

ECO- SCHOOL

Breakspeare school is proud to be part of the “**Abbots Parish Eco Schools (APES) Youth Forum.**” The purpose of this youth forum is to encourage cross-school cooperation in eco matters and to provide a means for manifesting eco ideas in the community. APES is a sub group within a local voluntary organisation called “Abbots Langley Transition Town Association” (ALTTA) www.altta.org.uk By finding sustainable local solutions, ALTTA aims to help make Abbots Langley a more positive and rewarding place to live and work, leading to a more sustainable future for everyone by focusing on four key project areas Energy, Food, Recycling and Transport. It is part of the “Transition Movement” which is an ongoing social experiment.

The first APES Youth Forum event was an eco-picnic which took place in Manor House Gardens after which students picked up litter together and decided what could and couldn't be recycled. The next initiative was held here at Breakspeare to celebrate “World Environmental Day” with over 60 students from different schools learning together in a series of workshops. On the heels of this, Abbots Langley School hosted another series of eco workshops attended by seven local schools and then at Tanners Wood School there were workshops that creatively reused things to make items for sale at the village community market (set up by ALTTA). RES, a global leading sustainable technology company based nearby, visited Breakspeare to help youth forum students learn about natural forces using wind and solar devices. The students loved using the portable solar panels and mini wind turbines.

In addition there are regular “Youth Forum” planning meetings attended by students and staff which gives students the chance to input into future events and ideas that could work in the community – giving them a chance for their voices to be heard beyond their respective schools.

The APES group are delighted that **10 local schools** are currently participating in the “Youth Forum” spanning special needs, mainstream primary and secondary. The schools currently involved are Breakspeare, Garston Manor (secondary moderate special needs), Woodfield (special needs), C of E St Pauls Langleybury, Divine Saviour, Tanners Wood, Abbots Langley, Bedmond, Francis Combe Academy and Parmiters. Events and meetings have been supported by the Chair of Three Rivers District Council and the Leavesden Country Park ranger.

In March 2015, **TEACHECO**, an organisation helping creatively link plant growing into the curriculum, began a project where eight of the participating schools were each given a raised bed and vegetable seeds in which they will grow produce for sale at our community markets, with proceeds going back into the APES group for future initiatives. Through this project, students will learn how to grow their own food (an invaluable skill for the future) , help the community, and will be treating it as an experiment, comparing results across schools, utilising maths skills, science and PSHE (Personal Social & Health education).

Further to this, APES will be providing some heritage fruit trees to be planted in the school grounds, along with their raised beds, to encourage them to become activate and enterprising local food producers of the future. We will also be encouraging biodiversity and a natural pest balance by making “bug homes” around the grounds to attract beneficial insects. This will aid the students with their understanding of the natural world.

The students who take an interest in and lead on eco-issues within Breakspeare attend an **Eco-Warrior lunchtime club**. The students have been learning about the seasons and the correct time to plant vegetables, herbs and flowers. They recently did an assembly where some of the plants were on display. This included daffodils that had been entered in the Abbots Langley Gardening Society Spring show in which the students received a highly commended certificate.

There will be opportunities for **parent involvement** which will be notified by parent mail or newsletter.