



Ringwood School: meeting the challenge of sustainability

FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS

In 2003, Ringwood School registered with Eco-Schools, an organisation that offers an award scheme. Bronze and Silver awards are available through self assessment, but the Green Flag, the pinnacle of achievement, requires external assessment. Although we're far from environmental perfection, we took proud possession of our [Green Flag](#) in January 2006.



OUR PATHWAY

Our pathway, suggested by [Eco-Schools](#), was similar to that suggested on this website. We formed an Eco team who conducted an Environmental Review using the Eco-Schools self audit forms. Survey results were not good and suggested that we needed to target certain areas (eg recycling) in our [Action Plan](#). The plan was developed by older students and members of staff, but was shared with the rest of the group.

We also developed our own [Eco Code](#) and a 'Six Rs' poster. Both have been translated into French and are displayed in every room in the school.

HINTS

- Enlist the help of a member of Senior Management on the team. This allows quick decision-making. It also delivers messages home and gives your project weight.
- Involve the wider community: invite a parent, Governor, caretaker or the groundsman on the team.
- Getting started is the hardest part, so value your early volunteers. Persevere: it gets easier!

OUR ECO TEAM

Our full Eco group consists of several adults working along with about 35 students, so we have a devised a structure that allocates responsibility to *students*. Elected sixth form students act as

- Chairman
- Secretary
- Publicity agent.

We also have student leaders of working groups such as energy, litter and wildlife. These may be sixth formers or may be drawn from other year groups.



Our audit showed real problems with litter, so we started by collecting all **paper** in special classroom bins. New Forest District Council arranged weekly collection of a skip, and we are now actively encouraging reuse of paper. We now collect plastic bottles and cans too.

LITTER AND RECYCLING

We [recycle](#)

- Paper
- Plastic bottles & cans
- Batteries (*left*)
- Mobile phones (*right*)
- Printer cartridges
- Stamps
- [Plastic milk bottle tops](#)
- CDs, CDRoms & DVDs
- Christmas cards
- Organic waste for compost
- Yellow Pages.

HINT: put *students* in charge of these areas of recycling!

HINT:

Think about collections within classes or tutor groups. Ringwood's Tutor Representatives deliver stamps, batteries & paper to central collecting points.



THE GROUNDS, WILDLIFE & DIVERSITY

This has been a major target and although we have made progress, work will continue. We have ...

- Planted a perennial wildflower area & sown annual wildflower seeds in parts of the grounds
- Run an allotment (*below*) near school, and encouraged the growing of local and organic produce.
- Maintained a wildlife pond and monitored species diversity
- Encouraged biodiversity through plantings and joined Hampshire's Project for ESD
- Started a [trout-in-a-classroom](#) project to increase trout numbers in chalk streams
- Planted hedges three times! (*below, right*)
- Put up bird feeders and nest boxes (Built by students and a Grandparent)
- Started a student-run phenology group.
- Joined in national surveys eg Big School Birdwatch, BBC's Springwatch, National Bluebell Survey (*above*).





HINT

Use the Internet: obtain membership and help from useful organisations eg

- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
- Learning through landscapes
- HDRA & BTCV



TRAVEL

In 2005, the Eco group carried out two surveys of students' journeys to work. [Results](#), particularly in the sixth form, were shocking: far too many cars were coming onto the site causing congestion, pollution and raising safety concerns.

We have therefore just entered the first phase in the development of a Travel plan, with the help of Hampshire County Council.



ENERGY

NFDC arranged an introduction to the [EST](#) who suggest an energy audit of the school. As a result, we are just starting work to promote energy saving. So far, our efforts have included

- Posters & information throughout the school promoting the need to save energy.
- A lights out campaign
- Sixth formers have built a working model of a wind turbine.
- Cooking with solar ovens (*below*).



WATER

[Radcom](#) installed a remote logger on our water supply. Students can download data (*left*) to monitor and graph our water use. They can immediately spot leaks, taps left on and can suggest areas where savings can be made.



ECO DAY

An [Eco Day](#) is easy to organise, high-profile & can engage students & members of staff who have not yet made a contribution to the 'greening' of the school. Ringwood is too large for whole-school involvement, so our Eco Day involved Year 9, & sixth form helpers. Results, such as creative use of litter on site (*below left*) & a crate for TFSR (*right*), were shared with other year groups. One group of students baked with [Fair Trade](#) ingredients, serving the products to visitors (*below, right*).



HINT

Devise treats to maintain interest and to maintain an 'Eco is cool' image! Outside speakers, lunchtime visits, bringing in animals, Fair Trade & local lunches have all worked for Ringwood.

HINTS

- Think about communicating ideas to and from your Eco team: use channels such as newsletters, suggestions box, and an [e-mail link](#) on the relevant page or section of your school website.
- To widen participation, ensure that some Eco team students are members of other bodies (eg School Council).
- Let students contribute to and maintain a prominently positioned Eco notice-board.

NEED HELP? See Ringwood's [Eco-Schools website](#) or contact Gill Hickman at Ringwood School.