



Eco-Schools Wales

2024-2025

Platinum Challenges

These challenges aim to inspire positive, environmental experiences, starting in the classroom and expanding to the community by engaging the next generation in action-based learning.

Eco-Sgolion



cadwch keep
gymru'n wales
dactus tidy

We recognise that as a Platinum school, you may be looking for new and exciting challenges to keep your school engaged with environmental education and ensure the continuation of your Eco-Schools journey.

These challenges have been designed to take young people on a deeper dive into selected Eco-Schools Wales topics, further developing knowledge and understanding of environmental issues. They aim to provide learners with opportunities to develop a range of skills whilst implementing effective actions for positive change, in your school and wider community.

The challenges are an optional extension to the work and actions you will already have completed as part of your Eco-Schools journey. It is up to you and your Eco-Committee to decide how many of the challenges you choose to participate in. Make sure to record your progress and results in your Eco-School action plan.

If you would like any more guidance about the challenges, please contact your local Eco-Schools officer.



We have linked the challenges with the relevant Eco-School topic(s), as well as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which these challenges support.

If you would like to know more about Eco-Schools and the SDGs you can find more info [here](#).

Let us know how you get on:

Submit your [changemaker story](#) or share your work with us via email or social media!



Paper or Aeroplanes?

The footprint of our paper use is higher than we may imagine. In fact, one research paper by the European Paper Network estimates that the greenhouse gas emissions (GHEs) from the paper industry could be higher than those from air travel! This isn't to say that flying doesn't produce an enormous amount of greenhouse gases, aeroplanes chug out huge amounts of emissions in order to stay in the air. The issue is that our global consumption of paper is enormous.



More about the paper industry:

BRITANICA: [prog 2-3](#) | [prog 3-4](#) | [prog 4-5](#)

[Why is paper's carbon footprint so large?](#)

[Paper Waste Stats from The World Counts](#)

[Paper footprint quiz](#)

As a global society we use paper to write on, read books, wrap gifts, post items, wipe our bums, clean up spills, send greetings and much more. Shockingly, we use enough toilet paper as a planet to reach around the World **every 10 minutes!**

Can you count the number of times you've already used paper today? Do you know where it came from? What did you do with the paper when you finished using it?

We make, use and throw away paper at an immense rate. When we work in this linear way, resources are wasted, and we damage our environment. We need to do things differently and take inspiration from the natural world. Eliminate waste, circulate products and regenerate nature; close the loop and create a circular economy.

[What is a circular economy?](#)

The Curriculum for Wales – Statements of What Matters

Humanities

2.3.1 Enquiry, exploration and investigation inspire curiosity about the world, its past, present and future.

2.3.3 Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions.

2.3.5 Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action.

Mathematics and numeracy

2.5.4 Statistics represent data, probability models chance, and both support informed inferences and decisions.

Science and technology

2.6.2 Design thinking and engineering offer technical and creative ways to meet society's needs and wants.

Sustainable Development Goals



Eco-Schools Topics:

Global Citizenship | Waste Minimisation | Energy | Health, Food and Wellbeing

Challenge: Create a campaign exposing the impact of the global paper industry and investigate paper consumption in your school.

Research: Use the links in the background information to find out more about the paper making process, its history and the impact of the industry today. Explore sustainable paper and how to reduce your footprint.

Get started with the links:

[MyRecyclingWales: Paper](#)

[FSC labels](#) | [Forest Stewardship Council UK](#)

[wwf_paper_guide.pdf](#)

Investigate: How circular is your school's paper consumption? Are the products made from recycled materials? Do they come from a sustainable manufacturer? Are all paper products recycled where possible? Consider a range of products including toilet roll, tissues, exercise books and copier paper.

Act: School-wide campaigns are a great opportunity to empower learners and effective ways to address important local or global environmental issues. Design and run a campaign in your school, highlighting ways to make paper usage more circular and sustainable.

Use these steps to guide you (more info [here](#)):

1. Brainstorm Ideas
2. Plan Your Goals
3. Communicate
4. Implement
5. Monitor Success
6. Celebrate, Reflect and Evaluate

It's important to **monitor** paper usage as you go along, so you know if your actions have worked! You can work out your footprint at [Paper Calculator 4.0](#) | [Environmental Paper Network](#).

