

Eco-Schools Primary Environmental Review

This review is a suggested format, designed to be an audit tool for the Eco-Committee to use in your school. The questions are labelled so that you can tell which will require investigation by the pupils, which they will need to ask a member of staff about and which may take a bit of research.

The Eco-Schools programme does not require that you complete all the suggestions in this document. It is designed to be a stimulus that you can use to assess what happens in your school at the start of the programme and as a baseline audit each year.

You may not know all the answers to all the questions in each section but if you choose to work further on a topic the answers should be found by the next time you complete the review. It also might not include every possible idea that you could carry out, so please don't take the questions as exhaustive.

The questions will help Eco-Committee members to think of actions that can be undertaken in the school to improve the environment and the school's impact on our planet. The 3 chosen topics (1 major and 2 minor) for the year should then be put into an Action Plan.

Take the time to investigate every year as a lot can change over 12 months.

Date completed: 25th October 2023

Completed by: Miss Oldcroft (class teacher and eco co-ordinator) and eco committee.

Key

	These are suggested links to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For more ideas and information visit our website .
	Pupils can find the answers themselves by looking carefully around the school.
	Pupils may need to ask an adult to find the answers to these questions.
	A little bit more investigation is required, maybe a survey or asking questions to other pupils.
	This is a way of measuring the impact that you are having on the environment so you can show how much you are improving. This is an important part of being an Eco-School.

Biodiversity



Does the school have trees in the grounds?		Yes	No
Does the school have more hedging than fencing around the parameter?		Yes	No
Are some of your trees and hedging native species?		Yes	No
Does your school have a pond or marshy area?		Yes	No
Does your pond have an exit route for frogs, toads, newts and hedgehogs?		Yes	No
Does your school have a wildflower meadow?		Yes	No
Does your school have areas of long/undisturbed vegetation linking habitats together?		Yes	No
Does your school have any of the following aids to biodiversity? Please circle/highlight the ones that you have:		Yes	No
<p><i>Log pile</i> <i>Stone pile</i> Minibeast hotel <i>Scented flowers/herbs</i></p> <p><i>Butterfly bushes</i> Bird feeders <i>Water for birds</i></p> <p>Bird boxes <i>Bat boxes</i> <i>Swift houses</i> Bee homes</p> <p><i>Hedgehog House</i> <i>Hedgehog passages (i.e. under/through fencing)</i></p>			
Are the school grounds free from herbicides and pesticides?		Yes	No
Do you always use peat-free compost?		Yes	No
Have you carried out a biodiversity survey of your school grounds?		Yes	No

Biodiversity action points/comments:

- Some of the things we used to have (e.g. butterfly bushes) but have been lost due to renovating our outdoor spaces. Need to re-evaluate what can be done/is being done regarding biodiversity.
- P7 will be taking part in ECO-UNESCO 'All about biodiversity' webinar on Wed 15th November.
- Current P3 carry out a bug hunt.

Climate Change



Do pupils understand the difference between weather and climate?		Yes	No
Is there an understanding of the contributing factors to climate change i.e. the use of fossil fuels and the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere?		Yes	No
Do some classes study the effects of climate change on different people and wildlife around the world?		Yes	No
Do pupils understand their carbon footprint and know ways to reduce it?		Yes	No
Which of these things do you do to reduce the school's carbon footprint: Circle all that you are doing: <i>Walk/cycle/take the bus to school</i> <i>Recycle all the waste you can</i> <i>Buy local food</i> <i>Carpool to school</i> <i>Save energy</i> <i>Plant trees</i> <i>Use less plastic and paper</i> <i>Save water</i> <i>Offset air travel through the Global Forest Fund</i>		Yes	No
Do you measure any of the above actions you have taken?		Yes	No
If yes, have you used an online carbon calculator to see how much carbon you are saving? <i>Hint one is available in the Eco-Schools Resource Library.</i>		Yes	No

Climate Change action points/comments:

At break time we watch Newsround which talks about climate change.

In the past we have measured the weight of our packaging waste and food waste.

A few years ago we took part in a garden project with Radius Housing and planted fruit trees and bushes.

