



Eco-Schools Newsletter

Welcome to the Eco-Schools Northern Ireland April 2015 Newsletter.

Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Event Celebration.

We were delighted to welcome almost 2000 school teachers and pupils to our 20th Anniversary Event last month. The turn-out represented 10% of schools within Northern Ireland and goes a long way to show the commitment of schools involved in the programme. The day included awards, speeches, workshops, exhibits and performances and was an amazing day enjoyed by everyone who attended.

We would like to thank the following organisations for their kind support of the Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Event: **SSE Airtricity**, the principal sponsors of Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland and ambassador for the Energy topic; **the Department of the Environment**; **Magherafelt District Council**; **Cookstown Textile Recyclers**, Eco-Schools waste topic sponsors; **the Wrigley Company Foundation**, Eco-Schools Litter topic sponsors; **Translink**, Eco-Schools Transport topic sponsors; and **Trócaire**, Eco-Schools Global Perspective topic sponsors who all attended to help celebrate the day.



We were also delighted to have Event sponsorship from:

- [ni4kids](#) the local media outlet which is full of information for parents of school-aged children. They presented an Ambassador Eco-School award to Downpatrick Nursery School and provided copies of the latest edition of their magazine.



- Bank of Ireland [Junk Kouture](#) in association with Repak is an exciting recycled fashion competition which challenges secondary school students from across Ireland to create wearable couture fashion from rubbish. They presented a fabulous fashion show on the day and presented an Ambassador Eco-School award to Lagan College.

- [Henry Brothers](#) (Magherafelt) Ltd is a leading privately owned Construction and Civil Engineering Company. They have recently developed a nature reserve which will, from April 2015, be available to local schools to assist in their



environmental education programme. They brought along their electric car to the event and presented an Ambassador Eco-School award to Loanends Primary School.



- The [Global Learning Programme](#) a fully resourced and extensive programme of teacher training is being delivered in Northern Ireland from 2015. This three year support programme for schools is designed to train and strengthen the capacity of teachers to deliver global learning in the classroom. They presented an Ambassador Eco-School award to Ulidia Integrated College on the day.

• [Safety Solutions](#) supply waste solution products including smiley face recycle bins, the new smart-e recycled litter bins in various styles, interesting recycle stations, among many more. Get pupils involved with their environment by designing their own bins or you can simply have your school crest on a bin. They also supply playground furniture, bicycle storage and safety signs. They presented Ballycraigy Primary School with their Ambassador Eco-School status on the day.



- The [EnAlgae](#) project is developing ways of using algae (seaweed) to make renewable energy, like biodiesel and biogas. The team are also examining the impact algae growth can have on the environment, to make sure it isn't damaging the ecosystem, and checking to see if big kelp farms in the sea can actually act as a safe area for juvenile fish and help improve fisheries in the area.

- [European Recycling Platform \(ERP\)](#) are actively involved in over 500 schools in Northern Ireland, providing free battery box kits, collections of used waste batteries and resources off their website. They also sponsor Environmental Youth Speak and support Junk Kouture. They were asking pupils to take a SelfEEE of themselves recycling electrical equipment as part of a competition.



[School Web Design](#) is a Northern Irish company creating unique, useful and easily managed school websites. Over 80 schools, from primary to secondary level have websites designed, built and supported by them. Their system makes it easy for ALL school staff to contribute content. Parents can also benefit from a monthly automated newsletter and quick loading app.

- [Helping Hand Environmental](#) - Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful has selected Helping Hand Environmental as their official environmental partner of choice for 2015. Schools can buy new bespoke 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. Helping Hand also give away one of their Handicarts to a lucky school at the event – see their promotion for Handicarts below.



- [Garden Escapes](#) are one of the leading providers of outdoor play areas in Northern Ireland and have specialised in working with schools and nurseries since 2006. Garden Escapes provide a complete service, from design, right through to professional installation and maintenance service. They offer a fantastic product range including - Eco Play, Sensory Play, Social Play and Physical Play.

- [Environmental Street Furniture](#) Ltd designs, imports, sources, stocks and supplies a huge selection of exterior street furniture products, exterior lighting (including LEDs) and highways products— all of which are available through local distribution networks. Collection options include sustainable recycled plastic eco-range of garden furniture.



[Jumping Clay](#)



[Carecall \(NI\) Ltd](#)



[FP McCann Ltd](#)



[Heyn Waste Solutions](#)



[Jilly Dougan](#)



[Unicorn Urban](#)

Big thanks to everyone who sponsored, exhibited and provided workshops at the Event.

Eco-Schools Support Local Radio Appeal

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful applied to be part of the annual BBCNI broadcast appeals late last year and were delighted to be one of 12 charities chosen to take part. The radio appeal features Eco Prefect Aisha Rahman from Victoria College, Belfast, committed volunteer Noel McKee from the Whitehead Wombles and local celebrity Joe Mahon, well known for his TV show Lesser Spotted Ulster.

