



Eco School learning at Breakspeare School

Breakspeare School has already received a Silver Eco School award. We are now working towards a Green Flag Award.

The benefits of achieving this award for Breakspeare School are:

- The students have opportunities to further develop their understanding of sustainable development and their skills in horticulture.
- Funding opportunities for future school improvements.
- Recognise and reward the hard work of staff, students and volunteers.
- Pride and reputation for in gaining this award.

We are thriving for Breakspeare School to become an Eco Centre of Excellence and an outstanding example to other schools.

The following will help us achieve this award;

- Breakspeare School is part of the Abbot Parish Eco Schools (APES) Youth Forum, which I chair, (part of Abbots In Transition (ALTTA) voluntary group).
- Student representatives for each class are given the opportunity to attend these workshops where appropriate.
- Other schools that participate are, Abbots Langley, Bedmond, Divine Saviour, CofE St Pauls Langleybury and Tanners Wood primary schools. Also Francis Combe Academy, Abbot's Hill School (secondary) and Woodfield Special Needs School. Schools have joined the APES Youth forum voluntarily.
- Each school is given the opportunity to host a workshop based on helping to look after the environment. The four main topics are, Re-use/Recycling, Local Food, Energy and Transport.
- Ted Casey from TEACHECO kindly runs workshops, demonstrating how Eco learning can fit into all areas of the curriculum and Damien Weller - Leavesden Country Park Ranger also.
- I will continue to arrange meetings/workshops and hopefully a student APES Youth Forum workshop will take place shortly after the Easter holidays.
- I am setting up a Breakspeare School Eco Council after the Easter Holidays. **This will enable students from other classes to get involved in the Eco learning that I carry out with class 7 and class 8 students in between the APES Youth forum meetings/workshops.**
- Abbots Langley Gardening Society also offer lots of school community involvement including their shows throughout the year, which Breakspeare School gets involved in.

Eco School learning focus for Spring and Summer 2017:

I run Eco School learning Monday from 11.15am to 12.00pm with students from class 8 and two students from class 7.

ASDAN - Towards Independence - Horticulture. Also AQA awards based on horticulture.

- Getting ready to work in the garden.
- Using tools safely.
- Growing seeds and plants indoors.
- Growing plants outdoors.
- Keeping the garden area tidy.
- Project (optional).

Students have been doing this over the past year and now the knowledge that they have attained can be shown by working towards the above awards.

Students have chosen this year to grow potatoes, tomatoes, lettuce, sweetcorn, onions, beetroot, peas, runner beans, broad beans, broccoli, cucumbers, courgettes, and cauliflower. I am teaching them when to plant these and also how to save seeds where possible to plant again rather than having to keep buying seeds. Flowers and herbs will continue to be planted also. We planted apple and plum trees last year, so we can watch and see how the trees change/produce fruit over the next few years. **Breakspeare School is also taking part in growing potatoes for the Abbots Langley Garden Society Autumn Show 2017.**

Abbots Parish Eco Schools Youth Forum (APES) received a Green Apple Award along with TEACHECO for the raised bed project.



Participating schools in the APES Youth Forum were given a raised bed and growing kits. Produce was sold at the Abbots in Transition Community Market and money raised went back into the APES budget. Pupils are invited and have taken part in selling produce at the market, including two students from our school. Ted from TEACHECO has given me beetroot seeds for the project this year.

I will be giving out seeds/seedlings to each class to plant in a raised bed or pot/growing bag during the spring and summer.

Students are also learning how to make compost - our compost bin is in the Eco garden.

Gardening has many health, physical and emotional benefits as it involves multiple brain functions such as strength, endurance, dexterity learning, problem solving and sensory awareness (taken from an article in My Local Abbots News, written by a member of Abbots Langley Gardening Society).



Photo taken by a student who had helped to plant the crocus bulbs.

The bulbs were given to us by Abbots Langley Garden Society for The Rotary Club Purple4Polio Campaign
www.rotarycrocus.com

Helping students with their understanding of the natural world - habitats.

A bug hotel is situated in the Eco garden. Students are learning about the insects that live in it, such as ladybirds, lace wings, spiders, beetles, woodlice, earwigs, centipedes, and hoverflies. We have grass and flowers on top of the bug hotel which attracts caterpillars, butterflies and bees. Some of these insects are beneficial by eating aphids which can overcome plants.

I am also teaching students about the life cycle of a butterfly.



Before Christmas our students attended at Abbot's Hill School, a "pond dipping" workshop run by Ted from TeachEco and teachers from Abbot's Hill School. Pupils from CofE St Pauls Langleybury also attended as part of the APES Youth Forum. This helped students to understand what insects and plant life are found in and around ponds etc. They did not see any frogs or toads on that occasion but we discussed them during Eco School learning lesson following the workshop.

Students attended a bug hotel and bird box making workshop at CofE St Pauls Langleybury last year along with other schools from the APES Youth Forum. This was run by Damien Weller the Leavesden Country Park Ranger. We have two bird boxes that will be put up once the wildlife area has been developed.

Students will continue to make bird food/bird feeders and learn about the birds you might see during the seasons.

Michael Wheeler (Chair of Governors) is helping me maintain the Eco garden. Plans are underway to make the pathway leading to the Eco garden and surrounding areas more accessible for students in wheelchairs. I will be meeting with Jo, Jane, Charmaine, Michael and Amanda Noyes-Pinchbeck to discuss the budgets for developing the Eco garden, wildlife area and sensory garden. In the wildlife area, we are hoping to have benches that are accessible for students in wheelchairs in one area for outdoor learning and a story telling area in the other. Keely the Chief Executive of Sunnyside Rural Trust is willing to help us with acquiring funding and developing the wildlife area. A memorial for Sophie Summerton, area for remembrance for other students who have passed way and we are also hoping to create a celebration/reflection area.

Reuse/recycling.

I will also be doing a recycling audit with students in the next couple of weeks. We will be giving out a recycling information sheet out to each class, check what is being recycled at the moment and how. From the feedback given we can then meet with Jo to see how we can make the recycling process easier and more uniform.

When the weather is not suitable, the Eco Learning is based on making items out of natural or recycled material and planning Eco Learning activities.

I also run an Eco learning lunch time club every Friday, which is available for students in every class.

Denise Bond
Eco Lead
Breakspeare School.
