Welcome

Welcome to the Winter Edition of the Kent Eco News. The first Kent Eco News was sent out five years ago and the Kent Eco-Schools Project celebrated its fifth birthday in August. It is exciting to see that the original 77 schools in Kent who had registered or gained an Eco-Schools award has now grown to over 380, and that those schools with an award have grown from 13 to over 260.

It is great to see and hear about the environmental activity that is happening around the county. 13 schools that attended one of the Sustainable Schools Twilights in the 2007-2008 school year have now registered as Eco-Schools. 185 compost bins have now been delivered to the staff who attended training on composting at the twilights. 61 Display Energy Certificates have been sent to schools. The Skinners’ School, and Tenterden Infant and Junior Schools have had solar photovoltaic panels fitted, and Hamstreet Primary School have had solar hot water heating installed since July.

I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Sarah Moy, Kent Eco-Schools Officer

Kent Schools Action on Climate Change

The ‘Kent Schools Action on Climate Change’ pack and the Low Carbon Communities Toolkit were launched at Eastchurch CEP on 4 December.

Attending the launch were Mr Ridings, the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Educational Standards; Mr Ferrin, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste; Mr Crowther, the local KCC Member; Mr Booth, Chairman of Eastchurch Low Carbon Community; and Mr Bundy from Kent Energy Centre.

Mr Ridings signed the ‘Kent Schools Action on Climate Change’ pledge with Mrs Shipley, the Headteacher of Eastchurch CEP. This was another first for the school that was awarded the first Green Eco-Schools Flag in Kent in 1997.

Mr Ferrin presented Eastchurch Low Carbon Community with their prize of a cheque for £1,000 from the Challenge Fund to help pay for the installation of energy efficient street lighting in the area.

The ‘Kent Schools Action on Climate Change’ pack has been developed to support schools in Kent to teach pupils about climate change. This can be downloaded from www.kent.gov.uk/climatechange.
Congratulations

Green Eco-Schools Flags
Hawkinge Primary School, Folkestone
Leigh Primary School, Tonbridge
Longfield Academy, Dartford
Shoreham Village Primary School, Sevenoaks
St Paul’s Junior School, Tunbridge Wells
St Stephen’s Infant School, Canterbury
Ulcombe CEP School, Maidstone

Silver certificate awards
Brook Community Primary School, Ashford
Broomhill Bank School, Tunbridge Wells
Capel Primary School, Tonbridge
Eastling Primary School, Faversham
Joydens Wood Junior School, Dartford
Riverhead Infant School, Sevenoaks
Salmestone Primary School, Margate
Sandling Primary School, Maidstone
Shatterlocks Infant School, Dover
Shears Green Infant School, Gravesend
Sibertswold CEP School, Dover
St John’s Catholic Primary School, Gravesend
Thamesview School, Gravesend
The Abbey School, Faversham

Bronze certificate awards
Barton Junior School, Dover
Bishops Down Primary School, Tunbridge Wells
Bredgar CEP School, Sittingbourne
Chilton Primary School, Ramsgate
Christ Church CE Junior School, Ramsgate
Cranbrook School
Crockham Hill CEP School, Edenbridge
Dartford Grammar School
Grove Park CP School, Sittingbourne
Herne Bay Infant School
Highview School, Folkestone
Kingsdown and Ringwould Primary School, Deal
Lympe CEP School, Hythe
Platts Heath Primary School, Maidstone
Sandling Primary School, Maidstone
St Mary’s Catholic Primary School, Whitstable
St Matthew’s CEP School, Tunbridge Wells
St Peter and St Paul Primary School, Yalding
St Teresa’s Catholic Primary School, Ashford
The Craylands School, Swanscombe
The Hereson School, Broadstairs
White Cliffs Primary College for the Arts, Dover

Clean Kent School awards
Northdown Primary School in Margate has become the fourth Kent School to gain their Red Clean Kent School Flag to fly alongside the Green Eco-Schools Flag.

