



Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to you to share some exciting news, this year our school has made the decision to work towards Eco-Schools Green Flag accreditation (<https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/>)!

Eco-Schools began in 1994 and is the largest educational programme on the planet (there are currently 70 countries delivering the Eco-Schools programme around the world), in England it is operated by the environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy. The Eco-Schools programme focuses on empowering young people to lead environmental education and action in their school, local community and beyond. It does this by providing a simple, seven-step framework that turns pupils into forward-thinking, decision-making, planet-protectors.

There are multiple reasons we have decided to embark on the journey to Eco-Schools Green Flag. Firstly, our planet (and all life on it) is already beginning to feel the catastrophic effects of climate change, plastic pollution, biodiversity loss and a myriad of other environmental challenges. We want our pupils to be aware of the challenges our planet faces, and will continue to face throughout their lifetimes. We don't want our pupils to avoid or shy-away from these challenges: we want to engage young people in conversations about them and we want to provide them with the skills needed to tackle these challenges directly. Our hope is by doing this we will empower our pupils with the passion and skills to protect our planet now and throughout their lifetimes, including as they grow to become leaders, decision-makers and educators themselves. Alongside benefitting our planet, we also hope it will benefit our pupils - independent research has found that pupil participation in the Eco-Schools programme leads to: increased confidence, development of leadership skills, improved behaviour and greater motivation at school. We also anticipate it will help our school, it is proven Eco-Schools consume less water, use less energy and produce less waste, which creates financial savings for schools which can then be spent on important educational resources.

You may be reading this and wondering, 'How does this impact me?' Well, our young Eco-Warriors last term did an audit and decided on the environmental actions we will embark upon:

**Action 1- Biodiversity** - improve our biodiversity by encouraging more wildlife to the school grounds

**Action 2- Healthy living** - develop our sustainability and healthy lifestyle choices by growing our own vegetables, herbs and fruit by creating a new kitchen garden at the front of school.

**Action 3- Waste** - introduce new plastic recycling schemes

Over the coming months you may notice: environmental hints and tips on our school newsletters; invites to litter-picks, community gardening days or other similar events; requests for donations of time, equipment or expertise; and, perhaps most noticeably, a young person in your home with a keen interest in all things environmental. This interest may manifest in various ways, which may include: increased awareness of correct recycling practices; a determination to switch lights off when not in use; a desire to create bug hotels and bird feeders; offers to help nurture nearby plants and maybe sometimes even requests to time their (and your) showers!

I hope you're as excited about our Eco-Schools journey as everyone at school is - if you would like to find out more, or get involved, please feel free to contact me directly.

*Mrs Churchill, Eco-Coordinator*