Energy



Gas / Oil:

Are windows and doors always kept shut when the heating is on?		Yes	No
Does each classroom have a thermometer so you can try and keep the temperature at 18 degrees centigrade?		Yes	No
Is there insulation in the roof of the school building to reduce heat loss?		Yes	No

Electricity:

Are lights always turned off in empty rooms?		Yes	No
Are lights turned off as soon as there is enough daylight?		Yes	No
Are projectors/whiteboards, computers and monitors switched off when not in use?		Yes	No

General:

Do pupils understand how our energy is generated, how it effects the environment, and the benefits of renewable energy?		Yes	No
Do pupils or an adult keep track of the electricity readings?		Yes	No
Has the school investigated possible sources of renewable energy?		Yes	No

What is your Display Energy Certificate (DEC) score? You should be able to find it in your school or online . It's a really useful document to track your school's energy efficiency between years.		86
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Energy action points/comments:

<p>Look into fixing thermometer</p> <p>'Switch off when not in use' sign beside each light switch in classrooms and corridors.</p>
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Global Perspective



Does your school have an active link with a school in another country?		Yes	No
Do the teachers have Fair Trade tea and coffee in the staffroom?		Yes	No
Are there any other Fair Trade products used in school? (fruit juice, footballs, bananas)		Yes	No
Do pupils recognise the Fair Trade symbol and understand its meaning?		Yes	No
Do you have any visitors from the local community/Eco-Schools delivery partners to talk about local or global issues?		Yes	No
Are pupils aware of their Rights and Responsibilities (linked to the UN convention on the Rights of the Child)?		Yes	No
Do you have any whole school awareness days to support people in other countries/situations?		Yes	No
Do you ever raise money or collect clothing/toys for charities working in developing countries?		Yes	No
Are pupils aware of, or are lessons linked to, the UN Sustainable Development Goals?		Yes	No
Do pupils understand that choices/behaviours in the developed world can effect people in the developing world in an unfair way?		Yes	No

Global Perspective action points/comments:

Teachers get tea and coffee each day but not Fair Trade

We raise money for charities and do the shoe box appeal

P4/5 learning about chocolate – advise them to study Fair Trade logo and products

Healthy Living



Do you have a fruit tuck shop that is run by pupils?		Yes	No
Are pupils encouraged to bring fruit for break?		Yes	No
Do you measure how many pupils bring a healthy break/lunch to school?		Yes	No
Do pupils have the opportunity to suggest what healthy choices they would like to include in the dinner/canteen menu?		Yes	No
Is there free drinking water available to pupils all day?		Yes	No
Do all pupils get to experience growing and then eating their own food at school?		Yes	No
Is there a fitness programme established in the school?		Yes	No
Does the school invite outside health agencies to come and talk to pupils about their health?		Yes	No
Does the school have an anti-bullying policy?		Yes	No
Does the school run any mindfulness and meditation lessons?		Yes	No

Healthy Living action points/comments:

- There should be a fruit tuck shop
- 4 days of healthy break
- Teacher should check break – currently do this in P7
- Have a healthy snack scheme but no fruit due to cost
- Healthy Kids in for after-school clubs
- NSPCC talk for KS2 pupils
- A few years ago we took part in a garden project with Radius Housing and planted fruit trees and bushes. Last year P6/7 got to take part in the harvesting event. Over the years we will hopefully have more fruit so the whole school can get involved.

Litter



Inside the school:

Is the inside of the school free from litter?		Yes	No
Are there enough bins inside the school?		Yes	No
Are the bins in the right places?		Yes	No
Are the bins emptied often enough?		Yes	No

School grounds:

Are the school grounds free from litter?		Yes	No
Are there enough bins around the school grounds?		Yes	No
Are the bins in the right places?		Yes	No
Are the bins suitable? E.g. does the litter blow out or are they too small/big?		Yes	No
If litter is present, is it coming from children in school or from outside the school grounds?		School	Outside

Outside the school:

Is your community generally litter free?		Yes	No
Are there enough bins in the community?		Yes	No
Does the school help to keep the community clean?		Yes	No

General:

Does the school have a clear policy on litter?		Yes	No
Do all pupils know the problems caused to the environment and wildlife by dropping litter?		Yes	No
Do you keep a record of what, where, when and amount of litter found?		Yes	No

Litter action points/comments:

We need something to hold the bins down so all the rubbish doesn't fall out.

Please note Eco-Schools NI consider balloon releases a form of mass littering. Having a balloon release at school may put your Green Flag status in doubt. Please consult the litter topic section of the Eco-Schools website for more information.

Marine



Can pupils list 3 reasons why the marine environment/ocean is vitally important to us?		Yes	No
Do the pupils know about plastic pollution in the oceans?		Yes	No
Can the pupils list 3 reasons why marine litter is bad for the marine environment?		Yes	No
Do you study in class the Marine topic and the effects of plastics on wildlife and human health?		Yes	No
Has your school banned any single use plastics? Circle any actions that you are currently doing: <i>Refusing - plastic straws/ cutlery / bags / Styrofoam food containers</i> Reducing – wrappers / packaging Recycling - plastic / food waste		Yes	No
Do you measure any of the above actions you have taken?		Yes	No
Do the pupils recognise the things listed below as sources of plastic pollution (macro and microplastics)? Circle all that you are able to identify: Packaging Farming Construction <i>Coastal Tourism</i> Cosmetics and toiletries Shipping <i>Texiles and clothing</i> Road transportation Fishing		Yes	No
Has your school taken part in a litter clean-up of a beach/river/or local area?		Yes	No

