



Changing Together

Eco-Schools 1994-2019





President Michael D Higgins at GS Expo 16, Eco-Schools Ireland

United Kingdom & Ireland

England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland & Wales





England

Keep Britain Tidy (KBT)

National Operator: Lee Wray-Davies

Country size: 130,395 km²

Population: 55.6 million

Longest river: The Thames 346 km

Highest mountain: Helvellyn 978 m

National animal: Lion

National tree: Oak

Joined Eco-Schools in 1994

Number of Eco-Schools: 19,631

National plant: Rose

The Tudor Rose is the traditional floral heraldic emblem of England and takes its name and origins from the House of Tudor, which united the House of Lancaster and the House of York. The Wars of the Roses were a series of battles fought in medieval England from 1455 to 1485 between the two houses. The name Wars of the Roses is based on the badges used by the two sides, the red rose for the Lancastrians and the white rose for the Yorkists. The Tudor rose now consists of five white inner petals, representing the House of York, and five red outer petals to represent the House of Lancaster and its superiority to the House of York.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

Neither Environmental Education (EE) nor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are compulsory in the English curriculum, however, elements of environmental issues and management are covered briefly in subject areas, such as geography and science.

K-12 Education

Throughout the Key Stages (KS), students cover elements of EE, with a more specific focus from KS5 onwards. Eco-Schools England has recently mapped the entire Eco-Schools programme and topics to KS1-4 to integrate EE through the wider curriculum in areas such as history, music and maths.

Professional Development

There are a wide variety of environment-based professional development courses available, some accredited nationally and some delivered in-house by environmental organisations. KSB currently offers bespoke Eco-Schools teacher training.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

England was amongst the first countries to launch and pilot Eco-Schools back in 1994 and the Tidy Britain Group ran the Eco-Schools programme for all UK countries. The organisation was and is to this day based in Wigan. The project was promoted and supported by the Going for Green Campaign. The Going for Green Campaign was a public awareness campaign that asked people to 'think green' and make a few simple environmental changes in their daily lives.

At the time, all supporting Eco-Schools materials were written and developed by Robert Stephenson and Cherry Mares. Professor Ashworth was the Chief Executive at Keep Britain Tidy in 1994, with Sue Rigby the first Eco-Schools Manager (UK).

Local authorities across the country supported the launch of Eco-Schools, linking the programme to initiatives such as Local Agenda 21 and in 1996, two years after the initiation of the pilot phase, the first Green Flag in England was awarded to Canon Burrows Primary School.

During devolution, each of the UK nations took over the management of their countries' Eco-Schools programme.



KEY MILESTONES

Since the launch in 1994, the programme has gone through some defining moments such as the devolution of the programme in 2004 with other UK nations taking over the management of the Eco-Schools programme in their own nations. In 2014, government funding for the Eco-Schools programme stopped, which resulted in the introduction of a charge to schools when applying for a Green Flag. In 2018-2019, changes to the order of the Seven Steps were made and the new topic 'Marine' was introduced. Eco-Schools England also hosted the first UK & Ireland regional network meeting in Wigan in 2017.

As EE is yet not compulsory in the English national curriculum, the Eco-Schools programme is an optional programme for schools. It relies on the goodwill and support of a network of thousands of volunteers to keep the programme running whilst they work towards compulsory educational benchmarks such as inspection criteria, league tables and examination results.

NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

Having been a geography teacher for over 16 years and having seen so many changes to the English national curriculum in that time, it always amazes me that for an entire generation every Eco-School, no matter where in the world, has followed the same simple Seven-Step framework to Green Flag success.

No school in England has to be an Eco-School, and yet 19,200 Eco-Coordinators have given their valuable time (some for over 20 years) to manage and run the programme in their schools, on top of the additional pressures and responsibilities they face within an ever-changing education sector. The maturity and determination of their students to make an environmental difference is a testimony to these inspiring individuals and the Eco-Schools programme as a whole. We are the largest educational programme on the planet and I don't doubt will continue to be for another generation.



Keep Britain Tidy (KBT)
Elizabeth House, The Pier
WN3 4EX Wigan



“When a child gets actively involved with Eco-Schools, they enhance their development further. They build upon their previously acquired knowledge and learn to use these skills. They understand that they have a voice and that they have a safe platform to use it. They become minute makers, organisers, planners and influencers. Projects are inspired from their imagination, success is seen in a non-academic form, things get done and if they don't there is the understanding.”

