

AMBASSADOR SCHOOL CASE STUDY



St. Therese of Lisieux Primary School

472 Antrim Road, Belfast, BT15 5GF

Number of pupils	Age range	Joined Eco-Schools	Number of Green Flags	Date of last Green Flag
424	5- 11	2012	6	2024

St Therese of Lisieux Primary School has been an ECO school for over 10 years. We achieved our 6th green flag in 2022-2024 and won the prestigious '**Eco School of the Year**' award in 2022 and again in 2024- the 1st school to win twice in a row! We celebrate our achievement by proudly flying our ECO flag at the front of the school for all to see.

Our ECO team has grown over the years, we started off as a team of 6 and now we have 201 members from P4- P7. Our ECO Council is the driving force and each member plays an important role in helping to make sure that our school shines as an ECO School. We have five main teams that run on class rotas throughout the week:

- **Eco ELFs (Eco Loving Force)**- Recycling/ food waste bins
- **Power Rangers** -Energy
- **Garden Giants**- Biodiversity
- **Bike It Buddies**- Transport
- **Eco Leaders**- our communication "PR" team

Eco jobs are carried out daily and the ECO members kindly give up part of their break or lunchtime on a rota basis to ensure their areas of responsibility are looked after. Our Primary 1- 3 children are also involved as '**Eco Warriors**', taking turns to be energy aware and ensure recycling and food waste removal is taking place in their own classrooms.

Meeting our Green Flag Action Plan targets are very important to everyone, with all children and staff being involved no matter how small the act, as we follow in St Therese's example of her "Little Way". Our children are passionate about making a

difference, as they know the important environmental role they can play in helping to make our world a better place.

Our two most recent Green Flag applications have focused on the following topics:
(2020-2022): **Major:** Recycling/ Energy **Minor:** Global Perspective
(2022- 2024): **Major:** Outdoor Learning/ Biodiversity **Minor:** Waste

Examples of some of the projects we have completed in the last few years are as follows:

- Building a Bug School in the P1 playground to encourage biodiversity
- Foundation Stage classes learn about why we recycle with a lovely story called Messy Magpie and Mr Rat's Recycling (visiting from Belfast City Council)
- Pollinator Grant applied for and obtained in 2022 to create our beautiful and productive pollinator school garden
- Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful 'Plastic Promise' pledge – almost completely eliminating the use of single use plastic water bottles by pupils and staff
- Key Stage 2 have annual visits from Belfast City Council and complete an interactive recycling quiz amongst other fun eco workshops
- Belfast City Council 'Plastic Fantastic' workshops- linked to our P6 Eco Warriors WAU topic
- Belfast Bincredibles KS2 show – annual visit
- Lyric Theatre- ECO Recycling musical
- Riverridge recycling assembly- showing our children exactly what their waste can be transformed into

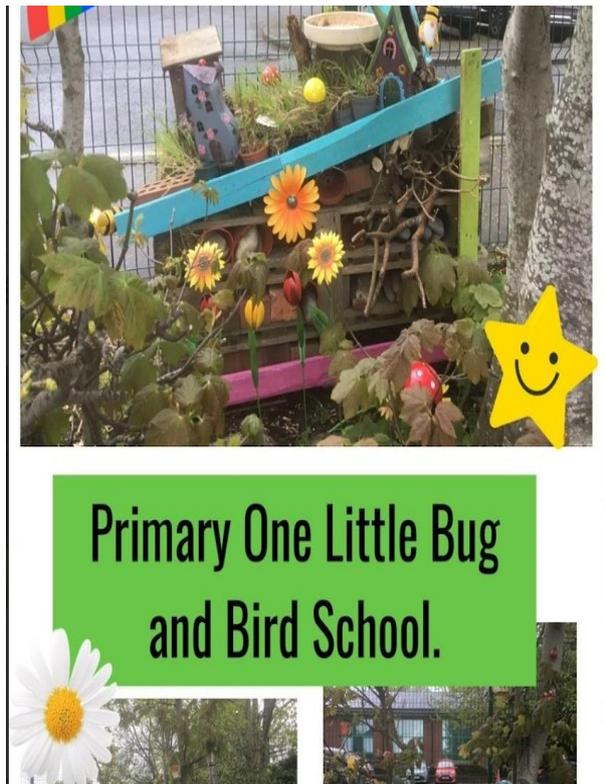
- Cash for Clobber- our annual clothes collection with all funds used to provide resources for our school pollinator garden
- Saving Water- we have taken part in water saving initiatives to reduce water usage throughout the school
- Saving Energy- weekly monitoring of energy used
- Battery recycling- we have a recycling point at the Reception area of the school for parents, children and staff to recycle any old and used batteries. This is emptied once a year by a battery recycling disposal company
- Annual Trocaire and St. Vincent De Paul fundraising- Global perspective and awareness
- Eco noticeboard- in the main Reception area of our school which is regularly maintained with updates, information and key Eco- Committee contacts for all to see

