



# ECO-SCHOOLS NEWS



December 2015

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## Royal visitor helps plant the seeds for a bright environmental future.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, Eco-Schools and Forge Integrated Primary School were delighted to host His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester for a visit to the school to see what the pupils have been growing in their eco-garden.

With food waste and food miles an ever more evident environmental problem, and contributor to Climate Change, the pupils at Forge Integrated have been taking action by growing their own vegetables including cabbages, peas, carrots and onions in their garden and studying ways to make their own organic compost, control pests and encourage pollinators to move into their bug-hotel.

The school has achieved the prestigious and internationally recognised Eco-Schools Green Flag award through their actions to look after the environment in the topic areas of litter, waste, energy and school grounds.

Ada Muinzer, P7 pupil and member of the Eco-Committee, told their special guest all about their actions to achieve the Green Flag and what it has meant to the school saying: "It has been fun watching our plants and vegetables grow from tiny seeds and learning how to look after them. We are very proud to be an Eco-School and see our flag flying outside."

His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester also had the opportunity to talk to green fingered pupils from visiting Eco-Schools: Ulidia Integrated College, Carrickfergus; Ballycraig Primary School, Antrim; and St Joseph's Primary School, Carryduff, about what they have been growing at school and how they are taking action to protect the environment. His Royal Highness was presented with a locally crafted wooden bowl made from native ash, and planted an apple tree in the school grounds with the pupils. For more on this story visit our [website](#).



HRH chats to pupils from St Joseph's PS, Carryduff.



Ulidia Integrated College explain horticultural display.



Ballycraig Primary School, Antrim, talk school grounds.



HRH plants an apple tree with a few keen helpers!

## NVTV features Lagan College during NOM visit.

100 International Eco-Schools Operators representing 54 countries worldwide came to Northern Ireland Last month for their annual National Operators Meeting (NOM) to share good practice and discuss the ongoing development of Eco-Schools for the benefit of young people and our environment globally.

During their stay guests had the opportunity to visit some local Eco-Schools showcasing excellence, to view the world-class Eco-schools work happening here in Northern Ireland, and take away some great ideas. One of the schools to host a visit was Ambassador Eco-School Lagan College, Castlereagh. The pupils explained their Eco-Schools work, why it is important to them and how they have developed it over the years. The guests were very impressed with the eloquence, confidence and knowledge displayed by the pupils in the Eco-Committee. Local TV station NVTV were there to capture the visit. To view their report follow this [link](#).



## Pupils 'Go Green, Go Global' with Trócaire and Eco-Schools Poster Competition.

### Local Eco-Schools take Global Perspective on Climate Change.



*Roxy McAskie with her winning entry and prize sculpture.*

With climate change making the headlines this month local schools have been investigating the issue. Pupils took part in a Trócaire and Eco-Schools poster competition 'Go Green, Go Global' which asked them to think of ways that they could help the environment in their own daily lives.

The entries proved that our young people care deeply about the environment, the impact our lifestyle has on the environment, and the wellbeing of people in less developed countries that are already feeling the repercussions of climate change. Pupils suggested lots of actions, big and small, that they could take from, turning off the lights to getting solar panels, and walking, instead of driving to the shops or growing your own vegetables.

The winning entry was sent in by Roxy McAskie from Edwards Primary School in Castlederg. Roxy's poster highlighted the importance of conserving trees, using sustainable transport and buying local produce to reduce food miles and also support our local farmers. The school won a fantastic, unique sculpture created from recycled materials by local artist Gloria Perry with help of Eco-Schools pupils at the Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary event in March 2015. Read more on this story [here](#).

## Hedgehog Campaign - It's Hibernation Time.

Mark H Durkan, Minister for the Environment, as part of NIEL's new Species Champions initiative, is asking all schools to help their native hedgehogs. In the 1950's it was estimated there were 36.5 million hedgehogs in Britain. It seems likely that there are now fewer than 1 million hedgehogs left.

Hedgehogs hibernate every year, usually from about November to around Easter, but this is much affected by the weather. Hedgehogs normally wake up several times over winter and often build a new nest made of leaves, tucked under a bush or log pile or garden shed, anywhere that offers shelter and protection.

Please be careful if you are planning a bonfire or a garden clear-up as hedgehogs may have chosen your pile of logs or rough ground as their home.

Read all about hedgehogs and what they experience during hibernation here [www.hedgehogstreet.org](http://www.hedgehogstreet.org)

If you have seen any hedgehogs in your school grounds or have top tips you would like to share please contact [ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org](mailto:ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org) and have a look at our Hedgehog Campaign on our [website](#).