**Jayson Taylor, Learning Mentor and Family Liaison
St Catherine Junior School, Leicester**

“In 2019, award-winning eco uniform provider David Luke school wear, were thrilled to renew their 6-year long relationship with Eco-Schools, strengthening their sustainability programme further. This year's partnership saw David Luke take ownership of Eco School's new 'Marine' topic. Ambitions for the project included working with the school wear brand's collective of youth environmentalists known as '16 Under 16' to produce a series of school resources with a plastic pollution and marine focus, including lesson plans and engaging assembly formats.”

Bryony Pestell, David Luke Clothing, Corporate Sponsor

“At Leicester City Council we are very proud to promote Eco-Schools as the model for accrediting our schools as they become more sustainable. The Eco-Schools programme is a fantastic framework which has enabled all types of schools to engage in the environmental agenda. It is accessible for children and staff from infants, primaries, secondaries and special schools. The Green Flag award visit is a great step for schools to celebrate their hard work and share their projects with others. What I admire is that the Eco-Schools programme is a journey, not a destination. This means that schools can always make further progress. As part of the climate emergency, our schools have been able to use the framework as a mechanism to reduce their carbon emissions and monitor their impact. This has been reflected in their informing and involving, working in their extended communities, and with their families and friends. We have high aspirations for all our schools to become Green Flag Eco-Schools.”

**Lee Jowett, Environmental Education Coordinator
Leicester City Council (Local Government supporter)**

“England was amongst the first countries to launch and pilot Eco-Schools back in 1994 and since then Keep Britain Tidy has overseen phenomenal growth in the programme, with over 19,200 schools now registered – representing over 80% of all schools in England. Feedback from Head Teachers and Eco-Coordinators indicates that the programme not only enables pupils to develop greater awareness of and take action on the environment, but it also helps foster the key skills of leadership and team-working which are so critical to today's sustainability agenda. We are proud to be leading this programme in England and building the knowledge, skills and values in our next generation who will lead the transition to a more sustainable and healthier world.”

Richard McIlwain, Deputy Chief Executive at Keep Britain Tidy



Ireland

An Taisce EEU - The National Trust for Ireland
National Operator: Cathy Baxter



Rathleague National School celebrates ten years of National WOW day during Walk to School week in 2018

Country size: 84,421 km²

Population: 4.7 million

Longest river: River Shannon 360 km

Highest mountain: Carrauntoohil 1,038 m

National animal: Red Deer

Joined Eco-Schools in 1997

Number of Eco-Schools: 3,952

National plant: Shamrock

The name Shamrock comes from the Irish name seamróg which translates to young clover. There is actually no individual plant species which is positively identified as a shamrock. The name is used for many small three-leaved clovers! According to folklore, St Patrick used the shamrock as a tool to help bring Christianity to Ireland. In many myths and legends, it is mentioned that St Patrick used the three leaves on one plant as a metaphor for the Christian concept of the Trinity. The number three was already an important figure in Ireland as the Celts had believed it was a powerful number and included it in their art so it is possible that shamrocks were an important symbol in Ireland dating back thousands of years.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) guides the status of Environmental Education (EE). This was developed by the Department of Education and outlines how environmental education and ESD should be implemented from early years to tertiary and adult education via formal and non-formal education and with support from various government departments and relevant bodies.

K-12 Education

In preschool education, ESD is incorporated into two frameworks – the curricular framework and the national quality framework. This ensures that environmental education is incorporated at an early age. At the primary and post-primary level, ESD is a component of several core subjects including Geography, SESE, Civic Social and Political Education, History and Environmental and Social Studies. In addition, both primary and secondary schools have key ESD principles incorporated into their guiding frameworks which direct environmental education principles to be incorporated throughout school life. In secondary schools, the framework governing the new Junior Cycle includes directions which promote environmental principles, for example, a statement that “the student has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably”.

Professional Development

The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development found that initial teacher training carried out in many colleges, universities and institutes of technology around the country is lacking in the area of ESD. However, there are opportunities for Continued Professional Development (CPD) for teachers involving environmental education. CPD is funded by the Department of Education and is mainly organised through the Professional Development Support Service for Teachers (PDST) and the Education Centre Network. The network provides a number of short courses during the school summer holidays including several related to ESD, e.g. one titled ‘Supporting Sustainable Development’. The City of Dublin Education and Training Board’s Curriculum Development Unit has also initiated a number of small scale CPD projects focusing on resource development.

An Taisce EEU - The National Trust for Ireland
Environmental Education Unit, 5a Swifts Alley
Dublin 8

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

Eco-Schools started in 1997, when the former Eco-Schools Director, Dr Patricia Oliver, who had seen the success of the programme in other countries through the FEE network, encouraged one of our local authority partners to support the programme. Other local authorities soon followed and the programme opened to registrations shortly thereafter. Elizabeth Arnett, the Green-Schools Manager, was tasked with establishing these partnerships with local authorities and guiding the very first schools through the seven-step process.

