest, confidence and motivation.



Successful links made between *Open Futures* and other programmes and projects include, for example:

- *Sustainable schools*
- *Healthy schools*
- *Learning Outside the Classroom*
- *Growing Schools*
- *Eco-Schools*
- *Fairtrade Schools*
- *Working with Others project*
- *Reggio Emilia schools*
- *Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) Education*
- *Local community activities*
- *Music, dance and drama projects*