



Eco-Schools Newsletter

Welcome to the Eco-Schools Northern Ireland Newsletter.

SSE Airtricity and Eco-Schools Global Wind Awards

Eco-Schools and SSE Airtricity hosted the **Global Wind Awards** for the third year in a row on 3rd June 2015 at the Everglades hotel in L/Derry. The Awards were a great success with shortlisted schools enjoying a trip to Slieve Kirk Wind Farm and getting an up-close look at the wind turbines – even going inside them! The finals were a great day of celebrating all things to do with sustainable energy including workshops, entertainment and lunch.

Winners of the **3 categories** this year will be announced in our next newsletter:

- **Eco-Committee Award** – for an Eco-Committee that is a shining example of school leadership.
- **Operation Energy Project of the Year Award** – for a school that has undertaken a great Energy project or taken part in Operation Energy Power Down Day.
- **Family Energy Champions Poster Competition** – designed by a family at home, this is an award for an eye-catching poster highlighting what the family does to save energy and suggesting good energy saving ideas.



The Wheelie Big Challenge

Eco-Schools and Belfast City Council were delighted to host a very successful day at the Wheelie Big Challenge Awards on 4th June 2015 at Belfast City Hall. The Challenge was a new, fun, waste themed, project and competition for schools in Belfast City Council. 30 schools submitted entries for the competition and the shortlisted entries presented a final display outlining their waste actions.

Winners will be announced in our next newsletter.



Termoncanice Primary School host a Translink Travel Challenge special guest.

Raymond Andrews from Translink visited the P4 classes at Termoncanice Primary School to see how they were getting on with their Translink Travel Eco-Schools Challenge and to give them some advice on travelling safely on public transport. The pupils were also delighted to climb on board the Translink Safety Bus for a look and receive some travel themed goodies.

For more information on the Translink Eco-Schools Travel Challenge and resources visit the [Translink website](#).



'Cash for Clobber' Schools

The Cookstown Textile Recyclers' Cash for Clobber competition closed on 31st May so good luck to all the schools this year. There are some great prizes up to £1000 - see our [website](#). Call Cookstown Textile Recyclers on **028 9447 8880** to organise your collection.

Pictured are Grange Primary School who have had 2 clothing collections this year and collected over 180 bags.



Eco-Schools successfully complete the Wrigley's Litter Less project.

Thirty schools from across Northern Ireland have successfully taken part in the international Eco-Schools, Wrigley's Litter Less Campaign, focusing on reducing litter and waste in their schools and local communities.

Schools have tackled the issue in many ways by recycling old clothes, composting their food waste, having a waste free lunch, setting up recycling in school, banishing polystyrene cartons in the dinner hall, mass litter picks and litter awareness campaigns. Well done everyone who took part, it has been a terrific combined effort.

Pictured are St Mary's Primary School and St Colm's High School in Draperstown completing a combined litter-pick of their local park. For more information contact eco-schools@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org.



Eco-Schools pupils roll up their sleeves for the Big Spring Clean.

Pupils from St Malachy's Primary School, Carnagat, and all across Northern Ireland have been showing pride in their school grounds and communities by taking part in Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful's annual Big Spring Clean.

If you would like to do something to help improve your school environment and your local community, or take part in a clean-up of your local area, pledge your support on the www.liveherelovehere.org website to receive more information.



Marine Litter Watch

The Spring 2015 edition of Marine Litter Watch is now available from <http://j.mp/1S0EsOD>.

St Mary's Primary School in Mullaghbawn develops world aspirations.

St Mary's Primary School in Mullaghbawn recently scooped €79,725 under the Erasmus+ scheme, the EU's flagship programme for education, training, youth and sport, and through it, are hoping to help pupils develop as global citizens.

Erasmus+, which is managed by British Council – and Eco-Schools Delivery Partner - and Ecorys UK, is helping the County Armagh school work with five countries across Europe – Finland, Greece, Spain, Ireland and Italy, on two complementing projects. They aim to promote IT skills, environmental awareness, a second language and even a happier work environment, ultimately working towards achieving the Eco-Schools 'Green Flag' award.