The first local authority partners supported the running of the programme in schools in their areas by assisting with recruiting schools to the programme, organising a venue for schools to attend an introductory seminar which provided teachers and coordinators with initial training and support to begin working on the programme, providing information to the schools on local resources and assessing the work done by schools.

Already in 1997-98, Roxboro National School, Roscommon; Cranford National School, Donegal and St. Michael’s Boys National School, Galway became the first schools to get awarded Green Flags in Ireland.

KEY MILESTONES

In 1997-98, Ireland awarded the first Green Flags, while in 2003 An Taisce held the Eco-Schools NOM for the first time in Dublin. In 2007, the organisation launched the Green-Campus programme, and 1,000 schools were awarded the Green Flag. A year later, An Taisce rolled out the Green-Schools Travel programme, which aims to increase the number of students walking, cycling, scooting, using public transport or carpooling to school. In 2009, University College Cork was awarded the first Green-Campus Green Flag, and An Taisce reached the 2,000 Green Flag awarded schools milestone.

In 2013, An Taisce held the FEE General Assembly in Dublin, and in 2016 it held the Green-Schools Expo, where the Water Ambassadors and the Marine theme were launched. Later in 2017, An Taisce’s Climate Action Programme was launched and in 2018 the organisation held the first Green-Schools Global Goals Conference. In November 2018, the Eco-Schools NOM was held in Cork, with participants from over 55 countries.



“The whole experience of the Green-Schools programme has benefited our school in more ways than we can ever imagine. We have engaged with this programme for such a long time (16 yrs - 6 Green Flags) that staff, in particular, cannot imagine life in St Joseph’s without the Green Flag culture! Not only has the project raised awareness of environmental issues among the pupils, but it has also fostered a change in attitude towards respect for our world, among all members of the wider school community.

Being part of the Green-Schools project has helped promote a culture of proper waste management, energy reduction, water conservation, sustainable travel, an understanding of biodiversity and heightened awareness of global citizenship that was never there before. We are extremely proud of this culture and continue to encourage it through good behaviour practice. Pupils learn by example and what better way to show this than by older pupils showing the young through healthy and positive environmental behaviour practices.

We have learned huge amounts about our environment, how it works and how to take good care of it. This knowledge we will carry with us forever. By continuing the good practice in relation to waste management, our school will remain a cleaner and greener place in which to learn. This, in turn, promotes a positive, happy and healthy atmosphere for everyone. One of the main benefits of our recycling endeavours is our effort to support charities and people less well off than ourselves. Also, by working together towards reducing energy costs in the school, we have managed to reduce domestic bills, thereby saving money from school funds. This money can then be channelled elsewhere.

Another really positive aspect of the programme has been our regular access to the Green-Schools website. This website has proven an invaluable resource for committee members and coordinators while working through the projects. It is well laid out, very teacher-friendly with a myriad of ideas, advice, case studies and pictures of various other schools ideas. As well as the educational benefits, there has been an element of fun, which has permeated each aspect of the programme. We have thoroughly enjoyed various tours/trips/visiting agencies already outlined in previous questions. We have experienced new activities such as gardening and the planting of trees, shrubs and daffodils in areas outside of the school. We have derived immense joy through the building of our Bug Hotel and Ladybird House!

Our Celebration of Cultures Day in February proved to be one of the most successful Green-School endeavours to date! Such was the success of this day that we intend continuing to celebrate our cultural diversity every other year going forward!

Furthermore, we have been lucky enough to have the experience of six Green Flag-raising ceremonies at St Joseph’s and have been able to enjoy

the parties that followed! These memories will remain with each and every one of us long after we have left the school system.

St Joseph’s proud tradition of green issues doesn’t stop at the school gates. One of our previous challenges, the Green Home Project involved assignments, which were carried out in the home with our families. Through this, we are enabled to pass all the information we learn at school into our homes. This raises awareness within our households on all issues green and helps us to reduce household bills and make the environment a healthier and safe place for generations to come.

Our local newspaper, The Tipperary Star has been extremely supportive in raising publicity for the school. The newspaper has, on a regular basis, printed articles and pictures relating to Green-Schools’ issues. This publicity raises the profile of our school and helps us act as an example to others. As we are recognized as an established and experienced Green-School, we have been approached by certain schools in the locality for advice and ideas in relation to the setting up of their Green-School project.

