

*I have spread my dreams under your feet,  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams*  
W.B. Yeats

The **classofyourown** why who what and how.

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## **Background**

As a surveyor engaged in the measurement of many school buildings and grounds, Alison Watson was inspired by the enthusiasm and curiosity demonstrated by the many children and young people she encountered. Surveying, as with many construction related professions, represents applied learning. Children who found traditional classroom based learning restrictive and even pointless were suddenly enthusiastic about subjects such as trigonometry and geography.

Realising the mutual benefit for business and education to work together, Alison brought together a group of like-minded, socially orientated professionals including architect Dan Gibson and sustainability & social media advocate Martin Brown from fairsnape to form 'Class Of Your Own', all determined to take real life experiences and opportunities right into the classroom.

Sustainability is a key feature of the Class Of Your Own series of collaborative programmes. We are enabling children and young people to liberate their skills, their imagination and their potential, and to recognise the impact they can have on the wider world. As 'good citizens' they can make positive contributions to their local, national and even global society simply by making educated choices in the way they live their lives and consequently, sustainable thinking for future generations becomes a way of life and not a series of targets and tick boxes.

By developing their natural interest in their own environments, Class Of Your Own programmes empower young people to lead on sustainability projects and assignments which can influence business strategy and promote genuinely accountable corporate social responsibility.

Young people are taking responsibility for sustainable practice in their own schools. They are helping local businesses to promote sustainability in the boardroom and the shop floor. They are designing and project managing virtual and real life eco classrooms in which to educate their peers and their communities. They are educating their own families to recognise the impact of globalisation on the environment.

At Class Of Your Own, we firmly believe that young people have an exciting part to play in a new society of sustainable communities. As the workforce of tomorrow, we are giving them the attention they deserve today.

## **The Eco Classroom**

Class of Your Own Limited provides a series of workshops entitled "A Class of Your Own" which introduce primary Y6 and secondary KS3–5 students to roles and responsibilities of an 'environmentally friendly' design company. Construction is not just about laying bricks and plastering. In line with the Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment, we inspire students to consider a professional future in construction by introducing them to the 'real life' personnel who deliver the workshops with first-hand knowledge and experience.

Students form a sustainable design company, choosing a range of management and technical roles, and all investigating ideas which would conclude in the design of a single stand alone Community Learning Resource – a classroom sized building with an external environment to complement that design. This resource would be a zero carbon, sustainably constructed design and would provide a facility to the school and its wider community where environmental and sustainability issues could be taught in line with cross curricular subjects, and the community would be encouraged and inspired to address and adopt green issues and lifestyles.

Ultimately, the school can opt to actually build such a resource with us, and students would have a very active involvement taking on further roles of 'real life' professionals, not only as introduced in our first competitive workshop , but also as project managers, quantity surveyors, finance managers etc. They will work side by side with us to take a design right through to the finished build stage, adopting an ownership role throughout.

When the building is finished, it really does become 'a class of their own'.

## **The Virtual Classroom**

Using state of the art BIM (Building Information Modelling) software (Autodesk Revit Architecture 2011), students are trained directly by Autodesk education personnel via live webinar and supported by professional mentors, enabling them to model their eco-classroom and undertake sustainability performance assessments such as sun tracking, orientation and energy performance scenarios.

For training purposes, students base their initial model on that of the Accrington Academy Eco Classroom – the first live building project Class Of Your Own have undertaken with students. A live webcam on site will enable students to compare their efforts to the 'real thing' and ultimately compare the structural and environmental performance of a live and a virtual building.

## **Taking Construction Commitments into School**

Aligned to the 2012 Olympic development, Construction Commitments cover six principles through which the construction industry is endeavouring to achieve a better industry and achieve best practice. The Construction Commitments bring together the six key areas vital to delivering construction projects on time, safely and to budget.

Our programme introduces the commitments to students as part of the Eco Classroom providing applied learning towards project management of their own physical or virtual building. This approach easily demonstrates that construction is not limited to crafts and trades but can be exciting for many professional disciplines.

Students develop a set of documents that will establish the ethos, values and principles through which the project will be managed by their construction partners. Indeed the students develop their own Value Management tree, their PQQ for contractor selection, sustainable construction plan, their health and safety induction and a project charter, through which live eco-classroom construction projects will be led by students and signed by all project members

## **School FM through the Eco Doorways**

Sustainable Schools, a national framework introduced by the Department for Children Schools and Families, assists schools to understand how they can actively promote sustainability through a commitment of caring for oneself, one's community and one's environment. Based on the Eight Doorways from this agenda, our Eco Doorways programme allows students to engage with and assess the school holistically, addressing issues through the following themes:

- Food and Drink
- Energy and Water
- Travel and Traffic
- Purchasing and Waste
- Buildings and Grounds
- Inclusion and Participation
- Local Well Being
- Global Dimension

Students develop a Good, Bad and Ugly current state report which covers the Doorways and provides students with an understanding of the wider facilities management aspects of managing a school. The school receives an action report that demonstrates real engagement with the students.

### **Reaching Out – The Good, Bad and Ugly**

School children are the next generation that an organisation's sustainability policy and approach seek to protect. In addition, organisations typically employ members of a school's wider community within their offices/sites in the immediate locality of any school. Students are important to any organisations success.

Our Good, Bad and Ugly programme enable students, as representatives of future generations, to assess an organisations sustainability strategy and performance in handing over an environment that does not compromise their own futures.

Young people (typically Year 7–8) will assess, assist and support an organisation to address, review and develop their sustainability practices and corporate social responsibilities through a programme of assessment, acknowledgement and action. Schools are 'partnered' with companies intent on developing long term relationships.

Organisations will receive a report, endorsement and action plan from the students, but most importantly, will be able to demonstrate that they really are working with the next generation, for the next generation.

### **Eco Connections**

Our Connections programme is aimed at young people typically 'branded' NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training Schemes) who need an alternative way of learning outside the traditional classroom base.

Through a series of engaging one day per week sessions over a twelve week period, small groups of young people will follow the themes of sustainability and learn about leadership and management, design, measurement, media and presentation, ultimately coordinating their own event to showcase their new found skills. A number of work experience placements may be available to these students on successful completion of the course.

## Sustainability for Teachers and Parents

Our workshops reinforce each theme of the Eight Doorways agenda through collaborative student activities. We believe that young people can only succeed if their actions are supported by a 'whole school' commitment from senior management, teachers, governors and parents. We are able to provide a range of activities and training sessions in order that opportunities can be easily identified to promote meaningful inclusion in the curriculum throughout Primary, Secondary and Tertiary education.

We are supporting North West Sustainable Schools through promotion and provision of resources to assist teachers in classroom sessions, bringing the significance of climate change to life and demonstrating to students that that they each have an important role to play in helping to protect the environment.

### Social Media

We see the use of social media, such as blogging and twitter as vital communication tools in promoting good practice and case studies related to sustainability and as such is a theme that runs through our programmes.

### Bespoke

We offer a wide range of sustainability, built environment and improvement skills facilitated support, providing bespoke sessions or programmes, all based around our values of student engagement.

### Who we are

Contact us for more information and how Class Of Your Own can help with your sustainable development:

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