The radio appeal is supplemented with a short video featuring pupil Kathleen Fitzpatrick from Holy Trinity College, Cookstown and pupil James McDowell from Millstrand Integrated Primary School, Portrush. This can be seen www.bbc.co.uk/niappeals along with another video from mentalist David Meade and one from Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful CEO Dr Ian Humphreys. Special thanks to the following Eco-Schools who have been helping us with our BBCNI radio appeal - Victoria College, Belfast, Holy Trinity College, Cookstown and Mill Strand Integrated Primary School, Portrush. We really appreciate your help and support and are sure that we have found some radio and video stars of the future in the process!

All of us can help to protect the environment. And small things can make a big difference - like putting our rubbish in the bin, cleaning up after our dogs when they're out for a walk or recycling our household and school waste. It's as simple and effective as that. As Eco-Schools we know you understand and are telling others how to protect and look after our place. We hope that you will listen to the radio appeal, watch the videos whether at school or at home and support our appeal. To learn more about the appeal and the work of Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, or to donate, please visit

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/northernireland/appeals/broadcast/knib.html>

SSE Airtricity and Eco-Schools Global Wind Awards

Eco-Schools and SSE Airtricity are delighted to be running the **Global Wind Awards** for the third year in a row. The Awards have been a great success in the past two years 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 are a great day of celebrating all things to do with sustainable energy including workshops, entertainment and lunch.

There are **3 categories** you can choose from this year –

1. **Eco-Committee Award** - is your Eco-Committee a shining example of school leadership? Tell us all about your greatest successes and eco-heroes in all things environmental.
2. **Operation Energy Project of the Year Award** - has your school undertaken a great Energy project or taken part in Operation Energy Power Down Day? Here is your chance to showcase your good work.
3. **Family Energy Champions Poster Competition** - how does your family save energy at home? Put your heads together at home and create an eye-catching poster highlighting what your family does and suggesting good energy saving ideas.



The closing date is Friday 8th May. Contact ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org to register for more information. Good luck - we look forward to seeing your entries for some or all of the categories!

Translink Travel Challenge school visit

Translink's Newry Bus Station recently welcomed pupils from St Paul's High School, Bessbrook, for a VIP tour. Translink Inspector Gerry Darcy talked about the importance of travelling safely on board a school bus, and the benefits of using the bus to help save the planet while keeping healthy - all on the way to school! The pupils got an insight into the daily activities at the station and got to see the bus wash – they were interested to hear how the water from the wash is recycled. For more information on the Translink Eco-Schools Travel Challenge, or to organise a Translink Travel Challenge visit for your school, visit www.translink.co.uk/ecoschools or email ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org.



BIG Spring Clean

If you would like to do something to help improve your local environment and your local community, why not register for the **BIG Spring Clean 2015** throughout **April 2015**.



We would like to encourage everybody to register their litter pick, no matter how big or small on the www.livehereandlovehere.org website, you can choose where and when your event takes place. You will even receive a **FREE** clean up kit when you register! For more information, please visit the Live Here Love Here website or email: enquiries@livehereandlovehere.org.

St Columba's Primary School, Clady, visit the Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Celebration Event

Pupils from St Columba's Primary School in Clady wrote about their recent visit to the Eco-Schools Celebration Event at Meadowbank Sports Arena in Magherafelt.

Our visit to Magherafelt to celebrate the 20th Anniversary Celebration by Y6 and Y7 pupils in the Eco-Committee

Year 6 and Year 7 classes and the Eco-Committee members in Y4 and Y5 travelled by coach to Meadowbank Sports Arena to celebrate Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary on Thursday 5 March 2015. The arena was massive but it needed to be as there were over a thousand pupils there.

Frank Mitchell from UTV was the compere. There were lots of speakers who talked about the eco-programmes in N. Ireland. Mark H. Durkan the Minister for the Environment was one of the speakers. He said that 100% of schools in N. Ireland were now registered as taking part in Eco-Schools. N. Ireland is the first country in the world to achieve this. This year's International Eco-Schools National Operators Conference is taking place in N. Ireland so that other countries can learn from us how to achieve this. N. Ireland was also the first country in the world to achieve a Green Flag. The school was Downpatrick Nursery in 1994. This school now has a total of 8 Green Flags!

Our school participated in three workshops. The first was on 'Fairtrade' and how we should look at labels to see where foods are made. We should buy fair-trade products as we will be helping poor countries. The next workshop was about endangered animals in the world and how we can help to save them. For example we should not buy wine with corks as that would save cork trees in the rainforest and so help to save the jaguar. The final workshop was looking for minibeasts in the shrubs and trees. Mrs Perry had a Paverpol workshop in which she was creating a sculpture to represent how we can save the planet.



It was a day to remember. There is going to be a time capsule buried in honour of the event. We contributed examples of our eco-programme in St. Columba's including a letter to the children of the future. I hope we can attend the 30th anniversary of Eco-Schools!

