

# ECO-SCHOOLS IMPACT REPORT: 2021/22





## OUR MISSION:

To create a society where young people are passionate and hopeful environmentalists - educated, empowered and united to make effective, long-lasting and systemic change.



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# This report is a celebration of young people in England and their supportive, tireless teachers. Together, they inspire us.

At the start of the 2021-22 academic year, Eco-Schools adopted a new annual format with an improved online application portal. This allowed Eco-Coordinators and their pupils to input evidence of their activities as they progressed throughout the year – from photographs of them at work, to snapshots of their creations, to the varied statistical data connected to their actions. The findings are incredible. For the first time, we can conclusively understand how Eco-Schools are making a difference ...and what a difference!

All facts and figures in this report are taken from data submitted by schools during the 2021-2022 application window. The statistics show a generation of change-makers, inspired to improve and preserve our planet for everyone and everything that calls it 'home'. Their impact is varied, deep and long-lasting. The figures and images that you're about to see are testament to a movement of young people who are creative, proactive and focussed. Their spirit, sense of urgency, collaborative approach and pragmatism are an inspiration. They make us feel positive for the future and in many cases, put adults to shame!

And of course, they're supported by their amazing teachers and school communities. They facilitate this impact and give their pupils the agency to make change. In the current context of education in England, their contribution is stunning.

We hope that you enjoy reading about the impact of schools working on our Eco-Schools programme just as much as we have.

**Adam Flint**

Manager, Eco-Schools England.

# OUR TOP 5 STATS OF THE YEAR

This year, schools aimed high  
and went big... VERY big!



## 2M KG

More than 2m kg of waste was diverted from landfill this year by schools working on the Eco-Schools programme – that's the same weight as 350 elephants combined!

**Read our Waste statistics on page 32**



## 96,580

young people participated in a litter-pick. That's more than the entire population of Watford!

**Read our Litter statistics on page 24**



## 1.2M M<sup>2</sup>

Approximately 1.2million m<sup>2</sup> of natural habitats were created or maintained as part of Eco-Schools activity – this is equivalent to 168 Wembley Stadium pitches!

**Read our Biodiversity statistics on page 16**



## £336,132

in financial savings were made by schools, colleges or nurseries as a result of their Eco-Schools activities. That's the approximate equivalent of 988,623 hours (41,192 days!) of electricity usage or 3,381,310 hours (140,887 days!) of gas usage.\*

**Read our Energy statistics on page 18**



## 37,865

trees have been planted by members of school, college or nursery communities as part of their Eco-Schools activity.

Once matured, each tree could take in up to 22 kilograms of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere every year! In total, that could be more than 800,000 kgs!

**Read our School Grounds statistics on page 28**



# 21/22: OUR KEY DEVELOPMENTS



## **An annual programme**

2021-22 saw the Eco-Schools programme move to an annual model, aligning to the school calendar. Teachers have noted how this has helped to embed the programme in the fabric of the academic year and make it easier to implement. It's also helped the Eco-Schools team to highlight opportunities, supporting applications, alongside key education dates and events. Schools are also now largely aligned on their journey. This has helped teachers and Eco-Committees to collaborate and share ideas, especially through our Eco-Coordinators [Facebook group](#). An annual programme also means that all pupils will get to see the results and reward of their work, whereas the bi-annual programme has seen pupils move schools or progress to primary, secondary or post-16 education and miss out.

## **A new application portal**

Our new application portal has been a big hit with teachers this year. Schools can now access the whole application form at the start of their journey, understanding the requirements for achieving the Eco-Schools Green Flag award from day one. They can also complete the application form as they go, at any point through the year, rather than waiting until the end of the programme to fill in the form and collate evidence. This has helped to remove a bottle-neck of activity during the application window in the busy Summer-term.

