

Monitoring and Evaluating

Why, What, How



You've come up with lots of ideas of things within the 9 TOPIC AREAS you can make improvements through your ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW. You've discussed and decided on your favourite targets and put them into your ACTION PLAN. Now, as you put your action plan into practice, you need to see if it's working, if you're making a difference! Because that's the whole point!!

Why?


If we didn't monitor the progress of our action plan targets, then we'll never be quite sure the extent of the good work we've achieved. It's always good to be able to back up our case with facts and figures. Armed with this information, we can celebrate our achievements and make a case for further improvements.

What?

Monitoring is the act of keeping a record of something happening.


Evaluation is when the information collected is discussed and conclusions are reached.

Both are as important as each other and go hand in hand as part of the Eco-Schools process.



What monitoring and evaluation is:

- Gathering information in order to find out what is the impact of your action
- Comparing before and after
- Can be quantifiable (data, graphs, hard facts!)
- Can be subjective (questionnaires, opinions, quotes)
- Keeping a record of ongoing actions to make sure they're continuing and on track



What it is not:

- Just photographing that something has happened
- Checking something is happening, without comparing it to how it used to happen



How?

Monitoring is something you need to plan ahead, before starting your action/target/activity. This is key, since you need to be comparing how things used to be, with how they are now.

The method you use to monitor your action plan targets will depend on what it is, and the ability of your pupils. For some actions, it will be possible to collect data, figures and create graphs. For others, it will be more a case of gathering opinions. In other instances, you will be able to project your impact by making calculations based on assumptions.

Turn over to view some examples...

Some examples of Action Plan Targets and ways to Monitor

Target: Increase number of pupils walking/cycling to school

Start a competition between classes. Record number of pupils walking/cycling to school each day. The class with the highest percentage by Friday win the 'Golden Boot' trophy!

Target: Ensure paper is used both sides before recycling

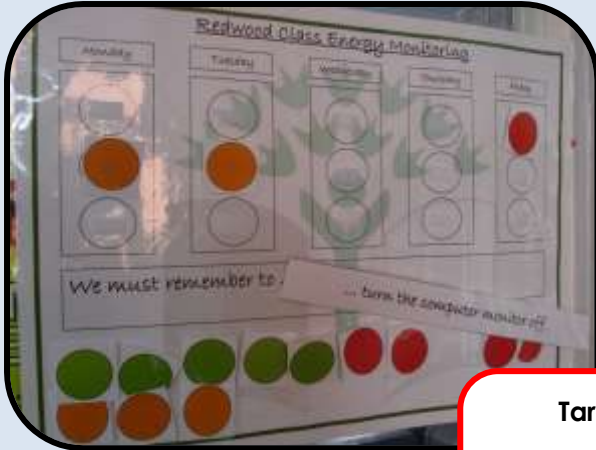
Volunteers take a sample of 10 sheets of paper from each classroom bin, then score the class out of 10 based on the number of pieces used on both sides. A record of scores can be kept to track progress.

Target: Reduce litter dropped in and around school grounds

Pupils carry out a weekly survey to 'grade' each area of school grounds as either A, B, C or D. Hopefully an increase in grade is observed.

Target: Fix a leaking tap

Calculate how much water is wasted in a day/week/year by collecting the drips in a cup over an hour. Now you know how much water you save once the tap is fixed!



Target: Make sure ICT equipment are switched off when not in use

Each class/ICT suite could be given a traffic light chart. Eco Monitors could give the room a score each day depending on performance. More green lights=good. More red=bad.

Target: Increase awareness about Fairtrade

Ask pupils to bring in and create a display with packaging showing the Fairtrade logo before and after Fairtrade Fortnight. An increase in the display will show if more families are buying Fairtrade. A questionnaire could also be included.

Target: Increase biodiversity within school grounds

Number of different creatures found on site is counted before improvements as part of science classwork. Repeated at the same time of year, following improvement to see if there has been an increase in biodiversity.



Target: Reducing lights and appliances left on

Energy Detectives could give out red light bulbs when lights or appliances are been left on. Compare total number of red lights given out during the week before and after action is implemented.

Target: Reduce food waste

Canteen staff keep a record of how much food is wasted each day. This information is displayed on a board in the canteen and data is converted into a graph.

Target: Reducing waste from water bottles

How about putting a bucket in each classroom for pupils to empty any leftover water. Compare the volume of water wasted before and after your action is put in place.

Target: Keep doors and windows closed to keep the heat in classrooms

Take gas or electric meter readings, together with outside and inside temperature and analyse the results to see if the effort to keep doors and windows closed has made an impact.