



### School facts

Number of Pupils: 600+  
Location: North Antrim  
Road, Belfast.  
Known locally as 'Park  
Lodge'.

## Eco-Schools Case Study Waste (Resource Efficiency)

### Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School registered with the Eco-Schools programme in 2011 with the intention of using the simple 7 steps framework to work towards the internationally recognised and prestigious Green Flag award.

Their Eco-Committee decided to focus on the topic areas of Waste (Resource Efficiency), Litter, School Grounds and Biodiversity. They took part in several Eco-Schools projects including: Rethink Waste, during which they collected 291 Mail Preference cards to cut unsolicited junk mail at home; and the Wrigley's Litter Less campaign, which funded their wormery. They began their awareness raising campaign on the issue of waste and the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) with an assembly presented by their P5 class – the [video](#) can still be viewed on their school website.

In 2013-2014 the school focused their attention on the Waste topic with the Belfast Environmentally Efficient Schools (BEEs) competition run by Eco-Schools and Belfast City Council. They were delighted to come first place in the competition and felt really motivated to recycle more at school.

2014-2015 saw the school determined to get recycling of paper and plastic put in place in school as they worked towards their Green Flag Award. They took the following actions:

- Attended the Belfast City Council 'Best Practice' Eco-Schools Cluster Group Meeting in November held at another Green Flag school for inspiration.
- Took part again in the Wrigley's Litter Less campaign and used the funding to purchase enough internal recycling bins for every class in the school.
- Attended the second Belfast City Council Cluster Group 'Going for Awards' Meeting in January to learn more about the Green Flag application.



Eco-Schools 7 steps  
Click [here](#) for more details on the process



- Completed a clothing recycling drive and collected a massive 4 tonnes which also raised funds for the school. The Eco-Committee monitored the amount of clothing collected from each class, a trip to W5 (won at the previous year's BEEs competition) was used to motivate the pupils, with the best class winning the trip. Find out how your school can take part in ['Cash for Clobber'](#).

• Took part in the Wheelie Big Challenge, run by Belfast City Council and Eco-Schools, which is based around waste audits and practical actions. The results of their actions and waste audits were submitted into the Wheelie Big Competition and the school was shortlisted to attend the finals at Belfast City Hall where they displayed their results for judging. They were delighted to come third in the competition (more information below).



## The school was proud to achieve their Green Flag Award in June 2015!!

### More on the Wheelie Big Challenge

The Wheelie Big Challenge run by Belfast City Council and Eco-Schools was launched for the first time in January 2015. It was designed to engage schools in a practical challenge focusing particularly on the Waste (Resource Efficiency) topic and suggested ways schools could implement recycling improvements in school. The Challenge supplied resources to schools including: workshop resources, waste audit resources, home waste themed actions, competition guidelines and some internal classroom recycling bins.

Schools used the workshop resources to raise awareness and educate on the importance of reducing waste to landfill sites. They then used the supplied audit sheets to assess their current waste/recycling system, took some suggested actions and re-audited their waste after taking actions. A short summary of their actions and the results of their audits were then submitted into the Wheelie Big Competition with the final judging held at the Belfast City Council event in June 2015.

30 schools across Belfast took part and 11 were shortlisted to attend the final competition in June at Belfast City Hall.



## Here's how Our Lady of Lourdes approached the Wheelie Big Challenge:

### 1. Measuring waste before Actions.

The school invited Eco-Schools staff to deliver an assembly to the whole school on the waste issue and the Wheelie Big Challenge. They noted that they had 4 or 5 X 1100 litre waste bins being taken to landfill every week.

They completed the first Wheelie Big Challenge Audit by following the steps below:

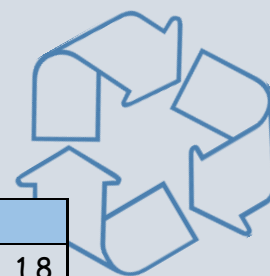
- **Choose** one class to represent each year group.
- **Noted** which classes they chose so they could use the same bins for the second audit.
- **Collected** one day's rubbish from the classroom bins for each of the chosen classes.
- **Weighed** each bag of unsorted rubbish.
- **Tipped** out each bag, one by one, and separated the recyclable rubbish (plastic, paper and food) from the non-recyclable rubbish.
- **Weighed** the non-recyclable rubbish from each bin.
- **Calculated** how much recyclable and non-recyclable waste there was in each bin.
- **Recorded** their results in the table below.