The new application portal also allows us to appreciate the amazing impact of our schools and produce inspiring reports like this one. As schools input their evidence, a data-set of their amazing impacts generates. This live reporting on applications also helps the Eco-Schools team to offer targeted support to schools as they go, and it helps us to work with Local Authorities and identify schools in their areas who they can support with the cost of their accreditation. Which leads us nicely to...

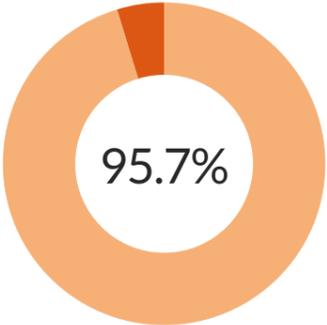
## **Local Authority collaboration**

This year, Eco-Schools has increased engagement with Local Authorities, working hard to enable and support them as they, in turn, support schools who are working on the programme in their area. Support varies, from delivering workshops in schools, to creating free eco-activities and initiatives, to covering the cost of schools' Eco-Schools Green Flag accreditation fees. In 21/22, more than 100 schools were supported with the fee by a Local Authority, with Leicester and Manchester City Councils leading the way.

The Eco-Schools Team is building on these relationships, creating new resources for Local Authorities and providing statistical data on the impacts of schools from their area, helping them to target their support and evidence their own KPIs.

# OUR IMPACT: ON SCHOOLS AND PUPILS

This year, we asked teachers about the impact of our programme on their pupils. The results have blown us away...



of teachers agreed that working on the Eco-Schools programme in 21/22 expanded environmental education in their school, college or nursery.



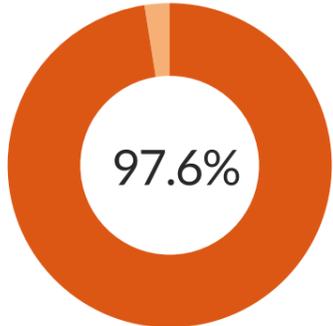
**1,478,364**

young people attended a school, college or nursery that worked on the Eco-Schools programme, engaging with Eco-Schools activities or benefitting from the sustainable changes made by Eco-Committees in their setting.

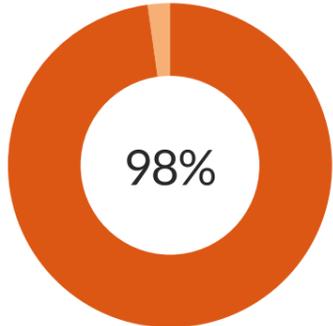


## We asked teachers:

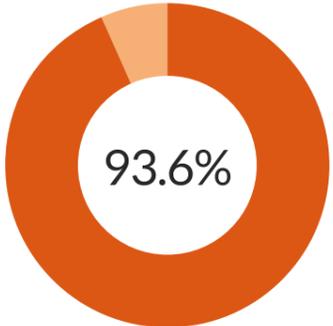
To what extent do you agree that the Eco-Schools Programme has improved the following in your pupils...



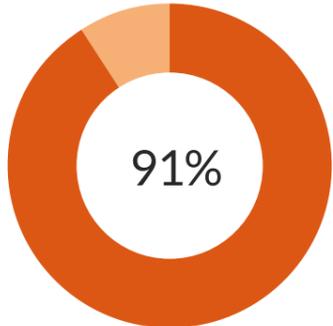
**Team Building**  
97.6% agreed or strongly agreed



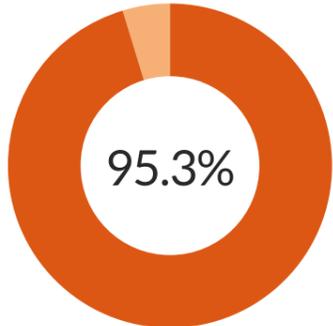
**Confidence**  
98% agreed or strongly agreed



