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Review of the Eco-Schools Environmental Education Programme in Wales (2018-2022)

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Review of the Eco-Schools Environmental Education Programme in Wales (2018-2022) Final Report

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Table of contents

	List of tables	4
	List of figures	4
1.	Introduction	7
	Project Background	7
	Background to the Eco-Schools Programme	7
	Background to the Eco-Schools programme in Wales	12
	Structure of the document	19
2.	Methodological Approach	21
	Scoping Phase: Approach	21
	Primary Research: Approach	23
	Case Study sampling approach	24
	Research conducted with case study schools	26
	Wider primary research	29
	Ethics	31
	Limitations to the approach	32
3.	Rationale, objectives and progress to date for the Eco-Schools programme in Wales	34
	Overarching aims of the programme	34
	Theme 1: To tackle the climate emergency	36
	Theme 2: Enable learners to take ownership in making a positive difference to the environment	37
	Theme 3: Support all four purposes of the new Curriculum for Wales	38
	Theme 4: Support children and young people in building skills to take action	39
	Theme 5: Provide a mechanism for embedding relevant Welsh Government priorities	39
	Theme 6: Help tackle biodiversity loss, promote nature recovery and prevent pollution	40
	Theme 7: Help schools take practical action	41
	Objectives agreed between KWT and Welsh Government for 2021/22	41
	Review of award progress between 2018-2022	48

4.	Delivery and management of the programme	51
	Funding and resources.....	51
	Management and Governance.....	54
	Marketing and promotion.....	55
	Eco-Schools Officers.....	57
	Engagement with Primary and Secondary schools	58
	Online resources, training and events for schools.....	59
	Partnerships	64
5.	Programme delivery within schools.....	68
	Motivations for joining Eco-Schools	68
	Activities undertaken	72
	Impact on School Resources	80
	Integration and delivery of the new Curriculum for Wales	83
	Monitoring and Evaluation of progress	88
	Barriers and challenges for schools	92
6.	International comparison of best practice.....	96
	International element of the programme.....	96
	Case Studies.....	99
	Scotland	99
	England.....	103
	Malta.....	104
	Lessons learned from best practice elsewhere	107
7.	Outcomes and Impacts of Eco-Schools in Wales.....	110
	Outcomes of Eco-Schools.....	110
	Impact and Counterfactual Assessment.....	121
	Assessment of impacts	125
8.	Conclusions and Recommendations	127
	Rationale for programme in Wales and alignment with Welsh	
	Government priorities	127
	Programme delivery by KWT	128
	Partnerships with the Eco-Schools programme	134
	Programme delivery within schools.....	134
	Insights and potential lessons from the international comparison ...	139
	Outcomes and impacts.....	141

Annex A – Eco-Schools Bronze, Silver, and Green Flag Award	
Criteria	145
Annex B – Eco-Schools Platinum Award Criteria	147
Annex C – Privacy Notice, scoping interviews	148
Annex D – Privacy Notice, Case Studies	152
Annex E – Privacy Notice, Workshops with Children and Young People	156
Annex F – Eco-Coordinator and teaching staff topic guide	159
Annex G – Privacy Notice, Surveys and Workshops.....	163
Annex H - Eco-Schools ToC Logic Model	167
Annex I - Eco-Schools progress against output indicators 2021/22	168

List of tables

Table 1.1: Alignment between Welsh Government policy and Eco-Schools..	13
Table 2.1: Sampling framework for selecting case study schools	25
Table 3.1: Progress of Eco-Schools programme against objectives for 2021/22, including against target metrics.....	35
Table 4.2: Number of Registered Eco-Schools progressing one award level (not including platinum renewal) 2018-22.....	43
Table 5.1: Links between subjects and Eco-Schools activities amongst surveyed schools.....	78
Table 7.1: Thematic breakdown of responses to survey question: Please write a few words on how the Eco-Schools programme has positive impacted pupils and / or the wider community.....	105

List of figures

Figure 1.1: Eco-Schools Seven Step methodology	9
Figure 3.1: Views on the rationale for the Eco-Schools programme in Wales, grouped by theme.	36
Figure 3.2: Award progress annually (2018 - 2022).....	503
Figure 5.1: Motivations for joining the Eco-Schools programme.....	62
Figure 5.2: Eco-Schools topics ranked according to school's implementation success.....	66
Figure 7.1: Impact of Eco-Schools on learner voice and the development of new skills.....	104
Figure 7.2: Eco-Schools impact on the physical environment of school and community.....	109
Figure 7.3: Impact of the Eco-Schools programme on engagement with parents and the wider community.....	111
Figure 7.4: Likelihood of carrying out similar activities to those of Eco-Schools had the programme not existed.....	115

Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
AOLE	Areas of Learning and Experience
CfW	Curriculum for Wales
CiW	Church in Wales
COP26	2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference
CWRE	Careers and work-related experiences
CYP	Children and Young People
Disengaged school	A school that at some point registered with Eco-Schools but has no award
Eco-Committee	A group of learners who, with the support of an Eco-Coordinator, are responsible for running the Eco-Schools programme in their school.
Eco-Coordinator	A member of the school staff who facilitates the Eco-Schools programme within each school
Eco-Schools Officer	A member of Keep Wales Tidy staff who provide support to schools to guide them through the Eco-School programme, application and awards process.
ESDGC	Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship
ESL	English as a Second Language
FEE	Foundation for Environmental Education
FSM	Free School Meals
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
KBT	Keep Britain Tidy
KS2	Key Stage 2 - a phase of primary education for learners aged 7 to 11 in England and (formerly) Wales.
KS3	Key Stage 3 - a phase of secondary education for learners aged 11 to 14 in England and (formerly) Wales.
KSB	Keep Scotland Beautiful
KWT	Keep Wales Tidy
LA	Local Authorities
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SSAS	Sustainable Schools Award Scheme
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

ToC	Theory of Change
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1. Introduction

Project Background

- 1.1 In April 2022, the Welsh Government commissioned Miller Research and OB3 Consulting to undertake an external review of the Eco-Schools Education programme (hereafter referred to as Eco-Schools) in Wales. The review covered the period of April 2018 through to January 2022, to develop evidence upon which to consider future funding options for the programme.
- 1.2 The key aims of the review were to understand how Eco-Schools was being delivered in Wales, the impact of the programme on schools and learners, and how it was supporting key Welsh Government policies. It also aimed to understand how the programme provided an opportunity to engage children and young people with specific Welsh Government priority policies as they developed in the future.