Topic Actions:

Our most recent Green Flag Action Plan (2022- 2024) Environmental Review identified these two areas as a priority for focus:

Major topic: Biodiversity - We wanted to upskill our school (teachers and pupils) to be more aware and proactive in improving our environment to increase opportunities and support biodiversity. We also wanted the children to be more aware of their outdoor environment both locally and globally.

Minor topic: Outdoor Learning – this area was identified as the one which scored lowest and where we feel we can make big changes. As a result of the development of our school garden, we feel this is a great time to increase our outdoor learning opportunities across the curriculum- bringing the inside, outside!



Sharing Good Practice

Actions:

Our Green Flag Action Plan has been shared amongst other schools new to the Green Flag process, as an example of a well-documented action plan!

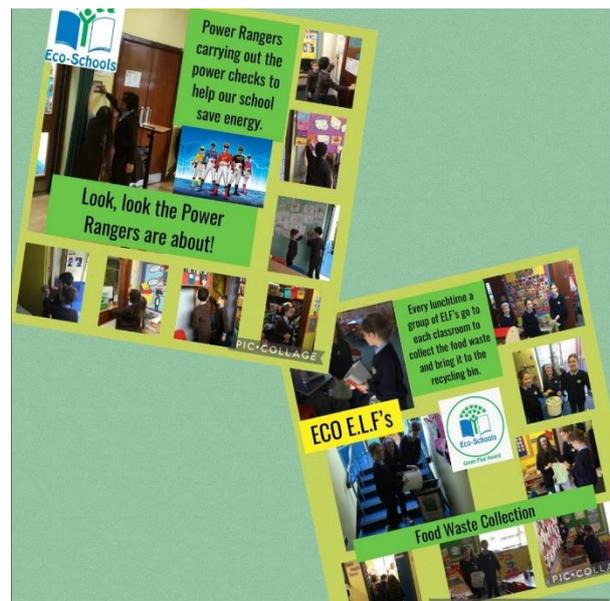
- Teachers in school attended a gardening course hosted by Kindergarden Cooks as an 'example school' to discuss how we have begun the process of increasing outdoor learning opportunities.
- RHS School Gardening- Roots to Wellbeing- Inspire Young People to Grow- attended school.
- Men's Shed worked with P7 pupils and assist them in making additional planters for our garden. They

applied for a grant to fund the wood and have named St Therese of Lisieux PS as one of the beneficiaries of the grant.

- Waterworks Community Garden- Craig Sands. We are on the waiting list to attend the garden for workshops relating to how to tend to plants, learning about local pollinators etc.
- Monthly Eco updates on school newsletter which is sent to families via Class Dojo app- no more paper newsletters sent out (2020-22 target).

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Data Zone for Green Flag application- we use this as a working document to help us see if we are achieving our goals through each year.
- Wheelie Bin Challenge – came 1st in 2022!
- Regular Eco Committee meetings to discuss what is working well or what needs changed.
- Caretaker and Eco ELF's monitor the rubbish daily to see if the recycling/general waste ratio has improved and subsequently, been maintained.
- Caretaker/ Principal monitor which bins were needing collected more- we have been able to eliminate 2 large general waste bins (River Ridge).
- Power Rangers monitor the energy meter and record each Friday to see if reductions are taking place.
- Power Rangers monitor power usage in each classroom (e.g. lights and IWB turned off at break and lunch). They report back to the Eco Co-ordinator any areas which are not being adhered to.