St Oliver Plunkett Primary School, Belfast, visit the Environment Committee at Stormont

On Friday the 5th of February the School Council from St Oliver Plunkett Primary School got to visit Stormont, learn all about the history of the building and sit in on a meeting of the Northern Ireland Environment Committee. The Environment Committee was established to advise and assist the Minister of the Environment, Mark H Durkan, on matters within his responsibility as a Minister. The Committee Chairperson, Ms Anna Lo, greeted the pupils and asked if they were an Eco-School. They were delighted to be able to inform the Committee that they are an Eco-School.



During their visit they listened to discussions on everything from road safety to gold mining. They were interested to see how the Committee worked and that someone was taking minutes just like at their own meetings. They said, "We noticed how important it was for them all to listen to each other and consider what the other person was saying. When we arrived back to school, we were able to share our experiences with our own Eco-Committee. We really enjoyed our day and hope to visit again and get the opportunity to sit in on another meeting."

Delivery Partner Update

British Council

Are you interested in linking with international schools? The British Council is operating a Connecting Classrooms programme, focusing on the issue of sustainable development. To receive their monthly newsletter, see stories from schools and get more information sign up at: <https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/sign-up-to-schools-online-news>.

Environmental Youth Speak

The annual schools' Environmental Youth Speak competition reached its climax on 10th March in Lisburn Civic Centre. The competition is designed to give pupils the opportunity to research and debate environmental issues. After battling it out in the regional heats the winners of the Junior and Senior sections were announced as Olivia Feron (St. Ita's PS, Castlereagh BC) and Alex Lyons and Clodagh Haddock (Lismore Comprehensive, Craigavon BC). Check out the [website](#) for videos of the six finalists.

New Global Learning Initiative Launches

Schools across Northern Ireland are getting involved in the Global Learning Programme! The GLP is a formal educational project, managed by the Centre for Global Education and funded by the UK government, which will enhance global learning at Key Stage 2 and 3. Support spanning 12 months is provided to all participating schools.



Education for a Fair and Sustainable World

The programme is off to a great start, with high numbers signing up. There are limited places left on Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Seminars for schools wishing to learn more. They will take place from 1.30-4pm on 21st April in St Columb's Park House (Derry), 22nd April in Cookstown Primary School (Cookstown) and 23rd April in Fortwilliam Resource Centre (Belfast).

All primary and post-primary schools welcome. Register via glp@centreforglobaleducation.com by 17th April 2015.

The first cohort of schools will subsequently begin participating in the GLP during May, with a nominated teacher attending two days of CPD training (supply cover provided). Dates and venues as follows:

Tues 19th & Tues 26th May 2015, 9:30am-3:00pm - St. Columb's Park House

Fri 15th & Friday 29th May 2015, 9:30am-3:00pm - Cookstown Primary School

Thurs 21st & Thurs 28th May 2015, 9:30am-3:00pm - Fortwilliam Resource Centre

To join the cohort, fill out the registration form found at www.surveymonkey.com/s/GLPMAY15 by 13th May 2015.

For more information, visit this [webpage](#) or the official [GLP Facebook](#). Call 028 9024 1979 or email glp@centreforglobaleducation.com with questions or to express an interest in joining the next cohort in autumn.

Who needs a Helping Hand?

Helping Hand are currently running a Spring Offer on their useful Handicart until the end of April for £199.00 - a great saving! The ideal community and school clean up companion - Handicart helps to promote the segregation of litter at source and has lift off Handihoops with a sweep/scoop function. Contact eco-schools@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org for more details.



Jumping Clay

A recent sponsor of our 20th Anniversary Celebration Event, JumpingClay, has developed workshops for KS1 and KS2 pupils that can teach children to discover individual characteristics of shape, size, colour and dimension. Workshops are designed to educate pupils on environmental issues with links to many curriculum subjects; traffic light safety, natural history, recycling and healthy eating to name a few. For information on prices contact info@jumpingclay.co.uk or 028 9020 4180.



Cluster Group Meetings

Craigavon Borough Council recently hosted the Ulster Regional Finals of ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards on 11th March 2015 at the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre. There were fantastic displays and presentations from 8 schools, with 12 teachers and 80 pupils attending. A member of the Eco-Schools team was there to answer any queries about the Eco-Schools Programme.

Green Flag Awards

Well done to the following schools on achieving the Eco-Schools Green Flag in March 2015:

- Dundonald Primary School, Belfast
- Donegall Road Primary School, Belfast
- Enniskillen Integrated Primary School, Enniskillen
- Kylemore Nursery School, Coleraine
- St Colmcille's Nursery School, Downpatrick
- St Columba's Primary School, Clady

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.

We have received a large number of Green Flag applications in the last week and are busy processing them so we appreciate your patience while we work through these applications. Please keep an eye out for an email to arrange a date and time for your assessment after the Easter break.

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