

AMBASSADOR SCHOOL CASE STUDY



St John the Baptist's College

4 Moy Road, Portadown BT62 1QQ

Number of pupils	Age range	Joined Eco-Schools	Number of Green Flags	Date of last Green Flag
535	11-16	2014	6	June 2024

In SJBC, we are committed to ensuring that each child receives a high-quality education and that they are given every opportunity to achieve their full academic potential. Our first set of GCSE results exceeded all expectations and our pupils scored well above national averages across all areas. Moreover, we value each child as an individual with diverse talents and interests, and our unique nurturing and inclusive ethos ensures that all students can develop at their own pace and follow tailor-made pathways.

We promote a growth mind-set and central to our ethos is a sense of “no labels and no limitations”. We pride ourselves on the delivery of quality care and welfare and this is rooted in the close and trusting relationships which we have with our students and their families.

We offer our students a rich and varied range of extra-curricular experiences and opportunities which support their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual development.

Over the years we have received a raft of prestigious curricular and pastoral awards/accolades which recognise the high-quality teaching and the caring, inclusive ethos which pervades all aspects of life in the college. In addition, we have won 2 ICT Excellence Awards, and we are one of only four schools in the North of Ireland who have been awarded Digital Schoolhouse Status. SJBC was recently appointed as the first Google Reference school in Ireland. As a very environmentally conscious or eco-active school and we have now achieved six green flags. We have been Young Environmentalist Finalists in 2024 and won a Young Environmentalist Award in 2017.

We believe that all young people should develop not just within the confines of the classroom but that they should be afforded as many opportunities as possible to develop values, resilience, leadership potential and self-belief. Many of these attributes and qualities are nurtured through our extensive enriched provision.

Topic Actions:

Last Year's Litter Campaign Success

Our school's focus on litter last year made a significant positive impact on our community. Through consistent effort and teamwork, we transformed how everyone thinks about keeping our school clean. Here's what we achieved:

- * Daily litter picks during lunch breaks
- * Student-led awareness campaigns
- * Posters and presentations about proper waste disposal
- * Recycling competitions between classes
- * Regular clean-up events around school grounds

Thanks to these activities, our school community now takes greater pride in keeping our environment clean. Students and staff are more mindful about disposing of waste properly, making our school a cleaner and more pleasant place to learn.

This Year: Celebrating Biodiversity

We're excited about our new focus on biodiversity, with our ECO Club and Key Stage 3 students leading the way. Our current initiatives include:

Young Environmentalist Award Projects

- * Creating educational games about local wildlife



- * Growing vegetables in our school garden
- * Learning about and planting native species

Mental Health Benefits

As a nurture school, we understand the importance of supporting student wellbeing. Our biodiversity project helps by:

- * Providing peaceful green spaces for reflection
- * Offering hands-on learning experiences
- * Creating connections with nature
- * Building a sense of responsibility and achievement
- * Encouraging outdoor activity

Student Leadership

Our students are taking ownership of:

- * Planning garden layouts
- * Choosing native plants
- * Maintaining vegetable patches
- * Monitoring wildlife visitors
- * Sharing their knowledge with younger students

Through these activities, we're not just improving our school's biodiversity - we're building a stronger, healthier, and more environmentally aware school community.





- * Hosted an exciting Eco Day for primary schools
- * Set up a dedicated Eco Classroom during Open Day to showcase student projects
- * Parents and visitors were amazed by our student-led environmental initiatives

We've welcomed many environmental experts to share knowledge with our students:

- * Water NI - Teaching us about water conservation
- * Eco Schools NI - Providing guidance on green initiatives and fast fashion.
- * Men's Shed - Sharing sustainable gardening skills
- * Queen's University Belfast - Environmental planning assistant discussing:
 - * New environmental programs
 - * Modern approaches to environmental planning in Northern Ireland
 - * Career opportunities in environmental science
- * Various employers visited to discuss green careers
- * Students learned about real-world environmental challenges
- * Built valuable connections with local environmental organisations

Our students have taken the lead in:

- * Presenting their environmental projects
- * Explaining our eco-initiatives to visitors
- * Demonstrating their knowledge of sustainability
- * Teaching younger students about environmental responsibility

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Google Forms Surveys

- * Student feedback surveys
- * Questions about what's working well
- * Ideas for improvement from students
- * Rating scales for different projects
- * Quick polls about new environmental ideas

Student Conversations and Meetings

- * Weekly ECO Club discussions
- * Class time to share thoughts

Eco Club

School: S.I.B.C

Date: SEPTEMBER 2023 - 2024

Areas for Improvement:

1. Provide a supportive learning environment to inspire students.
2. Provide students with various learning opportunities.
3. Communicate and engage with pupils to motivate pupils' curiosity of learning.
4. Record incidents and maintain a safe working environment.
5. Liaise with class teachers / Progress Leaders / Leaders of Learning and parents.