Share: Running a campaign is all about informing and engaging as many people as possible and making sure they support you. You must carefully consider the message that you want to get across and how to ensure the audience understands it. Use the changes you want to see in your school to guide your campaign. Let your community know what changes you're hoping to initiate. Tell them what they can do and find out if they have any ideas about how to help.

Share your successes, small and large, to help keep people engaged and passionate about the campaign.

Extend: Let the wider community in on what you are doing. Write an article that can be shared by networks such as local news sources, Eco-Schools Wales 'Change-Maker Stories', and on your own social media / newsletters. Include shocking facts and tips and tricks to reduce usage.

Be Inspired (spotted in Ysgol Byrn Coch, Mold):

Worksheets can save a lot of time, but they waste a lot of paper. INSTEAD, hole punch your exercise books and use treasury tags to insert worksheets. No need to faff around with glue sticks, you can print double sided, and eliminate wasted pages in exercise books!

For more ideas take a look at these top tips from Friends of the Earth to see how else you could reduce your paper footprint in your school community [Paper - things we can do](#)

Sustainable Supply Chains

Everything that we use has a story to tell and a journey to share. Although, we are getting better at thinking about what we do with our things after we've used them, we often forget to think about where our products come from, who was involved in making them, the communities that they live in and the impact on our environment. The journey that a product goes on to get to you, the consumer, is called a supply chain. Everything we buy has a supply chain, but some are more ethical and sustainable than others.

More about [Ethical Supply Chains](#)

At Eco-Schools Wales, we believe we should lead by example.

Our Green Flags have changed in recent years; we've moved away from polyester flags and sourced a much more sustainable fabric. After careful research, we are proud to have partnered with a small, ethical company who is supporting small rural communities in India, who are growing organic hemp which is then used to make our Green Flags.



More about [EarthFlag](#)

The Curriculum for Wales – Statements of What Matters

Literacy, Language and Communication

2.4.3 Expressing ourselves through languages is key to communication.

Mathematics and numeracy

2.5.1 The number system is used to represent and compare relationships between numbers and quantities.

Science and technology

2.6.2 Design thinking and engineering offer technical and creative ways to meet society's needs and wants.

2.6.3 The world around us is full of living things which depend on each other for survival.

Humanities

2.3.1 Enquiry, exploration and investigation inspire curiosity about the world, its past, present and future.

2.3.3 Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions.

2.3.4 Human societies are complex and diverse, and shaped by human actions and beliefs.

2.3.5 Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action.

Health and Well-being

2.2.3 Our decision-making impacts on the quality of our lives and the lives of others.

2.2.4 How we engage with social influences shapes who we are and affects our health and well-being.

Sustainable Development Goals



Eco-Schools Topics:

Global Citizenship | Waste Reduction | Health, Food and Wellbeing

Challenge: Investigate your school uniform, find out where it comes from and what impact it has, both socially and environmentally.

Research: In 2023, the statutory school uniform guidance for schools in Wales was updated: [School uniform and appearance: policy guidance for governing bodies](#)

In the new guidance a much greater emphasis was given to offering second hand and affordable uniform. This has resulted in a really positive increase in second hand uniform uptake across Wales. Schools are also encouraged to look at who is supplying their uniform and, if possible, offer a choice of suppliers to ensure inclusivity. But where are these suppliers sourcing *their* garments, and what impact are they having on the people who produce the fabric and manufacture the clothes that we are wearing?

Find out more about the guidance and what it means for young people in Wales:

[Children's Legal Centre Wales: School Uniform](#)

Investigate: How sustainable is your school uniform? Approach this challenge as if you are an investigative journalist taking a deep dive into the journey of clothing and specifically school uniform. Your uniform comprises of various garments, and most likely they're sourced from a range of places, your school jumper is a great place to start your investigation as it's likely everyone has one. Find out who makes the jumper and take a look at their website; do they have any information about where it comes from or their sustainability? What material is it made from and is this the best option to ensure it is affordable, cost effective and environmentally friendly?

Act: Equipped with the information learned, plan an event or campaign which will raise awareness of the issues surrounding the fashion and textile industry and how our choices can impact. Remember to link it to your school uniform and consider how your message will encourage change.

