

The Eco-Schools 7 Steps

A guide for schools in Dorset

Eco-Schools is the largest educational programme in the world, operating in over 60 countries worldwide. It provides fantastic resources and encouragement to help pupils learn about living sustainably and take positive actions to transform their schools into more sustainable communities.

Did you know...?

- There are over 18 000 registered Eco-Schools in England
- Dorset has over 170 registered Eco-Schools and 20 schools with Green Flag awards

This guide is produced by the Community Energy Team at Dorset County Council. It is designed to help you work through the 7 steps of the Eco-Schools framework. The Tips have all been provided by Eco-Coordinators working in Dorset schools.

The Eco-Schools scheme in England is run by Keep Britain Tidy. For full information and lots of resources relating to the Eco-Schools awards programme, please visit www.eco-schools.org.uk

The following other useful documents available online at www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk (search for 'Sustainable Schools')

- Dorset Sustainable Schools Directory
- Dorset Eco-Schools Curriculum Guide
- Improving School Grounds and Outdoor Spaces funding guide



1. Eco-Committee

Your Eco-Committee is the action group and driving force behind your Eco-Schools work. They are responsible for doing an Environmental Review, designing an Action Plan and letting the whole school know what's going on and how they can help.



The Eco-Committee should:

- Meet formally at least once every half term and informally a little more often to get stuck into the project work.
- Include at least one pupil from every year group
- Include a school governor, a parent or guardian and a site manager on board too.
- Keep a record of their meetings and decisions
- Be supported by an adult Eco-Coordinator but led by pupils.

Notes from Eco-Schools England: Any member of staff can be the Eco-Coordinator, but it can be a shared role and it is good to get several staff involved if possible.



Eco-Committee; England



Eco-Committee; Malaysia

Tips from Dorset Teachers:

- ...Consider giving the team a name, or designing badges, t-shirts or hats to identify them.
- ...Keep long serving keen members as an asset!
- ...Give other children a chance to join to keep the team fresh
- ...Elect a chair and secretary every term. Consider other roles for members e.g. taking photographs, recording finances etc. You may even form sub-groups, e.g. energy team, litter team, communication team.
- ...Build on children's interests and encourage them to try out their own ideas
- ...Tap into staff interests and strengths e.g. gardening, wildlife, Fairtrade.
- ...Be prepared for members to lose interest....you will find some absolute stalwarts, others will be more short lived in their enthusiasm
- ...Consider inviting guests (e.g. Governors or experts) or sending minutes to important contacts.
- ...Sit back and let the children lead!

2. Environmental Review

The Environmental Review is a complete survey of the school, inside and out. It will help the Eco-Committee to discover areas where the school is doing well and decide where improvements could be made.



The Environmental Review should:

- Be carried out by the Eco-Committee, with adult help where necessary
- Look at all 10 Eco-Schools topics
- The results should be shared with the rest of the school
- Be done at least every 2 years (and ideally once a year)

Find template Environmental Reviews at
eco-schools.org.uk/eyfs-primary-pathway/seven-steps/environmental-review/
 ...Or design your own survey. It can be as simple or as detailed as you need.

Notes from Eco-Schools England

There are opportunities to link this activity with the curriculum, especially Maths, Science and IT. The Eco-Committee might share the information for other classes' use in lessons e.g. estimating, displaying data, etc.



Surveying waste; England

Headteacher	Office
☹️ Prospectus info for new parents - no prospectus but maybe we could do more on website Tea/ coffee not <u>fairtrade</u> Doesn't reuse envelopes	☹️ Headed paper not printed on recycled paper Recycled paper for photocopier (photocopiers don't like recycled paper) Envelopes not from recycled paper (To be discussed with Mrs Heath) Turning off appliances in office at end of day
☹️ Do school <u>boys</u> know about school being eco school? Time out of school for <u>mps</u> W to do eco things Classes learning eco in lessons	☹️

Environmental Review; Primary school, England

Tips from Dorset Teachers:

- ...Email the review out for all classes to complete together and collate results – it is interesting to see how much children know about e.g. about recycling facilities across school
- ...Break the Eco-Committee into groups and give each group a topic or two to research
- ...Send groups of pupils to interview the Headteacher, Site Manager, Bursar, kitchen staff etc.
- ...Present your results in assembly, or at a Governor's meeting to draw attention to your findings and get support for future actions!