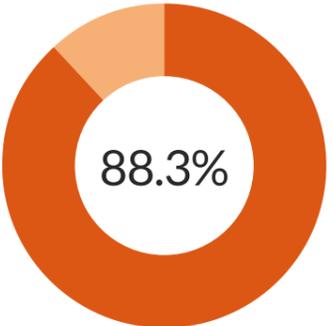
**Leadership**  
93.6% agreed or strongly agreed



**Critical Thinking**  
91% agreed or strongly agreed



**Active Citizenship**  
95.3% agreed or strongly agreed



**Growth Mindset**  
88.3% agreed or strongly agreed

# OUR IMPACT: ON THE ENVIRONMENT





# BIODIVERSITY

Schools that choose to work on our Biodiversity topic deliver projects that support and encourage the development of varied plant and animal life. From raised beds to hedgehog homes, these schools have had an incredible year.

# 1.2M<sup>2</sup>



Approximately 1.2million m<sup>2</sup> of natural habitats were created or maintained as part of Eco-Schools activity.

## Eco-stars: Hemdean House Primary School, Reading

Hemdean made the most of their school site in 21/22. They have a small woodland and recognised that certain areas had become eroded. They allocated these spots for rewilding projects to great success. Native bluebells and wildflowers have since popped up and saplings have been planted. They also planted a wildlife hedge in the school's garden area and plan to continue planting hedging along their border fence, countering local traffic pollution.

They've had a great year!



# 4,391



Bug hotels or log piles were installed or maintained by schools to encourage insect life.

# 520

Ponds or mini-ponds were installed or maintained.



# 111,663



Young people were involved in observing and recording nature as part of Eco-Schools project work.

# 181,982



Young people participated in or benefitted from Eco-Schools Biodiversity topic work.

# 6,011



Bird baths, feeders, houses, bat boxes or hedgehog homes were installed or repaired.



# ENERGY

Schools working on our Energy topic in 21/22 focussed on reducing energy-usage and increasing their renewable energy sources. From school-wide 'switch-off' events to installing motion-sensor lighting, they've made a big impact.

And with a typical school using 119kWh/m2/year of energy, their work couldn't be more timely.

# £336,132



in financial savings were made by schools, colleges or nurseries as a result of their Eco-Schools activities

## Eco-stars: Bidston Avenue Primary School, Wirral

Bidston Avenue have had a stunning 21/22, reducing their energy usage and increasing their renewable energy sources, resulting in a saving of £6,013! They've added more solar panels to their site - 101 in total, and improved their DEC Energy rating to it's best ever level. They delivered a 'switch-off fortnight' and appointed pupil energy-monitors, who patrolled classrooms at lunch time to switch off items or put them on stand-by when not in use. And last but not least, they installed 15 new energy-saving devices across their site!



# 4,048



renewable energy sources (solar panels, wind turbines, heat pumps etc.) were installed.

# 8,059



pupils became energy-monitors in their school, college or nursery, ensuring that electrical items were turned off when not in use or used sparingly.

# 24,919

energy-saving devices (motion sensor or LED lighting, smart meters etc.) were installed or maintained.



# 233,172

young people were noted by their teachers to be more aware of the importance of saving energy and how to save energy, as a result of their Eco-Schools work.



# 86,382



young people participated in an energy-free day as part of Eco-Schools work.



# GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

The impacts of climate change will impact countries, communities and individuals in a variety of different ways.