Furthermore, certain external agencies have used our projects to further promote Environmental Education in the wider community through their websites: eg tipperarycoco.ie (Artist in the primary school scheme)

Finally, our most recent theme, Global Citizenship-Litter & Waste, presented us with many challenges along the way, but we rose to each one and are extremely proud of our achievements. We hope to continue passing our “green” culture to all pupils at St Joseph’s for many years to come! “Mol an óige & tiocfaidh siad”

Ann Marrie Mason, Teacher, St Josephs Primary School, Templemore

“As the Minister responsible for marine environmental policy in Ireland, Minister of State Damien English is delighted to fund and support An Taisce’s world-leading Green-Schools Global Citizenship Marine Environment Module. In acknowledgement of the vital role that education and raising environmental awareness have in influencing behavioural change across society, the Government have included this Module as a key measure in Ireland’s official Programme of Measures set out under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Ireland is very proud to have one of the first, if not the first, dedicated Eco-Schools modules in the world dealing specifically with the marine environment. At the UN’s “Our Oceans Conference” hosted by the European Union in Malta in October 2017, Ireland formally committed to continuing to fund and develop this programme under the UN Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life below Water.”

Minister of State Damien English, Minister for Housing and Urban Development in the Department of Housing Planning and Local Government





The Green-Schools Woodland

The Green-Schools Woodland is in Cork, where over 3,000 trees have been planted to signify all the schools in Ireland who have been awarded a Green Flag. A group of students visited the woodland in 2015 for a day of Biodiversity themed workshops.

A student holds a “Thanks Pat” sign to acknowledge former Education Unit Director, Patricia Oliver, on her retirement in 2015.

NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

I have met some truly inspiring students and teachers throughout my time as National Operator. The highlight for me is listening to teachers tell me what a positive and powerful impact the programme has had on a young person in their lives. The collective impact of the programme worldwide is something so unique and precious. We have been incredibly lucky in Ireland to have such strong support both at the local and national government level and with our other sponsors.

I think the biggest challenge for schools and teachers is to find the time to fit the programme into their school lives, which are incredibly busy. I have the utmost respect for all the Green-Schools coordinators who make the programme the success that it is.



Northern Ireland

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
National Operator: Ruth Van Ry

Country size: 14,130 km²

Population: 1.8 million

Longest river: River Bann 140 km

Highest mountain: Slieve Donard 850 m

Joined Eco-Schools in 1994

Number of Eco-Schools: 1,192

National plant: Flax

The flax flower appears as the emblem of the Northern Ireland Assembly at Stormont, the badge of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom and some one pound coins minted between 1986 and 1991.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

The curriculum in Northern Ireland is managed by the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). In 2007, they formed a new curriculum for the different Key Stages (KS) - Foundation (4-6 yrs) through to KS4 (14-16yrs). Though Environmental Education (EE) is currently not included in any national legislation, Eco-Schools is specifically referenced in the Northern Ireland Curriculum Non-Statutory Guidance for Teachers, and Eco-Schools Northern Ireland (NI) tries to encourage schools to teach EE in all subjects.

K-12 Education

EE is not mandated in K-12 nor in the new 2007 curriculum. However, this is an overarching objective. It is taught in a variety of subjects; in Primary School KS1-2 it features largely in the World Around Us subject and in KS3-4 it is mostly taught in the science subjects and somewhat in Learning for Life and Work.

Professional Development

During teacher training, teachers look at the Curriculum Objectives and how to deliver them. One of these objectives is “to develop the young person as a contributor to the economy and environment”. EE in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is entirely at the individual school’s discretion - some schools encourage Eco-Coordicators to train in programmes such as Forest Schools. Eco-Schools Northern Ireland provides Cluster Group meetings to train and inform teachers involved in the programme, although this is not formalised CPD, i.e. no points are awarded.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

Eco-Schools launched in the UK in 1994 and the Northern Ireland programme at that time was administered by Keep Britain Tidy. The same year the first Green Flag in the world was awarded. The receivers of this very first flag were Downpatrick Nursery School in Northern Ireland.

TIDY Northern Ireland was formed as an independent charity in 2000 and in 2008, with the arrival of a new CEO, Dr Ian Humphreys, they became the National Operator of the Eco-Schools programme in Northern Ireland.



KEY MILESTONES

In 1994, the first Green Flag (anywhere in the world) was awarded to Downpatrick Nursery School, Northern Ireland.

In 2014, TIDY Northern Ireland rebranded itself as Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, and by 2015 every school in Northern Ireland was registered as an Eco-School. In the same year, Eco-Schools NI celebrated its 20th Anniversary with an event attended by 125 schools, 300 teachers and 1,500 pupils. Bríd Conneely, former International Eco-Schools Director, and Daniel Schaffer, FEE CEO, also attended along with the Minister of the Environment, Mark H. Durkan. Later in 2015, Eco-Schools NI hosted the NOM in Belfast.