$\text{Weight of full bag} - \text{weight of non-recyclable items in bag} = \text{weight of recyclable items in bag.}$

### Results from the first internal bin audit –

| Class        | All Waste Kg | Non-Recyclable Kg | Recyclable Kg |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| P1           | 2.3          | 0.5               | 1.8           |
| P2           | 1.35         | 0.2               | 1.15          |
| P3           | 1.75         | 0.65              | 1.1           |
| P4           | 1.85         | 0.25              | 1.6           |
| P5           | 3.6          | 1.15              | 2.45          |
| P6           | 6.5          | 0.5               | 6             |
| P7           | 2.35         | 0.5               | 1.85          |
|              |              |                   |               |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>19.7</b>  | <b>3.75</b>       | <b>15.95</b>  |







### Actions during the Wheelie Big Challenge.

They were shocked to discover that over **80%** of the waste they were sending to landfill could have been recycled. With the support of their Principal and caretaker they investigated switching some of their landfill bins to mixed dried recyclables (paper and plastic).

The school contacted their waste company Biffa and the BELB (who contract their waste company) and requested that 3 of their 5 landfill bins be swapped to recycling bins. This had the added benefit of saving them money, up to £7 per recycling bin lift, which adds up to more than £700 in a school year.

We completed a waste audit and discovered to our horror that up to 80% of our waste could be recycled. Each week, 5 large general waste bins are emptied with school waste. This waste will end up in landfill. Through lunch time meetings it was decided that we would learn about recycling and how it could be introduced into school.

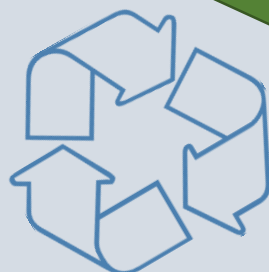
Using the 10 bins donated from the Wheelie Big Challenge, and purchasing a further 20 bins from the eco bank account, each class will now have 1 large bin and 1 small bin. All dry plastics and paper will go into the big bin. All other waste will go into the small bin. The recyclable waste will be placed into the recycling bins outside. The other waste will be placed into general waste bins.

We have also decided to keep the children's unwanted break/lunch food in the child's lunchbox to be returned home each day. When we completed waste audit 1 we found, for example, large apples with only 1 tiny bite out of them. Maybe if this was returned home the family members could buy smaller apples or send a piece of an apple in lunches rather than a whole apple.

The Eco-Committee had also noticed a lot of food waste during their first audit and decided to send unwanted food home again in the pupils' lunch boxes instead of letting them put it in the bin. They hoped this would help parents select more appropriate sized snacks, help parents save money and also drastically reduce the amount of food waste in the classroom bins.

After a practice run with the bins inside the school they were ready in May 2015 to switch their outside bins to the new collection system.

Initially we want to reduce our landfill waste by 60%. Once our action plan is in place we would hope to increase that to 80% and then become a zero waste school!





## 2. Measuring waste after Actions.

The pupils repeated the method used in Waste Audit 1 with the same classrooms selected for recording. The difference this time was that there were two bags from each class – one full of general waste and 1 full of recycling. It was obvious immediately that the general waste bags were much smaller than before. The pupils weighed the recycling bags first and had a quick check to make sure all the right things were in them. They then weighed the waste bags before tipping them out and separating

any recycling as before - there was very little recyclable material in the waste bags - in some classes none at all! They weighed the separated waste and recorded the results. The second audit was much easier than the first because there was less waste overall and no food waste.

### Results for the second internal bins waste audit -

| Class        | All Waste Kg | Non-Recyclable Kg | Recyclable in wrong bins Kg |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| P1           | 0.25         | 0.2               | 0.05                        |
| P2           | 0.4          | 0.3               | 0.1                         |
| P3           | 0.05         | 0.05              | 0                           |
| P4           | 0.07         | 0.07              | 0                           |
| P5           | 0.15         | 0.15              | 0                           |
| P6           | 0.2          | 0.2               | 0                           |
| P7           | 0.2          | 0.19              | 0.01                        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>1.32</b>  | <b>1.16</b>       | <b>0.16</b>                 |

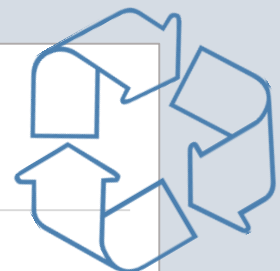
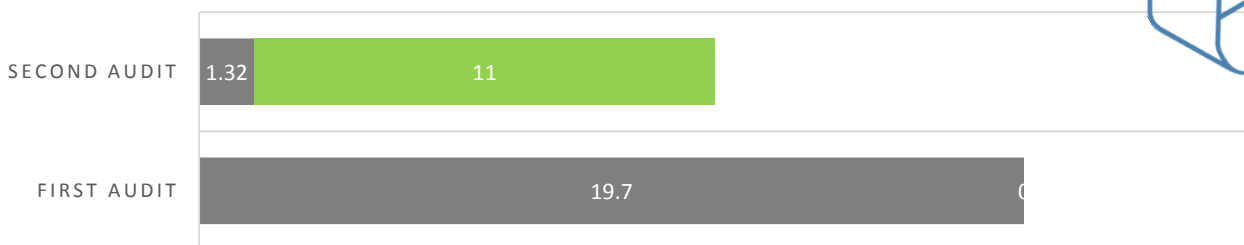


| Mixed dry recyclables in recycling bin Kg |
|---|
| 0.75                                      |
| 0.6                                       |
| 0.3                                       |
| 1   |
| 2.1                                       |
| 0.75                                      |
| 5.5                                       |
| <b>11</b>                                 |

Overall waste had reduced from 19.7Kg to 1.3kg on the day of the audit which annually could mean a saving of nearly 11 tonnes of waste being sent to landfill. The school was also now recycling 89% of its waste, where before they had been recycling none.