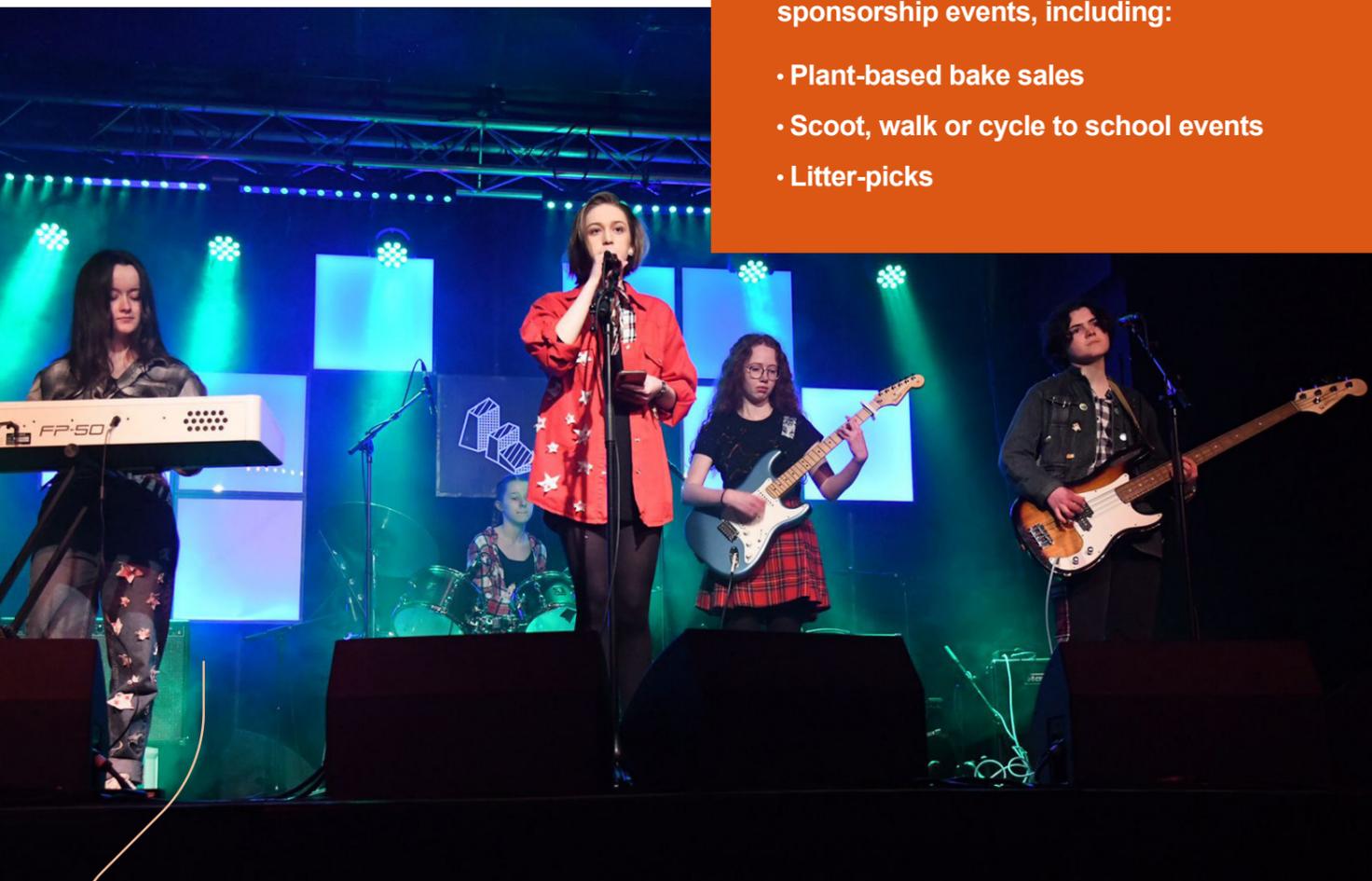
Collectivism and collaboration, at both a global and local level, will be vital in fighting back. Our Eco-Schools have shown an incredible understanding of that ethos in 21/22.

## £638,643



was raised for charity by Eco-Schools in 2021-22, most coming from eco-friendly sponsorship events, including:

- Plant-based bake sales
- Scoot, walk or cycle to school events
- Litter-picks



### Eco-stars: West Kirby Grammar School

This year, pupils got creative, taking part in Textpop26 - a Wirral-wide schools Music and Design competition. The event raises awareness about the environmental damage that fast-

fashion causes across the world. The group from West Kirby Grammar won two awards: pupil-band 'The Room' were named 'Best Performing Group', and the creators of their stage-clothes won the 'Best Upcycled Clothing' award.

