

Eco-Schools Newsletter

Welcome to the Eco-Schools Northern Ireland March 2015 Newsletter.

Northern Ireland Announced as the First Country in the World to Achieve 100% Participation in Eco-Schools Programme

We are delighted to announce that Northern Ireland has become the first country in the world to achieve a 100% participation rate in the international Eco-Schools Programme.

Mark H Durkan, Minister for the Environment, whose Department has provided invaluable support for the programme over the years said: "It is great to see the energy and enthusiasm young people have in helping to improve the environment and I have personally seen it at firsthand. 100% of schools are taking the opportunity to put into practice what they learn about the environment in class, involving the whole school and engaging the wider community is making a real difference towards a better environment and stronger economy. Schools across the North have comprehensively embraced environmental issues and are leading the way working with local businesses, councils and environmental organisations."



Support from SSE Airtricity, Principal Sponsors and Energy topic ambassadors, in recent years has also helped boost the programme while helping our young people to become more energy efficient. **Jillian Saunders, SSE Airtricity Brand and Sponsorship Manager** commented: "At SSE Airtricity, we're proud to have helped Eco-Schools set the sustainable agenda throughout classrooms over the last four years. Through the likes of Power Down Day and the Global Wind Awards, schools have embraced energy saving and started to make real changes around how they monitor and control energy usage. When you enter any Eco-School, the popularity of the programme amongst pupils and teachers alike is clear to see, and one that we at SSE Airtricity have taken real inspiration from."

Carmel Fyfe, Eco-Schools Manager, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful said: "It is inspiring to see so many schools choosing to be Eco-Schools and wanting to make a positive change to their local environment. This is a wonderful achievement for Northern Ireland and the commitment, enthusiasm and high quality of Eco-Schools locally is exceptional and with on-going support there is a very real opportunity for our young people to become world leaders in the programme. Eco-Schools is not only helping our young people to develop habits that will last a lifetime but is making a real difference to our local environment. The success of the programme is testament to the achievements of our young people and dedication of the teachers involved - we should congratulate them and be very proud of their great achievement."

Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Event – 05th March 2015

The Eco-Schools team are really looking forward to celebrating 20 years of fantastic Eco-Schools work with schools in Northern Ireland at the 20th Anniversary Celebration Event, which will be held on **Thursday 5th March 2015 at the Meadowbank Sports Arena, Magherafelt.**



There will be lots of fun eco themed workshops, activities and exhibits including Scientific Sue and BBC mentalist David Meade, and pupils will have the opportunity to take part in an official Guinness World Record[®] attempt. We are also delighted to be joined by Eco-Schools Ambassador Frank Mitchell, U105 and UTV Presenter, who will comper the event. We are also pleased to welcome Daniel Schaffer, CEO and Bríd Conneely, International Eco-Schools Director from the Foundation for Environmental Education to this special occasion.

If you have already booked tickets and would like more or if you would like to book your free tickets please contact Eco-Schools on Tel: 02890 736 920 or by email: cathy.gorman@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org.

We would like to thank the following organisations for their kind support of the Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Event: **SSE Airtricity**, the principal sponsors of Eco-Schools in Northern Ireland and ambassador for the Energy topic; **Magherafelt District Council**; **Cookstown Textile Recyclers**, Eco-Schools waste topic sponsors; **the Wrigley Company Foundation**, Eco-Schools Litter topic sponsors; **Translink**, Eco-Schools Transport topic sponsors; and **Trócaire**, Eco-Schools Global Perspective topic sponsors who will all be joining us on the day.

Take part in our Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Time Capsule

Schools and other guests are invited to prepare items they would like to include in our Time Capsule. A short note, a drawing or anything significant that will add a memory to the collection which will be sealed up and put under ground for future generations to recover.

Things you might want to include:

- Photographs
- Signature scrolls
- Essays
- Newspaper clippings
- Flags
- Clothing
- Forecasts of what life will be like in the future from teachers, students, and business people

We will also have some paper available at the Eco-Schools stand at the 20th Anniversary Celebration Event for those who would like to write a message on the day.

For schools and other guests who are unable to attend on the day but would like to include an item. Please post these to Carmel Fyfe, Eco-Schools Manager, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, Bridge House, Paulett Avenue, Belfast, BT5 4HD **by Friday 10th April 2015** so these can be included in the capsule also.

