

LESSON FOCUS:
Improving our school

Key stage	KS3 (Year 8)
Key concepts	2.1a, 2.3a, 2.3b
Key processes	3e
Range and content	1.3d
Curriculum opportunities	4a, 4b, 4c, 4d

PLTS:

Creative thinkers, effective participators, reflective learners, self-managers and team workers

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS:

Literacy: missing word cards and spokesperson activity

RESOURCES:

- Resource A - Picture cards
- Resource B - Missing words
- Resource C - Improvement cards
- Resource D - Answers
- Resource E - Cartoon proforma

Some preparation time for cutting cards

OBJECTIVES:

- I will tell others which improvements I think would be useful at our school.
- I will listen to others about what they think needs improving.

OUTCOMES:

- I will explore creative ways to address these improvements at our school.
- I will take part in implementing some of these improvements.

Overview

Year 8 students are at the perfect age for spotting opportunity. Harness this through a card-sorting game and some cartoon creation; the wheels of change will soon be oiled! How can your school improve, and what are *your* students going to do about it after this lesson?

Improving our school

Keywords

Action, active, argument, citizenship, community, decision, fair, improvement, investigate, need, negotiate, opinion, plan, school, School Council, unfair

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Share objectives and outcomes.

Starter (10 minutes) matching game

Resources:

- Resources A, B, C and D

Instructions:

- Explain that all schools can improve.
- Play the game 'How can we make our school a better place?':
 - ▶ Give each student one card from resource A, B or C (30 cards in total: each student in a class of 30 gets a different card).
 - ▶ The winning group is the first group of three to form with matching (a) picture card, (b) missing word card and (c) improvement card.
 - ▶ The answers are on resource D.
- Ask a spokesperson from each group to read out their improvement card to the class.

Main (25 minutes) circle time and cartoon

Resources:

- Resource E

Instructions:

Activity 1 (10 minutes)

- Create circle time and highlight circle time rules (e.g. only one person speaks at a time).
- Ask volunteers the following questions:
 1. Which main issue needs improvement at our school?
 2. How could students in this class make this improvement?
 3. Which ideas from the card-matching activity might work at this school?
- Examples of good responses:
 - ▶ 'I think that we need to be encouraged to walk to school or use a bike. Too many students get a lift or take the bus.'
 - ▶ 'The card about the swapping forum was good. Our science teacher says we should stop sending stuff to landfills.'

Improving our school

Activity 2 (15 minutes)

- Put students into pairs.
- Give each pair resource E.
- Ask each pair to produce a simple cartoon based upon a school improvement area:
 - ▶ Box 1: current situation (e.g. student throws paper in normal bin)
 - ▶ Box 2: improvement by next week (e.g. student throws paper in recycling bin)
 - ▶ Box 3: improvement by next month (e.g. teacher buys recycled furniture)
 - ▶ Box 4: improvement by next year (e.g. school gets recycling award from local council).

Plenary (20 minutes) feedback and targets

Resources:

- none

Instructions:

- Ask each group to swap their work with another group for one minute.
- Repeat the process a few times.
- Invite volunteers to comment on the most innovative ideas.
- Examples of good responses:
 - ▶ 'Sofi's group's idea could work. They say we should start a School Council so that by this time next year reps can run assemblies.'
 - ▶ 'Pedro's group had useful ideas. They want to make a playing field into an exercise area with outdoor equipment by next June. Their way of raising the money is shown in the cartoon.'
- Ask each student to choose an improvement idea, then write down three personal targets: how is (s)he is going to help it become a reality?
- Prompts:
 - ▶ charity government funding internet research MP parental support
 - ▶ pressure group school website School Council peer mentor tutor time

Attainment

Level 1	I can recognise that different students have different needs and wants.
Level 2	I can give opinions about issues that affect me at school.
Level 3	I can plan some action to improve my school.
Level 4	I can work with others to address issues at my school.
Level 5	I can explain the impact of the improvements I'd like to make at my school.
Level 6	I can present a persuasive argument for why a particular course of action would be useful at my school.
Level 7	I can begin to evaluate my role at school in terms of shaping decisions.
Level 8	I can put school improvements to the test after this lesson.
Exceptional performance	I can assess and evaluate the validity of a wide range of viewpoints about school improvements.

Recommended links

Provide students with three local schools' websites; encourage exploration of nearby initiatives.

RESOURCE A



RESOURCE B

recycling

forum

clothes

MP

debt

opinion

charity

entrepreneurs

homeless

bullied

RESOURCE C

At our school, a lady installed a beehive for us near the canteen. Volunteers take it in turns to collect honey from the hives, then we sell it. The profit we make gets split between sports equipment for the school and a _____ that the sixth form chooses.

All students here have to do one thing to change the school for the better before their GCSEs. I made a piece of art for the inclusion room and my friend is setting up a website for Year 7s who get _____. My sister helps autistic students with their homework.

We've got this promise at our school that every form class will get involved with a group in the community. Our class does sponsored runs to raise money for a local _____ shelter. Our teacher then uses the money to buy food for the residents.

Our careers teacher encourages us to do at least three days of voluntary work while we're at the school. I'm going to do my three days at a play project this Christmas holiday. Two of my friends are helping price _____ at a charity shop for three Saturdays.

Every Friday afternoon we have a lesson called 'Money Matters'. We do all sorts of things in the lesson. Last week a visitor from a local bank talked to us about avoiding credit card _____. This Friday we're practising paying online bills in the computer room.

There's a new initiative at my school. Every Monday morning we all find out what our local _____ has achieved that week. We get shown stuff on the SMART Board about who she's spoken to and what she's campaigned about. It's really interesting actually.

I set up an internet _____ with my ICT teacher. Students use it to get rid of things that they no longer want and collect points in return for new things. It's great. I gave away an unwanted computer keyboard and used my points for a new bike saddle.

We have a teachers versus students debate every term. The headteacher chooses a topic (e.g. religion) and the teams debate the pros and cons of the issue. You end up learning loads about the world; you realise that there's no such thing as a wrong _____.

I run the school magazine. I set it up in 2008 because I wanted people our age to have more of a voice. The magazine has articles about local _____. It also lists useful websites for under-16s who are passionate about following a career in politics.

I feel really proud that our school cares about wastage. We have three different bins in every room, and all the adults and children are expected to use them for the right types of rubbish. We got an award from the council due to our commitment to _____.

RESOURCE D

At our school, a lady installed a beehive for us near the canteen. Volunteers take it in turns to collect honey from the hives, then we sell it. The profit we make gets split between sports equipment for the school and a **charity** that the sixth form chooses.

All students here have to do one thing to change the school for the better before their GCSEs. I made a piece of art for the inclusion room and my friend is setting up a website for Year 7s who get **bullied**. My sister helps autistic students with their homework.

We've got this promise at our school that every form class will get involved with a group in the community. Our class does sponsored runs to raise money for a local **homeless** shelter. Our teacher then uses the money to buy food for the residents.

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There's a new initiative at my school. Every Monday morning we all find out what our local **MP** has achieved that week. We get shown stuff on the SMART Board about who she's spoken to and what she's campaigned about. It's really interesting actually.

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I feel really proud that our school cares about wastage. We have three different bins in every room, and all the adults and children are expected to use them for the right types of rubbish. We got an award from the council due to our commitment to **recycling**.

RESOURCE E

