

Sustainability Champions: Pupils at St Michael in the Hamlet Primary School Receive Eco-Schools Green Flag with Distinction Recognition

This academic year, pupils at St Michael in the Hamlet Primary have led the way in promoting sustainability and raising environmental awareness among their school community, including peers, staff members, and the wider local community. Their exceptional efforts have been recognised with the prestigious, internationally recognised Eco-Schools Green Flag accreditation.

The Eco-Schools programme, established in 1994, has been inspiring young environmentalists for over 30 years. It has grown into a global movement, with Eco-Schools Green Flag accreditation awarded to schools in more than 100 countries. In England alone, the programme reaches over 1 million young people each year, empowering them to make a positive impact on our planet.

At St Michael in the Hamlet Primary, a pupil-led Eco-Team, supported by Mrs Horscroft and Mrs Walker, embraced Eco-Schools' trusted seven-step framework to champion positive environmental behaviours and further their school's sustainability journey. The Eco-Team kicked things off by reviewing their school environment and curriculum from an environmental perspective. They then worked together to create a detailed and impactful year-long action plan to drive meaningful change.

Their Action Plan focused on three key areas: Litter, Marine and Recycling. The Eco-Team undertook various initiatives to address these priorities, including activities such as taking part in Trash Mobs (litter picks) and writing to their local MP, Paula Barker, to challenge her about what the government is doing to address the issue of single-use plastic. She asked the Department of the Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) questions on their behalf, and then came in to speak with the children. The team helped to create a 'wall of shame' which identified the companies responsible for making the plastic wrappers they'd found around the school grounds and contacted them, to raise concerns about the impact their single-use plastic was having on the environment. Since then, the Eco Team have worked hard, liaising with the school's business manager and waste provider, to reduce single-use plastics used by the school and to help introduce new recycling systems across the school.

Speaking about their achievements, staff member Mrs Horscroft said, "I'm so proud of every single member of the team! They were passionate about trying to tackle the problem of single-use plastic pollution, particularly when they realised it impacted not just on the school's environment but also the oceans. They were determined to bring both the government and big business to account!"

Kayla, aged 7, stated, "I liked it when we picked up litter because our environment is very important to us because it can help us breathe and learn."

Aurelia, aged 9, said, "I am proud that we made the world a better place and made a difference in this school. I loved what we did."

Isla, aged 9, said, "I loved when we contacted Paula Barker and she came in and we expressed our concerns on plastic pollution."

Eco-Schools England Manager, Adam Flint, expressed: "Every year, we are amazed by the incredible efforts of young people working together to create a better future for all. Their collective impact is truly remarkable. If everyone approached the climate crisis with the same level of passion and determination, we could resolve it much faster and make it a problem of the past. At Keep Britain Tidy, we are delighted to recognise their achievements with the Eco-Schools Green Flag with Distinction."

To learn more about the Eco-Schools programme and accreditation, head to www.eco-schools.org.uk.