In 2017, the 1,000th Green Flag was awarded, while in 2019 the Marine topic was launched to mark the 25th anniversary. Currently, the international Green Flag standard is held by 28% of all schools in Northern Ireland.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful received the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Outstanding Contribution to Environmental Education in 2018, the European Week of Waste Reduction NGO/Association Category 2012 and 2013, and the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) EE Under 30: Game Changers for the Planet 2007 award to Nicola Fitzsimons, a member of the Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful team.





"I feel it is a great programme, not only for helping to save our environment but also for developing children's thinking skills and personal capabilities. Our Eco-Committee works very hard throughout the year. Our pupils thrive when given extra responsibility. Each stage of the process has been a learning opportunity for our pupils. The whole school community are now more aware of how we can be more eco-friendly. The Eco-Schools programme gives the children an opportunity to communicate with our local council and engage in lots of cross-curricular activities. I would highly recommend this programme to any school."

Principal St John's Primary School, Armagh, Green Flag application 2018-19

"By capturing the hearts and minds of pupils and teachers, Eco-Schools is making a real, tangible and positive impact on our environment in Northern Ireland. The Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs is a long term and ongoing supporter of Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland, and recognising the programme makes an important contribution to this goal. The programme is engaging our young people, who will be the next generation of citizens, business leaders and politicians, in developing eco-friendly behaviours that help our environment and our economy. It is encouraging to see the programme going from strength to strength in this its 25th anniversary year. We would encourage every school in Northern Ireland to get involved and engrain the ethos of Eco-Schools into their everyday actions."

Dave Foster, Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs

"Cookstown Textile Recyclers are delighted to support the Eco-Schools Waste topic. Our Cash for Clobber scheme teaches pupils the benefits of recycling and raises valuable funds for schools. Investing back into our schools and community is an important link in our recycling chain and Eco-Schools plays an important part in that."

Billy Conway, Cookstown Textile Recyclers

"Eco-Schools was the main reason I applied for the job as CEO of Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. Eco-Schools continues to provide a vibrant richness to experiential education; something that has been gradually eroded from the curriculum with its sole focus on cramming content for exams. I think this is the reason for its success - it is filling a real and fundamental need for both young people and teachers."

One of the real highlights for me was being able to host the NOM in 2015 when over 50 nations visited Northern Ireland, saw some of our Green Flag schools and met some of the inspirational students and their teachers. Meeting operators remains a key strength of the programme, enabling the sharing of good practice, exchange and testing (in a supportive environment) of embryonic ideas and building a confidence

that all those small actions really are part of something much bigger.

Getting every school involved in 2015 took a lot of work and this feat remains a huge success. Reaching this platform readied us for the next and bigger challenge of making the most of the opportunity that Eco-Schools provides. For all the brilliant work I see, for all the budding young leaders I meet and for all the amazing committed teachers going the extra mile that I have the honour of knowing, Eco-Schools is still only achieving 10% of its true potential. And its potential is this: it can provide the framework for developing collaborative, critically-thinking, creative young people who can lead society in transforming the way we value and impact on our environment. Young Eco-Schools 'graduates' will know how to communicate effectively and will take positive, practical action as second nature.

Ultimately, Eco-Schools gives me hope that we can yet turn the curve on the big-ticket environmental crises facing humanity."

Dr Ian Humphreys, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Chief Executive



NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

I began working for Eco-Schools in 2012 and became National Operator in 2016 - that in itself was a huge achievement for me and made me very proud. I remember the Eco-Schools NOM coming to Belfast in 2015 and the excitement and buzz around that. Our schools were delighted to receive international visitors and we were so proud to be able to showcase them. Watching the programme grow year on year is really rewarding and inspiring. The amazing teachers and pupils spur me on to make the programme as good as I can and as helpful to them as possible every year.

A big challenge which we overcame in 2015 was to get every school in the country to register in the programme. This was a landmark moment for us but really only the beginning of the process of keeping schools engaged and participating in the programme and awards system. The programme is voluntary and schools continued interest in it is remarkable when they are facing budget cuts and diminishing resources. It is a testament to the value schools have for the programme and the benefits it gives to the pupils and the planet that it continues to grow each year despite the challenges.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
2 Paulett Avenue
BT5 4HD, Belfast



Aultmore Park Primary School, 2014

Scotland

Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB)
National Operator: Daniel Barrie

- Country size: 78,789 km²**
- Population: 5.4 million**
- Longest river: River Tay 188 km**
- Highest mountain: Ben Nevis 1,344 m**
- National plant: Thistle**
- Joined Eco-Schools in 1994**
- Number of Eco-Schools: 3,741**

National animal: Unicorn

According to Celtic mythology, the Unicorn of Scotland symbolised innocence and purity, healing powers, joy and even life itself. It was also seen as a symbol of masculinity and power.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

Learning for Sustainability (LfS) is a cross-curricular approach which enables learners, educators, schools and their wider communities to build a socially-just, sustainable and equitable society. An effective whole-school and community approach to LfS weaves together global citizenship, sustainable development education and outdoor learning to create coherent, rewarding and transformative learning experiences.