Ciara Crawley, the Erasmus+ Coordinator at the school, said: "We firmly believe that a good project impacts on not only the school involved, but also the wider community, to which each school belongs. Here at St Mary's we've developed a real community spirit – working with parents and grandparents and others within the local area. It's really important for us to have their support."

St Mary's Primary School have worked with the British Council for the past 12 years, initially developing European contacts through Comenius and working with a partner school in Finland and subsequently working with schools through the eTwinning programme.

The school is now looking further east for the year ahead – with plans afoot to partner with a school in China. The project will see St Mary's lead a cluster of ten schools in Northern Ireland who are forming links in China through the British Council's Connecting Classroom's programme.

Ciara said, "This is great for us as a school as we're used to working with schools outside of Northern Ireland but not with ones in our own backyard – it's wonderful to have a chance to collaborate like this. Working with schools in China will also be amazing and it will complement the Mandarin classes that we already have in place here."

Erasmus+ and Connecting Classrooms are just a few of the programmes available to schools through British Council Northern Ireland. For more information visit <http://nireland.britishcouncil.org>, www.erasmusplus.org.uk or follow on Twitter at [@BCouncil_NI](https://twitter.com/BCouncil_NI)

Buying Litterpickers? Order from Helping Hand and help Eco-Schools too!

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, the charity which operates the Eco-Schools programme in Northern Ireland, has selected Helping Hand Environmental as their official environmental partner of choice for 2015 and hopes that a strengthened working partnership with the UK's #1 Litter Clearance Hands Tools Company, will be successful as the environmental charity announces an exciting development to their relationship – and a bespoke Litterpicker!

Schools can buy the new litter pickers as part of the official Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Order Form in association with Helping Hand Environmental. The scheme enables schools to purchase litter clearance equipment and generate funds for Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful every time they quote KNIBGROUP when placing an order with Helping Hand Environmental.



Challenge Fund 2015/2016 is now open for applications

Following Environment Minister Mark H Durkan's announcement on Monday 1st June 2015, the 2015/16 Challenge Fund is now open for applications from community groups and schools from across Northern Ireland.

The **Environmental Education** category is open to **schools**, who can apply for support of up to £4,000. Applications will be welcomed until noon Friday 25th September '15. Successful applicants will be able to commence their projects at the end of October 2015.

For information on how to apply please visit the NIEA funding webpage:

<http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/funding.htm>

For further details on eligibility please refer to the [guidance notes](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document provided on the above website.

If you have any further queries please contact the Challenge Fund team at

ChallengeFund@doeni.gov.uk

Ballycraig Primary School – School Grounds Open Day



Ballycraig Primary School in Antrim were awarded the title of Ambassador Eco-School for School Grounds this year. They have made fantastic use of their schools grounds over the years and developed them with the help of local community groups, businesses and parents to become an intrinsic part of the school's everyday learning and community outreach. They have excellent outdoor learning, wildlife and vegetable growing areas. They even keep their own hens! To top all this they have just won 'Best of the Best' at the Best Kept School Awards for Northern Ireland.

We are delighted to announce that they will holding an open day for the school grounds on **Friday 26th June 1pm – 4.30pm** to give everyone a chance to come and see what they have been doing, share ideas and be inspired. If you would like to attend and use the opportunity to chat to teachers, parents and pupils involved please contact ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org.

Global learning initiative off to a great start

Over 70 schools have already registered for the new Global Learning Programme (GLP) who were sponsors of the Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Event. The formal education project is funded by the UK government to enhance global learning at Key Stage 2 & 3. The Programme is managed by the Centre for Global Education and provides support spanning twelve months to all participating schools to help them embed global learning across the curriculum using a whole school approach.



Schools begin the process by nominating a teacher to lead on global learning, who then attends two days of CPD training and cascades their increased knowledge throughout the school. Training days were held in Belfast, Cookstown and Derry. Further training dates will subsequently be held in the autumn.

