

St Mary's Primary School

Number of pupils: 209

Joined Eco-Schools: 2010

Age range: 4 – 11 years Location: Draperstown/Ballinascreen

Number of Green Flags: 4

St Mary's Primary School, at the gateway to the Sperrin Mountains, take great pride in their surroundings and have gone to lengths over recent years to improve not only their school grounds but also the local park and town with regular litter picks. Together with St Colm's High School, next door, they have built a nature trail, Susan's Trail, behind the two schools and adopted the local park, Moykeeran 'Plantin' Park, which they regularly clean-up. They have also been helping with the health of their local river ways, with the support of their local angling club, they have been raising salmon fry from eggs to hatch and release into the Douglas River.

The school also works hard on recycling and waste reduction, they have a gardening club who look after the school grounds and healthy living is an important topic too. An Eco-Cup is awarded each week to the most eco-friendly class and announced in assembly. In 2017 St. Mary's has collaborated with all the schools in the Parish of Ballinascreen to establish 'Screen Eco-Schools'. This has seen the schools lead the creation of an exciting 'Eco Hub' in Ballinascreen. The schools have taken part in a range of joint initiatives including 'Clean Screen', which is a drive to combat the litter in the area and 'Blooming Ballinascreen' which was a parish wide daffodil planting project.

Topic actions: Litter

Pupils carry out weekly litter picks in the school on a rota. Large community litter picks are carried out with all the schools in the Ballinascreen area, including their mentor school, Gaelscoil na Speirini. Pupils enjoy the responsibility of looking after their school and local area and setting a good example.

The school has also taken part in the Wrigley's Litter Less campaign, [Adopt a Spot](#) and the [Big Spring Clean](#). Developing the school grounds has enhanced the pupils' sense of pride and ownership of their surroundings. More can be read about the Eco-Committee's work on the school [website](#).

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The school counts full bags of rubbish collected during clean ups. Litter monitors check playground each day and report to eco committee. The measurements are kept in the eco-file and any actions needed discussed.

Sharing Good Practice actions:

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

Wrigley's Litter Less – the school has reported on their litter actions to the international campaign.

The school has appeared in newspaper reports showcasing their excellent litter community clean-ups.

The school has taken part in Environmental Youth Speak. Winning the 2016 regional heats.

The school has facilitated Eco-Schools Assessor training in 2017.

The school is part of 'Screen Eco-Schools' which has provided effective opportunities to collaborate and share good practice.

Mentoring School:

Gaelscoil na Speirini – the Eco-Committee have met with teachers of this nearby school to help them on their way in the Eco-Schools programme. They are looking forward to exchanging ideas and working together.



Above: St Mary's Primary School receiving their Ambassador Eco-School award during the Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Event.



Above: Pupils from the Eco-Committee meet teachers from Gaelscoil na Speirini – their mentor school.

Above and right: St Mary's Primary planting daffodil bulbs in Draperstown as part of 'Blooming Ballinascreen'.



Below: St Mary's Primary Eco Committee 2017/18 with Catherine Elatter and Martin Kearney, MUDC.



Above: Screen Eco Schools – the schools of Ballinascreen working together.

Above Right: Our Eco Committee meet MUDC chair Kim Ashton.



Left: St Mary's Primary and St Colm's High clean-up their local park for the Wrigley's Litter Less launch 2014.



Left: Clean-ups in all weather.

Below: Results of a recent clean-up with neighbours, St Colm's High School.