Marine action points/comments:

Please list 3 ways we can prevent marine litter entering the marine environment

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Don't litter 2. Don't use plastic bottles 3. Don't use single used plastic

Outdoor Learning



Are there games painted on the playground?		Yes	No
Are there murals, mosaics, sculptures or other artwork?		Yes	No
Are there plenty of things for climbing and balancing on, jumping and swinging from?		Yes	No
Are there quiet places to sit and talk?		Yes	No
Do you grow your own vegetables or fruit in the school grounds?		Yes	No
Do you have an outdoor classroom/log circle area?		Yes	No
Do you have friendship stops or buddy benches?		Yes	No
Are any lessons held in the school grounds?		Yes	No
Do you keep count of how many lessons are held in the school grounds?		Yes	No
Do all pupils have the opportunity to suggest what changes or new things they would like in the school grounds?		Yes	No

Outdoor Learning action points/comments:

- **There could be more places to talk, but there are a few places to sit down and talk (buddy benches)**
- **A few years ago we took part in a garden project with Radius Housing and planted fruit trees and bushes. Last year P6/7 got to take part in the harvesting event. Over the years we will hopefully have more fruit so the whole school can get involved.**
- **Miss Best has completed Forest School training and we got a log circle area**
- **We renovated our garden and do have things to balance on, but not climb**
- **We have received a grant for an outdoor learning classroom, which is in use weekly for foundation stage pupils.**
- **Possible tracking of outdoor learning lessons?**

Transport



Do most pupils walk, cycle or catch the bus to school?		Yes	No
Do you survey how people travel to school?		Yes	No
Is there somewhere dry and safe to store bikes?		Yes	No
Does the school provide cycle instruction for pupils?		Yes	No
Do you hold regular walk or cycle to school events/days?		Yes	No
Is it safe to walk or cycle to school?		Yes	No
Do cars park away from the entrance to the school?		Yes	No
Do pupils understand the environmental benefits of sustainable transport?		Yes	No
Have you taken part in a sustainable transport challenge i.e. the Translink Travel Challenge?		Yes	No

Transport action points/comments:

- It's too dangerous to walk to school for some people because they live far away
- It's only safe to walk to school if you're close to the school

Waste



Reduce:

Does the school use email to send newsletters?		Yes	No
If you send letters, is it one per family?		Yes	No
Do teachers photocopy back to back when they can?		Yes	No
Do pupils bring their packed lunch in reusable containers?		Yes	No

Reuse:

Are there scrap paper trays in the classrooms?		Yes	No
Are the toilet paper and hand towels made from recycled paper?		Yes	No
Does the office and photocopier use recycled paper?		Yes	No
Do you reuse any packaging in the classrooms (e.g. junk models)?		Yes	No
Do you have a swap shop for school uniform/games/ books/DVDs?		Yes	No

Recycle:

Which of the following do you recycle? (circle or highlight)					
Paper	Plastic	Cans	Cardboard	Clothing/Material	
Batteries	Phones	Stamps	Glasses	Food	Ink Cartridges
Do you have a compost bin/area that is in use?		Yes	No		
Do you use your compost on the school grounds?		Yes	No		
Are there enough recycling bins around the school?		Yes	No		
Do the recycling bins always have the right things in them?		Yes	No		

Information:

Do you measure how much waste you are preventing from going to landfill sites?		Yes	No
If so, does everyone in the school know how much waste you are saving from landfill?		Yes	No

Do pupils in the school know the issues of landfill?		Yes	No
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Waste action points/comments:

- Know the issues of landfill
- Do have a compost bin but we have had issues with it. Need to learn to use it properly
- Posters to be made by eco committee with things to & not to put in certain bins.

Water



Is the school free from dripping taps?		Yes	No
Do pupils always turn the taps off fully?		Yes	No
Do you have water saving devices in the toilet cisterns? <i>e.g. a Hippo bag or bottles filled with water</i>		Yes	No
If you have push taps, do they dispense the right amount of water at the right speed?		Yes	No
Do you have a water butt to collect rainwater for watering plants?		Yes	No
Is rainwater collected and used for anything else around the school? <i>e.g. flushing toilets or maintaining pond levels</i>		Yes	No
Do you learn about water issues in other countries?		Yes	No
Is the school involved in any river or coast conservation projects?		Yes	No
Are pupils or an adult able to take water readings from the meter or from the utility bill? (NI Water may be able to help you with this)		Yes	No

Water action points/comments:

- Work on turning the taps off fully
- Get involved in projects
- Water issues in other countries – Danny from Stand By Me
- Use of a new water butt