

## **OGP Policy Working Group: Background to Education**

### **What is happening in Oxfordshire now**

Oxfordshire as an education authority has a poor record. In particular, it has been content to allow most of its secondary schools, and many of its primary and special schools, to fall into the control of “academy chains”. It has colluded with a central state which placed far too much emphasis on test results in a few subjects as a measure of “good education”.

Young people from schools all over the county have taken part in “climate strikes” and other activities aimed at putting climate change and environmental deterioration at the top of the political agenda. Their education should respect their concerns and enable them to take part in the debate about how we respond to the global challenge of climate change.

### **What the Green Party needs to do**

Greens support teachers at all levels of education who work hard to hold on to a broader, more humane view of learning in the face of at best indifference and at worse hostility from governments, media, and vested interest groups.

We will support and encourage schools to see their physical environment as a learning resource, through visits to nature reserves, projects such as school gardens, promotion of outdoors learning pedagogy, forest schools, etc.

As children grow, they should be encouraged to see their physical environment in its full global context, and to become aware of how it can be shaped, for good or bad, by human activity.

Greens will press for all Oxfordshire-controlled school buildings to be energy efficient and carbon-neutral.

Greens will strongly support initiatives that encourage children to walk or cycle to school, such as “walking trains” and/or “bike convoys”. To that end we will press for an audit of safe cycling and walking paths to schools, and the development of pedestrian and bike-friendly areas and access round school sites.

We will also encourage OCC primaries to hold road safety events at which safe and considerate cycling is promoted.

Greens are committed to the idea that democracy is something that we practice in daily life. We will therefore press for the running of schools to be devolved as much as possible to the school with the local authority involved in monitoring them to ensure there is consistency of standards and level of involvement and to help to share best practice.

Greens fully support the view of the 1998 Crick Report on Citizenship Education that schools should model democratic practice in the ways they work. We will encourage schools and colleges to set up Parent Forums or Parent Councils to enhance the school’s accountability and improve communication and collaboration over issues such as curriculum, provision, homework, attendance and behaviour management.