

Eco Schools and the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural curriculum

We began Eco Schools at Salway Ash two years ago and the Eco Committee's work across the school provides many opportunities to support children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Eco Schools is a national initiative which aims to promote sustainability in every aspect of school life by making all members of the school community aware that their everyday choices and actions have an affect on both their immediate environment and the wider world in both the short and long term.

The elected Eco Committee at Salway Ash is supported by a teacher and a governor but is increasingly child led and the depth of children's understanding of sustainability within the committee and across the school has grown dramatically over the last two years. When Eco Schools began if the Eco Committee members were asked why they wanted to be on the committee their answers tended to involve an interest in mini beasts or a love of being outside. The children's affection for wildlife and appreciation of the natural world has not diminished but now they will also describe that the reason they want to be on the Eco Council is because they are “helping to save the world” or “because they want to help teach other children how they can make choices that help to improve our world by reducing climate change”. The children can very effectively identify an environmental issue in the wider world that they want to improve or change and explain how their choices and actions will improve the situation. For example, a child recently explained that he was worried about endangered rhinos and that the reason he wanted to be on the Eco Council was to give him the chance to teach people to recycle; to thereby reduce deforestation and thus protect the habitats of rhinos. The children are passionate about environmental issues and there is momentum in their work. In this respect, the Eco School model draws heavily on the Christian value of compassion because the children identify problems and they are driven to improve or solve them.

The structure of the Eco Schools model gives children opportunities to learn about a topic or issue, show their understanding through leading assemblies, producing policies, making posters, raising awareness and ultimately taking action to actively improve a situation. The children are taught via the classroom curriculum and through the context of the meetings about nine topics. These include litter, waste, energy, water, biodiversity, transport, school grounds, global perspective, healthy living and green procurement.

The children are introduced to an issue, they review our current performance in this area and make and deliver action plans to try to improve our performance. The children keep reviewing their actions until they see improvements. Christian values of hope and endurance also underpin the Eco Schools initiative because optimism that things can change for the better if we keep working together is instilled in the children and determination and willingness to continue to think creatively to overcome obstacles is a characteristic of all the children on the Eco Council.

The cycle of learn, review, plan and do in many ways mirrors the stages of development outlined within our spirituality policy, namely:

Surface/Encounter - Deep/Reflection – Profound/Transformation

In the document below I will outline how the actions of the Eco Council fits into this model. I will demonstrate how it provides opportunities for individuals, the group and the whole school to experience profound changes in thought and action and to make positive transformations across the school community.

Surface/Encounter	Surface/Encounter	Surface/Encounter
<p>Developing the Eco Code: The children wanted to agree a set of rules/behaviours for the school community to work from to help us become more sustainable. The children read examples of Eco Codes from other schools and shared ideas about what it should include, referring to the nine topics. The EC wrote their own codes and agreed to support them (See attached document)</p>	<p>Litter: Our first focus was on litter. Children in school learnt through meetings, lessons and assemblies led by the EC what litter was and the problems it could cause. Children learnt the right thing to do with litter – put it in the bin, take it home.</p>	<p>Waste: One of our first and ongoing focusses has been on waste. The children learnt at meetings and in class what happens to things we throw away and which things we could recycle.</p>
<p>Deep/Reflection</p> <p>The EC children used the agreed Eco Code as a basis for their environmental reviews and for their subsequent action plans. The EC taught the code to the whole school community in assemblies and displayed the code in each classroom and around the school. The Eco Code was uploaded to the school website to spread the message wider. Members of the Eco Committee worked with the youngest children in school to teach them a simplified version of the code. The youngest children presented their own work about the code in assembly.</p>	<p>Deep/Reflection</p> <p>The Eco Council reviewed the school's performance with litter and included the aim to reduce litter in their action plan. The EC have written an anti litter policy for the school. The EC delivered assemblies to the whole school showing how much litter was found on the school playground and raised the children's awareness about what the problems for humans, wildlife and the environment could arise from litter. The Eco Council ran an anti-litter campaign and a poster campaign to teach the KS1 that litter can harm wildlife, the Y3/4 children about the dangers of litter to marine life and Y5/6 about the hazards of plastic to the environment – most of the school entered.</p>	<p>Deep/Reflection</p> <p>As part of an environmental review the children identified that we recycled paper but they wanted to do more to reduce waste in school because of the impact on our natural resources and climate change. Reducing waste was added to our action plans. The Eco children delivered 3 whole school projects with a waste emphasis over the last two years. 1) Making a Waste Wizard from recycled materials 2) upcycling garden materials 3) upcycling secondhand clothes with the SCOPE shop as part of Bridport Green Fortnight. Most of the school entered the competitions, making imaginative designs and creations.</p>
<p>Profound/Transformation</p> <p>The whole school has learnt the Eco Code and everyone supports it and the projects that emerge from it. The youngest children in school are able to explain the eco code in their own simplified language, for example, in recent assemblies. We are now in our third environmental review and we are able to show that we have taken action to improve our performance against more and more of the elements of the eco code. Children in class are able to make connections between the eco code and the school's Christian values – particularly compassion and the missive to 'Love thy neighbour'. The Eco code in conjunction with our work on climate change and Christian Aid has extended children's understanding of "Who is our neighbour?" and supported the view that we have a responsibility to support our neighbours charitably.</p>	<p>Profound/Transformation</p> <p>The Eco Council celebrated the school's learning about litter in a whole school assembly and with a display in the library.</p> <p>The Eco Council set up ongoing regular litter picking in school and now report via monitoring that we are virtually litter free. Many children across the school volunteer to litter pick. The whole school community takes a pride in looking after our school grounds.</p> <p>Families in school have voluntarily set up beach cleans and litter picking days between Netherbury and Bridport.</p>	<p>Profound/Transformation</p> <p>The whole school has a greater understanding of the importance of avoiding waste. The Eco Council now plan to build on this and compost food waste and recycle batteries.</p> <p>The children developed a sense of community by working with the SCOPE shop for Bridport Green Fortnight and the winning design was displayed in the shop. This link meant that the school donated over 30 bags of secondhand clothes to the SCOPE shop thereby supporting a local charity, extending our commitment to compassion.</p> <p>At the beginning of the Eco Schools project the school only recycled paper and cardboard now we recycle 300 milk bottles a month, which is nearly 3000 a year which do not go into landfill, helping to protect the planet for future generations.</p>

