

Ballycraigy Primary School – School Grounds

Number of pupils: 140
Age range: 4 – 11 years
Location: Antrim

Joined Eco-Schools: 2005
Number of Green Flags: 4

The school grounds, vegetable garden, wildlife area and use of outdoor play are excellent at Ballycraigy Primary School. There is also great community involvement, with parents taking part in many projects and other community groups helping out too. There is obvious pupil ownership of the Eco-Schools programme within the school and pupils are very knowledgeable and proud of their achievements.

The school has its own hens - Chicken Lickin', Chicken Drumstick and Chicken Nugget, which acted as the original catalyst for drawing parents into the school to look after the hens during weekends and holidays. From that has grown a connection between school and community which is mutually beneficial. Parents and community run a gardening club in the school during the summer time when the pupils are out.

Through application for funding and prize money the school has raised a staggering £50,000 pounds since 2007 to use for improvements to the grounds. Funding has come from sources such as the Lottery, the Challenge Funds, Live Here Love Here, Wrigley's Litter Less and the Local Council. Prize money has come from Cash for Clobber, Best Kept Schools, RHS and Sam Gardiner among many more.

Topic actions:

The school has developed an extensive vegetable area with a poly-tunnel, formal garden, pond, hen run, greenhouse, wildflower areas, wild woodland walk, play fitness equipment and has more plans for alpine planted terraced areas. Naturally biodiversity has improved as a result with a hedgehog house in the wild woodland, swift boxes, bug hotel and lots of bird feeding stations.

The pupils are encouraged to learn through outdoor play and the topic is built into the curriculum across all year groups. More information on curriculum links can be found on the school [website](#). More examples of the work the school does also can be found on their [facebook](#) and [twitter](#).

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Eco-Committee have kept a record of all the developments to the school grounds over the years. They record the crops they grow and learn

Sharing Good Practice actions:

2015 Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Event – Display stand showcasing their topic work.

School Grounds open day June 2015 – 12 schools and community groups visit the school grounds to see the great practice and swap ideas.

2015 Eco-Schools National Operators Meeting (NOM) – Create a display board for international guests to enjoy.

2015 Create display stand for visit from HRH the Duke of Gloucester on their schools grounds work.

Win the 'Best of the Best' in the Best Kept Schools competition 2015 Royal Horticultural Society finalists for 2015 School Gardening Team of the Year- watch the [video](#).

Mentoring School:

Victoria Primary School, Carrickfergus. Ballycraigy are helping Victoria with advice and guidance as they work towards their first Green Flag.

from successes and mistakes as they go. They also sell plants and crops to raise more money for their grounds. They take biodiversity surveys and participate in the RSPB Big Schools Bird Watch.

The school is delighted to help any other school with advice on Schools Ground development.



Ballycraigy Primary School receiving their Ambassador Eco-School award during the Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Event.



Left and below: Open day in the School grounds June 2015



Above: Display stand at the Eco-Schools NOM



Above: pupils chat to HRH the Duke of Gloucester about their school grounds work and growing their own vegetables.



Above: Pupils enjoy a bumper harvest.