



MORECAMBE BAY CURRICULUM

Introduction

The Morecambe Bay Curriculum (MBC) is a positive response to the climate crisis challenge.

To achieve this objective, a new birth to 25 years curriculum is live and is being co-constructed by the Bay education stakeholders which includes early years settings, schools (including special schools), residential care settings, colleges, university partners, Eden Project North, NHS, Local Enterprise Partnership and the Chamber of Commerce.

Lancaster & Morecambe College (LMC) has taken the lead in the development of the curriculum, together with Professor Robert Barratt, previously Head of Eden Project Learning in Cornwall and now Eden Project North Chair of Education at Lancaster University.

The project is redefining the role of the College as a lead strategic partner shaping a new relationship between the community, the business community and the environment.

The College's Ofsted Inspection in March 2020 noted that:

“The principal and senior leadership team have established strong and sustainable relationships with a wide range of community organisations and leaders. They work effectively and creatively together. Their aim is to improve the current and future educational opportunities for learners and apprentices across a wide geographical area.

This project [MBC] is driving a whole-education system change across the area. The College has established itself at the centre of this change.”

The Curriculum

An innovative curriculum development project has been designed to connect the education offer to an environmental agenda and the business economy.

The curriculum is place-based and is culturally and contextually situated in the natural environment of the Bay and is informed by the impact of human activity in the area. It seeks to provide an integrated education, health, social, environment and economic framework for Morecambe Bay. The local stories (past, present, future) that connect people to their place are being used as a vehicle to reimagine future sustainable solutions to living in Morecambe Bay.

This initiative that recognises the equality and diversity of all living things including the place and the key outcomes of the curriculum are to:

- protect and improve the health of the ecosystem
- improve the psychological and physical health and well-being of the community
- create new green economies
- stimulate green entrepreneurship.

This new contract will empower residents with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to take personal responsibility for their local environment and the future of their place and a new

environmental ethic will be defined that acknowledges and values the importance of each person and place and recognises that all living beings, not just humans, play a significant role in a healthy place.

The project has established a new moral and environmental understanding that the College, as a lead partner, is shaping - through an agenda that takes responsibility and action for the health of the ecosystem.

The project is raising awareness about the climate crisis through equipping learners with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to protect and enhance the health of the ecosystem.

Key dimensions are:

- new partnerships and dialogue
- new curricular
- new teaching and learning experiences
- a reimagined teaching and learning environment
- increased community engagement
- increased enrolment and retention of learners.

This initiative has influenced the culture and ethos of the College.

There is a renewed confidence, enthusiasm and aspiration in all staff across the College and this infectious attitude (optimism and hope) is being transferred to all stake-holders.

Led by the College, this initiative is unique in that it has established its own stake-holder governance structure. This involves working parties for all phases of education, health sector, community voluntary sector and the business community, a steering group and an executive group. This group are jointly co-constructing the curriculum offer.

The impact of the Project so far includes:

- a new permanent public consultation space which has been established in the College, and which enhances the positive relationships between the College and the community
- the College has hosted all partnership meetings and workshops for all education and business stake-holders
- a new innovative and radical teaching and learning environment has been designed in which challenges current models of pedagogical thinking and practice.
- the College has designed new courses and have enrolled learners to these courses; a significant number of whom would not have engaged in a College course
- a new traineeship programme was established in 2020
- the College is leading on a new primary school partnership, (responding to a community led request) offering basic skills training in the community
- half a hectare of College land has been assigned to develop a food security and therapeutic offer for learners
- the College was a strategic partner in the Connecting Kids Project, providing digital support and food to the community during Covid-19 Lockdown.
- The 'eggcup' project has enabled the college and its students to produce over 24,000 ready meals for the most vulnerable in its community during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The MBC is focussed on re-establishing the disconnect between people and place. The curriculum is providing learners with real world experiences (going outdoors) that lead to learners thinking about their responsibility to *care* for the environment and sustainable solutions to living in this place and on the planet.

Fundamentally, learner experiences are embedded in real world scenarios in the community and the curriculum is developing the skills, knowledge and behaviours to support learners in their journey into employment, but also crucially, possess the skills and knowledge to think and act sustainably.

There is a growing concern about eco-anxiety in the mindsets of young people who will be inheriting an unhealthy planet. Fundamentally, the education system is not providing the skills for young people to mitigate or manage environments damaged by climate change and a range of external experts contribute to and influence the design of the curriculum and content including Chamber Ambassadors, community leaders, and others.

Engagement with employers and local communities

The principal and senior leadership team of the College have established strong and sustainable relationships with a wide range of community organisations and leaders and they work effectively and creatively together.

The College's Ofsted Report on March 2020 noted that apprentices and learners benefit from working on live, community projects and work well together with their employers, peers and their tutors.

A working group comprised of the Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce, the Lancaster and Morecambe BIDs and the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership was set up in 2019 and has led to a number of opportunities including the supply of technology from the local power station to the College for teaching and learning. The influence of the business community on curriculum development is welcomed and evident including through work placements, visits and expert inputs.

Flexible Teaching / responsive curriculum for professional and vocational education

The local stories that connect people and place are being used as a vehicle to reimagine future sustainable solutions to living in Morecambe Bay.

Primarily, the curriculum focuses on the health and well-being of the ecosystem and also opportunities for future sustainable living and employment in this place.

The future intention is that learners will participate in environmental 'powerful projects' that are designed to interrogate environmental challenges and seek to provide sustainable solutions for this place. These projects are currently being trialled. All projects are intergenerational. Currently, an Employer Gateway with employment internships is being designed. These experiences will be evidenced in an ePassport which is being evaluated by Lancaster University as currency to access higher education pathways.

The first pilot projects of the MBC were launched in 2019/20 and entrepreneurship is key to the initiative. The close relationship between the business community and the College ensures that this curriculum meets the needs of the employers and central to the partnership is the joint concern for the environment. Local employers are currently designing a Green Charter which will involve business sponsorship for MBC environmental projects and a national awarding body is being consulted to accredit the MBC.

Wider development

This development of the MBC is part of a wider regional portfolio of activity and has been reviewed and included in Town Deal, High Street Fund and Green Challenge Recovery applications to central government.

The project also subject to regular review by the governing bodies of the College and its partner, Lancaster University. Key metrics include impact on learner engagement and retention, employer engagement and employability of learners and the health of the environment.

The project and its sustainable future

This project has not been instigated or sustained by any additional or 'discretionary funding', rather by the volunteered time and effort of all stakeholders, based on a commitment to a shared set of values.

The College has signed a 25-year MOU with Eden Project Learning and a 10-year MOU with Lancaster University. The higher education partnership, 2020, was catalysed by this MBC collaboration project.

Sustainability has been built into the project from the beginning with a 25-year strategy in preparation to give 5-year milestones, reverse engineered from 2045 back to 2020 and one-year priorities