

Eco-Schools Primary Environmental Review

This review is a suggested format, designed to be an audit tool for the Eco-Committee to use in your school. The questions are labelled so that you can tell which will require investigation by the pupils, which they will need to ask a member of staff about and which may take a bit of research.

The Eco-Schools programme does not require that you complete all the suggestions in this document. It is designed to be a stimulus that you can use to assess what happens in your school at the start of the programme and as a baseline audit each year.

You may not know all the answers to all the questions in each section but if you choose to work further on a topic the answers should be found by the next time you complete the review. It also might not include every possible idea that you could carry out, so please don't take the questions as exhaustive.

The questions will help Eco-Committee members to think of actions that can be undertaken in the school to improve the environment and the school's impact on our planet. The 3 chosen topics (1 major and 2 minor) for the year should then be put into an Action Plan.

Take the time to investigate every year as a lot can change over 12 months.

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Key:



Pupils can find the answers themselves by looking carefully around the school.



Pupils may need to ask an adult to find the answers to these questions.







A little bit more investigation is required, maybe a survey or asking questions to other pupils.








This is a way of **measuring** the impact that you are having on the environment so you can show how much you are improving. This is an important part of being an Eco-School.

Litter




Inside the school:

Is the inside of the school free from litter?		Yes	
Are there enough bins inside the school?		Yes	
Are the bins in the right places?		Yes	
Are the bins emptied often enough?		Yes	




School grounds:

Are the school grounds free from litter?			No
Are there enough bins around the school grounds?		Yes	
Are the bins in the right places?		Yes	
Are the bins suitable? E.g. does the litter blow out or are they too small/big?		Yes	
If litter is present, is it coming from children in school or from outside the school grounds?			Outside

Outside the school:

Is your community generally litter free?		Yes	
Are there enough bins in the community?			No
Does the school help to keep the community clean?			No

General:

Does the school have a clear policy on litter?		Yes	
Do all pupils know the problems caused to the environment and wildlife by dropping litter?		Yes	
Do you keep a record of what, where, when and amount of litter found?		Yes	





Litter action points/comments:

The building work both in the school and outside (road service) is having an effect on the amount of litter in the school grounds. Pupils are following a litter picking schedule set out by the eco-committee to try and combat this. Timetable a schedule for litter pickers. Apply for more litter pickers.






Please note Eco-Schools NI consider balloon releases a form of mass littering. Having a balloon release at school may put your Green Flag status in doubt. Please consult the litter topic section of the Eco-Schools website for more information.

Waste






Reduce:

Does the school use email to send newsletters?		Yes	
If you send letters, is it one per family?		Yes	
Do teachers photocopy back to back when they can?		Yes	
Do pupils bring their packed lunch in reusable containers?		Yes	




Reuse:

Is there scrap paper trays in the classrooms?		Yes	
Are the toilet paper and hand towels made from recycled paper?		Yes	
Does the office and photocopier use recycled paper?			No
Do you reuse any packaging in the classrooms (e.g. junk models)?		Yes	
Do you have a swap shop for school uniform/games/ books/DVDs?			No

Recycle:

Which of the following do you recycle? (circle or highlight) 					
Paper	Plastic	Cans	Cardboard	Clothing/Material	
Batteries	Phones	Stamps	Glasses	Food	Ink Cartridges
Do you have a compost bin/area that is in use?					No
Do you use your compost on the school grounds?					No
Are there enough recycling bins around the school?					Yes
Do the recycling bins always have the right things in them?					Yes

Information:




Do you measure how much waste you are preventing from going to landfill sites?		No
If so, does everyone in the school know how much waste you are saving from landfill?		No
Do pupils in the school know the issues of landfill?		Yes

Waste action points/comments:




Pupils and staff are aware of the different bins and use these as part of everyday school life.

Energy





Gas / Oil:

Are windows and doors always kept shut when the heating is on?		Yes	
Does each classroom have a thermometer so you can try and keep the temperature at 18 degrees centigrade?		Yes	
Is there insulation in the roof of the school building to reduce heat loss?		Yes	

Electricity:

Are lights always turned off in empty rooms?		Yes	
Are lights turned off as soon as there is enough daylight?		Yes	
Are projectors/whiteboards, computers and monitors switched off when not in use?		Yes	










General:

Do pupils understand how our energy is generated, how it effects the environment, and the benefits of renewable energy?		Yes	
Do pupils or an adult keep track of the electricity readings?			No
Has the school investigated possible sources of renewable energy?			No
If you have a Display Energy Certificate (DEC) what is the score and rating for last year?			

Energy action points/comments:

Look into keeping track of electricity readings.










Water

Is the school free from dripping taps?		Yes	
Do pupils always turn the taps off fully?			No
Do you have water saving devices in the toilet cisterns? <i>e.g. a Hippo bag or bottles filled with water</i>			No
If you have push taps, do they dispense the right amount of water at the right speed?		Yes	
Do you have a water butt to collect rainwater for watering plants?			No
Is rainwater collected and used for anything else around the school? <i>e.g. flushing toilets or maintaining pond levels</i>			No
Do you learn about water issues in other countries?		Yes	
Is the school involved in any river or coast conservation projects?			No
Are pupils or an adult able to take water readings from the meter or from the utility bill? (NI Water may be able to help you with this)			No

Water action points/comments:

Visit each class to remind them to check taps are fully turned off.
Contact NI water about water readings. Get NI Water to visit the school for assemblies.
Look into possible river conservation projects in area.