Kent Schools Action on Climate Change Pledge Schools
Eastchurch CEP, Sheerness
Minterne Community Junior School, Sittingbourne

Green Eco-Schools Flags
Several schools have asked for visits from Sarah Moy and Carolyn Thomas to support them in completing application forms for Green Flags. If your school would like help with your application contact kent.ecoschools@kent.gov.uk.

ENCAMS have announced that the permanent Green Flag status no longer exists. Those schools that received their permanent Green Eco-Schools Flag before September 2006 will need to renew their Green Eco-Schools Flag during this school year. From September 2008 all schools with a Green Eco-Schools Flag will need to reapply for the award every two years.
Mr Peter Lake, the Chairman of KCC recently presented three schools with their first Green Eco-Schools Flags:

**Fosse Bank School, Tonbridge**

Fosse Bank School in Hildenborough, near Tonbridge, were awarded their flag in June. Fosse Bank is the first independent school in Kent to gain the award.

The school registered as an Eco-School seven years ago and in this time has made significant changes. Snack time and school lunches have a healthy, and locally sourced focus; they were recently awarded the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Healthy Eating Award. The school has organised their own recycling collection which means paper, card and plastic are now recycled. Ink cartridges are collected and fruit and vegetable snacks are composted. The school has also taken action to reduce energy and water use. The school grounds are being developed to extend opportunities for biodiversity.

**Leigh Primary School**

Leigh Primary School were awarded their flag in July and were presented with it by Mr Lake who is also their local KCC Member.

The pupils have been involved in reducing school water and energy use; recycling paper, cardboard and toners; composting fruit and vegetable snacks. They have been developing a wildlife area in a local field, and learning about food miles. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award, and developed a School Travel Plan. They are also working to become a Clean Kent School and have carried out audits around school and on The Green in front of their school.

**Hawkinge Primary School, Folkestone**

Hawkinge Primary School were awarded their flag in July. The Eco Club have developed a growing area and paid for a polytunnel using money from the sale of salad and vegetables. They organise paper, cardboard, mobile ‘phone and cartridge recycling and record the ‘Walk on Wednesday’ figures. Energy and water use are monitored and reminders given to staff and classes that have not switched off equipment and lights. The local water company, Folkestone and Dover Water Services, have supplied the school with an automated water meter which means water use can be monitored on the school computers.
Future events

January
19 – 30 January is the RSPB’s Big Garden Birdwatch. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds produces teacher materials and new for this year are resources to support classes in reporting their findings. Register your interest at www.rspb.org.uk/schoolswatch/index.asp.

When you take part in recording biodiversity in your school grounds don’t forget to record the ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘when’ and ‘where’ and send them to the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre through their website www.kmbrc.org.uk/recording/sendrecords/index.php.

23 January is Appetite for Action Day. To register for materials which support the development of a pupil-led campaign which includes carrying out waste audits, composting and growing food, and to take part in the competition look at www.appetiteforaction.org.uk/.

February
9 – 13 February is EU Sustainable Energy Week. There is information on the previous years’ events. You could use the week as a focus in school. See the website: www.sustenergy.org/tpl/page.cfm?pageName=home.

23 February – 8 March is Fairtrade Fortnight. This year the event is ‘Make it happen, choose Fairtrade’. For resources and how to take part in the attempt on the world record for eating bananas look at www.fairtrade.org.uk/get_involved/fairtrade_fortnight/fairtrade_fortnight_2009/default.aspx.

March
1 March is the deadline for nominating schools for the Teaching Awards. There is a category for Outstanding School for the DCSF Teaching Award for Sustainable Schools. To nominate a school go to www.teachingawards.com/nominations/.

6 - 15 March is National Science and Engineering Week. This year the theme is ‘Change’. Materials and resources to help plan activities for the week are available from www.the-ba.net/the-ba/Events/NSEW/.

28 March - Earth Hour takes place from 8.30 pm on this Saturday. Last year 50,000,000 people in 370 cities and towns across the world took part. To register go to www.earthhour.org/.