LfS is an important component of Curriculum for Excellence, an entitlement for learners and a core part of teachers' professional standards. It supports the development of knowledge, skills and the values at the heart of the curriculum's four capacities and provides a mechanism for promoting and working towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

LfS has always been part of Curriculum for Excellence and there are fantastic examples of how the exploration of social, environmental and economic sustainability continues to deliver outcomes across the curriculum. Details on how LfS can be promoted and supported are available on Education Scotland's National Improvement Hub.

K-12 Education

LfS has been developed and informed by the work of both the 'One Planet Schools Working Group' and the 'Learning for Sustainability National Implementation Group'. This work culminated in the 2016 publication of the 'Vision 2030+' report which recommended that:

- All learners should have an entitlement to LfS
- In line with the GTCS Professional Standards, every practitioner, school and education leader should demonstrate Learning for Sustainability in their practice
- Every school should have a 'whole-school' approach to LfS that is robust, demonstrable, evaluated and supported by leadership at all levels
- All school buildings, grounds and policies should support LfS
- A strategic national approach to support for LfS should be established.

A new Learning for Sustainability Action Plan (2019) sets out how the Scottish Government will implement the recommendations of the Vision 2030+ report over the next 3-5 years. It has been informed by consultation with a number of relevant stakeholders and delivery partners. The Action Plan is a living document and will be amended as appropriate as further opportunities to promote and deliver LfS become apparent.

Professional Development

Taken as a whole, the action plan aims to act as a catalyst to support the increased prevalence of LfS. However, lasting progress will only be achieved by the efforts of practitioners in our early-year settings, schools and colleges. Practitioners in those establishments and colleagues at local authorities and other relevant organisations are therefore encouraged to renew their commitment to LfS.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

Twenty-five years ago in 1994, Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) was formally in association with Keep Britain Tidy. When Keep Britain Tidy joined FEE and introduced Eco-Schools to England, the National Director of KSB, the late Douglas Wright, was enthusiastic about introducing the programme to Scotland and secured the support of the government in Scotland, local authorities and the independent sector. After Douglas retired, the programme was rapidly and enthusiastically developed by John P Summers, the new National Director. In 1995, Lunnasting Primary School, Shetland, was awarded Scotland's first Green Flag.

A consequence of the devolution for Scotland in 1999 was that the formal association with Keep Britain Tidy was dissolved, although the two organisations continue to co-operate on a cordial basis. All stakeholders in Scotland were particularly keen to maintain and develop the Eco-Schools Scotland programme and, on behalf of the Board of Charity Trustees of KSB, John P Summers applied to FEE for KSB to be the member of FEE for Scotland. FEE very kindly accepted the application and KSB continues to be an enthusiastic and committed member of FEE.

KEY MILESTONES

In June 2004, the 100th Green Flag in Scotland was awarded to Whitelees Primary School, North Lanarkshire. In September 2007, the 500th awarded to Rhu Primary School, Argyll & Bute. In May 2010, the 1000th awarded to St Joseph's Primary School, East Dunbartonshire. In June 2012, the 1500th awarded to Mearns Castle High School, East Renfrewshire and in March 2017, the 2000th Green Flag was awarded to St John's RC Academy, Perth & Kinross. Scotland was the first member nation to have awarded 2000 Green Flags. And by that, 98.5% of Scottish schools had registered with the Eco-Schools programme.

In May 2014, an independent review by Learning for Sustainability Scotland and Edinburgh University concluded that the Eco-Schools programme has been particularly successful in Scotland. It has a very high take up with over 98% of local authority schools registered, and the Green Flag is a respected and sought-after award. A key strength is its breadth of coverage of Sustainable Development Education combined with its whole-school and learner-centred approach. It can link well to Curriculum for Excellence and its international dimension is valued.





“The Eco-Schools programme has made the pupils more aware of their actions and how they affect the environment and their wider community. It has made them aware of how important their actions are on a wider scale.”

Eco-Coordinator, Lunnasting Primary School, Shetland

“I am delighted to present St John’s Academy with its Green Flag and congratulate all of the pupils and school staff on becoming our 2000th Eco-School, making Scotland an international leader through all their hard work. It is especially impressive when you learn about how the Eco Group built up its numbers, encouraging children from nursery through to secondary, as well as school staff, to think more about their impact on the environment and how they could make positive changes within their school.

Eco-Schools is a fantastic initiative that lies really at the heart of demonstrating the elements of our curriculum which are so important to ensure young people are equipped for the modern world.”