## School News: Omagh Academy set to Litter Less with Wrigley's Campaign.

Omagh Academy Eco-Committee outlined their plans for the Wrigley's Litter Less Campaign, "We would like to educate all the pupils in the school on the issue of litter using posters and an interactive corridor display with various items of litter with the decay times on the back so pupils can test their knowledge. A power point will also be produced for all the pupils to watch highlighting the problems of litter in school and the local community. Litter collections will be organised and we will use our Wrigley's funding to buy litter pickers and gloves for this.



"To launch our project the Eco-Committee spent time at the start of November cleaning up two areas of the school grounds and planting bulbs. These included crocuses, daffodils, and alliums. The bulbs will help provide early food for pollinators in the spring. We thoroughly enjoyed planting the bulbs and sprucing up the area, We are now excited about seeing all the flowers blossoming in the spring and the wildlife that they will attract. The Eco-Committee hope that by brightening up the area it will also encourage people to litter less. We collected 4 bags of litter weighing 21 kilogrammes during our clean-up."

## Partner News:

- The **Belfast City Council** and Eco-Schools 'Going for Awards' cluster group meeting was a great success with 10 schools attending to hear all about the projects currently on offer that could help towards awards, advice on Green Flag applications and other award levels. Thanks to Belfast City Council for providing the beautiful and festive surroundings at Malone House for the meeting.
- Young artists from thirteen schools throughout **Newry, Mourne and Down District Council** have been honoured by being selected to have their environmentally themed posters feature on the 2016 Environmental Calendar.

*Pictured with Chairperson Baillie is Eva Cumiskey from St Peter's Primary School, Cloughreagh. Her winning poster "Keep it Green" features on the calendar's front cover.*





## International Eco-Schools News:

### Finnish Eco-Schools Global Scrapbook Campaign

Eco-Schools Finland invites you to join an international Eco-Schools Global Scrapbook campaign. In the campaign, self-made scrapbooks will travel around the world from one Eco-School to another. The campaign will take place from February to May 2016. If you're interested in participating, please leave your contact details via this [form](#) by **23rd December 2015**.



What is the Global Scrapbook campaign about?

In the campaign Eco-Schools children will send their greetings to other countries by traditional mail. The purpose is to connect Eco-Schools in different countries with each other and make it possible for them to share their stories and Eco-School projects with each other. The scrapbooks travel around the world from school to school, following a route planned in advance.

More information available [here](#).

### Green Schools Ireland EXPO 2015

Eco-Schools in the Republic of Ireland, Green Schools, are proud to announce the launch of the first Green-Schools EXPO, taking place on **Thursday 25th February 2016** in the Industries Hall of the RDS.



The EXPO is an opportunity to showcase, celebrate and learn about the work of the Green-Schools Programme. The action-packed EXPO will include interactive exhibits, engaging displays, fun-filled activities, workshops and guest speakers to suit all ages and interests. Everyone is welcome to attend this FREE event but you do have to book tickets. Visit the Green Schools [website](#) for more information.

## Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful news:

Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland is operated by the environmental charity Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. Here is the latest news from other areas of our organisation:

### Belfast Royal Academy's 26th Annual Mournes Clean-Up supported by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful 'Live Here Love Here'.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Centre at Belfast Royal Academy held its 26th Annual Sponsored Mournes "Clean-up" and Environment Day on Saturday 12th December.

149 people took part, including 124 pupils, all Duke of Edinburgh's Award members from BRA, as well as 25 adult helpers. This was an excellent turnout in the face of very poor weather conditions in the Mournes area.

125 tonnes of rubbish have been cleared in the last 25 years and even though the weather was very poor, quite an amount of rubbish was cleared again this year. Much of it was day trippers' litter, including cans, bottles, crisp packets and sweet wrappers. However, domestic waste was also removed by the teams, including plastic piping, car springs, car wheel hubs, frames of chairs, tent frames and, in one location, a burnt armchair.

Also appreciated was assistance given by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, the Mourne Heritage Trust, the National Trust, the Forest Service and Mark's Skip Hire (Kilkeel).



149 volunteers took part in Belfast Royal Academy's annual clean-up in the Mournes.

Don't forget you can [pledge](#) your support to the Live Here Love Here campaign and receive updates about actions being taken in your community.

