

Dunseverick Primary School

Climate Change Case Study

Dunseverick Primary School is located near the Causeway Coast in Bushmills County Antrim. The school has 137 pupils, mainly from farming backgrounds, who have all become dedicated to protecting the environment.



The school holds the Eco-Schools Green Flag. It has its own wildlife walk and organic vegetable garden and is dedicated to recycling not only paper and cardboard, but also ink cartridges, mobile phones and toner cartridges.

CLIMATE CHANGE TACKLED

More recently the school has become involved with the issue of climate change, rather than recycling alone. In early 2006 the school entered a competition run by Keep Britain Tidy which asked schools to compile a case study about their own climate in order to win a wind turbine. With the help of the teachers, pupils, local community and even politicians, the school won the competition. In May 2007 the wind turbine was installed and turned on. The installation of the turbine, and the drive to win the competition placed much greater focus on the climate change issue. The school has established links with Bryson House who promote energy efficiency, as well as the University of Ulster who provide the school with weather information. Using this information the children have produced maps charting climate change. Dunseverick has even established its own motto **“Keep our school clean and the world green.”** The teaching of climate change within the school does not simply focus on local issues, but teaches the children about global consequences. Principal Peter Henry is hoping to move the electricity metre out into the hall so that all the students can see the amount of energy produced by the wind turbine. Presently, the metre is not able to be viewed by all, but students do calculate the energy generated and the energy saved.

ESD IN ACTION

Dunseverick PS is a model example of ESD in Northern Ireland. Climate change and environmental issues are incorporated into every part of the curriculum. Art and Design has particularly focused on environmental issues by making murals and pieces from recycled materials. One particular mural is made from entirely recycled materials and focuses on climate change. Geography is one of the more obvious subjects within the curriculum to be enhanced by the schools drive towards sustainability. Mathematics has also benefited particularly from the new equipment with pupils using the data from the wind turbine as well as the weather statistics to produce graphs and calculate energy use. Science has focused on recycling helps to aid identification of materials, and the school also enlisted the help of an expert on lignite mining to help the children understand the local and global impact of sourcing materials. Individual classes focus on one topic each year. For example, P1 focus on birds and have their own bird table where they can feed and identify birds. P3 study water, the water cycle and water conservation. P5 study climates and climate change, with their country of focus being India and the dry climate there. P7s focus on the rainforest which incorporates many different subjects and topics.

The school also believes that the focus on environmental issues has promoted stewardship and citizenships, promoting the belief that children have a responsibility not only to their local area, but to the world.

The local community has offered an incredible amount of support. The parents have helped with planting trees, tending the vegetable garden and drawing up the plans for the wind turbine. The outside environment of the school is largely managed by the parents. Parents also showed great support when they filled out surveys about the schools energy saving initiatives stating that many of them have learnt so much from what their children have been taught in school and are consequently bringing home. The support of the local community has been extremely important and it is with this continued support that Dunseverick PS will continue to be a key Eco-School. The school currently has plans to establish an animal enclosure containing lambs and also hopes to construct a greenhouse in order to plant their own seeds.