

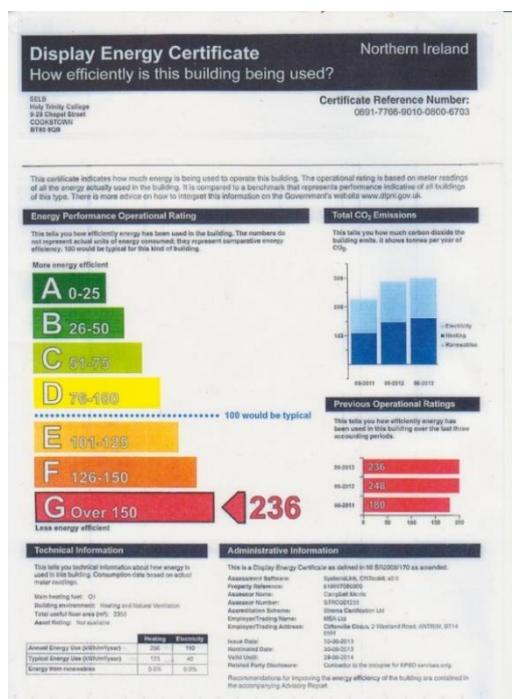


Eco-Schools Success Story from a School in Northern Ireland

Holy Trinity College Eco-Warriors to the Rescue!

The Eco-Schools Programme provides schools with a very simple 7 step process to help them improve their environmental performance and this is certainly the case for a school in Northern Ireland, Holy Trinity College in Cookstown.

Holy Trinity College is a post-primary school (ages 11-18) in quite an old school building, approximately 50 years old and has just over 950 students. The school began working on environmental projects about 4 years ago when the Holy Trinity Eco-Warriors were formed. This group of 12 students now form the Eco-Schools committee and lead eco-projects in the school.



Two years ago the Eco-Warriors were shown their school's Display Energy Certificate. (In the UK all public building are required to have a Display Energy Certificate showing how efficiently the building is being used with A the most energy efficient and G the least). This certificate showed the Eco-Warriors how much energy was being used in the school and they were shocked to discover that their school's energy rating was in the least energy efficient category possible, in the G category, and that their total CO₂ emissions were rising year on year. The Eco-Warriors quickly realised that something had to be done about this.

As an Eco School working towards achieving the prestigious Green Flag, they decided to make Energy one of the main topics to focus on. They knew that they would need to do a lot of work to try and reduce CO₂ emissions and make the school more energy efficient. They also realised that they would need all the staff and all the students in the school to change their attitudes to energy usage/energy wastage and for everyone to become more energy efficient.

The Eco-Warriors made sure they informed and involved everyone in the school, a key step in the Eco-Schools process. This included placing the Display Energy Certificate in prominent places around the school, including the staff room. This would remind staff and students of how bad their energy efficiency was and that they were going to change it for the better.

The Eco-Warriors bought labels to remind staff and students to switch off lights when leaving a room. These were placed beside the light switches of each room in the school, including the Principal's office. Stickers were placed on computers, TVs, data projectors, etc. to remind people not to leave electrical items on standby, which was a big problem in the school. They also checked there was a system in place to switch off all the computers after a certain time to ensure these were not left on standby all night. The school fitted low energy light bulbs, where possible, and the Head Caretaker was a great help, ensuring that lights were switched off, whenever possible. Finally, the Eco-Warriors presented assemblies to different year groups on the topic of energy and asked all students to pledge their support and make sure that everyone played a part in reducing the school's energy costs.



In November last year the school decided to take part in Northern Ireland's National World Days of Action Campaign 'SSE Airtricity's Operation Energy Power Down Day'. This was the first year that Holy Trinity College took part in the World Days of Action and it formed a major part of the Eco-Warrior's efforts to help the school tackle its very poor energy efficiency.

The Eco-Warriors led the school in their efforts to see how much energy they could save on the day and encouraged everyone to try to be more energy efficient. Electricity was monitored for the week and on the morning of the Power Down Day the Eco-Warriors sent emails to all staff and pupils reminding them to switch off lights and equipment, especially during break and lunch time and when rooms were not in use.