## £80,461



was raised for environmental, wildlife or animal welfare charities.

From birds and seals to hedgehogs and monkeys, pupils inspired amazing donations, supporting some great organisations.

## 1,713



charity events were delivered or participated in.

## 66,566



people, based outside of school, college or nursery settings were engaged to collaborate on Eco-Schools work. This included everyone from parents to local MPs to STEM professionals.

## 101,494



young people were noted by their teachers to have increased awareness about local and global issues as a result of their Eco-Schools work.





# HEALTHY LIVING

With eco-anxiety a rising concern in the younger generation, our Healthy Living topic has been embraced this year by proactive pupils.

Well-being and sensory gardens have been built, outdoor learning has increased, and plant-based options - body and planet-friendly - have been increased on schools menus.

## Eco-stars: Cambourne Village College, Cambridge

This year, Cambourne Village College built an amazing community sensory garden, aiming to help pupils to disconnect from their virtual life and re-engage with their surroundings, peers, families and members of the community, following the COVID-19 pandemic. By all accounts, they succeeded, creating a relaxing learning space for those who need support in managing their mental well-being and coping with reintegration anxiety.

# 101,515



young people benefitted from or were introduced to more and better plant-based options in schools, colleges or nursery canteens in connection to their work on the Eco-Schools programme.



# 3,477

hours of additional exercise were introduced by schools, colleges or nurseries for young people each week.



# 40,764



young people were actively involved in growing fruit, vegetables and herbs on schools grounds, with most producing plant-based meals for themselves and members of their school community.



# 113,621

young people participated in positive mental health activities, including yoga and mindfulness activities out in nature.



# 109,352



young people were noted by their teachers to be more aware that their health is linked to our planet's health as a result of Eco-Schools work activities.

# LITTER

From litter picks, to raising awareness, to installing more bins on school grounds, schools in 21/22 stepped up. With a piece of litter dropped every 23 seconds in the UK, it's time we all followed their lead!



# 96,580

young people participated in a litter-pick in 2021-22 in connection to their Eco-Schools work.



added recycling bins to all classrooms, and delivered a week of litter-picking events in their local community. The school noted that working on the Eco-Schools programme has also helped them to include more social engagement between pupils, creating new friendships outside of their set groups.

# 70,021



young people participated in Keep Britain Tidy's Great Big School Clean.

# 12,816

litter-picks were arranged by schools, colleges or nurseries.



# 25,439

bags of litter were collected by pupils during litter-picks.



# 292,225

young people were noted by their teachers to be more aware of litter-related issues and less likely to litter as a result of your Eco-Schools work.



# MARINE

Schools that work on our Marine topic design actions that protect and conserve water-based ecosystems. From delivering canal and beach cleans to reviewing and reducing their plastic usage – the biggest source of damage to our planet’s oceans – they’ve had an amazing year.

# 105,777



young people now bring a reusable water bottle to school, college or nursery, reducing the huge amount of new plastic bottles that are purchased in schools each day.

## Eco-stars: Queen Elizabeth Hospital School, Bristol

Across all ages, Queen Elizabeth Hospital School pledged to learn about and support Marine conservation in 21/22. They delivered litter picks around local bodies of water and even delivered a whole-year-group beach clean with their Year 10s. The Junior School produced amazing marine murals from plastic waste and the Senior School focused it’s Spring Eco-Week on waste, with Year 9 delivering a ‘listing litter survey’. This led to weekly litter picks that have reduced the waste getting into the sewers and harbours in Bristol.



# 227



schools banned the use of single-use plastics in their setting, including glitter, laminating, clingfilm and plastic wallets.

# 369

beach, river or canal cleans were organised.