3. Action Plan

The Environmental Review will have sparked a lot of ideas for potential projects. The Eco-Committee now needs to pick some ideas and turn them into a workable plan of action!



The Action Plan should:

- Be drawn up by the Eco-Committee
- Include actions for 3-4 topics for your first Green Flag (you **do not** have to do all 10!)
- Be a working document that you return to to keep you focussed
- Include details of tasks, timescales, equipment needed, measures of success and responsibilities
- Be shared with the whole school, so everyone knows how they can help

Find template Action Plans at eco-schools.org.uk/resources/tools/

Objectives and targets	Specific actions	By whom?	By when? (If ongoing, when did it start?)	How will we know if we've been successful?
Waste/Litter: Increase amount recycled in school	Meet with new caretaker to see how we can recycle even more in school	Year 5 and Year 2 buddies	By October half term	If we can draw up new agreement with caretaker
	Assembly to talk about recycling and use for each type of bin	Whole team	September 2015	Class survey responses after assembly
	Hand towels – recycling tub for each classroom, and toilets where used.	Year 1 and 2 members	Ongoing- started Sept 2015	By reduced numbers being ordered, and fewer towels on the floor

Action Plan snippet; England



River clean-up; England



Eco-Committee at work; Mongolia

Tips from Dorset Teachers:

-Choose priorities from your Environmental Review and discuss ideas for how to improve areas in school. How can you raise awareness? How can you reduce the impact on the environment?*
-Review your Action Plan regularly through the year. Scribbles on your Action Plan are good!*
- ...Use video clips and activities (e.g. from The Pod) to help the Eco-Committee learn more about their chosen topics, and follow them with a discussion about the issues raised.*
- ...It doesn't have to be A4 and typed....use a flipchart or wall chart if it helps the Eco-Committee take charge*
- ...It's ok to think small. Choose activities that are actually manageable for the Eco-Committee!*

4. Linking to the Curriculum

The aim here is for teaching staff to make the most of opportunities within the curriculum to teach environmental understanding and awareness. For example, English persuasive writing could be used to address MPs on local environmental issues. Basing curriculum work on Eco projects in school will help bring subjects to life.



Linking to the Curriculum should:

- Involve a coordinated effort among teaching staff
- Occur in most year groups in a range of curriculum areas (for Green flag, it is 3 curriculum subjects for most year groups)
- Be evidenced in schemes of work, whole school topic plans examples of classwork etc.

Notes from Eco-Schools England:

In carrying out Eco-Schools programme, you should see many opportunities to bring the curriculum to life with real-world activities. For example:

- *Environmental Review and Monitoring & Evaluation: opportunities for numeracy and scientific inquiry skills, plus communication skills through activities such as interviews and questionnaires.*
- *Taking learning out of the classroom: e.g. habitat creation projects could allow some science lessons to move outdoors to carry out bug surveys or wildlife counts.*
- *Involving & Informing: could involve factual writing skills, e.g. writing newsletter articles, or project reports.*



Curriculum work; USA

Tips from Dorset Teachers:

Many teachers find this the hardest aspect of Eco-Schools so don't worry if you find it challenging!

....ask to use staff meeting to map out everyone's topic work for the year and see where the Eco-Schools topics could link.

...The Pod's resources and curriculum guide are really useful (www.jointhepod.org)

....make it easy to collect evidence of curriculum linking from staff e.g. create a folder in a central drive, or have a physical folder in the staffroom for staff to add documents to.

....Whole school themed days (e.g. on water, energy and climate change) have helped make sure every class does something.

...Eco-Schools themes of personal and social responsibility link well with PSHE and the Jigsaw scheme.

