

Name	Hamilton Grammar School
Local Authority	South Lanarkshire
Type	Urban secondary school
Numbers	1200 pupils
Joined Eco Schools in...	2003
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How did our involvement with Eco Schools come about?

Involvement with Ecoschools came about through our auditing procedures where we identified our use of the environment in learning as one of our weaknesses.

Who's involved and how we communicate

- Initially, an environment club was set up. Funding to put in a small garden and polytunnel was applied for so that the work could be extended to pupils doing Biology.
- We now have an Eco Schools Committee which has representatives from many departments, non teaching staff, senior management and most importantly, pupils from S1 – S4. Minutes are taken at these meeting which are stored on our shared network. Eco items are shared in the daily school bulletin and at year-group assemblies.
- The key to our success is largely in our action planning, which allows pupils and staff to set targets and place these on to the plan which is stored in the school's network. This means that it evolves from the 'bottom up' rather than being the usual 'top down' approach to an initiative.

Actual activities and topics studied

Our current activities include:

School Grounds

- Composting green waste generated in the school and growing vegetables and herbs.
- Using the school grounds to monitor and identify the biodiversity to be found there as part of the S1 'Interactions between living things and the environment' unit.
- Recycling printer cartridges and paper.
- Fundraising to buy materials for environmental improvement in the developing world.
- Enterprise activities to raise money for the school's environmental work.
- Working on an Eco Newsletter (to be published quarterly)
- We had investigated the possibility of renewable energy sources for the school but await further council involvement in the proposed school energy audit before we take this further.

Taking Eco-Schools Further

- The Eco-Schools initiative has brought the key areas of environment, enterprise, health and citizenship into one curriculum for excellence package. We now have a 'curriculum for excellence' steering group which involve representatives from the four main areas mentioned above.
- We have been asked to talk to MSPs about our approach to the 'curriculum for excellence' which has again evolved through good practice rather than been seen as a new initiative.
- The pupils involved were invited to talk to prospective teachers on 24th October at a 'Biodiversity at the Chalk Face' conference in Perth and one of the pupils has even been asked by Jack McConnell to join the Scottish Youth Parliament environmental group.

Hot tips for success...

- Trust the pupils ability to generate, take responsibility for and drive their own targets. Pin specific jobs on individuals, not groups.
- Use your networked computer system to allow the pupils to build and achieve their own action plan.
- Get as many staff from around the school to get involved and take credit for work already being done under enterprise, citizenship, health and environmental initiatives.
- Have regular meetings to monitor progress and review targets
- There is lots of environmental money and expertise out there. Find out what is available from your authority (e.g. rangers, biodiversity officers, funding for environmental initiatives) and pester them until you get what you need.
- Get as many staff and parents involved as you can. You will be amazed at the variety of skills out there.

What our Green Flag assessors thought

- A good , whole-school ethos. Staff are very much 'on board' with the eco work in the school. Much of the school's eco work is driven by pupils and there is a very upbeat 'can-do' attitude amongst them.
- Some very good curricular links, eg:

Home Economics	Staff and pupils ensure that all green waste is saved for composting in the school grounds.
Biology	Extensive use made of the school grounds, especially in S1 and as part of the biodiversity study undertaken by the school.
Guidance/RME	Inclusion of environmental issues in S1/2 units
Geography	Various environmental topics covered in S1/2 and Standard/Higher grades
Art & Design	Involved in production of eco bulletin/newsletter
Technical	Involved in projects such as building birdboxes
Healthy living	Links being made with environmental issues

- Fantastic links with the local community eg a group of pupils had been instrumental in transforming the garden of a local nursery school. Future projects included plans for a similar project in an old people's home.
- Good use made of events such as eg parents' night to raise awareness of the school's eco work. Committee members manned a stand displaying information about their various eco activities.