John Swinney MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

“For more than two decades Keep Scotland Beautiful has committed to supporting our children to develop an understanding of the global and local environmental issues they face now and in the future. More than a million young people have benefited from environmental learning through Eco-Schools Scotland.”

Bruce Robertson, Keep Scotland Beautiful Charity Trustee



Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB)

Glendevon House, The Castle Business Park
Stirling FK9 4TZ

NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

In Scotland, it can be a challenge to respond to changing priorities at a local and national level, but the programme provides a fantastic opportunity for our students to target the entitlement to Learning for Sustainability which is embedded within our Curriculum for Excellence framework. As a result, Eco-Schools Scotland provides a lens for pupils to explore local, national and global issues and supports the development of a range of interdisciplinary skills through enquiry framed by these topics.

In Scotland, we were the first Eco-Schools National Operator to engage with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and to bring them into the assessment criteria for the Eco-Schools Scotland Green Flag Award. For pupils, establishing the connection their work has to global issues and innovations supports the development of a rights-based approach within schools. We are lucky in Scotland that there are no financial barriers to participation and the flexibility of the Eco-Schools framework supports education establishments for pupils from all ages and stages to adapt and engage with the programme in their context, be that rural or urban, small or large, early years, primary, secondary or an additional support needs context.

Each individual establishment’s journey towards attaining the Green Flag is tailored to their own context and provides a great opportunity for pupils to engage with the highs and lows of project planning and management. The passion this opportunity inspires in pupils also develops life skills, resilience and an insight into future sustainability careers.



Wales



Keep Wales Tidy

National Operator: Julie Giles

Food growing project at Mount Street Junior School, Powys

Country size: 20,735 km²

Population: 3.1 million

Highest mountain: Snowdon 1,085 m

National Flower: The daffodil

Joined Eco-Schools in 1994

Number of Eco-Schools: 1,463

Longest river: The River Towy 120 km

The River Towy has a total length of 120 km and is the longest river flowing entirely within Wales.

The river is well known for its sea trout and other fish species, it provides a home for many water and wetland birds, and also supports otters and other more common mammals. Grey seals are found in its lower reaches.



STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

National Legislation

The Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015 requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

The Act is unique to Wales and has attracted interest from countries across the world as it offers a huge opportunity to make a long-lasting, positive change to current and future generations. The Welsh Government launched Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) – A Strategy for Action in September 2006 to highlight actions driving the ESDGC agenda forward and to ensure the principles of ESDGC are built into every aspect of day-to-day life. It also launched the ESD & GC Common Understanding documents in July 2008 to support the delivery of ESDGC in schools.

K-12 Education

More recently in Wales the new school curriculum is being developed and will be compulsory in 2022, although many schools are already introducing elements of the curriculum. The concept is a much more experiential and pupils-led way of learning that will be delivered through themes. This gives huge scope for a more embedded approach to Environmental Education (EE), especially with the increase in media coverage of environmental issues, which is inspiring so many young people. By the end of their schooling, all pupils will have worked towards four core goals in their education - most importantly for EE is the goal: "All our children and young people will be ethical informed citizens who:

- find, evaluate and use evidence in forming views
- engage with contemporary issues based upon their knowledge and values
- understand and exercise their human and democratic responsibilities and rights
- understand and consider the impact of their actions when making choices and acting
- are knowledgeable about their culture, community, society and the world, now and in the past
- respect the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society
- show their commitment to the sustainability of the planet and are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world

Professional Development

The Welsh Baccalaureate, a qualification for 14 to 19 year-old students in Wales, offers opportunities for students to be involved in ESDGC topic areas to varying degrees.

A variety of EE courses are offered in a number of Welsh Further Education Colleges and Environmental Education degrees are accessible in Welsh Universities. Environmental Science degrees are also available.

A few organisations, like Keep Wales Tidy, offer environmental training for teachers. This however is an area we would like to see expand in Wales as a real opportunity for professional development.

THE STORY OF ECO-SCHOOLS

Wales has been involved in Eco-Schools from the very early years, initially as part of Keep Britain Tidy and with FEE support from 1994. In 1994, one of our community group volunteers, Gerry Taylor, an ex-teacher with a huge amount of environmental knowledge, was employed as Eco-Schools Manager. Awareness of the programme was raised and schools started to show great interest and registered to take part. In 1995, Wales' first Green Flag was awarded.

As the programme grew and school numbers increased, more staff were needed to support them. In 2000, Keep Wales Tidy established itself as a separate charity and the Eco-Schools programme received support from the Welsh Government which enabled it to expand and develop.

