

AMBASSADOR SCHOOL CASE STUDY



St. Colm' School

2 Magherafelt Road, Draperstown, BT45 7AF

Number of pupils	Age range	Joined Eco-Schools	Number of Green Flags	Date of last Green Flag
430	11-18	2006	7	2025

Our school boasts a range of impressive facilities, including a greenhouse, polytunnel, and a beautiful sunflower garden. We also have Susan's Trail, our biodiversity area featuring native hedges, a wildflower meadow, apple trees, and a pond. These facilities support our commitment to environmental education and sustainability. Our eco clubs engage students in a wide range of activities, from litter picking and promoting recycling to making birdhouses and maintaining the biodiversity of Susan's Trail. Community projects include our very successful Draperstown in Bloom initiative, which adds colour to the streets of Draperstown by creating 22 recycled flower reels, 20 bird boxes for 'The Plantin' and Susan's Trail, and 30 garden boxes for the community and local schools. Additionally, we create floral displays at the Fairhill, involving the planting of 9,724 bulbs in the design of hot air balloons to celebrate the annual balloon festival in June. The community is also involved in the 'Keep Screen Clean' campaign, our 'Adopt a Spot' initiative at The Plantin, and the annual community litter pick. We are very proud of all our eco projects, including our special memory garden and biodiversity area, Susan's Trail. Recently, our eco committee organised a preloved fashion show to raise awareness about sustainable fashion. The show featured 80 preloved outfits, encouraged reduced consumption, and aimed to minimise landfill waste. All showcased outfits were available for purchase. Our amazing eco team was recognised for their outstanding contributions to the school and local community, winning the Community Eco Award at the Mid Ulster Arts, Culture, and Community Awards.

Topic Actions: Waste - Pre-loved Fashion Show

Our recent action plan focused on raising awareness about sustainable fashion by organising a fashion show. The goal was to showcase 90 pre-loved outfits, encourage reduced consumption, and minimise landfill waste. All showcased outfits were available for purchase.

Here is an overview of the activities our Eco team undertook.

We organised a clothing collection drive to gather pre-loved outfits from students, staff, and the community.

Planning the event logistics was a crucial step. We selected the venue, set the date and time, and coordinated all necessary arrangements. The event was scheduled for Thursday, 6th March 2025, to align with Reuse, Recycle Week, enhancing its relevance and impact.

To ensure the event's success, we promoted it through various channels. We created posters, utilised social media platforms, and made school announcements to spread the word and generate excitement.

We arranged for models, including both students from St. Colm's High schools, local primary schools and staff, to showcase the pre-loved outfits. This required coordinating with volunteers for setup, managing the backstage area, and ensuring the smooth flow of the event. The fashion show featured 90 pre-loved outfits, highlighting the importance of sustainable fashion.

The event also aimed to engage the community by making all showcased outfits available for purchase. This not only promoted sustainable fashion but also encouraged the community to adopt eco-friendly practices.

The event was a great success, thanks to the collective efforts of students, staff, and the community. Building on this momentum, we



have since opened a preloved shop and are preparing to attend a Preloved Event at Meadowbank, Magherafelt, where we will continue to sell donated clothing and promote sustainable living.



Sharing Good Practice Actions:

Our school has actively fostered strong, positive relationships with all local feeder primary schools, creating a collaborative and inclusive approach to environmental education. We have successfully linked eco-projects across the community by encouraging both primary and secondary pupils to work together on shared initiatives. These projects have included:

- Participating in the Draperstown in Bloom initiative, where students helped plant and nurture 1,200 flowers, followed by a large-scale planting of 9,724 flowers in a community space—enhancing local biodiversity and civic pride.
- Creating 22 recycled flower reels, now proudly displayed around the streets of Draperstown, combining sustainability with public art.
- Building 20 bird boxes for the community, now installed around ‘The Plantin’ and Susan’s Trail, supporting local wildlife habitats.
- Constructing 30 sedum garden boxes for use by the community and local schools, encouraging hands-on learning and sustainable food growing.
- Working closely with the young people and youth tutors from The Corn Store Youth Club, fostering youth engagement and collaboration.
- Developing links with Siobhan from the Fashion Hub in Derry, representatives

from the Northern Ireland Recycling Network, and John Murtagh from Mid Ulster Council, expanding our eco-network and sharing best practices.