Grant information

One Planet Living Awards
The B&Q One Planet Living Awards are launched every January. Between £1,000 and £10,000 of B&Q products are given to organisations in the United Kingdom and Ireland. The materials are given to projects that aim to enhance the local community and encourage a return to ‘One Planet Living’. The projects should show one of the following themes: environment/energy saving, natural habitats and wildlife, or local culture/heritage.

B&Q also offer two awards of £5,000 combined cash and products to schools that submit science-based project proposals which show an understanding about the environment and the need to tackle climate change.

The B&Q website has helpful information on how to apply for awards: www.diy.com/diy/jsp/bq/templates/content_lookup.jsp?content=/aboutbandq/2004/social_responsibility/YCDI_Awards/main.jsp&menu=aboutbandq.

Look out for

Bird box
The birdbox website is open for all schools that have webcams fitted to nest boxes. It enables schools to show the developments in nests around their sites.

To find out more about the project look at www.segfl.org.uk/birdbox. If you would like your school to be included contact Chris Davison at the South East Grid For Learning by telephoning 01252 81 11 81 or emailing bird.box@segfl.org.uk.

Total Green School Awards
Total Green School Awards recognise regional achievements in environmental work carried out by young people between the ages of 7 and 11 years. There are four categories of award; practical school grounds based work; research on the environment; creative activity; energy related projects. Entries from classes or groups can be entered. There are regional prizes for each of the categories of £500, and an additional £500 award for the overall winner per region. The UK Champions will also receive an expenses-paid four night residential course. For more information see: http://tgsa.ypte.org.uk/.
Lauren Baldock is working with Eco-Schools in Kent as part of her ‘work in industry’ year and has written these web reviews.

Shoreham Village Primary School
Shoreham Village School received their first Green Eco-Schools Flag in November 2008 after a lot of hard work. You can see all the effort the school, and especially the Eco Council, have done on their web pages.

Their website (www.shoreham.kent.sch.uk/Eco_Council.html) is really impressive and contains lots of information and photographs of their achievements! There is a lot of detail around the school grounds and their environmental area ‘Speller’s Wood’ which has been transformed by the pupils, staff and Friends of Shoreham School. The hard work paid off when the school were able to enter the local bi-annual ‘Garden Safari’ event in June 2008 with all proceeds going to the local village church. A mini world garden was developed in the grounds, in addition to an allotment, compost bin and ongoing work within the school.

The web pages also include questionnaires that the children have developed for the whole school to get everyone thinking about the amount of energy and paper they use. A survey was sent home asking if parents would provide electronic contact details so that newsletters would not need to be printed – what a great idea! For schools just beginning the Eco-Schools scheme I would really recommend taking a look at their website for more information on recycling, the Eco board and Eco-Code, plus much, much more!

Leigh Primary School
Leigh Primary School gained their Green Flag in July 2008. The school website is developed by the pupils as part of their lessons. The eco section on their web pages detail some of the activities that they have carried out in the past. Leigh is working to gain a Clean Kent School Award and carried out a litter pick, resulting in over 8kg of rubbish being collected! The website is www.leigh.kent.sch.uk/
Extended Services and Schools

Extended Schools offer access to a variety of activities and services to children, young people, families and the wider community, often beyond the school day. Extended Schools will be well placed to show how they are promoting local well-being within their community which is one of the ‘National Framework for Sustainable Schools’ doorways.

The Government wants every school to be offering its local community access to specific additional activities and services outlined in DCSF Extended Schools Prospectus (www.dcsf.gov.uk). The ‘core offer’ of services include:

- Childcare from at least 8am to 6pm all year round. This includes breakfast clubs, after school clubs and holiday play schemes. Many Eco-Schools are already offering these clubs and have addressed ‘healthy living’ and sustainability through the menus they offer.
- Study support activities which may include environmental clubs.
- Parent support which gives parents access to information and guidance on issues that may affect their children and the wider family.
- Specialist support and services which may include speech therapy, behaviour support and family support.
- Community access to computing, sports and arts facilities within the school building.

