

AMBASSADOR SCHOOL CASE STUDY



Strangford Integrated College

Abbey Road, Carrowdore, BT22 2GB

Number of pupils	Age range	Joined Eco-Schools	Number of Green Flags	Date of last Green Flag
827	11-18	Sept 2022	1	June 2024

Strangford Integrated College is an all-ability integrated school which is committed to providing a school experience for students from a diverse range of backgrounds, that is memorable and aids their current and future success. At Strangford we believe that everyone's interests and talents should be accommodated so that everyone not only can demonstrate their academic potential, but all areas of the individual, therefore developing the whole child.

Facilities in the school - Currently due to our new school build our facilities to deliver Eco Schools is very limited where we have a small outdoor planting area outside of science. However, this has not stopped us and in our new build we will have a greenhouse, eco garden with orchard and an outside classroom (the items required for our eco classroom were obtained from a successful grant application from Live Here Love Here). We also currently use Carrowood which is located a few minutes walk away to help deliver Forest School activities.

Eco clubs – Eco Club is run every Tuesday break time / Gardening Club runs every Friday after school.

Eco Activities and projects past and present – At Strangford we complete a wide range of Eco activities:

- Eco assemblies
- Strangford Pollution Needs You as the Solution Campaign – whole school litter campaign
- Shared Ed Marine Study or beach cleans with St Columbus
- Shared Ed tree planting in connection with ANDBC
- Adopt a Spot litter picks of Carrowdore
- ANDBC Street Art Competition
- Recycling initiatives – Waste to Wonder where we are semi-finalists in the YES Eco UNESCO Awards
- Removal of plastic items within the college
- YRE
- Trocaire – Game changers workshops
- Community planting with Carrowdore Community
- Eco activities with Carrowdore Nursery
- Fast fashion workshops
- Hedgerow Heroes
- Litter Less Campaign
- Christmas jumper swap
- Preloved uniform sale

- Earth day
- Sunflower competition
- Translink Youth Summit
- Wee Critters - delivered annually to Year 8 in Dec
- Building bird houses – delivered in Technology
- Second Sips – YE project where they transformed old glass bottles into glasses
- Regular newsletters
- Shoebox appeal
- Foodbank appeal
- Transport surveys
- Reusable cutlery and water bottles to all students
- Installation of water fountains and the removal of vending machines
- Forest School activities

Community involvement - We are proud of the community links that we have built and the positive impact that we have brought to our local community through the following activities:

- Adopt a Spot (Carrowdore)
- Planting and revitalising the village in partnership with Carrowdore Community (Louise Wallace Head of Carrowdore Community)
- Partnership with Carrowdore Nursery
- Shared Education projects with St Columbus School completing litter picks in Portavogie, Ballywalter and Cloughey beaches
- Buying local – items for our outdoor classroom where sourced from Cardy Timber a local timber merchant and woodworker based in Greyabbey / buying plants, soil and seed from Walkers Seeds and Paints in Newtownards
- Numerous articles within the Ards Chronicle.

Awards - As a college we are most proud of the following awards we have achieved:

- Silver Eco Schools Award (March 2023)

- Green Flag Award (June 2024)
- Eco Teacher of the Year - Mrs Diaz Morris (June 2024)
- Eco Pupil of the Year – Matthew McCurdy (June 2025)
- ANDBC Street Art Competition Best Artwork – Erin Adair (October 2025)
- Semi-finalists in the YEA Eco UNESCO Awards – Waste to Wonder (March 2026)

We are currently waiting to see if we have made it through to the final which is in May in Dublin

Funding – We also very proud of the following funding competitions we have won, or the funding we have successfully achieved:

- Ernest Cook Trust £500
- Live Here Love Here Small Grants Scheme £2040
- Litter Less Campaign 2x£200
- Hedgerow Heros – free hedgerow
- Queen’s University Belfast – free orchard (plums, pears and apples)
- Strangford Integrated College £600 - injection moulding machine for our recycling initiative
- NIFSA – 2x OCN NI Level 3 Leadership in Forest School (QCF) qualification

Topic Actions

Sharing Good Practice Actions

The Eco Committee use our Eco Schools Newsletter to share good practice with the school community and the wider community. It outlines what we have been working on, or the activities that have/or are taking place within the college, giving students the opportunity to be involved, and at the same time helps spread awareness of environmental issues and challenges. Our newsletter is posted to our website and social media page which has a following of 6.3k people.