Surface/Encounter	Surface/Encounter	Surface/Encounter
<p>Energy: Learning about energy is an Eco Schools requirement. The Eco Committee and the KS2 classes learnt about how we use energy and where it comes from in lessons and meetings. The Eco Council reviewed the school's energy use and added reducing energy to their action plans. Initially the children understood that switching off lights would reduce the electricity bill but did not fully grasp the link to climate change and CO2 emissions.</p>	<p>Green Procurement: Adopting a Green Procurement policy is a requirement of Eco Schools. This means that when we purchase services or products the environmental impact of them must be considered. This concept was introduced to the children on the EC via the meetings and a generic green procurement was adopted. At this stage the wording of the document meant the children could access it at a simple level.</p>	<p>Developing the school grounds and biodiversity – A focus of the Eco school action plan this year has been to develop the biodiversity within the school grounds for the benefit of all users, human and animals. The aim is for the children to develop an appreciation for the natural world to encourage them to protect it.</p>
Deep/Reflection	Deep/Reflection	Deep/Reflection
<p>Through further teaching and meetings the children's understanding of the connection between our turning things off when we have finished with them and the wider global problem of climate change increased.. The Eco Committee led assemblies to teach the children “How to save electricity?” and energy saving and climate change. The EC led poster competitions to teach the whole school why and how to save electricity. Most of the school entered. They set up “Switch off Fortnight” which was a whole school concerted effort to reduce energy waste. The EC wrote and shared an energy policy. Light monitors were set up in each classroom. The oldest children were taught about the implications of climate change in different parts of the world and the ethical issues involved in this. The children used Christian aid materials to further understand the link between our daily actions (turning things on/off at the simplest level) and how climate change was affecting different communities around the globe.They reflected on “Why we should save energy?”.</p>	<p>The EC reflected on the areas in which the school has considered the environment in its purchases of products or services – they generated a range of examples – selling second school uniform rather than putting it into landfill; buying refillable pens for the teachers; using local materials and renewable sources for our new build; buying recycled toilet roll. The children wrote a simplified Green Procurement Policy of their own and it was agreed with the teaching assistants and office staff that the EC of each class will be consulted when new stock is purchased for the classes to see where there might be opportunities to choose more sustainable products.</p>	<p>Gardening Club have worked weekly to plant seeds, trees, bulbs to develop a nature trail around the school field and they have really enjoyed watching their seeds emerge this summer. Y3/4 children have had a literacy focus to celebrate all the wild spaces on the school grounds and all of them wrote about opportunities to have quiet time, think and use their imagination. All the classes are growing their own food and the reception class are planning to set up a vegetable patch in school from the recycled materials of the old playground equipment. The children were taught to search for mini beasts and build bug homes. The Eco School introduced a Go Wild project for the month of June which encouraged the children to get outside and have enjoy and appreciate the beauty and wonder of the natural world. All of the Y3/4 children took part – drawing outside, creating wild art, making bug homes, running barefoot, watching clouds.</p>
Profound/Transformation	Profound/Transformation	Profound/Transformation
<p>Y5/6 answers to the question “Why we should save energy?” reflect children's compassion for their neighbours nationally and globally but also for future generations of people, wildlife and the natural world. This work extended their understanding of “Who is my neighbour?” The EC calculated that if each class switched off its lights during playtimes , assembly and lunchtime (when the classrooms are empty) then the school would save the equivalent of 10 school weeks worth of electricity a year, saving a full year's worth over 4 years. The school is committed to</p>	<p>The children on the EC wanted to find out more about how their time in school and the products they consume affect the environment. They decided to source the most eco friendly writing exercise books they could and compare them to their existing writing books. The children discovered that our existing supplier did not offer recycled books and they found an alternative supplier for sustainable writing books. The Eco Council have written to our existing supplier to find out more about their green policies. The children hope to provide</p>	<p>The nature trail is getting ever more established. 100S of deciduous trees have been planted in the car park. A scented area is planned. Along the path to school many thousands of wild flowers are in bloom for the children and families to appreciate on their way to school.</p> <p>The new Eco School action plan aims to develop and maintain the conservation area to both encourage biodiversity and develop an area for contemplation. The Y3/4 children's interest in animals extended beyond</p>

achieving this and to support the youngest classes in school a simplified sticker code has been developed in school where every light switch has a green/red sign on it signifying whether a child can switch it off.

each child with writing exercise books made from paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council so that as a school we reduce our impact on forests.

Individual children report purchasing decisions they and their families make based on the environmental factors – for example, not buying peanut butter with palm oil or coca cola because of the number of non recyclable bottles they produce.

indigenous species to global endangered species and they led their own “Card and cake” sale to raise funds to adopt two endangered animals via the World Wildlife Fund.