

Eco Schools assembly script – June 2020

- This is Charities week and last week you heard from Mr Sillifant, about ways you can help raise funds for this year's charity, WasteAid. At their most recent meeting the Charities committee held a video conference with people working on Waste Aid projects in Kenya. I was privileged to be able to sit in and learn about all their amazing work. It was really inspiring to hear them describe the many ways in which community led groups are acting to reduce waste and increase recycling. For example, they make plastic waste into road tiles, waste fabrics into school bags and biogas out of organic waste. In school all our waste is sorted and recycled for us, as long as it gets into bins, but in Kenya the collection and sorting is often left to communities in the poorer areas. This makes the challenge of reducing waste much harder. Today, I've invited representatives of the Eco-Schools committee to share with you what they are doing to play their part in tackling the global environmental issues that we are facing.
- The work of the Sustainability Student Action Group last year led us to start this year with the aim of achieving the international Eco Schools Green Flag award. We'd like to take this opportunity to update you on what we have done so far and what our next steps are as well as asking for your help.
- Our first step was to form an Eco Committee. This is made up of students from across the year groups along with Ms Smith as staff representative. The whole committee meets at least once a half term but smaller groups meet separately to work on particular projects.
- Our next job was to carry out a full Environmental Review of the school to help us to find out what we already do well and what our main improvement areas are. We could complete some sections ourselves, but needed help from site staff and the catering team to fully complete it. We rated the school in ten key areas, including biodiversity, litter, transport and water. Overall, the school scored highly in many areas.
- As a result of the survey we chose three areas we wanted to make improvements in. These are our Action Plan areas. They are: Waste, including reducing our use of single use plastics; Energy, including reducing the number of appliances left on stand by, and finally Healthy Living, with a focus on healthy eating.
- To achieve the green flag award we have to show links to the curriculum. At the moment, we are in the middle of a survey of our curriculum to find out which of the Eco Schools topics are already covered in lessons. To achieve the Green Flag award environmental issues have to be covered in at least three areas of the curriculum. From the surveys we've already collected from subject leaders we think that we will meet this criterion comfortably. Many subjects cover at least one of the topics in lessons at some point.
- To maximise the impact of our work we want to get as many people involved as possible. So far we have written letters to our governors and PTA, communicated to parents and students through the bulletin and given updates to Senate. In addition, we have met with Site staff, Catering staff and Network staff to help us with our action plans. We are currently in the process of designing a webpage for our school website. This will make it much easier to give everyone more regular updates as well as allowing us to display information about our committee members, our actions plans and post the minutes of our meetings. We will let you know when this is ready to launch.
- This term we have been working on a project to reduce our Energy use. On 8th January we carried out a detailed audit of classroom appliances left on, when rooms had been empty for at least an hour. We have presented and

analysed the survey data and written a detailed report. We will upload the full report to our webpage shortly so anyone can read it.

- We learned that pcs were the devices most likely to be left on, many of them in Design. We were also surprised by the numbers of projectors left on, including many in Humanities classrooms. We are currently working with Network Services on some technical solutions, including automated shutdowns.
- We would also like to ask for your help. Please remind which ever teacher you have Period 6, or 5 on a Wednesday, to switch off the projector, close all windows and switch off lights if not automatic. This small change will have a surprisingly significant impact on our energy use. We are also planning to launch a campaign to help persuade all of us to take steps to reduce energy use at home. This will help tackle climate change.
- Our other two projects are Waste reduction and promoting Healthy Lifestyles. These link to issues often raised at Year Council meetings and at Senate. We think that there is general support for reducing the use of single use plastics in school. Although we use far less plastic in the Hub and g2 than we used to, we still buy a lot of single use plastics in the form of drinks bottles. However, before we recommend any further action on drinks bottles we really want to know your views. This week you will receive a link to an on line survey in which you will have a chance to have your say.
- We also want to find out your opinion on changes that could be made to food options on offer in school that would help make us more environmentally friendly and promote healthy living. We have combined our questions on plastics and food into one EcoSchools survey. We want to hear from everyone in the school so please take the opportunity to have your say.
- We will share the results of the survey in an assembly after the Easter holidays.
- If you would like to get involved with Eco Schools please let me know.