Where are we now? (With reference to areas for improvement noted above.)

Eco club was established within SIBC in 2017 when we received our first Green Flag. Since 2017 SIBC has gone on to obtain a further 4 Green Flags which is solely due to the dedication and hard work from our Eco-conscious students. In the Year 2023-2024 we hope to gain our sixth green flag for the school and continue to be an ambassador school for Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Eco-Schools. Our students are getting the opportunity to be part of a globally interactive discussion and are potentially developing or learning new techniques to help improve our global ecosystems.

With reference to the above points:

- We have provided a supportive learning environment to inspire students by partaking in various external agencies projects. Although we would like to encourage students to employ more practical skills to help with eco-tasks. Students are taking part in a two-year project with [Eco-VNESCO](#) to help reduce energy consumption within school and at home.
- We are providing students with various learning opportunities including the exploration of green energy and showing students how to grow their own crops and plants. The Men's Shed in Portadown have created excellent links within SIBC and provide our gardening students opportunities to grow crops and plants. This is a transferable skill we hope that students will be able to use within their working careers. Next year we hope to continue with this link and encourage students to sell and donate produce to the local community.
- Within Eco-Club we have developed and improved the student's ability to communicate and debate environmental and global environmental issues. We hope to engage with more pupils to motivate them to build a curiosity about the environmental issues that face Northern Ireland.
- Record incidents and maintain a safe working environment to ensure all students are safe when partaking in activities such as gardening or green energy engineering projects.
- Liaise with class teachers / Progress Leaders / Leaders of Learning and parents by posting activities on social media and creating an interactive activity for all year groups to help improve their social and cultural capital.

Objectives/ Targets	Success Criteria	Actions to Bring about Improvement	Resourcing	External Support	Staff Involvement	Time Scale
1. Provide a supportive learning environment to inspire students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive learning opportunities for all subjects to deliver interactive tasks or discussions in KS3 and KS4 to take place during STEM/Agencies with local agencies • Students take part in agencies to bring in workshops from local agencies related to green energy and 	<p>Liaise with staff within STEM subjects to deliver interactive tasks or discussions.</p> <p>Communicate with local agencies to bring in workshops / spreadsheets that are practical and engaging.</p> <p>Use Eco-Club time to improve</p>	<p>Staff members</p> <p>iPad</p> <p>Excel</p> <p>PowerPoints</p>	<p>External agencies- Water Board, Eco Schools NI Men's Shed</p>	E Mollay	By 30.6.24

- * Talking with student leaders
- * Sharing ideas during assembly
- * Group discussions about our garden progress

Our Action Plan Checklist

We Keep Track Of:

- * Number of students involved in projects
- * How many vegetables we grow
- * Wildlife visitors to our garden
- * Recycling amounts each week
- * Clean-up day participation

Success Markers:

More students joining ECO Club
 Less litter around school
 Growing vegetables successfully
 Better recycling habits
 More wildlife in our garden

Regular Updates

- * Updates on school website
- * Photos of our progress
- * Celebration of achievements
- * Sharing challenges, we face with each other

Student Leadership Role

- * Students help collect data
- * Leading discussions about progress
- * Sharing updates with classes
- * Making suggestions for improvement
- * Helping create new goals



Mentoring School:

Being an ambassador school has allowed us to:

Learning from Others

We get to share ideas with other eco-friendly schools.
Learn about what works well in different places.
Get tips and tricks from successful environmental programs.

Special Opportunities

Access to expert speakers from places like Water NI and Eco Schools NI
Special training for our students and teachers
Chances to participate in environmental competitions.
Extra resources and materials for our projects

Leadership Growth

Our students become better leaders by:
Teaching younger students about the environment
Presenting our projects to visitors
Running eco-friendly activities
Sharing our success stories with other schools

Community Connections

Building partnerships with local organisations
Working with Queen's University Belfast
Connecting with environmental experts
Getting support from Men's Shed for our garden

Making a Bigger Impact

Other schools learn from our success
We inspire our local community
More people join our environmental mission
Our eco-friendly message spreads further

Being an ambassador school helps us do more than we could alone. It gives us the tools, knowledge, and connections to make our eco-friendly projects even better



Planting new seeds



Year 8 Gardening club



Forging for berries in school garden





Cleaning up school garden



Students learning about renewable energy

Contact

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

[School Name]

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