To find out more about Kent Extended Services visit the website: www.kent.gov.uk/kentextendedservices or contact the Kent Extended Services Team. Telephone: 01622 694991 Email: extended.services@kent.gov.uk.

Observer’s spot

If you went to ‘Kent Goes Wild’ at Shorne Woods County Park in September you may already have seen Spike the Spotter and picked up a biological recording kit specially written to help young people and their families get involved in identifying reptiles and amphibians, trees, mammals, mini beasts, birds, flowers, and information on commonly spotted wildlife at the beach.

There is also a passport to help keep a record of what has been seen. You can find out more about Kent’s wildlife at www.kent.gov.uk/environment/wildlife-and-landscapes/wildlife.

The species to look out for this time are House Sparrows and Dunnocks. These are often confused but if you look closely at their beaks you can tell the difference between them quite easily.

The male house sparrow has a rusty brown back, a black and grey head with a little black bib on his chest. The female has a light brown head and chest. The house sparrow is often seen in groups feeding and bathing and can be seen around towns, gardens, and parks. They live together too and often use the same nest sites each year. They like to nest in holes in buildings, nest boxes and hedges and make their nests from grass, straw, feathers and moss.

The beaks are adapted to eat seeds and grain which is the food of the adult birds. The chicks eat caterpillars, aphids and grasshoppers.

Dunnocks are small and brown and grey in colour. They live under bushes and creep along. They are very quiet and live very close to where they were hatched. They eat insects and spiders so their beaks are very slim.

For clear identification look at the RSPB website www.rspb.org.uk/schoolswatch/learn/topbirds.asp.

Remember to record what you see and note the ‘what’, ‘when’ and ‘who’ and send them to the Kent and Medway Biological Record Centre at www.kmbrc.org.uk/recording/sendrecords/index.php.

Don’t forget to feed the birds during the Winter and to take part in the RSBP’s ‘Big Schools Bird Watch’.
National Framework for Sustainable Schools

Two new publications have been produced to support the ‘National Framework for Sustainable Schools’ and are available from www.teachernet.gov.uk/sustainableschools.

‘Top Tips for sustainable purchasing in schools’ provides steps to make buying for school more sustainable. Currently 42% of carbon emissions from the school sector are due to day to day buying. The leaflet shows how developing a co-ordinated approach to buying, planning, looking at alternatives and sharing best practice can help school finances and the environment.

‘Top Tips to develop the global dimension in schools’ encourages schools to look at the links between local issues and global perspectives. It provides starting points to carry out work with a variety of organisations.

Energy Efficiency Training

An Energy Efficiency training course is being run at Oakwood House on 13 January. This is for support staff with responsibility for overseeing the day to day running of the site and building finances. For more information email tina.clark@kent.gov.uk.

Sustainable and Global Schools

It was great to see so many Eco-Schools Co-ordinators at the Sustainable and Global Learning events held by Commonwork at Bore Place in October and November. Commonwork is a charity based at Bore Place, an organic farm in West Kent. The organisation is developing a network of schools interested in the Global Dimension. Following an introductory event in July schools will be working with Commonwork for the next three years to extend and share their work in this area. See their website for information about the charity: www.commonwork.org.

Services for Schools

The Kent Eco-Schools Officer, with Lauren Baldock and Anna Williams from Canterbury Environmental Education Centre, were pleased to see Eco-Schools Co-ordinators at the Kent Services for Schools Trade Fair in Ashford. Schools were able to pick up information from the KCC stand ‘Supporting Kent Schools to Become Sustainable Schools’.

Primary Geography Conference

Primary Geography Co-ordinators attending the Geography Conference in November shared their experiences of becoming Eco-Schools and the Sustainable Schools links that have been made to the school campus, curriculum and community.

