

St Michael's Primary School, Belfast

Waste Case Study



Where did we begin?



Well, when the Eco-Committee carried out their Environmental Review at the start of the school year, September 2017, they decided that Waste Management in the school should be given priority on their Action Plan.

Areas of the school grounds were identified as being 'very messy' and the pupils decided to do a litter pick around the school grounds. The Eco-Committee rolled up their sleeves and got stuck in.

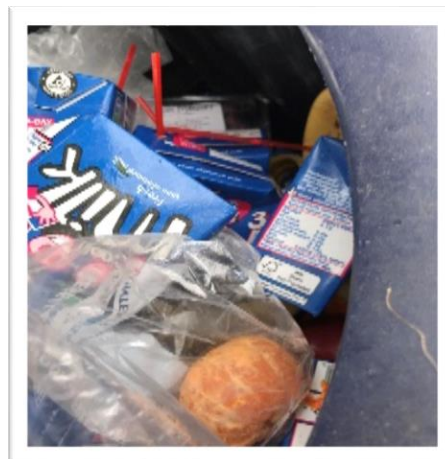
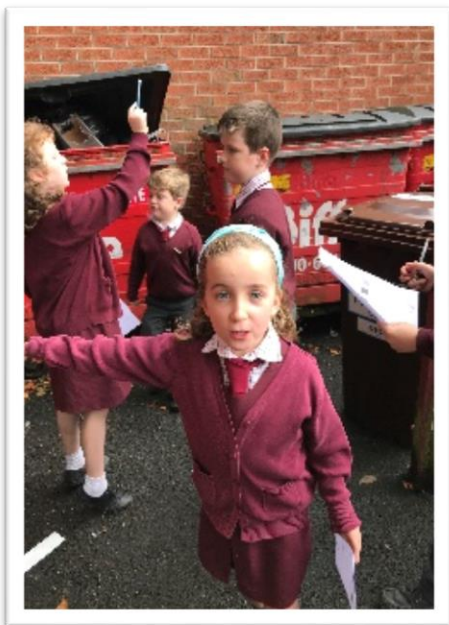


They then weighed the resulting black bags collected and were shocked to find they had collected a whopping 14.9kg of litter...**3 full black bin bags!!**

As a result of the litter picking audit the Eco-Committee decided action was needed throughout the school to ensure that the grounds were kept litter free. We decided to tackle the amount and types of waste that we were generating in the school.

The first step... The first thing the Eco-Committee decided on was to create a whole school litter picking time-table, giving each class a day when litter picking in the playground was their responsibility. Litter pickers and high-vis vests were provided for each Key Stage and collected by the class on duty each break-time.

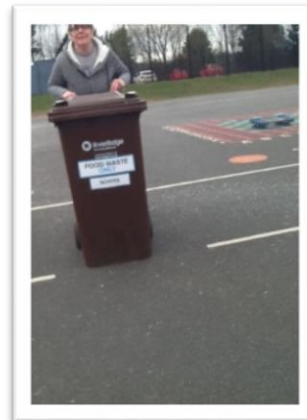
The next step ...was to look at our litter and see if it was possible to reduce our landfill waste by recycling. When the Eco-Committee carried out a bin audit they discovered that a lot of our waste contained recyclable materials as our school bins were full of mixed waste.



At this point we contacted Belfast City Council and George Lyttle visited our Eco-Committee meeting and gave us lots of advice to help us improve our school waste management.



George also delivered two compost bins which the gardening club use to recycle food and gardening waste into compost to be used for planting herbs, vegetables and flowers in our new raised beds and polytunnel.



All classes were provided with brown caddies and a large brown food waste bin was wheeled into the centre of the playground by our caretaker every break-time to encourage pupils to put their snack waste into the correct bin.