Transport

Do most pupils walk, cycle or catch the bus to school?			No
Do you survey how people travel to school?		Yes	
Is there somewhere dry and safe to store bikes?			No
Does the school provide cycle instruction for pupils?			No
Do you hold regular walk or cycle to school events/days?			No
Is it safe to walk or cycle to school?			No
Do cars park away from the entrance to the school?			No
Do pupils understand the environmental benefits of sustainable transport?		Yes	
Have you taken part in a sustainable transport challenge i.e. the Translink Travel Challenge?		Yes	

Transport action points/comments:

Due to the rural location of the school and being near a major road it is difficult for pupils to walk to school safely however parking further away and walking some of the journey is encouraged. Contact Sustrans for transport initiatives and assemblies.












Outdoor Learning

Are there games painted on the playground?		Yes	
Are there murals, mosaics, sculptures or other artwork?			No
Are there plenty of things for climbing and balancing on, jumping and swinging from?		No	
Are there quiet places to sit and talk?		Yes	
Do you grow your own vegetables or fruit in the school grounds?			No
Do you have an outdoor classroom/log circle area?			No
Do you have friendship stops or buddy benches?		Yes	
Are any lessons held in the school grounds?		Yes	
Do you keep count of how many lessons are held in the school grounds?			No
Do all pupils have the opportunity to suggest what changes or new things they would like in the school grounds?		Yes	

Outdoor Learning action points/comments:

Develop outdoor area in the school, to be used more frequently. Create an outdoor place to rest, think, pray or appreciate nature. Look at developing Sensory garden for this as it is overgrown.

Biodiversity









Does the school have trees in the grounds?		Yes	
Does the school have more hedging than fencing around the parameter?		Yes	
Are some of your trees and hedging native species?		Yes	
Does your school have a pond or marshy area?			No
Does your pond have an exit route for frogs, toads, newts and hedgehogs?			No
Does your school have a wildflower meadow?			No
Does your school have areas of long/undisturbed vegetation linking habitats together?			No
Does your school have any of the following aids to biodiversity? Please circle/highlight the ones that you have:		Yes	
<p><i>Log pile</i> Stone pile Minibeast hotel Scented flowers/herbs</p> <p><i>Butterfly bushes</i> <i>Bird feeders</i> <i>Water for birds</i></p> <p>Bird boxes <i>Bat boxes</i> <i>Swift houses</i> <i>Bee homes</i></p> <p><i>Hedgehog House</i> <i>Hedgehog passages (i.e. under/through fencing)</i></p>			
Are the school grounds free from herbicides and pesticides?		Yes	
Do you always use peat-free compost?		Yes	
Have you carried out a biodiversity survey of your school grounds?		Yes	

Biodiversity action points/comments:

Due to the building work in the last few years a lot of the biodiversity areas need updating/ fixing.

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Global Perspective

Does your school have an active link with a school in another country?		Yes	
Do the teachers have Fair Trade tea and coffee in the staffroom?		Yes	
Are there any other Fair Trade products used in school? (fruit juice, footballs, bananas)		Yes	
Do pupils recognise the Fair Trade symbol and understand its meaning?		Yes	
Do you have any visitors from the local community/Eco-Schools delivery partners to talk about local or global issues?		Yes	
Are pupils aware of their Rights and Responsibilities (linked to the UN convention on the Rights of the Child)?		Yes	
Do you have any whole school awareness days to support people in other countries/situations?		Yes	
Do you ever raise money or collect clothing/toys for charities working in developing countries?		Yes	
Are pupils aware of, or are lessons linked to, the UN Sustainable Development Goals?		Yes	
Do pupils understand that choices/behaviours in the developed world can effect people in the developing world in an unfair way?		Yes	

Global Perspective action points/comments:

<p>Lots being done on global responsibilities – maybe put same focus on our local area and issues.</p>








Healthy Living

Do you have a fruit tuck shop that is run by pupils?			No
Are pupils encouraged to bring fruit for break?		Yes	
Do you measure how many pupils bring a healthy break/lunch to school?			No
Do pupils have the opportunity to suggest what healthy choices they would like to include in the dinner/canteen menu?			No
Is there free drinking water available to pupils all day?		Yes	
Do all pupils get to experience growing and then eating their own food at school?		Yes	
Is there a fitness programme established in the school?		Yes	
Does the school invite outside health agencies to come and talk to pupils about their health?		Yes	
Does the school have an anti-bullying policy?		Yes	
Does the school run any mindfulness and meditation lessons?			No

Healthy Living action points/comments:

The school has a healthy eating policy. Each class teacher ensures this is followed. Dinners are cooked off the school grounds by another school canteen.

Climate Change

Do pupils understand the difference between weather and climate?		Yes	
Is there an understanding of the contributing factors to climate change i.e. the use of fossil fuels and the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere?		Yes	
Do some classes study the effects of climate change on different people and wildlife around the world?		Yes	
Do pupils understand their carbon footprint and know ways to reduce it?		Yes	
Which of these things do you do to reduce the school's carbon footprint: Circle all that you are doing: <i>Walk/cycle/take the bus to school</i> Recycle all the waste you can <i>Buy local food</i> Carpool to school Save energy <i>Offset air travel through the Global Forest Fund</i> <i>Plant trees</i> Use less plastic and paper Save water		Yes	No
Do you measure any of the above actions you have taken?			No
If yes, have you used an online carbon calculator to see how much carbon you are saving? <i>Hint one is available in the Eco-Schools Resource Library.</i>		Yes	No

Climate Change action points/comments:

Look at energy saving week. Get school council to remind pupils.

