Eco-Schools Scotland

11/11/2022

Congratulations to everyone at Balmalloch Primary School for achieving your 9th Eco-Schools Scotland Green Flag Award!

I thoroughly enjoyed reading through your application and learning about the **fantastic** work you have carried out during this journey. We appreciate how challenging these times have been and celebrate that you were able to keep your Eco-Schools work going on despite all. You have covered **all Seven Elements** of the Eco-Schools programme.

Despite the restrictions that have been in place, staff and pupils have shown **commitment and determination** in completing your planned actions. Well done. Your actions were very positive, and it is wonderful to see that the pupils have been covering a really good range of issues through their work.

The pupils have achieved a good understanding of your chosen **Sustainable Development Goal, Climate Action,** as well as having learned about **Litter prevention, reducing environmental pollution, Waste Minimisation, Waste Management, Global Citizenship, Life Below Water**, and local environment through engaging, dynamic, and interactive activities throughout the journey.

Your Eco-Code has displayed a clear message of the school’s mission in how to contribute to the solutions of Climate Change by adapting the 5R’s. The code has also helped to draw attention to your Eco-Schools’ work. You have used the **noticeboard well sharing your eco vision, values, targets, and achievements this has helped to keep the whole school community up to date about your Eco-Schools work**.

It is great to see that Learning for Sustainability is **embedded within the curriculum**. This has helped the pupils to achieve a better understanding of how to build a **socially-just, sustainable, and equitable society**. This has also provided the pupils with the opportunity to continually explore Eco and Environmental issues. Pupils have been working on Eco projects together with and within different subjects, such as: **music, numeracy, mathematics, STEM, art and design, PE, and English**. The whole school community played a role in being a **'Green Flag school'** and collaboration was encouraged throughout different Eco-subjects. Staff have been able to develop a wide range of resources and materials, shared lessons that linked up to explore key ideas and shared learning opportunities across the school.

Your links with the community has allowed pupils to take an active role in their community to work with others to make **our planet more peaceful, sustainable, and fairer**. These activities have also allowed them to foster **responsible behaviour** within the school and wider community. Your collaboration with families and community has helped to develop and increase a sense of **social connectedness**. The **parental involvement** has allowed parents and carers to make good connection with the school, **understand their children’s learning, and had the advancement to create more positive experiences for pupils.** Pupils have learned how they can act on a local and global scale to develop a more sustainable lifestyle for the benefit and **preservation of the planet** and how they can support others to do so as well. They have learned that helping others through sustainable actions can also benefit our planet.

Throughout the journey pupils have **displayed data simply, clearly, and accurately by using mathematical skills** they have also carried out **investigations and surveys**; used a variety of methods to gather information; worked with others to collate; and organised and communicated the results in an appropriate way. These elements of Measuring and Monitoring has enhanced your work, experience, and application.

It has been a **busy and impactful year** as the understanding and connecting with making the world more sustainable has been very powerful and pupils have not only been taking actions in school but also at home. Pupils shared their understanding about climate change during **Climate Action Week** and encouraged families with the help of an activity sheet to make small changes to help battle climate change and sustainable lifestyles. The climate action activities have helped enhance pupil’s awareness that small actions can make a positive difference in tackling climate change. These actions have also allowed them to learn that making changes can help **reduce footprints** and to inspire others to do their part in caring for the environment. Participating in **COP26 “The Moment” Youth Parliament** has allowed pupils to gain a better understanding that education is fundamental to tackle Climate Change.

The Litter and Waste actions have helped to increase student’s understanding of the harm litter brings to the environments and wildlife. The actions have also provided them with practical skills to prevent and manage litter and waste to prevent this from happening and encourage long-term positive behavioural change in their communities and beyond. Pupils have developed comprehension of saving energy as part of their work towards **Waste Free Week**. They have developed an understanding that energy conservation is the effort made to reduce the consumption of energy by using less of an energy service. That this can be achieved either by using energy more efficiently or by reducing the amount of service used. These activities have also helped pupils to learn that Energy conservation is a part of the concept of **Eco-sufficiency**.

Exploring **marine pollution – Life Below Water** has helped to develop pupils understanding that marine pollution is a combination of chemicals and litter, most of which comes from land sources and is washed or blown into the ocean. These activities have also helped them to learn that this pollution results in damage to the environment, to the health of all organisms, and to **economic structures worldwide**.

The **coats appeal** has helped to make a tangible impact on the **lives of those the charity helps**. Discovering and exploring **Fairtrade** has helped pupils to learn how Fairtrade helps producers in growing countries achieve sustainable trade relationships. The **thinking heads initiative** have supported pupils’ creative thinking to evaluate next steps in developing a school community that is more sustainable. The **upcycling project** has been a good way to promote the importance of adapting a circular economy. These activities have helped **enhance pupils understanding** that we must transform every element of our take-make-waste system: how we manage resources, how we make and use products, and what we do with the materials afterwards.

Pupils have learned how plants grow and develop; how to look after them; and how growing your own foods **contributes to sustainable lifestyles**. These activities have also allowed them to develop their sense of wonder and curiosity about the world around them. Growing your own foods has helped to promote a sense of exploration and discovery. The outdoor learning experiences have helped develop **life skills will**.

Pupils have become **environmentally aware**, they have developed an understanding how their behaviour impacts the environment and been **committed to make changes** to their activities to **protect the planet**. Their reflections on the Eco-journey shows that they have developed an understanding that by contributing their **views, time, and talents, they can play a part in bringing about positive change in our school and wider community**. Their efforts throughout the journey should support them to become **successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors.**

**Achieving a Green Flag Award means a good amount of versatility and commitment from staff and pupils**. All pupils benefitted from a wide range of **challenging, motivating, meaningful and fun learning experiences which support them to develop creativity, resilience, and independence.** Staff have helped to create a **nurturing, inclusive, innovative, and stimulating learning environment, and a respectful and positive ethos by working closely with everyone in the school community**. You have taken a unique chance to reflect on your findings, reflecting on what the pupils have learned and how to go forward.

Please, be aware that since August 2021 the topics of Litter and Waste Minimisation have merged into one. Since September 2022, the new Core Topic is Climate Action. We still like to encourage you to incorporate a (Community) litter pick in your future journeys as litter picks are a simple activity to enhance pupils understanding of the harm litter can cause, provide practical skills to prevent litter from happening, and to foster long-term positive behavioural change in their communities and beyond.

**Keep up the outstanding work and a big congratulations again to Balmalloch Primary School from everyone at Eco-Schools Scotland!**

Your application was assessed by Hendrika. If you have any questions or need further advice, please contact me at hendrika.psaila@keepscotlandbeautiful.org

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