## RESULTS OF WASTE AUDITS (KGS)

■ Waste ■ Recycling





### 3. Wheelie Big Challenge Belfast City Hall Event.

The school entered their audit results and a short description of their actions into the Wheelie Big Competition and were shortlisted to display their work at Belfast City Hall on the 4<sup>th</sup> June. There were 11 schools shortlisted, 9 primary and 3 post-primary. They were judged on their actions during the Challenge, their presentation of it at the final and the pupils knowledge as demonstrated to the judges. Our Lady of Lourdes were pleased to come 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Primary category. Their real success is in the reduction of waste to landfill.

### 4. The future...

The school hopes to continue with their battle against waste by focusing on reducing waste, ensuring recycling continues efficiently, looking at waste during school events e.g. summer BBQs and hopefully becoming a zero waste to landfill school sometime in the future.

### Useful hints and tips for Eco-Schools success -

The key to success is whole school involvement. Our Lady of Lourdes has great buy-in from their Principal, parents, teaching staff, caretaker and cleaners, and of course pupils. They regularly run whole school events and invite parents to join in too.

Don't be afraid to try things and see if they work. Our Lady of Lourdes trialed the separation of waste in class before they changed their external bins to make sure it was going to work.

Let the pupils and the Eco-Committee take ownership of projects - it's the best way to build their enthusiasm and confidence. They can encourage their peers' participation better than anyone else. A little bit of healthy competition is good too!

Take part in Eco-Schools cluster group meetings and projects when you can and take advantage of advice from your local council, Eco-Schools staff and the experience of other schools whenever possible.

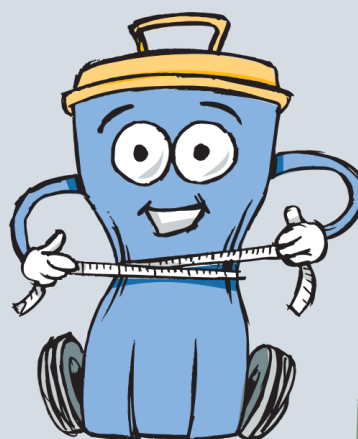
### Useful contacts and links -

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, Eco-Schools:

P: 028 9073 6920

W: [www.eco-schoolsni.org](http://www.eco-schoolsni.org)

E: [eco-schools@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org](mailto:eco-schools@keepnorthernirelandbeautiful.org)







Belfast City Council, Waste Department:

P: 028 9032 0202  
W: [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/waste](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/waste)  
E: [wasteeducation@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:wasteeducation@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Education Authority (Belfast Region):

P: 028 9056 4000  
W: [www.eani.org.uk/ea-regional-offices/belfast-region/](http://www.eani.org.uk/ea-regional-offices/belfast-region/)  
E: [info.belb@belb.co.uk](mailto:info.belb@belb.co.uk)

Biffa Recycling:

P: 0800 601 601  
W: [www.biffa.co.uk](http://www.biffa.co.uk)  
E: [www.biffa.co.uk/contact-us/general-enquiry-form.html](http://www.biffa.co.uk/contact-us/general-enquiry-form.html)

Bryson Recycling –

P: 028 9084 8494  
W: [www.brysonrecycling.org](http://www.brysonrecycling.org)  
E: [info@brysonrecycling.org](mailto:info@brysonrecycling.org)

Waste resources:

- Wheelie Big Challenge information and resources.
- Belfast City Council and Eco-Schools Waste [booklet](#).
- Eco-Schools Inspiration Waste topic [resource](#).
- Sort it Out recycling [game](#).
- Love Food Hate Waste [website](#).
- RHS [advice](#) on wormeries and composting.
- Mail Preference Service [website](#).



Cookstown Textile Recyclers – Cash for Clobber:

P: 028 9447 8880  
W: [www.cashforclobber.com](http://www.cashforclobber.com)  
E: [schools@c-t-r.com](mailto:schools@c-t-r.com)

Live Here Love Here (Big Spring Clean):

P: 028 9073 6920  
W: [www.livehereandlovehere.org](http://www.livehereandlovehere.org)  
E: [equiries@livehereandlovehere.org](mailto:equiries@livehereandlovehere.org)



*Schools attending the **Belfast City Council and Eco-Schools Wheelie Big Challenge finals** and Green Flag Celebration 2015.*



Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School Eco-Schools timeline -