The work of the Geographical Association was highlighted, in particular the Geography Champions. Three Geography Champions have been appointed in Kent to work with Geography Co-ordinators in their local primary schools. See the Geographical Association website for more information: www.geography.org.uk/eyprimary/champions/#top

High Weald Energy Story

The Kent High Weald Project launched the High Weald Energy Story programme in November. Six primary schools and The Skinners’ School will be working together to learn about the ways energy has been generated in the High Weald through time, and looking at the options for the future. Practical equipment will be available to these schools for use in lesson time. Pupils will attend a special energy day at Bedegbury and there will be support to investigate the feasibility of installing renewable technologies in their schools.

Canterbury Christ Church University Initial Teacher Training Students

Good luck to the students from Canterbury Christ Church University who start their final teaching practice next term. Carolyn Thomas and the Kent Eco-Schools Officer had the pleasure of meeting those taking Geography as their specialism recently when they went to talk about using Eco-Schools to introduce students to sustainable development.

Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells Secondary School groups

Students and staff from Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells Secondary Schools have been meeting this term to help each other to become Sustainable Schools. Students and teachers from The Skinners’ School, Weald of Kent Grammar School, Hillview School for Girls, Tonbridge Grammar School, Mascalls, Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys, Oakley School, and The Judd School are discussing joint activities and sharing contacts.
**Kent Eco News**

**Kent Schools Pumpkin Challenge**

On 10 October representatives from schools across the county attended the Grand Competition of the Kent Schools Pumpkin Challenge at Hunton CEP. Pupils from Year 1 through to the Sixth Form shared tips on growing pumpkins, and what they had been doing as Eco-Schools.

During the morning, whilst the judging was going on in the marquee, the schools took part in a food miles game, a composting game, made pots, planted herbs and made fruit smoothies.

Judging of the four classes was undertaken by three teams:

- Sue Harvey and Ian Startup from Trading Standards. They bought special scales to weigh the heaviest pumpkins and also measured the largest ones across the widest point.

- Jennifer Holland, the East Kent Healthy Schools Team Leader, tasted the pumpkin soup prepared to the same recipe by the schools. She was assisted by Mike Thompson the Local Children’s Services Partnership Manager for Maidstone 1.

- Mr Dance, Cabinet Member for Education and Steve Oram from Yalding Organic, selected which pumpkins could be awarded the title of ‘ugliest’. This had proved to be a difficult class to enter for many schools as the pumpkins grown were far from ugly.

The morning ended with the results being announced and a healthy buffet lunch. Prize winners were awarded certificates, books and spring flower bulbs:

- **Heaviest:**
  - 1st prize - Hunton CEP, Maidstone
  - 2nd prize - Slade Primary School, Tonbridge
  - 3rd prize - Hillview School for Girls, Tonbridge

- **Largest:**
  - 1st prize - Hillview School for Girls, Tonbridge
  - 2nd prize - Hunton CEP, Maidstone
  - 3rd prize - Slade Primary School, Tonbridge

- **Ugliest:**
  - 1st prize - Longfield Academy, Dartford
  - 2nd prize - Furness School, Swanley
  - 3rd prize - Hillview School for Girls

- **Tastiest:**
  - 1st prize - Bapchild and Tonge CEP, Sittingbourne
  - 2nd prize - Ryarsh Primary School, West Malling
  - Joint 3rd prize - Aldington CEP, Ashford, Hunton CEP, Maidstone and Slade Primary School, Tonbridge

Thank you to Suttons Seeds who donated some of the pumpkin seeds, Steve Oram for donating some of the prizes and Hunton CEP for hosting the event, donating prizes and having the original inspiration for the competition.

Schools that could not take part but sent in information about their pumpkins received a special certificate of participation. These schools were:

- Bower Grove School, Maidstone
- Christ Church CEP, Folkestone
- The Churchill School, Folkestone
- Cliftonville Primary School, Margate
- Colliers Green CEP, Cranbrook
- Halfway Houses Primary School, Sheerness
- Hartsdown Technology College, Margate
- Hever CEP, Edenbridge

Mr Dance, Cabinet Member for Education with pupils and pumpkin from Hunton CEP, Maidstone.
After making pledges the pupils then spent time trying to generate energy by rowing and by turning the handle of a generator, working to turn lights off using a hand/eye co-ordination and reflex machine, cleaning windows using a computer game and using a heat seeking camera.

