

AMBASSADOR SCHOOL CASE STUDY



FAIR HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL, 4 TULLINSKY ROAD, KINALLEN, COUNTY DOWN,
BT25 4PJ

| Number of pupils | Age range | Joined Eco-Schools | Number of Green Flags | Date of last Green Flag |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 260 | NURSERY – P7 | 26/9/2005 BRONZE | 9 | MAY 2024 |

In Fair Hill we continue the tradition of upholding our Green Flag status with our 9th awarded in May 2024. Our ambassador status is a fantastic achievement that reflects the ongoing dedication of our whole school community with our Parent Support Group now on board helping us, most recently publicising our Cash for Clobber fundraising through social media. One of our parents now designs our posters and these are circulated in the community and also with all our parents through Class Dojo. We use Class dojo also for notifying parents about the Big Bird Watch, sharing our successes and results as part of the wider UK community of bird spotters as well. Energy Saving Week was also given a good boost this year with all families being given the challenge to turn down heating by 1 degree and switch off taps when brushing our teeth etc. Results were collated and filed and pupils celebrated in assembly for their energy conscious decisions and family involvement.

The experienced members of our Eco Committee who are now in P6 and P7 are upskilling our younger members to continue on their legacy (see photos attached).

PICCOLAGES PUT UP ON CLASS DOJO AND ALSO ONE OF THE POSTERS WIDELY DISTRIBUTED IN THE COMMUNITY



TOPIC ACTIONS:

Our school has been actively involved in a variety of recycling and sustainability initiatives, which have become an integral part of our school culture.

We have participated in the Cash4Clobber programme since being awarded our bronze status. Post covid our enthusiasm had waned so this year we are delighted that we have raised the profile of recycling again in school and look forward to ABC council representatives coming out to talk to us in Term 3. We will be availing of their Bushcraft Programme and multiple biodiversity and community growing programmes in-house.

Each year, our pupils take part in the Big Schools' Birdwatch, where they observe and record bird species in our school grounds and submit their results to contribute to national data on biodiversity.

We also regularly participate in the Energy Saving Week Schools' Challenge, run by NIE Energy, helping pupils understand how everyday actions can reduce energy consumption and benefit the environment.

In addition, we were delighted to welcome Trocaire as they enhance our shared education programme with St Colman's, Annaclone.

To further support our eco efforts, we maintain our 'Adopt a spot' just outside the school grounds and do regular litter picks in our Mixed Up Monday Eco Club time. We talk to the whole school in assembly time regularly to encourage whole school / community involvement. This helps to keep our school and surrounding area clean and reinforces the message that everyone has a role to play in protecting and caring for our environment.

Sustainability is a core part of our school culture and values. Over the years, we have taken many steps to promote environmental awareness and action within our school community. Over the last 10 years the school has become a much more vibrant, attractive and better used learning space.



We have made a point of upping our recycling initiatives this year. At the beginning of term 1 each family was given a box to put old batteries in and each class was given its own battery collection box. These are recycled sweetie jars donated by 'Harry's' our local shop. The Eco committee collects the boxes at the end of each month. In our big whole school assembly, success is celebrated for AR and then ECO as well. The class that has collected the most batteries is awarded a certificate. Individual children have also had to be commended as each household has their own recycling battery box. Grandparents, neighbours and family friends are all helping and the results are amazing.

We have reached our 10,000 battery total already.



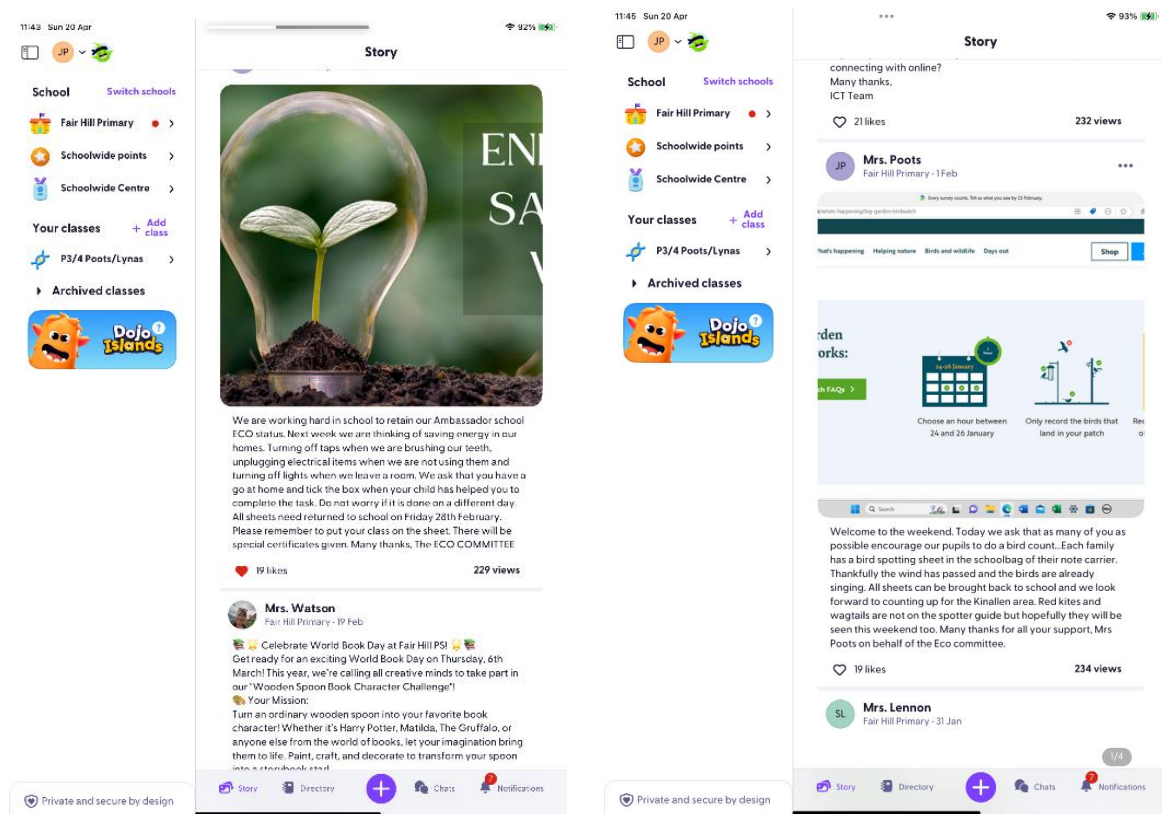
CLASS BOXES COLLECTED AT THE END OF EACH MONTH....

