



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA

## 'Cool It!' Case study

### Background

The 'Cool It!' project has been running in The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) for three years. The main aim of the project is to introduce children to the issue of climate change and to engage them with interactive and fun activities, all focused on providing knowledge and inspiring action (both now and in the future). Last year The Council received funding from the *Climate Challenge Fund* to develop the 'Cool It!' project.

Climate Challenge is funded by the government (Defra) and is the first in a long line of initiatives to try and change attitudes on climate change across the country and inspire people into action in their everyday lives. The Energy Centre for Sustainable Communities (ecsc) have co-ordinated the project this year on behalf of The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and have developed a tool kit to help others to run similar projects working with schools or community youth groups.

The project works with schools and children across Key Stage 2 to increase knowledge of climate change, including; how it is caused, what it's impacts are and what we can all do to reduce these impacts in the future. The overall objective of the project is to change young peoples' attitudes to climate change, with the following aims:

**Informing:** climate change is real; this is how it happens and what it means.

**Enabling:** making sure young people know what they can do individually and collectively to take action against climate change.

**Encouraging:** making sure young people feel enthusiastic, informed and supported in addressing climate change.

**Inspiring:** you need to take ownership, it's your future.

Working with the Big Foot Theatre Company, a bespoke assembly presentation has been developed to introduce climate change, along with interactive workshops and a comprehensive resource pack which teachers can use to implement classroom activities. The assembly, workshops and resource packs link in to many areas of the National Curriculum, SEAL and the Primary Framework for teaching Literacy and Mathematics. They also seek to encourage and improve students' speaking, listening, creative writing, self-esteem and teamwork skills.

### The 'Cool It!' project

The first stage of the project involved Key Stage 2 students from four RBKC schools; Parkwalk Primary School, St Charles Primary School, St Thomas Primary School and Thomas Jones Primary School. Facilitators from Big Foot Theatre Company visited each school for a morning and performed an interactive assembly and then worked with students on drama and creative writing workshops. The assembly, which was developed by Big Foot in partnership with ecsc, follows a day in the life of a child living in London with his mum. To begin with the performance is set in the present day and then moves into the future, through a dream sequence, in order to show what might happen if climate change is not controlled. The last section of the performance becomes interactive when the boy, waking up from his dream, asks the audience to

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help him live his day again but this time being environmentally conscious. The children are asked to shout 'Cool It!' every time they think the boy is doing something that may have an environmental impact, and then give him suggestions of what to do instead.

After the assembly students participated in workshops which allowed them to explore the issues surrounding climate change further. At the end of the session the students were given a mini project by Big Foot to create either a performance or a piece of creative writing to present at the 'Cool It!' day based on what they felt was important.

### The 'Cool It!' day

The 'Cool It!' day event took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2007 at Kensington Town Hall. It was split into two sessions. The morning session was attended by classes from four different schools that had not been involved in the earlier stage of the project.

These schools were; St Cuthbert's Primary School, Queen's Park Primary School, Servite Primary School and St Francis R C Primary School.

The event started with the climate change performance by Big Foot Theatre Company and was followed by some exciting activities, carried out by experienced facilitators, which focused on different areas of sustainability. These activities included a recycling relay race carried out by Waste Watch. After a short break the students participated in workshops put on by Big Foot and were then asked to complete a short evaluation process which involved indicating their opinions about issues relating to climate change. The afternoon session was set up for the children who had previously received the pre-event assembly and workshops with Big Foot to present their pieces about climate change and display their creative writing in front of other schools. This set up allowed the students to share and communicate what they had learnt about the environment with students from other schools.

At the end of the day each class received a prize for their school and the school with the strongest performance won a mini wind turbine tool kit, which was presented by Tom Powell from Defra.

Throughout the day students were taken aside and asked to participate in a short video. They were asked a series of questions relating to their opinions about climate change and what they thought should be done to tackle this problem. This footage was then edited into a short documentary.

### Contacts

To find out how to run a similar project with young people and to get a copy of the 'Cool It!' toolkit contact ecsc on [info@ecsc.org.uk](mailto:info@ecsc.org.uk) or on 020 7922 1662.

For more information about the project and to access the 'Cool It!' resource pack visit the 'Cool It!' website on [www.rbkc.gov.uk/coolit](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/coolit)