Schools can register for the Global Learning Programme now via this [SurveyMonkey](#) form, while more information on the GLP is available via this [webpage](#). Please email glp@centreforglobaleducation.com or call 028 9024 1879 for more information.

Safety Solutions NI have all the answers for bins and outdoor playground furniture.

Safety Solutions NI Ltd, who were proud sponsors at the Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Celebration Event, are the leading supplier of recycling, waste management & street furniture solutions for both the public and private sector throughout the UK and Ireland.

Safety Solutions' products are high quality & durable as well as being stylish & functional. All recycling & waste management solutions can be personalised with your school's logo or crest.

Safety Solutions' extensive range of products including internal, external & novelty bins can be seen at www.safetyni.com or simply call 028 92 622 444 to discuss a solution to suit your requirements and budget.



Do you have some primary school news worth shouting about?

Ni4kids Magazine, who sponsored the Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Event, would love to hear about what pupils and teachers have been up to during this term.

Has your school achieved a special award or accolade? Do you have a star pupil who deserves a mention for their achievements?

Did you have any special visitors to your school or take part in a community project that you are really proud of? Perhaps you have a special teacher, classroom assistant or school principal who is retiring after many years of dedicated service to your school?

If you have some special school news that you would like to share with the world then send it, with an accompanying image, to editor@ni4kids.com.



Junk Kouture announces winners for 2015.

Eco-Schools were delighted to have Junk Kouture sponsor our 20th Anniversary Event and have pupils from Northern Ireland strut their fabulous recycled fashion creations for us on the day. The competition is over for this year with Elphin Community College, Co. Roscommon scooping the top prize.

Junk Kouture is an all-Ireland competition for second level students which challenges teenagers to create high-end wearable fashion from everyday junk that would normally find its way into the bin. Junk Kouture aims to inspire and ignite passion in these teenagers while at the same time subtly educating them about the importance of recycling and reusing waste.

To find out more about taking part next year and to read all about the winners this year visit www.junkkouture.com.



Henry Brothers support Eco-Schools event and the environment.

Henry Brothers (Magherafelt) Ltd sponsored the Eco-Schools Celebration event and underlined their commitment to protect the environment by bringing along their electric BMW I3 with zero CO2 emissions for pupils to see on the day.

The Magherafelt based construction and civil engineering company strive to maintain a high environmental standard in all of their work and also support young people through employment, education and sport sponsorships.

They have recently developed a nature reserve which has been used to host company fun days and BBQ's. From April 2015 the Nature reserve will be available to local schools to assist in their environmental education programme. Contact them on info@henrybrothers.co.uk for more information.



Quality award for Lough Neagh Discovery Centre Interpretive team

Congratulations to the Interpretive team at Lough Neagh Discovery Centre. After months of hard work they have been awarded the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge award.

The team are now officially recognised with a stamp of quality for its Environmental Education and Learning outside the Classroom Programmes. They are only the third organisation in Northern Ireland to achieve this award.



The LOTC Quality Badge means that the team has passed a robust assessment designed to ensure that they are meeting schools' learning and risk management needs, no matter what activities they offer.

The purpose of the badge is to help schools identify good quality and safe provision, and to reduce red tape when planning educational visits. It incorporates existing safety standards for all types of activity and combines learning and safety into one easily recognisable accreditation for all organisations providing learning outside the classroom.

“We have been working towards the award for a while and we were delighted when we received the email to say that we were successful. It is excellent recognition for the hard work everyone has put it over the past 5 years and we are all delighted” said Andy Griggs, Conservation Education and Activities Officer.

Eco-Schools International Updates

Now this is what we call taking Eco-Schools actions to the next level. Giles Clarke (nine years old) is a student at Fish Hoek Primary School in Cape Town, which is an Eco-School. Giles Clarke, Jon O’Hanlon and Darren Clarke, (Giles’s Dad) are running across the African continent, starting in the Skeleton Coast region on the west coast of Namibia adjacent to the Namib Desert.

They are running to raise awareness around Water, Elephants and Education and the youngest participant, Giles, will be acting as an “Eco-Schools Ambassador” for Eco-Schools and WESSA along the route. Things are starting to gain momentum now as the team leaves on 1 June.

Their run will take them across 3,000 km of often-uncharted terrain, following rivers, elephant migration routes, and cultural and natural heritage sites, to the east coast of Mozambique near the mouth of the Limpopo river. They will run approximately 45 km every day, with a rest day every seventh day, taking nearly four months to finish.

The purpose for their run is to attract people’s attention and their awareness to two major issues facing the Earth, and southern Africa in particular. Firstly, the sustainability of the planet, and in particular water sustainability. South Africa is one of the world’s top water scarce regions. Secondly, the nearing extinction of the sub-Saharan African elephant. This is due primarily to poaching for the ivory trade, with water scarcity as a result of climate change also affecting their survival.

In South Africa the FEE Eco-Schools programme is implemented by WESSA (the Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa), who have appointed young Giles as an **Eco-Schools ambassador**. Giles will be recording his observations of the elephant conservation and water sustainability issues in pictures and on video. He will also be doing a mini SASS (stream assessment scoring system) analysis of every stream, river and body of water that the expedition team crosses on their route across Africa, and uploading the results onto the international mini SASS bio-monitoring site.

Giles will be running 5km every day with the athletes. And in case you thought he wasn’t busy enough already, what with all of these activities as well as the home schooling he will be doing every day – he will also be distributing information. Since the route that the runners will be following will take them through many villages of the local and indigenous peoples of Southern Africa, Giles will be providing hand-outs and educational material on environmentalism, correct water usage and sustainability, elephant conservation, and human-elephant conflict issues.

Giles is launching a “Connect The Children” campaign. This involves sharing all of the observations and experiences that he encounters in his trip across Africa with all the children at the Eco-Schools in the 59 countries in which the Eco-Schools programme is running. He also hopes to try and extend this to other countries as well to broaden the reach of the programme.

To help Giles achieve his aim please send an email to jon@goodsport.org.za to sign up for the newsletter which will be sent by Giles directly.

Green Flag Awards

Well done to the following schools on achieving the Eco-Schools Green Flag in **April and May 2015**:

- St Mary's Primary School Derrytrasna
- St Bride's Primary School Belfast
- St Therese of Lisieux Primary School Belfast
- St Peter's Nursery School Belfast
- Fairview Primary School Ballyclare
- St Clare's Abbey Primary School Newry
- St Teresa's Primary School Mountnorris
- Cookstown Primary School Cookstown
- Moyallon Primary School Portadown
- Holy Cross Primary School Atticall
- Cavehill Primary School Belfast
- Abbey Primary School Newtownards
- Leaney Primary School Ballymoney
- Loughshore Education Resource Centre Belfast
- Academy Primary School Saintfield
- Victoria College Prep Department Belfast
- Downshire Nursery School Banbridge
- St Comgall's Primary School Antrim
- Bangor Central Integrated Primary School Bangor
- St Pius X College Magherafelt
- Donaghmore Primary School Donaghmore
- Moat Primary School Lisnaskea
- Banbridge Nursery School Banbridge
- Sacred Heart Boys' Primary School Belfast
- Holy Trinity Primary School Belfast
- St Patrick's Primary School Ballynahinch
- St Mary's Grammar School Magherafelt
- Killowen Primary School Lisburn
- St Patrick's Primary School, Drumgreenagh Rathfriland
- St Malachy's Primary School, Balymoyer Whitecross
- Cortamlet Primary School Altnamackin
- Mossley Primary School Newtownabbey
- Donaghey Primary School Dungannon
- Kilronan School Magherafelt
- Roan St Patrick's Primary School Dungannon
- Edendork Primary School Dungannon
- Meadow Bridge Primary School Hillsborough
- Bush Primary School Bush
- St Colm's High School Draperstown

We are continually amazed at the knowledge and enthusiasm of all the pupils and staff at our Green Flag schools and they are to be congratulated on their fantastic achievement.

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