As a school we effectively use Class Dojo and the school website and facebook to communicate with the school and wider community. Their feedback and interest and support is invaluable. Parents and members of the wider community generously support all our fundraising initiatives, most recently our Fair Hill hits the road tractor run and family fund day. Primarily our school's eco initiatives are now well publicised and the BIG birdwatch, Energy week and recycling are especially enjoyed by all. Parents, neighbours and family members donate unwanted clothing and shoes for our Cash4Clobber collections. This ongoing support plays a vital role in helping us promote sustainability and raise funds for our eco projects.

This initiative continues to grow thanks to strong leadership and the enthusiastic support of pupils, staff, and families working together for a more sustainable future.

Class dojo messages are sent to parents on a weekly basis, updating them on key events and the impact the events will have on our local environment.

SAMPLE DOJO MESSAGES sent out to all parents



We have used the expertise and skills of our parents to upgrade our play area and establish much needed seating/planters/play equipment keeping resources as naturally made as possible. We have recycled pallets into painting easels and made areas for reading and drama from log cut offs. We are blessed to have builders, joiners and plant specialists at our disposal to come in and support/advise us.

Cash4Clobber collections have taken place over the years in Fair Hill. This year we collected 150 bags totalling 1040 kg. We await the cheque but hope for 50p per kg.

We now involve the whole school community in our Eco initiatives through our Eco Updates on Class dojo and on our School website as well as poster in our local community.

February was our Big Spring Clean as part of our Cash4Clobber campaign.

March/April: Fair Hill hits the Road / Guess the name of the bunny rabbit / Raffle / seed planting

May/June: Climate calm and outdoor learning/more planting with parents helping to develop our outdoor play areas and raised beds and birdboxes.

Within our school grounds, pupils have planted trees, plants, bulbs and a variety of seeds including wildflower seeds, helping to create a more biodiverse and welcoming environment for wildlife. Our Nursery pupils delight in harvesting their carrots and potatoes and watching their bulbs grow into beautiful daffodils. Many trees have been donated and planted in the school grounds and then the apples are harvested and made into apple crumble by the P3s for example.

Through Cash4clobber and School Uniform Recycling and also the P7s even selling once loved books and toys our pupils are playing an active role in developing their own mindsets and shaping a more sustainable future, both within and beyond the school gates.

Sharing Good Practice Actions: The Energy Saving Challenge showed that a total of 133 families took part in our drive to turn off lights with 123 families turning down thermostats, 125 unplugging electrical items, 123 reducing shower time and 132 turning off taps whilst brushing their teeth.

May/June will be our focus on Climate Calm reinforcing our Shared Education link with St Colman's Annaclone. Environmental values and awareness have been shared to us by Trocaire representatives and both schools are working on further curriculum planning at P6/7 level. We aim to have a cleaner, greener environment as is reflected in the beautiful area in which we live.

We continue to send our light monitors round at break and lunchtimes to patrol and make sure IWBs are turned off alongside classroom lights and

It has been a rewarding and inspiring journey, with our pupils leading the way in caring for their planet, making their environment cleaner and greener and encouraging others to do the same. The enthusiasm, teamwork, and commitment shown by our Eco Committee and wider school community continues to make a real difference. WAU and Eco are closely linked alongside outdoor learning and active learning from Nursery through to P7. Sustainability has always been a key part of the N.I Curriculum and at Fair Hill we utilise the excellent nearby resource of Ballyburren Outdoor Escapes Forest School and also local residential centres for P7 and also the Ulster Museum and forest parks to take our learning beyond the school grounds. Our local environment is a rich teaching resource, and we are constantly seeking to develop this with the help of Colin our building supervisor and general handyman and our Eco and ABC Council representatives. Our pupils regularly engage in meaningful, hands-on activities that promote care and responsibility for the planet, planting/creating and protecting our environment.