Throughout our Eco Schools journey we have also had a number of articles published within the Ards Chronicle/Spectator to share with the local and wider community the environmental actions we have completed. This also aids in raising awareness to other schools and organisations that small changes can have a huge impact. Ards Chronicle has a

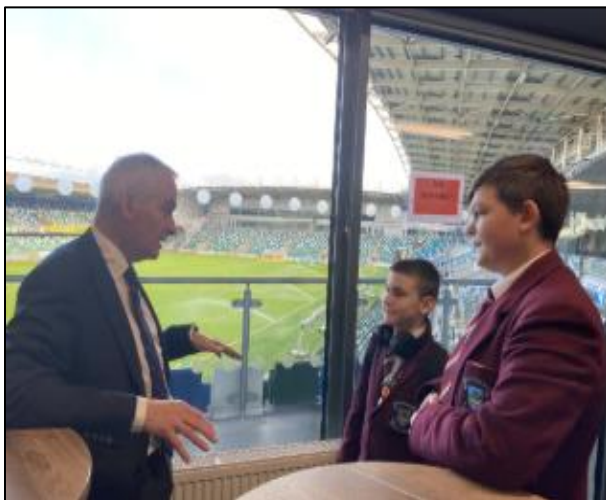
readership of 25,000.

We have had the opportunity for one of our Eco Ambassadors Gabriella to speak with the education minister (Paul Givan) regarding the environmental issues we are tackling and our plans for the future ahead of our new build. With a designated outdoor



classroom, greenhouse and wooded area it will give us the opportunity to deliver the Forest School programme which further enhances our students ability to connect with the environment and give them first-hand experience of the importance of caring for our natural spaces and the wildlife that inhabits it.

We have also shared good practice with business owners such as the CEO of Translink (Chris Conway) where we have had the opportunity to share with him about our recycling projects and aims to reduce plastic waste within our college. We gained a lot of valuable information and guidance from him which has helped aid the delivery and completion of our environmental projects which we have led within the college.

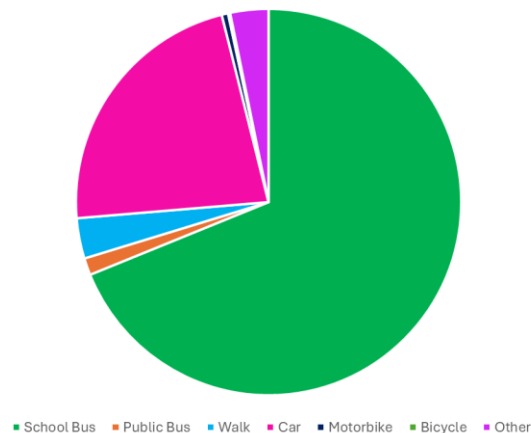


Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and analysing data is something we believe is both important and what has helped drive our environmental initiatives that we have undertaken. Without the continual collection and monitoring of data it would have been impossible for us to evaluate the impact we have made.

Through data monitoring and analysis, it has allowed us to change our plan but never our goal. Data collected included electricity and waste/bin audits which allowed us to see the impacts of our 'Save electricity' signs within our classrooms, or the impact of our recycling initiatives across the college. These included setting all printers to print double sided, having recycling bins in all classrooms and workspaces, and our whole school litter campaign - 'Strangford Pollution Needs YOU as the Solution'.

Methods of Travel to and from SIC



Recyclable Waste (kg) collected from SIC



	Food 240ltr	General Waste 1100ltr	Dry Materials 240ltr	Dry Materials 1100ltr	TOTAL RECYCLABLES
Jan-24	5	36	2	18	21480
Feb-24	4	36	2	9	11340
Mar-24	8	48	6	27	33060
Apr-24	4	24	2	9	11340
May-24	5	48	4	18	22960
Jun-24	8	48	4	18	22680
Jul-24	1	12	2	9	
Aug-24	1	18	2	9	
Sep-24	6	48	4	18	22200
Oct-24	7	48	4	18	22440
Nov-24	7	48	4	18	22440
Dec-24	5	40	4	18	21960
	Food 240ltr	General Waste 1100ltr	Dry Materials 240ltr	Dry Materials 1100ltr	TOTAL RECYCLABLES
Sep-25	5	48	4	18	21960
Oct-25	4	48	4	18	21720
Nov-25	4	48	4	18	21720
Dec-25	5	36	4	18	21960
Jan-26	4	48	4	18	21720
Feb-26	3	36	2	9	11100
					AVERAGE
					21133.33333

Mentoring School



Over the past 3 years we have been working with St Columbus School to deliver environmental projects where we have had the opportunity to liaise with one another to assist with ideas and to problem solve. We are currently working with Carrowdore Nursery and are due to start our delivery of eco activities on 14th April. Our delivery programme aims to help

educate and inspire the children about the environment through interactive activities such as reading 'The Weatherbies' books, planting of seeds, recycled messy walls and forest school activities. We also pass on key information such as funding opportunities and are encouraging them to get involved with Eco Schools and become a Green Flag accredited.