# 8,751



members of school, college or nursery communities participated in beach, river or canal cleans in connection to Eco-Schools work.

# £17,877

was raised for marine-based charities.



# 8,056



young people were noted by their teachers to be more aware of marine-related issues, and our role in protecting marine environments, as a result of Eco-Schools activities.



# SCHOOL GROUNDS

From planting trees to keeping bees, schools have used the opportunities presented by their school grounds to make incredible impacts. With the education estate representing 36% of total UK public sector building carbon emissions, they've been a much-needed sustainable-superpower.

## 37,865



trees have been planted by members of school, college or nursery communities as part of their Eco-Schools activity.

### Eco-stars: Nether Hall SEND School, Leicester

Nether Hall have been developing their amazing outdoor learning space this year. So far, the space has fruit trees, bug hotels, wildflower areas, relaxation benches, two willow domes and a new outdoor classroom. To top it all off, they've built a sensory garden from recycled tyres and eco-bricks, and plan to develop a mini forest and a track to encircle the whole area, giving their wheelchair users full access.



## 10,613

indoor plants were introduced or maintained in schools, colleges or nurseries.

## 71,888

outdoor plants were introduced or maintained.



## 219,272



young people were noted by teachers to have benefitted from improved School Grounds and a renewed focus on outdoor education as a result of Eco-Schools activities.



## 22,456

hours were spent working outside on School Grounds projects by Eco-Committees.



# TRANSPORT

Transport produces around 25% of the UK's total carbon emissions each year. Pupils in 21/22 have faced the issue head-on, delivering thousands of events to reduce their use of one of the worst culprits – cars – whilst raising awareness and inspiring behaviour-change.

# 6,063



walk/cycle/scoot to school days were delivered by school, college or nursery communities as part of their Eco-Schools work.



### Eco-stars: Gorse Hall, Tameside

This year Gorse Hall have been inspiring people to take up sustainable travel, not just locally, but nationally too. Pupils appeared on the One Show, which featured their campaigning

activities as part of a feature on air quality in schools. They've also taken part in Bikeability, their local Clean Air Day celebrations and produced a cycling video to promote the Tame Valley link, a local walking and cycling link.

# 36,992

young people have been taught how to walk, bike, scoot or use public transport in connection with their Eco-Schools activity.



# 1,092

school staff members have been inspired by their Eco-Committee to change the way they travel to school in order to become more sustainable.

# 210



schools took action to reduce air pollution around their school, college or nursery this academic year. Amongst other things, they planted hedges to capture carbon, delivered anti-idling campaigns and created parking exclusion zones.



# 91,032

young people were noted by their teachers to be more aware of the health and environmental benefits of sustainable transport as a result of their Eco-Schools work.





# WASTE

Our most popular topic with schools, Waste was tackled head-on in 21/22. From installing new recycling practices, to up-cycling projects, to hosting pop-up swap shops, pupils have blown us away this year with their stunning impacts.

# 2,264,216 KG



of waste were diverted from landfill this academic year.

### Eco-stars: Downsview Primary School, London

Downsview started their year with a bang, hosting a massive eco-fair that attracted hundreds of pupils, parents, school staff and even the local press. The event featured activities raising awareness about sustainability, and even included a 'refill station' where visitors could top up some household items without buying new packaging. They followed this with a number of amazing Waste-reduction actions, including changing milk supplier to one that used more sustainable packaging.



# 3,669

second-hand sales, or swaps were delivered by schools, colleges or nurseries.

# 316,181

young people were involved in refusing, reducing, reusing, repairing and recycling projects.



# 367,523 KG

kgs of food waste was composted.

# 225,407

young people have taken an active role in recycling their school, nursery or college's waste as part of their Eco-Schools work.



# WATER

Schools working on the Water topic have jumped in, feet-first, this year. No dipping their toes in the shallow end! From reducing water usage, to leak auditing, to the installation of water-saving devices, they've made incredible impacts.



