

AMBASSADOR SCHOOL CASE STUDY



[McKinney Primary School and Nursery Unit]

[3 Leathemstown Road, Dundrod, Crumlin, Co. Antrim]

Number of pupils	Age range	Joined Eco-Schools	Number of Green Flags	Date of last Green Flag
[159]	[3-11]	[2001]	[9]	[2023]

McKinney Primary School is located in a rural location approximately halfway between Lisburn and Antrim.

McKinney Primary School were awarded their first Green Flag in June 2002. The school has gone on to achieve 9 Green Flags and is currently awaiting assessment for it's 10th one.

McKinney Primary School has worked on a wide range of Eco-School topics including, biodiversity, energy, global perspective, healthy living, litter, outdoor learning, transport, waste and water.

Recently the school has engaged in extensive work on healthy living, outdoor learning and the transport topics.

From having no school garden to now having several large raised beds and a polytunnel, the school now grows their own fruit and vegetables. This has in turn led to an interest in cooking with "School grown" produce. We have an annual "Potato bread day" where the pupils gather, clean, sort and cook their own potatoes. The pupils then make this into potato bread which is enjoyed by the whole school. Money raised from growing, cooking and selling left over vegetables has allowed the pupils to buy a wide range of cooking resources and utensils including their own Ninja Foodi 10-in-1 oven and a 3 tier storage trolley.

McKinney PS entered the Samuel Gardiner Primary Schools Gardening Competition Awards, which was open to all primary schools in NI. In 2013 they came in second place and in 2014 they were awarded first prize and were presented with their award in the Long Gallery in Stormont.

In 2015 at the Airtricity and Eco-Schools Global Wind Awards McKinney PS were Runners up in the Primary category for Eco-Committee of the year for Northern Ireland.

In 2018 the Yellow Door bakery and deli in Portadown teamed up with the CCEA. They launched The Yellow Door School Challenge, encouraging primary school children to develop a new flavour of potato bread and come up with a mini-business enterprise. McKinney PS developed the winning recipe and they got to make their potato bread at the bakery and sell it to customers.

(See pdf link below).

https://ccea.org.uk/growing/docs/mckinney_primary_school_project.pdf

In June 2023 McKinney Primary School was awarded its 9th Eco-Schools Green Flag and we also received the Eco-Coordinator of the year award for 2022-2023.

McKinney Primary School is currently registered with the Forest School programme and two members of staff are currently completing their OCN NI Level 3 award in leadership in Forest Schools.

McKinney are currently in the second year of a three-year programme with Sustrans to promote active travel to school. A video highlighting the success of the Sustrans programme was produced at McKinney PS for the Department for Infrastructure.

McKinney Primary School have raised money for charities both locally and internationally. We worked alongside Habitat for Humanity and raised money for them through our "Shack Attack Day" when studying the waste topic.

When we were working on the water topic we raised money for the Barnabas Aid charity which enabled them to install a water cistern for Christians fleeing persecution in Northern Cameroon.

When we were working on the outdoor learning topic we raised money by doing a sponsored cycle for the charity Real Hope in Romania to enable them to buy bicycles for the orphans and young people they work with.

Topic Actions:

We are currently at the end of our two year action plan and are awaiting assessment for our 10th Eco-Schools Green Flag.

Our major topic for the past two years has been transport and the two minor topics have been Healthy Living and Outdoor Learning.

We have been learning about dressing appropriately for travelling on the roads and on our bicycles and scooters. We all took part in “Ditch the Dark Day” where we came to school in bright reflective clothing. We had a “Bling It” day where we decorated our bicycles making them very bright and then we had a whole school bicycle parade.

P1 and P2 engaged in Ditch the Stabilisers days and P4 – P7 took part in Pedal Ready sessions.

Healthy Living - we have been growing our own fruit and vegetables and cooking with them.

Outdoor Learning - we have started on the Forest School programme.





Sharing Good

Practice Actions:

Photo – production of video by the Department for Infrastructure at McKinney Primary School with Sustrans.

One of our pupils, who presents with ASD, had difficulty learning to ride a bicycle. In P5 he approached the Eco-Schools coordinator and asked if she could help him overcome his difficulty. With the expertise of Johnny McCrystal - a Sustrans Active Travel Officer the boy was able to learn to ride his bicycle in a 20 minute 1-1 training session. This success story was picked up by the Sunday Life and then the Department for Infrastructure wanted to make a video of his success story.

See link below.

https://youtu.be/Z4aDgSP9a3w?si=DHEIzN3-_kzDKuX6

Monitoring and Evaluation:

We have carried out before and after surveys to track our progress with our topics. We produce graphs of our results and share them on the Eco-Schools notice board. See travel data and graphs in photo.





Mentoring School:

McKinney Primary School took part in the Erasmus Programme linking with teachers from Gran Canaria, Greece, Italy, Lithuania and England. Staff from McKinney had the opportunity to travel to some of these countries to observe educational practices and McKinney PS hosted staff from all of the above- mentioned countries. They had a tour of McKinney PS and an opportunity to see and discuss all our environmental / Eco-Schools work and to take ideas back to their own schools to be implemented. The Eco-coordinator presented a PowerPoint presentation on what the Eco-Schools programme is

and what we had been working on in our Action Plan.



P2 making fresh fruit salad



Eco-Club – making apple creams!



Gathering the potatoes for
“Potato Bread Day”



Potato Bread Day – Yum, Yum!!



P3 Carrot Factory



Receiving our 9th Green Flag

Contact

For more information on this Eco-Schools Ambassador School, see details below.

[McKinney Primary School and Nursery Unit]

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