We are also delighted to have Event sponsorship from:

- [ni4kids](http://ni4kids.com) the local media outlet which is full of information for parents of school-aged children, providing them with useful information on education, health, parenting, entertainment and fun things to do for all the family, whether in the home or out and about around Northern Ireland.



- Bank of Ireland [Junk Kouture](#) in association with Repak is an exciting recycled fashion competition which challenges secondary school students from across Ireland to create wearable couture fashion from rubbish that would normally find its way into the bin. We are delighted that Junk Kouture will be putting on a fabulous fashion show at our Event.



- [Henry Brothers](#) (Magherafelt) Ltd is a leading privately owned Construction and Civil Engineering Company specialising in commercial, custodial, defence and education projects. They have recently developed a nature reserve which will, from April 2015, be available to local schools to assist in their environmental education programme.



- The [Global Learning Programme](#) a fully resourced and extensive programme of teacher training is being delivered in Northern Ireland from 2015. The three year support programme for schools is designed to train and strengthen the capacity of teachers to deliver global learning in the classroom. The programme aims to build on schools' existing work in this area by providing a rolling programme of support.



Education for a Fair and Sustainable World

- The [EnAlgae](#) project is developing ways of using algae (seaweed) to make renewable energy, like biodiesel and biogas. The team are also examining the impact algae growth can have on the environment, to make sure it isn't damaging the ecosystem, and checking to see if big kelp farms in the sea can actually act as a safe area for juvenile fish and help improve fisheries in the area.



- [European Recycling Platform \(ERP\)](#) are actively involved in over 500 schools in Northern Ireland, providing free battery box kits, collections of used waste batteries and resources off their website. They also sponsor Environmental Youth speak and support Junk Kouture.



- [School Web Design](#) is a Northern Irish company creating unique, useful and easily managed school websites. Over 80 schools, from primary to secondary level have websites designed, built and supported by them.



- [Helping Hand Environmental](#) - Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful has selected Helping Hand Environmental as their official environmental partner of choice for 2015 and hopes that a strengthened working partnership with the UK's #1 Litter Clearance Hands Tools Company, will be successful as the environmental charity announces an exciting development to their relationship – and a bespoke Litterpicker! Schools can buy the new litter pickers as part of the official [Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful Order Form](#) in association with Helping Hand Environmental. The scheme enables schools to purchase litter clearance equipment and generate funds for Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful every time they quote KNIBGROUP when placing an order with Helping Hand Environmental.



- [Garden Escapes](#) are one of the leading providers of outdoor play areas in Northern Ireland and have specialised in working with schools and nurseries since 2006. Garden Escapes provide a complete service, from design, right through to professional installation and maintenance service. They offer a fantastic product range including - Eco Play, Sensory Play, Social Play and Physical Play.



- [Environmental Street Furniture](#) Ltd designs, imports, sources, stocks and supplies a huge selection of exterior street furniture products, exterior lighting (including LEDs) and highways products— all of which are available through local distribution networks. Collection options include sustainable recycled plastic eco-range of garden furniture.



[Jumping Clay](#)



[Carecall \(NI\) Ltd](#)



[FP McCann Ltd](#)

All our sponsors will be there on the day with displays, workshops and information on their products and services. For more information on all our sponsors for the event, please follow this [link](#).

The support of many of our Delivery Partners is also very much appreciated and we look forward to their displays and workshops at the event. Please see further details in our dedicated Delivery Partners section below.

Eco-Schools on the Radio

With Northern Ireland becoming the first country in the world to achieve a 100% participation rate in the Eco-Schools Programme and the 20th Anniversary Celebration Event on 05th March it is great to see such interest in the programme from local radio stations and of course they want to learn more about what our Eco-Schools are doing.

Downtown Radio: Thanks to Andrews Memorial Primary School's Mr Skimin and two star pupils, Ellie Van Giesen and Erin Tumilson, who joined Carmel Fyfe, Eco-Schools Manager, on Downtown Radio's Siobhan McGarry's show to tell listeners more about the programme. With the school having achieved two Green Flags already it was great to have them on the show to share their Eco-Schools experience with listeners.



Q Radio: Ruth Van Ry, Eco-Schools Project Officer, has been keeping Q Radio listeners up-to-date on our upcoming 20th Anniversary Celebration event. Q Radio will be joining us on the day for a very special Eco-Schools broadcast across their network on 05th March so make sure you tune in.