5. Involving & Informing

This is where you let the whole school, and wider community know what you're doing, why you're doing it and how they can help! Feel free to use your artistic and creative talents.



Involving & Informing should involve:

- Having a designated Eco-Board detailing all Eco-Schools activities, including a copy of the Environmental Review, Action Plan, minutes, Eco-Committee members and monitoring updates
- Regularly communicating Eco-Schools activities to the entire school e.g. through assemblies, newsletters, Parent Mail, social media etc.
- Involving the wider community e.g. parents, carers, local businesses, environmental organisations, local churches, residential groups etc.

Notes from Eco-Schools England

Ways to involve the whole school community could include:

- Letters to parents identifying skills the school is looking to secure
- Arranging speakers from outside organisations and businesses
- Including activities for pupils to do at home in the Action Plan
- Issuing a call to action for pupils and parents
- Displaying results of your activities throughout the school
- Using real-life data from your monitoring in curriculum work (e.g. graphs of how pupils get to school)
- Commending or rewarding people those who participate in projects
- Informing the local media
- Organising a celebration event



Community action; Malta



Talking to the Mayor; Malaysia

Tips from Dorset Teachers:

- ...try a whole-school day of action (e.g. clean-up project or switch-off day) or themed learning day (e.g. outdoor learning, World Water Day) to get everyone involved!
- ...make it competitive! Which class/year group can reduce their waste the most or grow the best-tasting tomatoes?

6. Monitoring & Evaluation

How will the Eco-Committee know whether their actions have been successful and made a difference to the environment? It's important to think about how you can monitor the activities in your Action Plan, so you can either tick them off if they were successful or think of a different approach if they didn't have the effect you wanted.



Monitoring & Evaluation should:

- Involve collecting evidence and data on your activities
- Be **objective** (e.g. analysing electricity use data) or **subjective** (e.g. asking children what they think of changes to the school grounds).
- Produce information which can be analysed in class.

Notes from Eco-Schools England:

How you monitor and evaluate your work depends on the types of activities in your Action Plan, as well as the age and ability of pupils. You might consider the following forms of monitoring:

- **Meter readings** to show the effects of energy/water-saving activities.
- **Litter/waste audits** to show the effects of litter/recycling initiatives.
- **Calculating financial savings** from energy or water bills
- **Asking pupils, staff or local residents** What do they think of the changes that you have made?
- **Before, during and after photographs** to provide visual evidence
- **Lists of wildlife or species found** before and after habitat work e.g. bird boxes



Energy monitoring; England



School grounds project before and after photos; England



7. Eco-Code

The Eco-Code is the Eco-Committee's mission statement. It demonstrates – in a positive, imaginative way – the school's commitment to environmental responsibility. The code could be in the form of a charter or statement, or the Eco-Committee committee could create a song, poem, rap, acronym, acrostic or something even more creative!



The Eco-Code should:

- ❑ Be agreed by the school, and ideally be integrated in to the school's mission statement and core values
- ❑ Be displayed on the Eco-Board and in all classrooms
- ❑ Be known and understood by the majority of pupils and staff

Notes from Eco-Schools England:

The Eco-Code process gives pupils a chance to reflect on shared environmental challenges. What responsibilities do schools have?

There is no set format, so work with other teachers and the whole school community to decide on a format. You want the whole school to feel committed to the Eco-Code, and developing it collaboratively will help.

You don't need to stick to your Eco-Code forever – feel free to review and change it as you learn and reflect on your Eco projects.



Eco-Code; England

Teacher's tips:

.....If possible, feature the Code on your school website. Show assessors just how committed you are to the cause!

...it could be an opportunity to explore different languages. We have learnt to say their Eco Code in French. As part of their curriculum learning, students also looked at eco projects that have been carried out by French schools.

...Link your code in with other school initiatives, e.g. Rights Respecting Charter. Turn it into a whole school declaration on people and the environment.

Eco Code - **BELIEVE**

Be kind to our world
Eliminate waste
Look after our planet
Include everyone
Educate ourselves
Value each other
Enjoy life

Sample Eco-Codes; England

