



Eco-Schools update



The Eco-Committee held its first formal meeting at the start of this half term. The committee has 30 members and is made up of representatives from each year group. Our aim is to achieve the Eco-Schools Green Flag award by the end of this school year, to demonstrate our commitment to raising environmental awareness and improving our school environment. Eco-Schools is a student-led initiative that is designed to empower pupils to lead change and to have a positive impact on their wider community.

As a committee we intend to involve as many people as possible in our journey and to provide regular updates on our progress. Our first task was to carry out a detailed Environmental Review, helping us to identify things we are already doing well and highlighting things we could be doing better. Particular thanks go to Georgina Scott, Matthew MacDermott, Hugo Sladdin, Jake Sandland, Naomi Godden and Chris Ingram for their work on this. Thanks also to Mr Mungovin for helping us with questions linked to the school site.

The findings of the review were really interesting and pretty encouraging. Some of positives included:

- ✓ We already have a high biodiversity rating due to the amount of green space, hedges and trees on site that provide a varied habitat for wildlife.
- ✓ Our energy rating is quite high as we use lower energy lightbulbs and appliances, programmable thermostats and have a lot of double glazing. We also produce carbon neutral energy via our solar panels and biomass boiler.
- ✓ Less than 10% of students arrive by car, which helps give us a high transport rating.
- ✓ Our waste rating is also quite high. All rubbish deposited in school bins is taken to a central sorting site. Paper, card, plastic, cans and cups and textiles are all recycled and non-recyclable waste is burned to generate electricity - leaving only a tiny percentage to go to landfill. In addition, all our toilet paper and paper towels are made from recycled material and our blazers are made from recycled material.
- ✓ Water is generally used carefully too. We have lots of water saving devices, including low-volume flushes on toilets and push taps. Our school plants are watered using rainwater, not tap water.



However, we also identified some areas for improvement:

- Switching of electrical appliances when not in use (including computes, projectors and lights in classrooms).
- Taking part in some health and fitness campaigns.
- Taking steps to reduce litter around school.
- Avoiding using single-use plastics in school.
- Greater use of reusable items like water bottles and lunch boxes to avoid waste.

Our next step is to select three topics to work on and to write an action plan. We are also writing to parents, the PTA and to Governors to invite them to get involved. As well as regular Bulletin updates, we will be creating an Eco-board near the Hub. This will be a notice board displaying information about the committee and the work that we do. It will include a list of members of the committee, so you know who to approach with ideas or comments, a copy of the Environmental Review and minutes of our meetings. We will add our Action Plan and updates on our progress over time.

If you would like to get more directly involved with any of our projects you can get in touch with either our Eco-Schools Coordinator and Deputy Head Student, Matthew Warren at 134129@student.harrogategrammar.co.uk or with Ms Smith our staff representative at ags@harrogategrammar.co.uk.

The Eco-Schools Committee