U105: Frank Mitchell, U105 and UTV Presenter and Eco-Schools Ambassador, interviewed Carmel Fyfe, Eco-Schools Manager, and passed on his congratulations to all schools involved in the programme for all their hard work. Frank is a keen litter pick enthusiast so he was pleased to hear about so many schools getting involved in clean-ups and taking the anti-litter message home to their families too. We are delighted that Frank will be compering our 20th Anniversary Celebration Event on 05th March.

Translink Eco-Schools Travel Challenge - Schools Spring into action for 2-week sustainable transport challenge.

Translink and Eco-Schools are encouraging schools across Northern Ireland to join a two-week sustainable travel challenge this Spring, cutting down on car congestion around school gates and boosting the health and wellbeing of participants.

More than 70 local schools, including Ulidia Integrated College (pictured), have already registered for the Challenge which promotes walking, cycling, bus and train travel for the school run instead of car use.



The travel challenge assists schools in achieving the Green Flag Award and winners will also receive a range of travel prizes including an Ulsterbus Tours school coach trip and day out in Dublin for their class. Click www.translink.co.uk/ecoschools for further details.

Deadline for completed Translink Eco-Schools Travel Challenge entries is 13th May 2015. For further information email ruthvanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org or call 028 9073 6920.

Wrigley's Litter Less Campaign - McKinney Primary School takes action to litter less and reduce waste.

Tackling the tricky issue of litter and waste is the focus of thirty local schools determined to make a difference by looking after their local environment. They have received funding from the Wrigley Jr Company Foundation to deliver a 'Litter Less' project with pupils in the school and their local communities. Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful are delighted to be delivering the campaign through the Eco-Schools Programme in partnership with the Foundation for Environmental Education.

McKinney Primary School in Dundrod, already a Green Flag Eco-School, have made fantastic progress in reducing litter around the school in recent years and now are focusing their attention on waste reduction and promoting a reduce, reuse, recycle mind-set in the school and local community. They recently held a "Trash to Treasure" evening, as part of their Litter Less project, to help pupils and parents alike view rubbish as a resource. Families were invited to get crafty and create treasures to win prizes.



For more information on the Wrigley Litter Less Campaign contact ruth.vanry@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org.

Delivery Partner Update

We have a number of delivery partners who can help schools with the topics, either by visiting their schools or by providing the necessary resources. The full list of [delivery partners](#) can be found on the Eco-Schools Website.

We are delighted to have the support of Magherafelt District Council and that so many of our Eco-Schools Delivery Partners are able to join us at the Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Event on 5th March 2015. You can look forward to meeting the following:

- Ards Borough Council
- Ballinderry Rivers Trust
- Ballymena Borough Council
- Banbridge District Council
- Belfast City Council
- Bryson Energy
- Business in the Community - ARENA
- Craigavon Borough Council
- DOE
- Habitat NI
- Larne Borough Council
- Limavady Borough Council
- Magherafelt District Council
- North Down Borough Council
- Northern Ireland Water
- Omagh District Council
- RSPB
- Strabane District Council
- Sustrans
- The Wrigley Company
- Ulster Wildlife

The Wheelie Big Challenge – closing date 8th May

Eco-Schools and Belfast City Council are delighted to have launched a new, fun, waste themed, project and competition called the Wheelie Big Challenge for schools in Belfast City Council.

The Key Stage 1 and Foundation Stage pupils at St Paul's Primary School in Belfast recently took part in the Wheelie Big Challenge learning about reducing, reusing and recycling waste. Pupils enjoyed listening to facts about waste, sharing their own knowledge, and taking part in a craft activity using scrap materials



Wheelie's challenge is action based and the competition will be judged not just on the amount of waste reduction but also on the actions taken and campaign run in the school and at home to reduce waste. Shortlisted entries will be invited to Belfast City Hall in June to present a final display outlining their waste actions. The closing date for competition entries is **8th May 2015**. Schools that register will also receive some free internal recycling bins and support from an Eco-Schools Project Officer for their Challenge.

Prizes for Primary and Post Primary School are:

First Place - £500

Second Place - £300

Third Place - £200

The Challenge is based around 4 key areas: Wheelie's Workshop, Wheelie Big School Audit, Wheelie Big Competition and Wheelie Big Celebration.