In addition, we have built meaningful partnerships with local organisations such as the Ballinascreen Community Forum, the Balglen Project, and Workspace, further strengthening our community ties and broadening the impact of our eco-efforts.

To further share our practices and inspire others, our eco-coordinator Mrs. Belaid represented our school at a local eco-networking meeting. She engaged with:

- Local councillors
- Community groups
- Eco-coordinators from nearby primary schools

These engagements have allowed us to exchange ideas, offer guidance, and support the development of eco-initiatives in other schools—reinforcing our commitment to environmental leadership and community collaboration.

A highlight of our recent efforts was the organisation and hosting of a highly successful Preloved Fashion Show, which showcased 90 pre-loved outfits. The event raised awareness about sustainable fashion, encouraged reduced consumption, and promoted circular fashion through the resale of all showcased items.

Looking Ahead

Following the success of our Preloved Fashion Show, we expanded our efforts by launching a Preloved Shop. This initiative focuses on providing affordable, sustainable clothing options for local families, including:

- First Holy Communion dresses and suits
- Confirmation outfits
- School uniforms for both primary and secondary schools

In addition to promoting sustainable fashion and reducing textile waste, this project also supports our wider community. All proceeds from the sale of Communion outfits are donated to St. Vincent de Paul (SVP), with £165 raised to date.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to be organising and leading a 'Teddy Bears' Picnic in June 2025 for 207 children from local pre-schools and primary schools. This event is designed to get young children outdoors—learning, exploring, and enjoying nature—while nurturing early environmental awareness in a fun, imaginative, and inclusive way.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

To monitor and evaluate the success of the Pre-loved fashion event, the Eco Team employed a range of effective methods. They recorded the number of attendees to assess the event's reach and tracked the number of outfits purchased to gauge interest and engagement. Additionally, they weighed all donated and sold clothing, achieving a total of 2,110 kg diverted from landfill—demonstrating a significant positive impact on waste reduction.

The Eco Team also implemented the Cash for Clobber programme, collecting:

- 690 kg on 1/02/24
- 420 kg on 3/10/24
- 420 kg on 19/12/24
- 580 kg on 20/02/25

In addition to waste reduction, the Eco Team led several community litter picks, including:

- 18/04/24 – In collaboration with St. Mary's Primary School at Plantin Park: 35 bags collected
- 18/04/24 – Year 9 litter pick around school grounds and Susan's Trail: 7 bags
- 20/04/24 – Joint effort with Cornstore Youth Club, St. Colm's High School, and St. Mary's Primary School at Plantin Park: 9 bags
- 22/04/24 – Year 8A Geography litter pick at school grounds and Susan's Trail: 5 bags
- 16/12/24 – Year 9 Christmas Clean-Up: 4 bags
- 30/01/25 – Year 8C litter pick in the Fair Hill area: 10.2 kg of rubbish collected

To further evaluate the impact of these efforts, the Eco Team also monitored and recorded the number and weight of litter bags collected during:



- Planting sessions in the Fairhill area, helping assess the cleanliness of public spaces
- Litter picks in Susan's Trail and the Plantin Park, ensuring consistent tracking of environmental improvements



Mentoring School:

We have actively supported and collaborated with several local primary schools, delivering meaningful environmental and educational experiences that have had a lasting impact. One standout example is our work with four local feeder primary schools, where we provided:

- Planted cable reels to enhance their outdoor learning environments and promote biodiversity.
- An opportunity for 104 primary pupils to visit our school and help plant 1,200 plug plants, fostering hands-on environmental learning and a sense of ownership in community beautification.
- A large-scale planting initiative where 9724 bulbs were planted in the Plantin area, involving pupils from all four schools. This not only improved local biodiversity but also instilled civic pride and environmental responsibility in the children.
- A joyful and educational Teddy Bears' Picnic for 207 primary children, designed to encourage outdoor learning, exploration, and early environmental awareness in a fun and engaging way.
- A confidence-building experience for 57 primary school pupils who participated as models in our Preloved Fashion Show. Walking the catwalk helped develop their self-esteem, public speaking skills, and self-confidence, while also promoting sustainable fashion.

These initiatives have strengthened our partnerships with local schools, enriched the pupils' learning experiences, and supported their personal development in creative, environmental, and social contexts.



Award



Pre-Loved Fashion Show



Pre-Loved Fashion Show



Pre-Loved Fashion Show



Cable Reels



Fair Hill Planting

Contact

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

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