WHAT WE ARE PROUD OF – ‘WHO WE ARE’

We are proud of everything we have achieved to date and feel we have made positive impacts on the environment both within the college and the local community. Some of the projects we are most proud of are:

Recycling initiatives

1.YEA Eco UNESCO Awards - Waste to Wonder



Our Waste to Wonder project turns recycled bottle tops into fidget spinners. This requires melting the bottle tops down in the oven and putting them into a 3D mould to create the fidget spinners. We have begun to sell these, and the profits made (100% as there are no costs involved in the process) have gone towards further funding for machines so we can diversify our

products, and the volume and type of plastic we can use making this project sustainable and gives it longevity in its positive environmental impacts. With time we aim to create other designs such as plant pots, pencil pots etc.

These bottles tops are sourced from litter picks within our college, house competitions, and also from the Bryson Recycling Center (a charity who donates recyclable materials to organisations and schools). The aim of this project was to reduce marine plastics, a major global issue today. We were semi-finalists in the YEA Eco UNESCO Awards and are currently waiting to hear if we have made it to the finals.



2.Second Sips

Second Sips is run by a group of sixth-form students within the college for their YE project. They have collected used glass bottles from staff and parents and have turned these into drinking glasses - reducing waste, reusing



the glass and recycling it into a new product. They have had great success with one of the judges from YE placing a custom order of 30 glasses, and the Waterfront Hall also placing an order so they can use the glasses at events.

Shared Ed projects

We have completed shared Ed projects annually – litter picks, marine surveys or community tree planting. These projects have not only helped develop the students'

understanding of key environmental issues such as marine plastics, the issues surrounding littering, climate change, and biodiversity, but it has developed their interpersonal and teamwork skills.



Wee Critters



For the last 4 years we have had Wee Critters, an interactive animal educational experience to deliver sessions to our Year 8 students. This gives the students the opportunity to get up close with exotic and native wildlife and learn about the challenges they face with regard to the environments in which they live. Students find these sessions

extremely enjoyable and informative, and they have provided them with an up-close understanding of areas of our curriculum.

Community Projects

1. Adopt a Spot

For the past 4 years we have been involved in the Adopt a Spot Programme where we adopted Carrowdore as our spot. We are proud of the impact we have made within the village with regards to the reduction of litter, but we are also thankful of the relationships we have built with the community furthering community cohesion.



2.Community Planting

We have further developed our links with the Carrowdore community through community planting. This gave our students the opportunity to work alongside the Head of the community, Louise Wallace, and other community members to replant the recycled work hats within the main street. This project not only highlighted the importance of good teamwork skills, but one person's waste is another person's treasure.



Bringing Learning to Life



Another aspect of our Eco Schools journey that we feel very proud of is the development of learning to incorporate more lessons and trips into the

outdoors to further enhance our students' love for these areas, and to further educate them on the importance of protecting our natural environment. Schemes of work have been adapted to enhance outdoor learning experiences. Examples include trips to Colin Glen to complete river studies and learn about the importance of clean waterways, or educational visits to Murlough Nature Reserve in Newcastle where students have witnessed first-hand the negative impact we as humans have upon our natural environments, and the devastating impacts climate change and sea level rise can have upon our dune systems and the wildlife that inhabit these. Within PE lessons we have visited green flag parks (Londonderry Park) to appreciate our natural environment and the benefits it can have for our health. Due to obtaining funding for 2 staff members to complete the OCN NI Level 3 Leadership in Forest School (QCF) qualification we have also began to deliver Forest School sessions within areas of our curriculum which further enhances our student's appreciation and concern for the natural world. International trips to places such as Iceland and Mexico have also provided our students with opportunities to witness the negative impacts of climate change and human degradation to our planet, giving them a much broader insight for the need to protect our planet.





Contact

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

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