Please see our website for more information on the [Wheelie Big Challenge](#).

Northern Ireland Water Competition – deadline 27th March 2015

Key Stage 2 Reservoir Safety Poster Competition

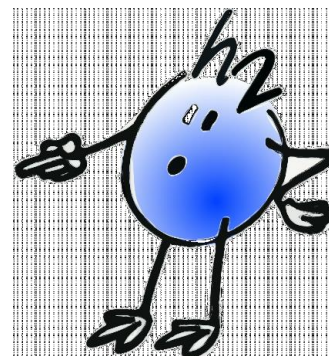
Northern Ireland Water would like to invite your school to participate in [Northern Ireland Water's \(NI Water\) Annual Schools Competition](#).

The competition will focus on designing a poster to promote safety around reservoirs highlighting the dangers they can present and is open to KS2 pupils in all primary schools in Northern Ireland, with a category for Special Needs Schools.

Prize money for the winning schools:-
Primary schools in each age category, P5, P6 and P7:
First prize- £400, Second prize- £200, Third place- £100
Special Needs category:
First prize- £400, Second prize- £200, Third place- £100

Each winning pupil will receive a “goody bag” and certificate and will be invited to an awards ceremony at NI Water’s Wastewater Heritage Centre, Belfast in June 2015.

For a full list of competition instructions, please follow this [link](#).



Sustrans Big Pedal



The UK's largest inter-school cycling and scooting competition, The Big Pedal, is open to nurseries, primary and secondary schools and challenges them to compete against one another by making the most journeys to school by bike and scooter over 15 days from March 2nd to 20th 2015. Last year over 1,520 schools signed up to take part, and teachers, parents, siblings and pupils made over a million journeys (1,142,374) to school on their bikes and scooters. By signing up to The Big Pedal schools will receive a wall-chart to record their progress, whilst a range of resources designed to support schools are available in the teachers section of the Sustrans website. Winning schools will receive prizes including bike and scooter stunt shows and equipment.

To register your school go to: www.bigpedal.org.uk



Cluster Group Meetings

Banbridge District Council hosted a very successful Cluster Group meeting on **10th February 2015** at Dromore Nursery School at 3pm. A member of the Eco-Schools team was there to answer any queries about the Eco-Schools Programme.

Green Flag Awards – Application Deadline 20th March 2015

Well done to the following schools on achieving the Eco-Schools Green Flag in February 2015:

- Victoria College, Belfast

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.

Please note that **the deadline date for applications is 20th March 2015** if you want a guaranteed assessment before the end of the academic year.

Eco-Schools International Updates

Eco-Schools Worldwide

Eco-Schools operates in 59 countries worldwide and has over 15 million pupils, 1.2 million teachers and 45,000 schools involved. Northern Ireland is the only country in the world to have 100% participation rate in the Eco-Schools Programme – well done to all our schools!

Foundation for Environmental Education Coming to Northern Ireland

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful are delighted that Bríd Conneely, International Eco-Schools Director, and Daniel Schaffer, CEO of the Foundation for Environmental Education, will be attending our Eco-Schools 20th Anniversary Celebration Event on the 05th March 2015.

International School Partnership Opportunity.

CPR Valle de Andarax Instinción, a primary school in Almería, Spain, are seeking partner Eco-Schools for a Comenius Project (modality KA2) about environmental improvement. If your school is interested please contact the school directly on mamolina69@hotmail.com

A special message for you all the way from Australia!

G'day!

My name is Stacey. My job is to help schools in Australia to become Eco-Schools, just like you. In 2015, I'm helping Aussie schools to find an international partner school to work with.

If your school would like to take part, please send me an email to info@eco-schools.org.au and tell me:

- What do you think you could do together and when? (Don't forget there's a big time difference so we will have to write or email!)
- What region of Australia are you interested in? ([here's a map](#))
- Which students would be involved? Age group and group size?

I will then approach suitable schools here in Australia and link you up. I've heard that Northern Ireland has many Eco-Schools with lots of knowledge, ideas and cool projects so I am really looking forward to hearing from you!

Best wishes,
Stacey Passey
Sydney, NSW, Australia

Eco-Schools Northern Ireland
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful
Bridge House, 2 Paulett Avenue
Belfast, BT5 4HD
Tel: 028 9073 6920
eco-schools@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org