Members of the Eco-Warriors acted as 'Carbon Detectives' for the day, checking rooms to see if lights and equipment had been switched off. They really enjoyed this, and even named and shamed the teachers who did not support the school's energy saving efforts for the day. At the end of the week, after they had recorded the meter readings (with the help of the school's Head Caretaker) they discovered that the school had achieved a 20% saving on its energy consumption for the Power Down Day. This was a fantastic achievement, and showed just what the school could do, and save, when they acted together to save energy.

Holy Trinity College

Thursday 7th Nov. Operation Energy Power Down Day

10 AM Reading: 152,753

3PM Reading: 152,807

Units Used: 54

20% Saving for Power
Down Day



Holy Trinity College Successful in National Energy Challenge

Holy Trinity College has achieved impressive results from their energy saving actions during SSE Northern Ireland and Airtricity's, Operation Energy Power Down Day which took place on Thursday the 7th November.

pupils off for not doing what they are told."

The work by the students certainly paid off with significant savings on the day and continued savings into the

ing fantastic energy ideas through their free Operation Energy resources available at www.operationenergy.com. Holy Trinity College

The school's efforts made the local press and the school also notified its partner schools across Europe about its efforts to save energy and requested similar action from them. Holy Trinity College is partnered with schools from England, France, Germany & Spain looking at

sustainability and how to make schools and their local communities more sustainable and environmentally friendly. Last year the school found a new partner school in New York, USA, thanks to their participation in FEE's Wrigley Litter Less Project, and more recently have provided a good practice case study article to be shared with Eco-Schools in Japan.

Overall the World Days of Action was a great success for Holy Trinity College as it highlighted energy usage and indeed energy wastage in the school. It showed everyone how the school could save money and help the environment at the same time. The Eco-Schools Programme has played an important part in the school becoming more energy efficient and electricity bills for the period April 2013 – April 2014 showed that Holy Trinity College had cut their electricity bill by a staggering £6,000 from the same period the previous year. This was a fantastic achievement and the school went on to win a National SSE Airtricity Eco-Schools 'Operation Energy School of the Year' award for their efforts.

The Eco-Warriors hope that the school can cut the cost of their electricity bill even further; keep on reducing energy usage and wastage; and help ensure that the school's next Display Energy Certificate will not be as disappointing. Holy Trinity College also hope that their efforts show others what is possible when tackling energy and that it complements all the other great work being done by Eco-Schools across the country and indeed across the world.

Holy Trinity College have achieved Bronze and Silver Eco-Schools awards and this year are aiming to achieve the prestigious Green Flag. The school also participated in the Foundation for Environmental Education's Wrigley Litter Less Campaign and organised community litter picks with other schools and local businesses in the town. They even used some of the litter they collected to create fabulous Junk Kouture fashion. The Eco-Warriors won the 2012 Young Reporters for the Environment national competition for their video report on the problem of litter in their school and the local community. The school has expanded their care of the natural environment to a local river where they have taken part in conservation and biodiversity projects and went on to win a Best Youth Group award in 2013 and a Civic Award from Cookstown District Council. The Eco-Warriors have also recently won a Sustainable Ireland Award for the 'Most Inspiring Environmental Project by a Young Person/Persons' in 2014 and have proudly hosted a visit to the school from the Northern Ireland Environment Minister.

Some of the Eco-Warriors also visit local primary schools helping them with their Eco-Schools projects too. The Eco Warriors recently joined forces with the eco group from Cookstown High School, and via funding from the local Toyota car dealership – to the tune of £2000 – the groups developed an Eco – Garden, which is hoped can be shared by the two schools and help provide a 'home' for nature.

The Eco-Warriors have also taken part in a Queens University Belfast PhD research project. They became peer co-researchers with a PhD student from the university's School of Education, helping the student design and develop a survey to help ascertain the views of young people in Northern Ireland about sustainability and citizenship.

The Eco-Warriors have also looked at the future of electric cars here in Northern Ireland. They attended the inaugural Northern Ireland eCar event in Belfast and the eCar Roadshow in Cookstown. They also produced a video on eCars as part of their BBC School Report projects, where they produce video reports on environmental topics.