

National Sustainable Schools Online Conference 2009

Mr. Jonathon Porritt – Keynote Speech, July 2009

MORALITY AND TEACHING

There is a question that goes to the heart of the leadership dilemma that Head teachers now face. Should their schools still be in the business of reflecting back at young people facets of the contemporary paradigm of progress that has dominated people's lives since the middle of the last century (in terms of values, material aspirations, consumerist behaviours and so on), or should they be proactively preparing them for the very different world that inevitably awaits them and will be asking very different things of them?

And what kind of moral perspective should Head teachers bring to bear on what they teach, how they teach it, the performance of their own schools, and their relationships with the local communities. The logical conclusion of this kind of moral analysis is that all schools (primary and secondary) should become as rapidly as possible, microcosms of the world as it will be in 2025, not as it is today, and living exemplars of full-on sustainability practice, achieving total self-sufficiency in energy, generating zero waste and zero emissions, growing and cooking as much fresh, organic food as possible, bringing the natural world back into the school and its grounds, embedding sustainability across the entire curriculum, and living out the values of an interdependent world where the future wellbeing of each of us depends on the wellbeing of all.

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