

Your guide to becoming a

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL

Improving school grounds



Participating and contributing



Enjoying
and
achieving



St Laurence School, Bradford-on-Avon

Background

St Laurence is a popular 11-18 Church of England Comprehensive School in Bradford-on-Avon, with specialist performing arts status. They achieved their bronze Eco-School status in April 2007 and are well on their way to achieving their silver award. The school's eco-group call themselves ECO (Environmental Care Organisation) and meet every few weeks. The group is facilitated by biology teacher Mr Squire, and led by Hannah, a Year 13 student.

ECO is made up of approximately ten pupils with almost all year groups represented. They also have 30 or more other pupils who volunteer to help out with tasks and fundraising.

The group's initial focus was on energy and waste. They came up with a set of five eco-guidelines for the school encouraging pupils and staff to properly turn off taps, close doors, switch off lights, dispose of rubbish carefully, and recycle paper. This message is a focal point of the ECO noticeboard and re-iterated to the rest of the school and parents through the school newsletter "Connect" and assemblies presented by members of the ECO group.



Keen to secure their silver Eco-School status, ECO together with Mr Squire and his colleague, head of humanities, Mr Evans, have some fantastic plans and initiatives underway.

Both teachers are interested in developing and prioritising environmental performance within the school as it is also a personal issue for them, but both strongly believe that any initiative should be pupil-led.

Specific achievements

Waste

In February 2006, with funding from Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the school installed the remarkable Big Hanna

kitchen composter. A Year 9 competition resulted in the huge machine being named "Chew-Barker".

Since its introduction, the machine has diverted almost all of the school's kitchen waste from landfill and provided the school with huge amounts of rich compost which has been used on and around the school grounds.

One of the issues the school wants to continue to improve on is their recycling. They want to ensure that each classroom has a recycling bin and that these are used in a consistent way. The ECO group is currently fundraising to provide bins for every classroom. The group is also visiting local primary feeder schools to build stronger links and consistency in recycling systems for when Year 7 pupils join the school.



Mr Evans is keen for these community links with the primary schools to be built upon as he feels the most successful way of changing community behaviours is by starting with young people within the school environment. By liaising more closely with feeder schools, he feels a consistent system is possible and a positive belief and ethos about waste can be embedded in local children's minds.

School grounds

Earlier this year ECO ran a bird-box building activity for Year 7s. The majority of the bird boxes were put up in the local community, but one has pride of place on an exterior wall of the school. This one is fitted with an infra-red camera and the feed is transmitted to the school's server, where pupils can follow the birds' comings and goings. There are plans to link this feed to the school website where the public will also have access to it.

Mr Squire and ECO are currently growing silver birch and rowan saplings they received through the Woodland Trust's "Trees for All" scheme, and these will eventually be planted around the school grounds.

Year 8 pupils will be carrying out a biodiversity survey around the school grounds as part of their science lessons this year, with a view to planting more wildflowers and plants in order to encourage biodiversity (especially butterflies) and to provide