What have you found out about the journey of your school uniform and who / what is affected along the way? Are you happy with your findings or do you want changes to be made in order to offer a more sustainable option for learners?

Share: You've created your campaign and now it's time to share it with your community! It's important that you know if your campaign is working. Can you ask members of your community to complete interviews or surveys to let you know if their views have changed.

»» **Extend:** Create a documentary-style vlog which follows your investigation and can be shared at the end of the project to raise awareness, alongside other campaign materials. Use this Natural Resources Wales resource to help plan and structure the vlog: [Creating an Enviro-Vlog](#)

Where Have All the Insects Gone?

[MORE
ABOUT
INSECTS](#)

Insects evolved on Earth long before humans and make up over 50% of the species on our planet today. There are about 1 million known species of insects; and scientists are constantly discovering more. Insects play vital roles in our eco-system; our planet's health depends on them.

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SPLAT! OR not so splat? Ask someone from an older generation what the windscreen used to look like after a car journey. They will probably tell you that once upon a time the windscreen would have been covered in splatted bugs and regale you with how smeary and difficult they are to clean off. Gross! But things are different now, people are noticing way fewer splats. This observation is known as The Windscreen Phenomenon. Why would this be? Have insects got better at crossing roads or is there a more sombre answer? According to BugLife and other conservation charities, the number of insects populating the planet has significantly declined in recent years.

2020



Since we rely on insects to help pollinate our crops, control pests and support food chains, it is important to start doing everything we can to help our creepy crawly friends!

The Curriculum for Wales – Statements of What Matters

Mathematics and numeracy

- 2.5.1** The number system is used to represent and compare relationships between numbers and quantities.
- 2.5.4** Statistics represent data, probability models chance, and both support informed inferences and decisions

Science and technology

- 2.6.1** Being curious and searching for answers is essential to understanding and predicting phenomena.
- 2.6.2** Design thinking and engineering offer technical and creative ways to meet society's needs and wants.
- 2.6.3** The world around us is full of living things which depend on each other for survival.

Humanities

- 2.3.1** Enquiry, exploration and investigation inspire curiosity about the world, its past, present and future.
- 2.3.2** Events and human experiences are complex, and are perceived, interpreted and represented in different ways.
- 2.3.3** Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions.
- 2.3.5** Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action.

Health and Well-being

- 2.2.2** How we process and respond to our experiences affects our mental health and emotional well-being.
- 2.2.3** Our decision-making impacts on the quality of our lives and the lives of others.

Sustainable Development Goals



Eco-Schools Topics:

Global Citizenship | School Grounds |
Biodiversity

Challenge: Become active citizen scientists and join the movement to save global insect populations.

Research: There are a number of citizen science surveys which collect data about insect populations. Each is slightly different and serves a different purpose. Explore the range of surveys, look at the different types of data being collected and how it can help scientists understand what is happening to insects.

Investigate: Collect data about the insects in your locality. Select one or more of the citizen science surveys which you'd like to participate in, and which are relevant to your school and other learners.

You might want to ask classes or other clubs to get involved and help you collect data about insect population in your local area. You could also ask the wider community to get involved and collect data outside of the school grounds.

Remember, not all surveys can be completed all year round so you'll need to plan for these if you want to get involved. For example, the [BugsMatter](#) Survey runs from May – Sept.

Share: Host a beetle drive event. Invite people in your community to come into your school so you can share what you have learned and make sure that even more people know about helping insects. You could use this as an opportunity to raise money for an insect charity or to spend on improving the school garden.

Act: How can your school help the global insect crisis?

Use your newfound knowledge to plan actions / events and help insects.

Check out the [No Insectinction](#) Campaign for ideas on how you can help.

Extend: Ever heard of a BioBlitz? It is an informal and fun way to create a snapshot of the variety of life that can be found in an area. Expand your understanding of the biodiversity in your area by attending or hosting a BioBlitz. You can find out more about BioBlitzes [here](#).

Be Inspired (spotted in Ysgol Hay-on-Wye, Powys):

You don't need nasty, bug killing, chemicals to help your garden grow! Children in Hay-on-Wye Primary School tackled two birds with one stone, removing excess stinging nettles from their playing field and turning them into fertiliser for their school garden.





Eco-Sgolion



Eco-Schools



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