ALL FOOD WASTE MUST BE PUT INTO THE BROWN CADDY FROM MONDAY 24TH APRIL

Teachers must ensure that pupils understand the importance of playing their part in food waste collection. Remains of fruit/vegetable snacks should be placed in the brown caddy along with and food waste from lunches in the classrooms. Pupils should be encouraged to take lunchtime food waste home to be placed in their own recycling bins. The reason for this is that should the school generate too much food waste it will be charged extra for the collections, whereas, there is no extra charge for households.

Foundation- Eco-councillors will be appointed to collect and empty Brown Caddies

KS1 & KS2 Teachers please arrange for Brown Caddy monitors within each class

Please support your ECO-Council

www.eco-schoolsni.org

-Wheelie Big Food Waste lesson F /KS1 /KS2



Two large bins for recycling paper and plastics, cardboard, aluminium, and tins were delivered to each classroom and pupils and teachers were asked to recycle everything they could



Then... we decided to enter the **'Wheelie Big Challenge'** with Eco-Schools to give us a focus for our litter and recycling campaign. The Eco-Committee set about carrying out waste audits to determine what bins we were using in school and what new bins we might need to facilitate the recycling that was now happening throughout the school. The committee discovered that we didn't have a bin for food waste so the school principal contacted a recycling company to collect our food waste and a company to collect our recyclable waste, significantly reducing the waste we were sending to landfill.

Breaking News

No more plastic straws in St Michael's PS!

In January 2018 the pupils on the Eco-Committee talked about the problem caused by plastic straws being used with the milk cartons every day in class. The office provided figures for the number of cartons of milk being consumed in each class and the figures were worked out for the whole school (each child using one plastic straw per carton of milk):



266 cartons per day x 5 days = 1330 per week = 5320 per month

A lot of plastic straws!!

Some research was carried out and compostable straws were sourced online and the school purchased thousands of them to stock up for the rest of the year. Since January 2018 **NO** plastic straws have been used in school. This reduced our plastic waste going to landfill.

Our caretaker also reported that banning plastic straws saved on plumber's bills for clearing pipes under sinks blocked by plastic straws that had slipped down the plug hole!



Next... a different type of litter was identified by the Eco-Committee and this involved lost property. We had a very large lost property box of good quality school uniform. The School Councillors got involved at this stage and sorted all of the clothing into items with names that could be returned to their owners and clothing that could be washed and reused. We decided to organise a 'Pop-up' recycled uniform shop and put out a request to parents for contributions of uniform that they no longer needed. The response was amazing! Parents not only contributed items but also purchased items from the shop. We would like this to become a regular feature on the school calendar.

To get the whole school community involved in our Eco activities the Eco-Committee came up with the idea of organising an Eco-week in early April. This involved lots of emails to various organisations and people and drawing up a full time-table of events to ensure that everybody could take part in Eco Week.

Eco Week April 16-20	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>Outside agencies involved</p> <p>Habitat for Humanity Pete 02892635635</p> <p>Bryson Energy efficiency talk Elaine 02866340798</p> <p>George Lyttle Belfast City Council 028 90320202</p> <p>NI Conservation Volunteers Nevill 028 90645169 07843069561</p> <p>Litter Presentation Corina</p> <p>Parents Mrs Bennet P4 Mrs McGonigle Mrs Donnelly</p> <p>BOG Marie O'Donoghue</p>	<p>Litter Poster competition (whole school)</p> <p>All Classes Daily survey of walk/ cycle/scoot to school Daily Healthy Break survey Litter picking time-table Daily mile</p> <p>Rap/Poem competition on Eco code years 4-7</p> <p>Create a sculpture from recycled materials P1 Mrs O with Marie O'Donoghue</p> <p>weigh black bin bag after lunch and record</p>	<p>Paper free school day</p> <p>All Classes Daily survey of walk/ cycle/scoot to school Daily Healthy Break survey Litter picking time- table Daily mile</p> <p>Planting years 1-2 Plant out tyres in Foundation playground</p> <p>P2 / P3 join the pod.org Bug survey online www.ase.org.uk</p> <p>weigh black bin bag after lunch and record</p>	<p>Eco lunch box day waste free lunch</p> <p>All Classes Daily survey of walk/ cycle/scoot to school Daily Healthy Break survey Litter picking time- table Daily mile</p> <p>P3-4 planting</p> <p>P4- making recycled bird/butterfly feeders</p> <p>P6-in Hall Habitat for Humanity 11.00-12.00</p> <p>weigh black bin bag after lunch and record Pop up Uniform shop</p>	<p>Eco council assembly</p> <p>All Classes Daily survey of walk/ cycle/scoot to school Daily Healthy Break survey Litter picking time- table Daily mile P3 Mr Duggan- No electricity day</p> <p>P7-George Lyttle BCC-Composting interactive quiz in classrooms 9.45-10.30 -Mrs D 11.00-11.45 Mr McG</p> <p>P5 Litter presentation in hall 9.15-10.15-Mrs C/KA 11.00-12.00-Mr L Planting years 5-6 weigh black bin bag after lunch and record Pop up Uniform shop</p>	<p>Green Day - 'wear something green to be green' (£1 donation)</p> <p>All Classes Daily survey of walk/ cycle/scoot to school Litter picking time- table Healthy Break survey Daily mile</p> <p>Planting year 7</p> <p>Mrs Bennet</p> <p>weigh black bin bag after lunch and record</p>



An email was sent to all parents to make sure that they were aware of the activities and to encourage them to support their children:

Next week is 'Eco Week' in St. Michael's and lots of activities have been arranged to highlight the targets on the Eco-Committee's Action Plan.

- *All children are being encouraged to walk, cycle or scoot to school.*
- *The data for this will be recorded in every class each day.*
- *All children should have a healthy break and the data will be recorded in each class every day*
- *Wednesday 18th is 'Eco-lunch' day. We want to encourage all the children to come to school with as little packaging as possible in their lunch boxes and NO single-use plastic water bottles are permitted.*
- *Each class will weigh the black bin in their classroom every day after lunch. We hope that on Wednesday the amount of rubbish going into the bin will be reduced and this should be reflected in the recorded weight.*
- *The aim is to send less rubbish to landfill.*
- *Friday 20th is an optional non-uniform 'Green Day'*
'Wear green to be green' when the whole school will celebrate our Eco efforts.

To find out how much waste was produced the Eco-Committee weighed the amount of waste in the general bins after lunch each day during Eco week. They found that the amount of waste was 55% lower on Eco-lunch day, saving a whopping **5kg** of waste from being sent to landfill on this one day!

All on board...The canteen got on board the Eco-train and decided to measure the amount of food waste being created each lunch during Eco-week. They actively encouraged the children to take what they thought they would eat and to eat up everything on their tray. The staff weighed the food waste each day to give them the necessary data to determine how much waste food was being produced.



The canteen agreed to join in with the Eco-week activities. Each day the Dinner Supervisor weighed the slop bucket at the end of dinner time. Pupils were actively encouraged to only take the food on their tray that they thought they would eat. They were told to come up for more if they still felt hungry. As the week went on the amount of food being thrown out had reduced by half. The canteen hope to continue reducing waste.

Well done Francis and the canteen staff!

	Monday 16th	Tuesday 17th	Wednesday 18th	Thursday 19th	Friday 20th
Canteen/ slop bucket	4.3kg	4.2kg	2.8kg	1.9kg	2.7kg

Our big day came when we were invited to Belfast City Hall to take part in the Final of the Wheelie Big Challenge. Everyone had a brilliant day.



*Our presentation at the Wheelie Big Competition in the City Hall with our recycled **Alex the Alligator**.*

We got to see all the work being done in other schools and we were thrilled to be given first place!



Finally, after all our hard work...we applied for our Green Flag and were delighted to be awarded it by the assessors who came to visit us in May 2018.