The Eco-Schools Wales team now supports schools in a variety of ways including school visits and workshops, annual national Eco-Committee events, new coordinator training and, more recently, Eco-Schools and Curriculum Linked training. Resources have been produced to give guidance to schools about various topic areas and days of action. Information from other projects or initiatives that assist Eco-Schools are passed on through a regular newsletter.

Eco-Schools Wales takes pride in the development and history of the programme in our country. To ensure continuity of this support, funding the programme is a challenge that needs regular investigation and development.

Eco-Schools Wales has been partly funded by the Welsh Government for many years, which has been invaluable in maintaining the programme. However, Keep Wales Tidy continues to investigate other funding sources to ensure long-term sustainability.



Michael Sheens visit to Cwmnedd Primary School, September 2013

Maintaining and supporting the large percentage of schools in Wales, as well as encouraging them to progress through the programme, is a challenge in itself. Awareness of national school priorities, producing resources and developing ongoing training is something we do regularly, where over 90% of schools are now part of the Eco-Schools programme. More than half of these schools are Green Flag status holders with many of these being long-term (four flag plus) Platinum status holders.

KEY MILESTONES

The Welsh Government recognises the value of the Eco-Schools programme, regularly mentioning the work we do. We work closely with Welsh Government officials to deliver school activities closely linked to government priorities. Over 90% of the schools in Wales are on the Eco-Schools programme. 53% of Welsh schools have achieved the international Green Flag status. 52% of Welsh Green flag schools are at Platinum level (long-term commitment - four flags plus level). Wales runs the National Eco Committee (NEC) event annually, inviting Platinum level schools. NEC events often link to Welsh government priorities. Senior Eco-Committee events are held annually, inviting senior school pupils, the last event being the Big Schools Day at the Volvo Ocean Race. In September 2013 the Keep Wales Tidy ambassador Michael Sheen visited Cwmnedd Primary school.

NATIONAL OPERATOR - REFLECTIONS

As National Operator I am always truly amazed and so proud of the young people taking part in the Eco-Schools programme here in Wales and around the world. At every school I visit I learn something new. I am constantly inspired by the enthusiasm and commitment shown, the growing strength of pupil voice and the changes being achieved by schools on the programme.

In Wales, one of the purposes of the new school curriculum states "All of our children and young people will be ethical informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the World" - this gives me great hope that Eco-Schools is here to stay!

National animal: The Welsh Dragon or yr Ddraig Goch

The Welsh Dragon is used to identify all sorts of things Welsh. However, the flag has a fascinating history and has long been a symbol of Welsh culture and identity. The leek vegetable was the original symbol of Wales. Legend has it that it originated from a great battle against the Saxons. St. David (some sources say the 7th King of Gwynedd, Cadwaladr) advised the Welsh to wear leeks in their hats to show which side they were on. It must have worked well, as the battle was won.



"The school has been involved in many projects over the years, including raising money for projects in Southeast Asia, raising awareness of recycling and working with Chester Zoo and the RSPB. Over the years our Conservation area has developed, grown and evolved. It has become our Forest School area now and is used daily. We have also worked with North Wales Wildlife Trust to plant a new Orchard in our school grounds. Eco-Schools has become so embedded in our school and the curriculum it is sometimes difficult to draw out the specifics of what we do and, in this age of global pollution and youth awareness, we hope our pupils have been better informed and more responsible citizens because of the Eco-Schools ethos which runs through our school"

Mrs Mel Williams, Assistant Head Northop Hall CP School Flintshire

"In my role as Keep Wales Tidy ambassador, I've had the opportunity to experience first-hand the fantastic work carried out by Eco-Schools students. It's inspiring to see young people working together, feeling empowered and driving change in their schools, communities and on the global stage. Eco-Schools is a vital programme that I hope will continue to go from strength to strength over the next 25 years."

Michael Sheen, Actor and Keep Wales Tidy Ambassador

"Since 1994, the Eco-Schools programme in Wales has grown in size and significance - 90% of schools are now registered on the programme, with a team of nine officers helping young people to take positive action. The programme is valued at a national level by the Welsh Government, whose ongoing support enables us to work with schools at every step of their eco journey. It has allowed us to carry out a diverse range of practical projects with pupils; from planting for pollinators and reducing flood risk through improving drainage, to creating food growing areas and tackling water pollution. We've also been able to bring Eco-Schools together at large-scale events, such as the 2019 Volvo Ocean Race, giving ministers the opportunity to hear directly from young people about the Wales they want. Thanks to the enthusiasm and commitment of Eco-Committees across the country, environmental awareness has become an intrinsic part of the life and culture of our schools. It is so inspiring to see young people rising to the challenge and working together to achieve a sustainable future."

Lesley Jones, Keep Wales Tidy Chief Executive

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