At the end of the session pupils confidently answered questions and graduated as Climate Cops. Armed with special red t-shirts and environmental crimes note-books they were challenged to help their school, friends and families to reduce energy use and carbon emissions.

**Benenden Schools go for green**

Pupils and staff from Benenden School and Benenden CEP School have been working together to gain Eco-Schools status.

Year 2 pupils from Benenden CEP walked to Benenden School to plant tree seeds with the Eco Committee from Benenden School. It was a very special occasion which helped to mark the beginning of a year of events to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the opening of Benenden CEP. After a picnic lunch Mr Lake, Chairman of KCC, the Headteachers of both schools, the schools Eco-Schools Co-ordinators and pupils planted seeds and named them. Then Mark Dodds, the Head Groundsman at Benenden School took them to propagate ahead of planting in the forest in Benenden School grounds next Autumn.

The two schools have been working together to develop Eco Committees. They have carried out reviews and will hopefully apply this school year for their Green Eco-Schools Flags. Another activity to support their work has been the installation of water hogs into the toilets at the primary school by the pupils from both schools.

Benenden School pupil; Alex Dear said, 'Being part of the Eco Schools project in our school has been a highly rewarding experience. So far we have initiated schemes such as 'Walk to school Wednesdays' in order to reduce pollution, as well as a tree planting session we carried out with Benenden Primary School which really instigated an awareness of the current environmental problems for the younger children. I have found that this project has encouraged the co-operation of the student body as well as brought us closer together as a community as we all work towards the common goal of helping the environment.'
This page needs you! Every edition features news from around the county. Reports are from guest journalists from the schools carrying out the projects.

The Craylands School, Dartford

Claire Williams, Allotment Gardener writes about the work done to develop the grounds at the school and the work of the Action Team at the school. Find out more about The Craylands School from their website, www.craylands.kent.sch.uk

I was originally employed to manage the allotment at The Craylands School. This consisted of seven raised beds set on the edge of a rough grassland meadow. The Parent Support Adviser and I have become inspired to use the whole meadow as much as we can. We have resident foxes, mice, lizards and slow worms. We have a feeding station to encourage birds into the area and soon we will have an outside classroom erected.

Our action plan is to have an outside classroom erected in the meadow, so that the pupils can use it for science and art projects. We hope that it will also be used for parent classes. This will be eco-friendly and save on heating and lighting.

Most lunchtimes, a group of children come up to the allotment to help me and one of the mums with the weeding, growing and harvesting. We harvested four pumpkins this year and displayed many vegetables at the Harvest Festival assembly. We have regular parent sessions. We select large projects to tackle with the adults; we have planted 50+ trees; installed guttering and water butts on the shed; cleared weeds and raked the meadow.

We have an action team, a notice board with progress photographs and the school newsletter also gives updates to the parents. Each classroom has a compost caddy for their fruit peelings/cores and the school kitchen also contributes to the allotment compost bins!

Brook Community Primary School, Ashford

Mrs Gauthier Eco-Schools Co-ordinator writes about the Green Day held in October. And the plans that the school has to gain the Green Eco-Schools Flag. Find out more about the school on their web pages, www.brookschool.co.uk

Just to let you know that we did finally feel we were ready to go for Silver, and are delighted to have received our certificate.

We held our Green Day on 9 October as our final push to get everything in place before we submitted our claim for a silver certificate award.

I’m also attaching a copy of our Eco-Code, of which we are very proud. The pupil members of our Action Team presented a poster version of it in sharing assembly, and all the children and staff signed footprint stickers and stuck them on the poster to say they agreed to it. We are encouraging parents/governors etc., to add their signed stickers too!

But we’re not resting on our laurels. Got to keep up the momentum and enthusiasm to strike out for Green Flag now!

It is great to hear from you all. Please keep emailing and writing.

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