Mentoring School:

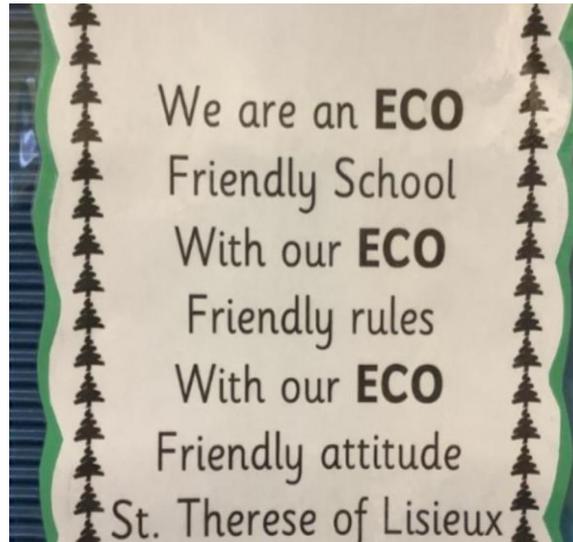


We had an informal chat with the Eco-Coordinator of another local primary school, who was wanting to know how we had become so efficient in our waste reduction. We discussed all that goes into our food waste, recycling and general waste bins which are in every classroom and how the inclusion of these has contributed to our increase in recycling bins and reduction in general waste bins which are collected by Riverridge. We also explained how our class Bin Monitor rotas work, providing an efficient system for removing waste from classrooms.



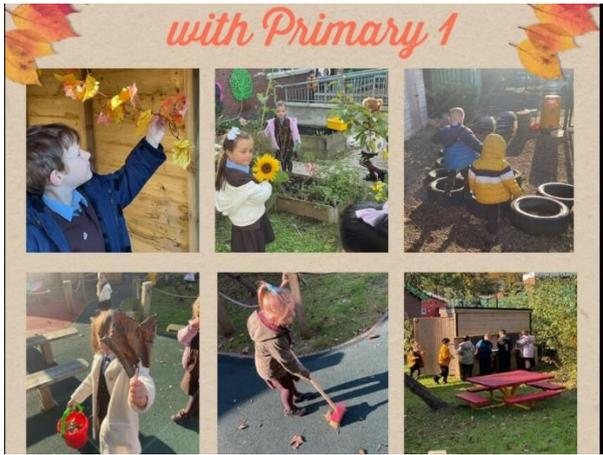
Whole school assemblies

We have a yearly ECO assembly in our school to remind the pupils and teachers how we can be ECO friendly and help our environment.



Eco Code and Song

Our Eco- Committee created an Eco Code, which is voted upon each year by our new Committee to update or keep the same. We also have a whole school Eco song which the children learn from P1 to P7!



Outdoor Learning

Outdoor Play Timetable has been made for P1 and P2 classes to use the garden as part of their Learning Through Play lessons. The following topics in K21/2 were changed to include outdoor learning sessions linking to the topic: Vikings (P6); Healthy Living (P3); Dinosaurs (P4); and Famine (P7).

Children also take part in the Daily Mile and Outdoor Brain Break Sessions.



Our PTA are involved now too!

We have been working with our PTA to identify areas where they could help us. They held a Halloween costume and Christmas jumper 'Swap Shop' to address the issue of fast fashion and sustainability, particularly at those times of year.



Eco across the Curriculum

Our Eco Action Plans have been integrated across the Curriculum in all year groups, to ensure our children are leaving primary school understanding how to take care of the planet and how to be sustainable individuals.



Further garden development and maintenance

Garden Giant follow give up their Golden Time on a Friday to help with garden tidy up and weeding. We also now have parent and grandparent volunteers helping maintain the school garden.

Contact

For more information on this Eco-Schools Ambassador School, see details below.

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