

EcoSchools in Worcestershire

Indicator

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Status



EcoSchools performance in Worcestershire is good, and continues to improve.

Overview

Many partners within the Worcestershire Partnership (the County Council, District Councils, Wildlife Trust, Duckworth Worcestershire Trust and others) have encouraged schools to explore their relationship with the environment. This has involved looking both locally and globally, within the wider context of sustainability, through a focus on:

- whole school approaches;
- practical action;
- outdoor learning;
- supporting the development of the children's voice; and
- curriculum development.

The International Eco Schools Award Scheme has been identified within the county as an effective means of engaging school children to take action on key issues such as waste, water, biodiversity, energy, school grounds, transport, and litter (along with Healthy Living and the Global Dimension), and is seen as a key delivery mechanism for schools working towards becoming Sustainable Schools (still recognised by DFE, November 2010).

It is a useful reflection of the perception of Worcestershire citizens that many teachers and pupils from across the county consider making Eco Schools a high priority within their places of learning. This is reflected by the unusually high percentage of schools within the county registered with the Scheme (88% of county schools), and the number of schools/colleges with the coveted Green Flag Award, an independently assessed Award with a strict list of criteria to be considered (25% of county schools). The scheme is a useful demonstration of commitment through practical action. Such action often involves significant changes in behaviour, as children, young people, teachers and other key stakeholders work towards the Green Flag Award.

Partners from across the County have also joined a **Learning for Sustainability Forum**. The forum provides an opportunity to identify ways in which organisations can support each other in moving towards sustainability in schools. The forum helps to prioritise key targets and actions to bring about more effective working. A *Learning for*

Sustainability Strategy is now available with a list of prioritised targets and actions for the next 5 years. Further information is available at: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/learningforsustainability

Performance

In Worcestershire there are currently 260 places of learning registered with Eco Schools. Of these:

27 are Nursery units / Nursery schools

13 are Private schools

2 are Colleges of Further and Higher Education

3 are Pupil Referral Units

217 are Worcestershire County Council Schools – 88% of the total number of County Council schools.

This information is correct at April 2011. Data is collected from the [National Eco Schools](#) website.

The performance of Worcestershire schools in engaging young people as active participants around the theme of the environment can, in part, be measured by looking at success within the Eco Schools scheme.

The following table gives an outline of data:

Type of school/college	No. Registered with Eco Schools 2011	No. Awarded Green Flag 2011
Nursery Schools	27	5 (up 2 from 2010)
County Schools	217	63 (up 11 from 2010)
Private Schools	13	-
Colleges	2	-
Other	1	-
Total	260	68 (up 13 from 2010)

Figures correct at April 2011

Alongside the Eco Schools monitoring, additional indicators that can help to assess sustainability in schools are being considered. Monitoring data on the level of energy use/CO₂ emissions will soon be available through Worcestershire County Council's Automated Meter Reading (AMR) strategy, and figures for success in terms of energy reduction are available through a [report on the County's Energy Award project](#) (2008-9). The success of the joined-up approaches to improving sustainability in schools between the County Council's Property Services, Energy

Management, and Learning for Sustainability teams is reflected in the average Display Energy Certificate "C" rating (placing Worcestershire 6th nationally).

In addition to the information listed above, linked to the [national Eco Schools database](#), Worcestershire County Council maintains its own database which includes links to other key initiatives such as School Travel Plans, Healthy Schools, Forest Schools, etc. [Edulink](#) also provides useful information about Worcestershire schools under the Best Practice section of the website.

Number of EcoSchools registered within
each Worcestershire District

District	Number of Registered EcoSchools
Bromsgrove	41 (+2)
Malvern Hills	41 (+4)
Redditch	34 (+3)
Worcester City	40 (+2)
Wychavon	57 (+6)
Wyre Forest	47 (+12)

Figures correct at April 2011.
Figures in parentheses refer to additions over the last 12 months.

Geographical Context

The latest statistics shown above place Worcestershire as having the highest number of schools with Green Flags amongst Local Authorities both within the West Midlands region and nationally (see www.eco-schools.org.uk/statistics)

In the context of reductions in funding nationally, Local Authorities in the West Midlands are still exploring how they can maintain support for schools as they work towards becoming Sustainable Schools. The support for this process previously available through the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) is no longer available. The Learning for Sustainability Team continues to organise meetings and conferences on sustainable schools for local authorities and voluntary organisations, building on the introductory events held during 2008 (e.g. an Eco Communities Conference in May 2011).

The Eco Schools scheme is active in schools across most of the West Midlands, but is only actively promoted by certain local authorities, including Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire, Telford and Wrekin and Staffordshire.

Actions

The outlook for increasing school registration with Eco Schools is relatively restricted given that so many schools across the County are already signed up and involved (88%). It is a new aim that each year we will increase the number of Green Flag Award schools by 10% (based on the number of Green Flag schools from the previous year). This new focus (strategically significant for the County) will be to work in supporting those schools that are registered with the scheme who hold the Bronze Award (72) and Silver Award (74) in working towards the Green Flag Award. This award demonstrates considerable commitment and a significant level of activity around the theme of sustainability across curriculum and campus (buildings and grounds), through whole school culture and in the schools' work with their communities. There was a **19%** increase in Green Flags over 2010-2011.

Actions being coordinated for the support of schools working towards the Eco Schools Green Flag Award and/or towards becoming Sustainable Schools are listed below:

- Direct support for developing and maintaining whole school approaches to sustainability and energy management through training events and tailor-made staff meetings/CPD events in schools. This is available through a **new Service Level Agreement** within Worcestershire County Council (WCC) involving WCC's Property Services Energy Management Section. This includes:
 - Direct support for staff linked to School Development Planning around the theme of Sustainability, Energy Management and the Eco Schools scheme
 - Training for pupils
 - Direct support in working towards and preparing for a Green Flag Assessment
 - District Eco Schools meetings for teachers involved in the scheme (5 in the X5 Autumn/Spring Term, 2 in the Summer term)
 - Support with links to curriculum development
 - Support through the Learning for Sustainability Newsletter
 - Phone and email support
- Annual conferences/events for children, young people and their teachers around the theme of Eco Schools/Sustainable Schools
- Worcestershire's Eco Communities Pilot Project working with 15 schools across 5 communities, in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy, is nearing its conclusion; a report should be available in July 2011
- Working with Secondary Schools Eco Committees towards them becoming Sustainability Ambassadors in their local communities.

Further Information

For a strategic overview of the County Council's current work in education for sustainable development, please telephone 01907 766378 / 01905 766809 or email rbrakspear@worcestershire.gov.uk or alunt@worcestershire.gov.uk

Further information on EcoSchools and Learning for Sustainability can be found at:

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/learningforsustainability

www.eco-schools.org.uk

<https://www.edulink.networcs.net>