## **Eco-stars:** Acorn Early Years Sharnbrook, Bedford

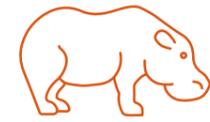
Water is a key theme on the curriculum of Acorn Early Years Sharnbrook. They've embedded the topic across their work. Group discussions have focussed on various ways to reduce water consumption and they've used story books to

**328** 

water-butts were installed or repaired on schools grounds.



explore the topic even further. Pupils have been empowered to become water monitors, ensuring all the taps are turned off after use and they've installed a new water butt. The collected water has been used for watering plants and mark making the nursery garden. They're a great example of how even the youngest of pupils can make an impact and deliver our programme.



**1,286**

water saving devices have been installed, maintained or distributed, including water hippos, tap inserts, shower timers and various types of flush controls.

**39,995**



young people have been educated about what should not be flushed or poured down toilets and sinks (wet wipes, fat, oil, cotton buds etc.)



**2,771** 

devices were checked by Eco-Committees for leaks or drips.



**42,865**

young people were noted by teachers to have been involved in or benefitted from sustainable, water-related Eco-Schools actions.

# THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS



### People's Postcode Lottery

Players of People's Postcode Lottery has generously supported the development of the Eco-Schools application portal, Eco-Coordinator training materials, Eco-Schools resources and promotional materials for the programme. Their input has allowed the programme to become more user-friendly and enabled an improvement in our reporting capabilities, allowing us to fully understand and acknowledge the impact of our amazing schools with reports just like this one.



### Frugi

In 21/22, Frugi generously supported 500 teachers through the Eco-Coordinators training programme, enabling them to work with their Committees to deliver the programme, whilst developing confidence in covering climate change and sustainability in school.

Thank you to the following organizations for supporting schools with the cost of their Eco-Schools Green Flag accreditations:



Pell Frischmann



Finally, a big thank you to pupils from St. Wilfrid's RC Primary School in Hulme, Manchester for featuring in our Impact Report photoshoot.

# SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS

We would like to extend special congratulations to the award-winning, employee-owned Childbase Partnership, a leading UK provider of Early Years care and education. This year all day nurseries – 43 for 2021/2022 – not only achieved Eco-School Green Flags but 23 achieved this with Distinction and 6 with Merit.

It's an amazing achievement and Childbase Partnership has become an incredible Eco-Schools standard bearer. We're proud to call them partners.



We have embedded Eco-Schools as a core deliverable for the business through our previous and current Corporate Plan alongside our Environment Pillar and core Values. This adds an invaluable element to our progressive approach to sustainability by providing accredited environmental education to the children which helps to bring their families along on this journey.

**Mark Bird**  
Health, Safety & Environment Director,  
Childbase Partnership

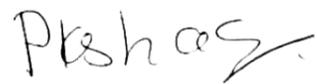
# CONCLUSION

One of the Foundation For Environmental Education's principles encourages participants to actively work together and involve their communities in collaborative solutions. Technology has become a great tool to record the everyday changes that are happening in individual schools and show the power of local, collective action in creating national and global impact.

The first year of implementation of a nationwide IT-enabled tool in England has generated valuable data and its analysis and reflections will no doubt give insights to develop the programme even further, maximising its impact for both schools and the environment.

The Eco-Schools programme is not just about environmental performance or the improvement of schools, but is equally about building skills to facilitate change – transforming one's self to transform others! The feedback in terms of improving transferable skills - like being able to work in a team, self-belief and confidence, critical thinking and having a growth mindset - is heartening.

It's the combination of all of the above factors – environmental knowledge, transferable skills, collaboration, and the desire to take action – that is producing the impact evident in this report. It's this combination which also gives us hope for the future of our planet.



**Pramod Kumar Sharma**

Senior Director of Education,  
Foundation for Environmental Education

[www.fee.global](http://www.fee.global)





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