

ECO-COUNCIL SUMMER TERM NEWS



Feedback

Green Flag Award, 2025

Oakfield Primary School

Award Level: Distinction



The summer term has been a remarkably busy one for the Eco-Council as our focus during the summer months was to improve the biodiversity within the school grounds. We have been striving to make our school grounds a better place for wildlife and insects.

Even though we concentrated on biodiversity this term we continued to work on reducing energy, litter, and waste within the school with small projects.

Three notable achievements this term were being awarded the Eco-Schools Green Flag with a distinction, the Royal Horticultural Society School Gardening Level 4 Award and The Woodland trust Green Tree Gold Award. This has been an accumulation of hard work and effort from the Eco-Council but also the whole school as we have taken on many changes to make our school Eco-friendlier and continue to provide outdoor learning experiences throughout the year. These efforts have meant that we can celebrate a **second** year of being awarded a distinction with our Green Flag award. The Eco-Schools feedback included what they believed to be our greatest success (see below)-

“What you've achieved is nothing short of inspiring—a full-scale transformation that not only beautifies the school environment but also deeply embeds sustainability and ecological awareness into the heart of school life.”

ENERGY.

After our energy survey was completed in January by an Essex energy surveyor we received a report about our energy usage from the Essex energy team; positive comments were made about our Eco Council carrying out the energy checks (see below)-

2025 update-

Building on the previous efforts of the Eco Council, class representatives have expanded their checklists to ensure that all lights and TVs are turned off when not in use, doors are closed to limit heat loss, and radiators are free from obstructions. Additionally, a competition was held between classes to determine which class excelled in avoiding energy waste. These initiatives demonstrate the school's strong commitment to saving energy and promoting sustainability.

This term, the Eco Council is focusing on ways to save energy and help reduce carbon emissions. Four Year 5 Eco councillors joined the energy survey to measure the power consumption of appliances and use a thermal camera and infrared thermometer to identify areas that need improved insulation.

GOOD NEWS!

After our energy survey we were contacted by our energy surveyor to tell us that we have been featured in the Essex climate action plan because we managed to cut our electricity use by 24%!

BIODIVERSITY AND SCHOOL GROUNDS.

Our school grounds have had a mini makeover this term with the introduction of a **wild corner** where we have sown wildflower seeds and placed some insect hotels. We have a large **bug station** by the fire pit area made from our tin bug hotels from Earth Day and decorated with weaving made in a Year 5 outdoor learning lesson. We became Friends of the Honeybee which is a British Beekeepers Association initiative aimed at reaching out to primary schools and other community groups to encourage them to become more bee friendly and aware of the importance of all pollinators.



The Pond- Renovations.



Our pond decking has been replaced and the three bug hotels (two in the pond area and one in the woods) have had some renovations by reusing tin cans from the kitchen, food insulation packaging and items from our wooded area; this is to encourage more wildlife into our school, we look forward to using them during our science and outdoor learning lessons.



Potatoes to Chips!

Using the 'Grow your own Potato' project we began our potato growing journey in late March, planting Shannon and Casablanca potatoes in grow bags after chitting them for a few weeks to encourage them to sprout before planting. In late June, after many months of watering, we emptied the bags to harvest our crop!

We managed to grow just over 2 kg of potatoes in total: Mrs Pinchback organised the kitchen to cook the potatoes for us and we had a chip party to celebrate our hard work. Our potatoes were delicious and we cannot wait to grow some next year!



Earth day celebrations in April.

Earth day was celebrated at Oakfield school, with the focus being on outdoor learning and DT. South- East Essex Wildlife Hospital came in to visit us and led an assembly on what they do and how litter affects our wildlife. We fundraised money for the wildlife hospital this year and managed to collect £135; this will help towards rescue, rehabilitation and release of injured wild animals and birds.

Throughout the afternoon, Key stage 1 made clay hedgehogs therefore continuing our theme of caring for hedgehogs. Key stage 2 made bug hotels out of recycled materials and using natural resources from our school grounds.



Oakfield Fundraiser for South Essex Wildlife Hospital

£135 raised
£200 target · 25 donations



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Oakfield Primary is organising this fundraiser on behalf of South Essex Wildlife Hospital. ✓



The Bee Corridor and Meadowcroft Garden Centre Bloom in Schools competition.



On the 27th of June we had judges from Meadowcroft garden centre visit us to judge our new bee corridor against many other schools in Wickford, Rayleigh, Rochford, Southend, and other surrounding areas. We wanted to use the summer term to encourage pollinators,

so the bee corridor was planned by the Eco-Council using flowers from the garden centre, flowers grown by Mrs Pinchback and flowers donated to us by local Wickford residents.

The Eco-Council mapped out where they wanted all the plants to go in the planters and made sure water was also factored into the corridor so the butterflies, bees, birds and other wildlife had somewhere to access water- we made drinking stations from sticks and bottle tops and repurposed a broken bird bath. Ladybird hotels, insect hotels and bee homes have also been added to the corridor to create nesting locations for the pollinators and other insects.

We have been happy to see our newly made habitat has become a haven for so many bees, butterflies and ladybirds who are coming to take nectar and pollen from our flowers.

Oakfield's 25th Anniversary and planting an Oak sapling.



To celebrate the 25th year of Oakfield, which was opened in January 2000, the Eco Council planted an oak sapling which was donated by a local resident. Councillor George Jeffrey, Mrs Cooney and Mrs Pinchback and Mrs Granby- a school governor celebrated the school's anniversary and along with the Oak sapling the Eco Council planted a time capsule with special memories and items from 2025.

Outdoor Learning in the School Grounds.

This term has been full of outdoor learning experiences including many of the Year groups cooking a two-course meal on the fire pit, mapwork of the pond area, scavenger hunts, pond dipping and using palm drills to make a log slice face.



WASTE- Reusing and Recycling.

Alongside our usual recycling of pens/glue stick lids (we now use the Edding company who use our pens and glue lids to make their Eco range of stationery), batteries, paper and plastic we came up with some impressive and imaginative ways to reuse and recycle items such as a free bird table for the butterflies to feed from, using bottle lids as bee drinking cups, using stones and plastic spoons to make bee and ladybird garden decorations, using scrap material to make bunting for our bee corridor, fixing a broken bird bath to make a drinking station for the butterflies and birds and even using our vegetable scraps from the kitchen for Miss Dorrington's horse!



LITTER.

Our litter picking continued throughout the summer term with each class having the litter picking equipment on a weekly basis to help keep our school litter-free.