



## Eco-Schools Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Venue: Geography Room 2

3:45pm –4:45pm



**Present:** Mr H. McSorley & Miss McCay

**Minutes:** Mr H. McSorley

Mr McSorley and Miss McCay reviewed the progress made this year regarding the work of the Eco-Schools committee in order for Mr McSorley to submit the school's application for the Silver Award. The following success was identified when reviewing the action plans of the year.

### **Biodiversity & School Grounds**

1) A flower planting initiative carried out in the school grounds with our Year 13 enrichment group / Eco-class planting 100's of wildflowers to further increase biodiversity within our school grounds and create a sanctuary for birds, bees and butterflies.

### **Energy**

1) In order to further raise awareness on the efficient use of energy within our school community and to celebrate Earth Hour (Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016 8:30-9:30pm. An Energy Awareness Activity / Workshop was held by the Geography Department for all Year 8 students following their studies of Energy as a cross curricular them in Geography, Maths and Science. The workshop involved all Year 8 students receiving a talk to raise awareness on Earth Hour, a talk on how our homes can be made eco-friendly and a talk by a guest speaker from SSE Airtricity regarding the use of wind power. Students also worked in groups / teams during the course of the workshop to design an eco-home home which they then built in their following Geography lessons, which a prize being awarded for the best one in each class. All Year 8 students involved in this workshop also received an official Earth Hour participation certificate to note their contribution to the initiative.

### **Global Perspectives**

1) School opened the celebrations in Derry city for Fair Trade Fortnight (29<sup>th</sup> February – 13<sup>th</sup> March) by providing music, serving customers and giving out brochures on fair trade at the fair trade coffee morning held by the Mayor in Sainsbury's.

2) The Fair Trade group within the school held a Fair Trade 'Big Breakfast' to mark Fair Trade Fortnight within the school community. On the same day guests from Fair

Trade Ireland and Derry Fair Trade communities along with Maria Genoa (a banana farmer from the Dominican Republic) held a Fair Trade Assembly / talk for all Year 9 students. Stemming from this our Year 9 students sent >200 postcards to Tesco's shop in the city calling for 100% fair trade bananas to be sold in their shop. This workshop complimented the cross curricular theme of Fair Trade launched during Fair Trade Fortnight and covered in the curriculum of both Geography and Home Economics in the Junior School.

3) The debating society within the school hosted a debate on the theme of fair trade fashion in conjunction with St. Columb's College. The fair trade tuck shop was also held at the event.

4) Eco-School group within the school continue to run a weekly Fairtrade Tuck Shop within the school on 'Fairtrade Fridays'.

5) Fair Trade tuck shop at School Sports Day.

6) School was awarded the Fairactive Award by the Fair Trade Foundation.

7) All Year 13 students involved in the enrichment eco-class and Pope John Paul II awards and within the school's Third World Group watched the video "The True Cost".

### **Waste**

1) The Minister for the Environment Mr Mark H Durkan chose a visit to our school (Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015) to make the official announcement that over 30 schools across NI would receive a total of £90,245 from the DOE's Challenge Fund to invest in projects which would improve their local environment. As part of this scheme our school was awarded £4000 for our 'Journey to Zero Waste' project – which is an extensive educational recycling initiative across the whole school.

2) As part of our "Journey to Waste" whole school initiative we are now recycling all plastic bottles / rigid plastics through the use of red bins in all classrooms, we are continuing to recycle all paper and card through the use of green bins in all classrooms and we are separating and recycling bottle tops for financial benefit of the Order of Malta (which many of our students are members of). This is being achieved through the work of our eco-prefects, teachers, care-taking staff and every individual in the school making the conscious choice to separate their waste and use the recycling bins in our school. This project has was awarded runner up in the community education awards for the 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Project Award' out of 600 entries. This scheme won the school £320 as part of the Wrigley's litter less campaign.

3) Two Department's in the school (Music & Geography) is trialling a pilot food waste separation scheme to pre-empt changes which will need to be introduced within the school to meet food recycling statutory requirements being introduced in April

2016. We will evaluate the success of this pilot to see how it can be further rolled out across the school next year.

4) We ran an Eco-Art Project, which involved dozens of KS3 students and our Year 13 Eco-class students working alongside the Art Department in the school to design and paint the recycling bins being used in the school to depict the different subjects / departments hosting these bins for recycling. This project came highly commended in the community education awards and reached the All Ireland Final of the Young Environmentalist Awards (ECO-UNESCO).

5) We have set up a stationary recycling point in the school at the Geography Department to help recycle used stationary currently being sent to landfill. We are aiming to recycle this stationary through the Terracycle writing instrument recycling scheme. We have applied to become a BIC Community Champion which will allow us to work with Derry City Council, other local schools and businesses to become a collection point within our local community for the recycling of used stationary. As part of this scheme we held a 'Clear Your Pencil Case Day' in June for all students in our school to bring in used stationary which could be recycled at the end of the year.

We hope to roll out the 'Clear Your Pencil Case Day' to other schools in the local area in June next year. As well as rolling out the food waste recycling scheme and introducing a can, old headphones and clothes recycling schemes.