We are lucky to have close contacts with Castlewellan Park as one of our parents is on their staff. This has been beneficial as she can get us advice as to what to plant where and is keen to help us

At Castlewellan Park and Ballyburren pupils explore and learn about native trees, shrubs, and animals that are found in Ireland. Back at school, pupils help plant native hedging and trees, and install bird feeders to attract and support local wildlife. From Nursery upwards pupils grow their own vegetables, learning to nurture them from seedling to harvest.

Pupils gain a deeper understanding of waste and sustainability through exciting events such as the 'Waste Busters' Eco-Musical, supported by DAERA. This performance helps children see how every small choice to reduce waste can have a positive environmental impact. At Christmas, pupils get creative by making decorations through upcycling classroom waste materials—turning rubbish into something festive and fun.

We seek to empower our young people to become environmental ambassadors. We have an active Eco Committee in Fair Hill but also are blessed to have an Eco Club on Monday afternoons as part of our Mixed Up Monday initiative. This means that younger and older pupils get to come together from P3 - P7 to share ideas and learn together. They learn about various themes and then take the lead in visiting classrooms to inspire and educate others on issues like pollution, recycling, and saving energy. We have updated our Eco tunnel of information for the school to see data and posters and we have also an Eco noticeboard at the front of the school where we record our ongoing initiatives. For example, through light patrols, the Big Garden Birdwatch and our Energy Challenge, they encourage their peers to take part and make a difference.

By giving our pupils these opportunities, we are helping them to become responsible citizens, confident that their voice matters, and that even small changes can lead to a big impact on protecting our environment.

Monitoring and evaluation: We actively monitor the impact of our eco initiatives using a variety of tools and strategies, allowing us to track progress and celebrate success across the school.

Solar energy generated by our panels is regularly recorded in school and compared to existing data. The Quality Energy and Sustainability (QES) team come out to record our overall savings for us in Term 3.

Light monitor results for each classroom are collected twice daily and certificates given to the winning classes each month.

The BIG BATTERY HUNT results are graphed at the end of each month and success is celebrated in assembly and on the Eco noticeboard at the front of the school.

Our grounds supervisor is in charge of monitoring the amount of recyclable rubbish that is collected and the Eco Club have been proactive in encouraging the younger classes especially to use the correct bins and new labels have been put on bins following a talk to each class.

Results from the Big Schools' Birdwatch are submitted annually to the RSPB. We also share these findings on our Eco Board and at school assembly, allowing pupils to take pride in their contributions.

We have reviewed the RSPB results in Eco club to help us understand the positive effects of our biodiversity efforts and have a greater understanding of wildlife in the UK.

Our Cash for Clobber data allows us to monitor the amount of textile waste being recycled and reinforces the importance of reducing landfill waste. We are also trying to encourage parents to donate used uniforms so that not only will these be saved from ending up in landfill but parents will be helping each other.

Mentoring School:

We are proud to have shared our Eco Schools expertise with several local primary schools as part of our commitment to promoting sustainability beyond our own school community. As an ambassador school we are also sharing our expertise with Dromore Nursery as they have yet to attain Ambassador status. Links have also been made with St Colman's, Dromore who we work alongside especially for World Around Us topic planning. We have met in terms 1 and 2 despite industrial action. As part of our Ambassador School Programme, as WAU/ECO coordinator I have mentored and supported St. Colman's Primary School, Dromore, in our shared journey. We want to promote in our children the need for them to be innovative, inspirational environmentalists from a young age and we want them to share this with their family and friends. Our Shared Education link: St Colman's Annaclone have a new Eco coordinator who is keen to make links and they have just applied for their Green Flag. Our 2 schools have been meeting together in Term 2.

Through these partnerships, we aim to inspire and empower other schools to take meaningful environmental action, and we are delighted to see the positive impact of this shared learning across the wider community. We have been actively engaging with local schools and organisations to enhance biodiversity across our community and promote shared environmental learning. We have well established links with our local feeder schools in Dromore and our shared education link schools. Our onsite nursery school is linked to Dromore Nursery and Drumnamoe. Together they support environmental learning and assist in the transition to primary education through fun, nature-based projects and visits to outdoor learning sites. These include creative activities such as leaf printing and mosaic-making using natural materials from our environment.

Looking ahead, we are excited to develop new links with Dromore Central Primary School and Ballydown Primary School in their Eco Schools journey as we can all learn from each other's strengths. Our Eco-Committee will collaborate with theirs to exchange ideas, share resources, and work together on projects that benefit both schools and the wider community.

Contact

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

FAIR HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Eco-Coordinator: JAYNE POOTS

Years involved in the Eco-Schools Programme: 10

Address:

4 TULLINSKY ROAD, KINALLEN, DROMARA, COUNTY DOWN, BT25 4PJ

Phone: 02897532553

Website:

Email Address: