

Director of Estates Sustainability Report

Autumn 2024



**'All pupils
achieve the
highest standard
of educational
outcomes
regardless of
circumstance or
background'**

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Introduction

The purpose of sustainability in schools is to produce contributing community members. When preparing for the future, schools need to model and help children understand the impact each of us has on the world. This includes teaching sustainability in schools and helping children understand the importance and purpose of environmentally friendly practices.

This will enable our children to develop an understanding of environmental issues and help them make decisions that can maintain and improve the world that we live in.

What is Environmental Education and why is achieving Green Flag status important?

Environmental education can be defined as “a process that allows individuals to explore environmental issues, engage in problem solving and take action to improve the environment. As a result, individuals develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues and the skills to make informed and responsible decisions.”

Educators and young people care deeply about environmental issues and have a strong desire to actively protect our planet. However, environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity-loss or plastic pollution are huge global issues and the thought of tackling them can be intimidating, leaving many feeling overwhelmed and wondering ‘Where do I begin?’

The Eco-Schools programme provides a simple, seven-step framework that answers this question whilst empowering young people to make a difference in their school, local community and beyond. Since 1994, millions of young people around the world have worked through the Eco-Schools Seven Steps programme before being recognised for their efforts with a prestigious Eco-Schools Green Flag.

Schools connect their activities to three or more of the ten Eco-Schools Topics. These topics break large, global issues like climate change into more manageable and directed themes that prompt young people to consider environmental changes that they can make in their school and everyday lives.



Establishing Eco Committees

The main purpose of the Eco Committee is to establish a group of pupils in each school to take responsibility for delivering the Eco-Schools programme, with the support of a member of staff to act as the school's Eco Co-Ordinator.

The establishment of school Eco Committees will help our pupils to develop the abilities to work together to plan, deliver, monitor and evaluate environmental actions in their school.

Embedding sustainability within our schools will:

- engage our pupils in important environmental issues.
- demonstrate to our pupils that environmental actions can be enjoyable, social and rewarding.
- teach responsibility and generate a sense of community.
- develop the skills and knowledge our children need to play an active role in protecting our environment now and throughout their lifetimes.
- empower our pupils with the belief that they can have a positive impact on our planet.

Independent research has also found that children's participation in Eco-Schools leads to increased confidence, development of leadership skills, improved behavior and greater motivation at school.

Health, Safety and Environmental Committees

To help facilitate this process, the responsibility of each school's Health and Safety Committee has been expanded to include sustainability. To reflect this change, each committee has been re-named to Health, Safety and Environmental Committee.

The Trust nominated Sustainability and Environment Manager, Steven Owens all committee meetings to help develop each school's sustainability awareness and drive awareness activities.









Several schools already have established Eco Committees while others are just beginning their journey.



Our journey to achieving Green Flag Status

All Trust schools have now begun their journeys towards achieving Green Flag status. Some schools are now in a strong enough position and applications have been submitted. Other schools have only just begun this process, and some are making slower progress than others and will look to apply during the following year, however all schools will make significant progress throughout next year.

The diagram below details the timeline and stages to be achieved by our schools:

Eco-Schools Step	Autumn Term				Spring Term				Summer Term		
	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL
 Eco Committee	█										
 Environmental Review		█									
 Action Plan		█									
 Curriculum Links		█									
 Informing & Involving		█									
 Monitoring & Evaluation				█							
 Eco-Code									█		
 Application!									█		



Environmental Review

The environmental review enables the Eco Committee to identify environmental areas within each school that can be improved. The environmental review is split into 10 categories and the Eco team must choose three to focus on throughout the school year.

Once schools have registered to be part of the Eco-Schools program, all resources become available, these include assemblies, application forms, eco projects and evaluation tools.

The 10 categories are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Biodiversity | 6. Marine |
| 2. Energy | 7. School Grounds |
| 3. Global Citizenship | 8. Transport |
| 4. Healthy Living | 9. Waste |
| 5. Litter | 10. Water |

Schools assess themselves throughout the year on the Eco-Schools website and can evaluate their progress towards green flag status.

All schools with the exception of Hawbush and Paganel, have now had an initial environmental inspection and a plan for each school has been developed on the "National Nature Park" website.

The following pages highlight areas that have been developed during the Spring and Summer Terms 2024:



Jervoise School

Eco Teams are established and completed the environmental review. The staff member allocated to the ECO Teams has left, and Rhett Butler has begun his induction process to undertake the role. The team have decided to work on:

1. Identified an area to the rear of the school for redevelopment
2. Requested a better agreement with Weoley Castle Nursery to take on a shared use of the forest school area
3. The pupils undertook a biodiversity lesson. They decided to focus on planting wildflowers for pollinators and vegetables for the school to use.



The Jervoise Eco Team Biodiversity Lesson

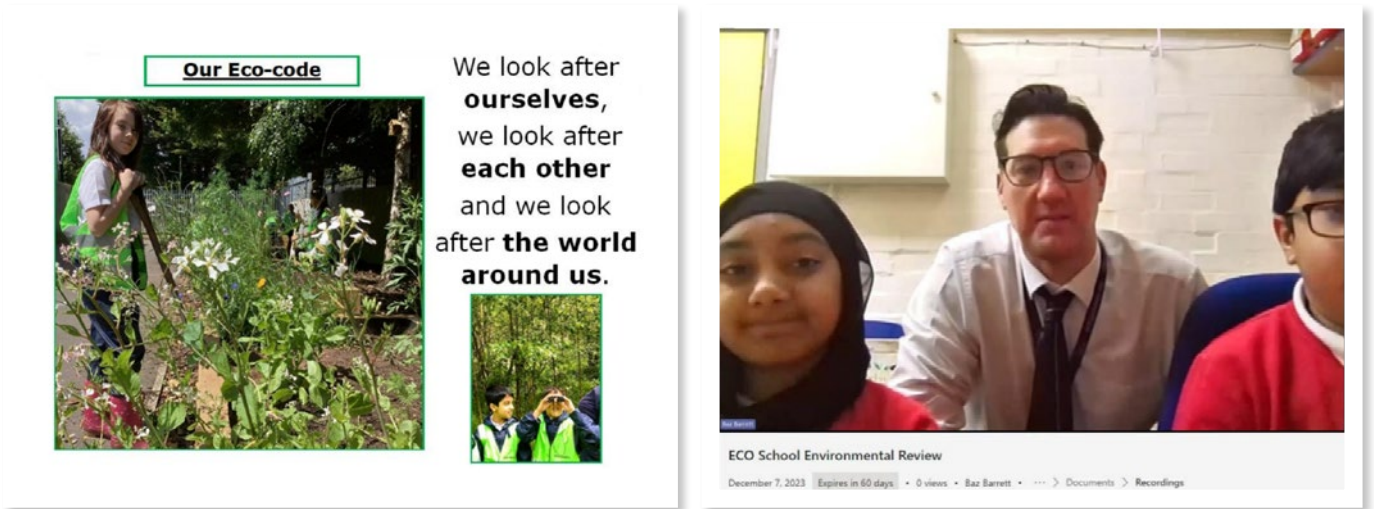
Next Steps:

1. Discussion with Weoley Castle Nursery was had and plans for increasing the biodiversity of the site were made. The Nature Park Application was successful.
2. Plans are to be in place to develop the area to the rear of the school into an eco zone with planting area and rainwater harvesting.

Audley Primary School

The following projects have now been completed. This will enable the development of the Forest School and Eco Garden areas:

- The ECO Team met and decided on the school's ECO Code



- The ECO Team deliver live bulletins to all staff, informing them of ongoing ECO initiatives, encouraging whole school involvement in sustainability.
- After taking part in the Big Schools Birdwatch, six pupils were inspired to attend a local nature reserve to observe a local bird ringing session.



- The ECO Team has also worked with the local Bickenel Parish Council, enabling the school to strengthen community relationships. This has enabled pupils to develop a larger offsite Forest School area at a local wood in Marston Green.

- Through the ongoing commitment and vision of the ECO Team, Audley has now been awarded the Green Flag Status!

Statement from the Green Flag Award

Great work! It was wonderful to see how completing your Environmental Review helped to raise the level of awareness in your school and helped your Eco-Committee to identify the issues and spot gaps in your school's existing environmental activity. It was also brilliant to read that the Environmental Review helped your pupils appreciate everything that your school is already doing to benefit our environment and identify areas to work on in the future.

Your Curriculum Link examples are imaginative, practical and fun, making environmental education accessible and engaging, well done! We loved seeing the excellent examples of your Schemes of Work and lesson planners and the photos of your pupil's work and of them enjoying their activities.

- Baz Barret has now completed the Forest School Level 3 training course at Weston Park in Stafford and is now on his journey to being a fully qualified Forest School Lead. Baz is now leading Forest School sessions in the small on site Forest School area and offsite at Bickenel Park.

Next Steps:

1. Identify planting to align with the RHS calendars to establish year-round growing opportunities in the new raised flower bed areas.
2. Eco Teams to focus on Biodiversity and planting initiatives.
3. A stronger focus on Waste Recycling as they struggled with the local council for assistance on this issue.

Beechwood CE Primary School

Beechwood has an Eco Team called the Bears (Beechwood Eco-school Awareness Raising Squad.)

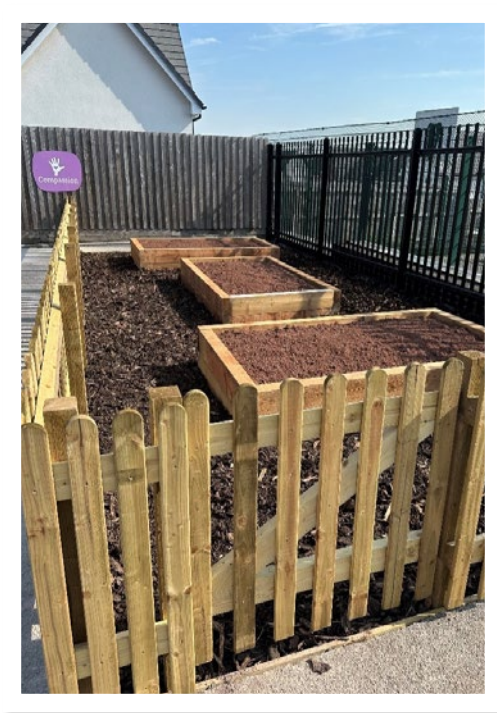
Current topics are displayed on the Eco Board and cover:

- Litter picking
- Biodiversity
- Water Energy and Healthy living

This school has a well-established Eco Team and sustainability ethos.

The Sustainability Manager met with four members of the Eco Team to gain the children’s understanding of their Eco journey. The staff member dedicated to the ECO Team has now left and an alternative champion is being sought.

The Sustainability Manager delivered a Biodiversity Lesson with the ECO Team. As a result of the lesson, the ECO Team decided to apply for funding to develop a new planting area within the school.



Next Steps:

1. The SIAMS garden has been designed and approved by the Diocese. This will be implemented before the end of the Summer Term 2024.
2. Identify planting to align with the RHS calendars to establish year-round growing opportunities in the new raised flower bed areas.

Hob Green Primary School

The following initiatives have been completed:

- Eco Team and whole school took part in the Chartwells Bee Ready Awards. The pupils submitted their designs for pollinating plants. 6 winners across the school were judged and awarded by Chartwells.



- The first harvest from the school's gardens was delivered to the kitchen. The ECO Team are instrumental in ensuring that kitchen waste is recycled.



- The afternoon gardening club explored planting initiatives to lock carbon into the soil. As a result of their findings they decided to implement a “no dig” gardening project.



- Pupils took part in the RHS “Big Seed Sow”.
- Pupils organised a fund-raising afternoon for the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust and Wild Acre Rescue, raising £280.00 and collected food donations for rescued cats and dogs.
- The ECO Team achieved the Level 4 RHS School Gardening Awards.

Next Steps:

1. Install new pond adjacent to the Eco Zone
2. Renewal application for Green Flag Award.
3. Carry out Biodiversity counts to assess the impact of the initiatives taken to date.

Bromley Pensnett Primary School

This school has a well-established Eco Team and sustainability ethos.

The Sustainability Manager met with four members of the Eco Team to gain the children's understanding of their Eco journey.

The following initiatives have been completed over the Spring and Summer Terms:

- A gardening club has been established and the ECO Team have been planting vegetables. These vegetables have been passed to the kitchen and utilised in the school's meal preparation.



- The school has now been awarded the Green Flag status for the second year running.
- The Eco Team worked with the kitchen staff and Chartwells to deliver a sustainable menu focusing on a "themed food day"

Next Steps:

1. The school will focus on initiating a new Forest Schools Programme. The Sustainability Manager will deliver Forest School taster sessions with pupils with SEN and the ECO Team.
2. The ECO Team have decided to drive their sustainability target and increase recycling activities on site.
3. Carry out Biodiversity counts to assess the impact of the initiatives taken to date.

The Oval School

Beth Watson is the school's nominated staff member in place to manage the Eco Teams.

- The Eco Team have completed their environmental review and are currently choosing topics to focus on this year. The Team have identified a litter problem within the local area and will put in place initiatives to address the issue.
- Severn Trent have delivered an assembly and workshop.
- The Eco Team has worked with the children from the learning hub to enter the Gardeners World wheelbarrow competition.



- The Eco team further developed the planting area to enable the area to be utilised to grow pollinating flowers and planted trees.

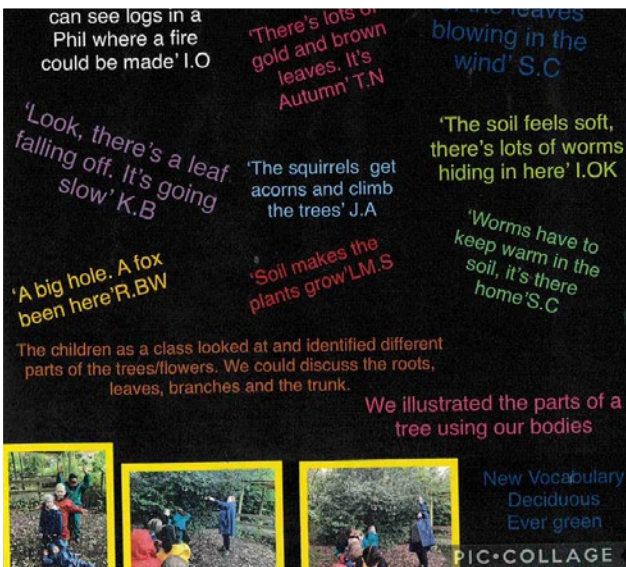
Next Steps:

1. Carry out a litter pick on route to the school's allotment area.
2. Apply for nature park funding to potentially install a pond area within the designated nature area.

Princethorpe schools

Deb Williams is the school's nominated staff member in place to manage the Eco Teams.

- Planters have been upcycled during Spring 2024. The paint was donated by a parent.
- Princethorpe have an excellent Forest School programme and as part of this they have a robust three-year sustainable plan in place for this area, delivered by passionate staff.
- The ECO Team carried out a site litter pick with the Sustainability Manager.



Next Steps:

1. Deliver refurbishment works to Pond and School Eco Zone.
2. The ECO Team will refocus their Environmental review and progress towards Green Flag status
3. The school will engage with the National Education Nature Park (NENP) to map habitats around the site utilising the resources available on the NENP website.

Wychall Primary School

The following initiatives have now been completed:

- The ECO team brainstormed the Environmental Action Plan, and voted on ECO initiatives for their Green Flag application.



- The planting area was refurbished and planted by the ECO Team



Next Steps:

The Eco team have decided to focus on the following areas:

1. Submit application for Green Flag status
2. Redevelop nature area and pond
3. Develop sustainability links into curriculum.

The Oaks Primary School

Michelle Calloway is the school's nominated staff member in place to manage the Eco Teams.

The following ECO projects have now been completed.

- The ECO area has been developed with the installation of a new greenhouse. ECO Team have begun developing the area for their "Seed to Feed" initiative.



- The ECO Team has gained additional funding from various companies including BUPA, Tesco and Wicks. These funds have been utilised to develop all aspects of the ECO Teams initiatives.
- The Year 2 ECO Team delivered an arts project utilising natural materials found from around the ECO garden.
- The ECO Team worked with the National Literacy Trust and attended a ECO literacy trip to a local woodland. This trip demonstrated how nature can have a positive impact on your wellbeing.



- The ECO teamwork with an external horticulturist to provide an extracurricular after school gardening club.
- The local newly elected Member of Parliament, Al Cairns, visited the school to observe the impact of the grounds and gardening work delivered by the school to meet their biodiversity targets. Mr Cairns has now offered future support for the fantastic work the ECO lead is undertaking in this area, as Mr Cairns understands the social challenges the school faces.



- The school has achieved Level 4 RHS School Gardening Award.

Next Steps:

1. Develop Forest School with a view to including this element in next year’s ECO Action Plan.
2. Submit application for Green Flag award.

Paganel Primary School

Attended site to conduct an initial meeting to identify potential areas for development. The next stage at Paganel will be to deliver the ECO Assembly and establish the Eco Committees.

Next Steps:

1. Deliver ECO Assembly
2. Set up school’s ECO Team
3. Develop the Environmental Review and progress their journey towards Green Flag Status

Trust Eco Champions

Here we celebrate the hard work of one of our staff members and the work they have put in to ensure the children at their schools can take part in the Eco Schools Award. Our second Eco Champion is the wonderful Michelle Calloway who works as a year 2 teacher at The Oaks Primary. Michelle's hard work and focus has enabled the children to apply for their Green Flag during their first year of inception.

Michelle has a vision for biodiversity at the site and will let nothing stand in her way to achieve her goals. She has many tricks up her sleeve and has huge success finding funding and volunteers to help her achieve this vision. Her passion and drive has enabled her to access funding from Tesco, BUPA, Wickes and the RHS. Her love and understanding of the natural world is refreshing and she is a credit to the school. Through her determination and savvy spirit, they now have a greenhouse, a teepee, a pond, a planting area and wildflower meadow. Michelle can often be found at the school at weekends with a shovel and has recently installed her own steppingstone pathway through the wildflowers and into the teepee. Her eco day was a huge success with a whole day of sustainable lessons taking place across every class. This culminated in a celebration of the two frogs which now inhabit the pond "Cadbury and Fredo."

Michelle believes that the schools' involvement in the eco schools programme *"has allowed children to have a voice, to have an input into their future. They loved having responsibility and being able to voice their concerns and ideas for what we as a school could do better. After all it's their future we are all working towards."*

"It has been nice to work with children from across the whole school, gaining a deeper insight and understanding of what their thoughts are about how to develop a more sustainable future."

Has she felt supported during the schools eco journey?

"Yes, we're still in the early stages of developing our schools offering and there are still some areas we need support in to ensure it continues, but the support received by Steve so far has been great. As a school we would benefit from support with the grounds (maintenance and installation of items such as water butts) and a small budget to hold events and purchase items needed."

Michelle expressed interest in creating a new forest school area at the site, and we hope that dream will become a reality this year. She will be working with the trust's estates team to develop the area, and a staff member will be trained to deliver the sessions. The wildflower area earned the school a certificate from Butterfly Conservation, and their planting initiatives earned the level 4 certificate for school gardening from the RHS. For this Michelle has utilized the expertise of a local gardener to run the gardening club and many volunteers through the groundworks programme. Michelle even managed to persuade the estates team to help her build the new greenhouse!

Well done, Michelle, you truly are an inspiration to us all and the children at The Oaks are very lucky to have you. Good luck with your plans for the coming school year!

Nature Park Funding

In 2023, the National Education Nature Park, managed by the RHS, identified specific schools eligible for funding applications to convert grey spaces to green so increasing biodiversity at the sites.

In Spring 2024, the Sustainability Manager worked with the school's ECO Teams to identify "Grey to Green" initiatives. Applications were submitted for 5 schools. All applications were successful, securing £47,750.00.

This funding has been utilised for the following projects:

Beechwood C of E Primary School

Develop a new ECO Zone with planting and rainwater harvesting.



Jervoise School

Removal of large tarmac area and develop a new ECO Zone with planting and rainwater harvesting



Princethorpe Infants School

Redevelopment of the pond area within the forest school, to enable safe access for the pupils to utilise the new facility.



Princethorpe Junior School

Installation of new eco zone to include planting area and rainwater harvesting.



Hob Green Primary School

Redevelopment of disused pebble garden to create a new pond area.



Outstanding
pupil experience

Excellence
in education

Impactful
teaching

Effective
partnerships

Curriculum Links

As part of the Green Flag journey, schools must provide evidence demonstrating that the curriculum delivers environmental learning.

This will be delivered through our schools participating in the Eco-Schools programme, which has been designed to make young people more environmentally aware by allowing them to deliver youth-led environmental projects in school. Part of the Eco-Schools Seven Step framework is completing work relating to any of the ten Eco-Schools topics in our curriculum:

- Biodiversity
- Energy
- Global Citizenship
- Healthy Living
- Litter, Marine
- School Grounds
- Transport
- Waste
- Water

These links do not have to be specifically planned for Eco-Schools and evidence can be taken from any area of the curriculum.

The Trust curriculum has been reviewed with the Strategic School Improvement lead. The following links are in place and covered under the current curriculum:

Year Group	Curriculum Subject	Eco-Schools Topic	Brief description of Lesson / Activity
Year One	Science	Biodiversity	Plants / Bulbs / Blossom and Fruits
Year One	Forest Schools	School Grounds	Tree planting / Willow fencing
Year Two	RE	Global Citizenship	Hannukah
Year Four	Science	Biodiversity	Habitats
Year Four	Geography	Water	Rivers (including human influence)
Year Five	DT	Biodiversity	Build a Birdhouse / Insect House
Year Five	RE	Global Citizenship	Buddhism
Year Six	Science	Energy	Electricity / Light
Year Six	Geography	Biodiversity	Costa Rica

Informing and Involving

Throughout the academic year, school Eco Committees are to inform others about their progress and also plan opportunities to involve other pupils in their projects.

Sustainability Manager to organise an end of year conference for all Eco Teams.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Our school Eco Committees will monitor the progress of their projects and evaluate their outcomes.

Summary

The table below details a summary of the progress of our school’s journey towards the Green Flag award:

Category	Criteria	Audley	The Oval	Princethorpe	Jervoise	Wychall	Hob Green	Bromley Pensnett	The Oaks	Beechwood
ECO Teams	ECO Team / School Council established									
	3 x ECO Projects Identified									
	Project 1 - Big Battery Hunt									
	Project 2 - Eco Assembly									
	Project 3 - Site Litterpicks									
	Project 4 - Energy Stickers and swith off									
	Project 5 - Healthy Living									
Outdoor Learning environment	Project 6 - Allotment Planting									
	Project 7 - Community Clean									
	Outdoor Space Assessed and projects identified									
Carbon Offset	Outdoor Space Assessed and projects actioned									
	Forest / Outdoor learning space established									
Recycling Initiatives	Registered for Woodland Trust.									
	Recycling of Card and Paper Initiative in place									
	Recycling of glass and plastic initiative in place									
Green Flag	Composted Waste									
	Green Flag Status Achieved									

At present, the Trust has five schools that have achieved the Green Flag Award Hob Green Primary School, Audley, The Oaks, Wychall and Bromley Pensnett School It is anticipated that at least three other schools will achieve the Green Flag status by the end of the Autumn term 2024, these are The Oval School, Beechwood C of E School and Princethorpe School.

School ECO Teams are now in place across all schools. These teams will drive the ECO projects identified and play an integral part in embedding sustainability within each school. The Trust Board will be updated on progress throughout the process

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September 2024



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