### Northern Ireland's Award Winning Beaches

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful attended an international meeting on Blue Flag for Beaches and Marinas in the Netherlands recently. It was an opportunity to share information and thoughts about many aspects of beach management, and ensure that all of the world-class Northern Irish beaches currently applying for a Blue Flag in 2016 are right at the top of the criteria.



In 2015 all 23 of the designated bathing waters in Northern Ireland met the European bathing water standard, and 14 had "Excellent" water quality, making them eligible for a Blue Flag (for resort beaches) or a Green Coast Award (for rural beaches).

Blue Flag beaches run a variety of environmental education activities and events, primarily during the bathing season, but also throughout the year, which you may be able to take part in or adapt for your own use. Contact your local Council to discuss the activity programme.

For more information about the Blue Flag programme in Northern Ireland or to learn what the criteria for beaches and marinas are [visit our website](#).

## Competitions:

### Cookstown Textile Recyclers, Cash for Clobber

Cookstown Textile Recycler's (CTR) 'Cash for Clobber' is a great way to raise money for your school's environmental projects. CTR will give money for the clothing they collect, **50 pence/kilo**, which is all sorted locally and either distributed to countries in need or recycled into fibers used in industry.



They are the only BSI certified clothing recycling company, with strong environmental ethics at their core, which Eco-Schools Northern Ireland recommends and they have proudly sponsored our Waste topic for the last six years.

You could win up to £3000 for your school by simply recycling all types of clothing and shoes (pairs only please), household textiles and handbags (not duvets or pillows).

### Get collecting now! – the rules couldn't be simpler:

The school that collects the most clobber per pupil wins a magnificent cash prize. There are 3 bands to win prizes in, depending on the size of your school.

Band 1 = up to 100 pupils	Band 2 = 101-250 pupils	Band 3 = more than 250 pupils
£1,000	£2,000	£3,000

The Competition runs from **1 September 2015 until 31 May 2016**. Visit the [Eco-Schools website](#) for more information.

To arrange a 'Cash for Clobber' clothing collection for your school contact CTR at [schools@c-t-r.com](mailto:schools@c-t-r.com) or phone 028 9447 8880.

## Translink Travel Challenge

The Translink Travel Challenge is now open to all schools. The Challenge is running in the Spring term until 23rd May for any 2 weeks that you choose. Record your results in the resources provided and send your results to us for the chance to win super prizes!



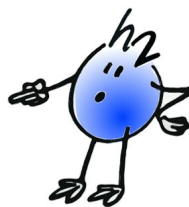
Doing a great Transport project in your school? Why not enter the #Smartmovers Project category for a chance to win a prize too.

This is not only a competition but a great project with lots of learning and monitoring resources provided. Visit [www.translink.co.uk/ecoschools](http://www.translink.co.uk/ecoschools) for more information or email [ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org](mailto:ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org).

## NI Water Poster Competition

You are invited to participate in Northern Ireland Water's (NI Water) Annual Schools Competition.

NI Water provide us with clean safe drinking water delivered straight to our homes but unfortunately for some people around the world the reality is very different. 650 million people live without safe water, walking to collect dirty water from a pond or lake and carrying it back to their families. The aim of this competition is to highlight the importance of clean safe water for life.



The competition will focus on designing a poster to show the comparison of having safe water in a Northern Ireland and those living without safe water in developing countries.

The competition is open to KS2 pupils in all primary schools in Northern Ireland, with a category for Special Needs Schools. Great prizes to be won. Closing date 25th March 2016. Contact the NI Water Education team for more information [education@niwater.com](mailto:education@niwater.com).

## Eco-Schools Green Flag application deadlines 2015/16.

If you are planning to apply for the Green Flag this year, please note that there are two deadlines for the academic year 2015-2016, **8th January 2016** and **11th March 2016**.

We guarantee that applications received before the 8th January will be assessed before the Easter break and that applications received before 11th March will be assessed before 24th June 2016. Whilst applications received after 11th March will still be assessed at some time, we cannot guarantee that this will be before the 24th June. 2016.

## Green Flags this month.

Congratulations to all the schools who have achieved their Green Flag award in the last month. We are continually amazed at the knowledge and enthusiasm of all the pupils and staff at our Green Flag schools and they are to be congratulated on their fantastic achievement.

Congratulations to:

- Queen Elizabeth II Primary School, Pomeroy
- Creggan Primary School, Randalstown
- Sperrinview School, Dungannon



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**Don't stop here! Visit our [Eco-Schools Northern Ireland website](#) for more news, project ideas, programme guidance, case studies, delivery partner information, and much more.**