Background to the Eco-Schools Programme

- 1.3 Eco-Schools is the largest international environmental education programme globally, operating across 74 countries, including Wales, and engaging 59,000 schools and 19.5 million children worldwide¹. Internationally, Eco-Schools has various funding models. In some instances, the governments of participating countries cover the entire cost of the programme, while others are funded through a hybrid model of part-public and part-private funding.
- 1.4 The first schools in Wales were registered to the programme in 1994 and managed by Keep Wales Tidy (KWT), a charity that has received central funding to deliver Eco-Schools from the Welsh Government since 2011. KWT has received £420,000 of funding to deliver the programme as part of its three-year annual budget for the period of April 2020 until March 2023, an uplift in funding from previous years. While these funds cover the cost of most activities, KWT also

¹ [Eco-Schools Wales: Keep Wales Tidy](#)

contributed additional funding for the programme where required. The programme is free for local authority (LA) funded or maintained schools in Wales, but independent schools are required to contribute towards the support they receive.

- 1.5 In England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the relevant government funds a charity to manage Eco-Schools in their nation, with funding varied according to the budget allocated to cover delivery.
- 1.6 The programme was launched in 1994 by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), and takes a holistic, participatory approach to learning for sustainability. The programme aims to empower and inspire learners through classroom study, school and community action to raise awareness of environmental, climate and sustainable development issues. Through their involvement in Eco-Schools, young people experience a sense of achievement through exercising their voice on the social and environmental policies of their schools, steering them towards Eco-School certification and awards.
- 1.7 The Eco-Schools programme is underpinned by a **uniform** pledge across all participating countries to undertake a Seven Step methodology, designed to maximise a school's success in the programme. The method, outlined below, involves a wide diversity of individuals from the school community, with an emphasis on pupil-led, bottom-up approaches. In this way, Eco-Schools extends learning beyond the classroom and develops responsible citizenship attitudes both at home and in the wider community.

Figure 1.1: Eco-Schools Seven Step methodology



Source: Miller Research, adapted from Eco-Schools Global

1.8 The seven steps are as follows:

1. **Establish an Eco-Committee** to include the whole school, which drives the school's involvement in the programme.
2. **Conduct an Environmental Review** in which the school examines its environmental and social impact to identify targets for action and improvement.
3. Create an **Action Plan** in which specific targets are identified from the review.
4. Carry out **Monitoring and Evaluation** to ensure that progress towards targets is recorded, and any necessary changes are made to the action plan.
5. **Integration** of the programme with **curriculum** work.

6. Inform and involve the **wider community** with the project.

7. **Formulate an Eco-Code** a statement of the school's environmentally friendly ethos, which is displayed throughout the school.

1.9 The Eco-Schools programme focuses on several key themes, to provide a structured system for participating countries and their schools to engage in environmental management. In Wales, this includes the following nine topic areas:

- Litter
- Waste Management
- Biodiversity
- Transport
- Healthy Living
- Energy
- Water
- School Grounds for People and Wildlife
- Global Citizenship.

1.10 These topics help support children and young people to have a direct link to tackling climate change by carrying out 'hands-on' projects in these thematic areas.

Structure of how schools are awarded

1.11 There are three levels to the internationally recognised Eco-Schools award scheme, to enable schools to gradually scale-up their environmental activities:

- The **Bronze Award** is self-assessed and focuses on setting up the Eco-Schools process within a school, so that everything is in place to start undertaking the eco-work that they have planned.

- The **Silver Award** is self-assessed and builds on the Eco-Schools process established in the Bronze Award. At this stage, schools must begin to evidence their progression towards the third level of award, the Green Flag.
- Once a school has put the Eco-Schools process in place and collected evidence of their progress, they can apply for the **Green Flag**: an externally assessed and internationally accredited Eco-Schools Award. In order to keep Green Flag status, schools are required to renew their award every two years, by undertaking an assessment of their progression with a dedicated Eco-Schools Officer based within KWT.

1.12 Each award level has accompanying assessment criterion² to help schools gauge their progress. The criteria align with the Seven Steps (see 1.8) that form the basis of the programme. Schools must demonstrate their consideration, planning, and discussion around these areas at the Bronze level, and their increasing action and commitment to these areas at the Silver level. At the Green Flag stage, schools should demonstrate that core parts of the programme (Eco-Schools topics, the Eco-Code etc.) are fully integrated across the whole school, and that aspects of the process are undertaken as part of curriculum work.

1.13 In Wales, a **Platinum Award** was introduced by KWT in 2012 to reward schools for their long-term commitment to the programme. Schools that have been continuously involved for nine years, or have achieved the Green Flag three times, become eligible to apply for a Platinum award. Specific criteria were also adopted to recognise the symbolic status of Platinum, to support consistent practice and identify best practice from those schools³.

² Please see Annex **A** for Bronze, Silver and Green Flag Eco-Schools Award criteria

³ Please see Annex **B** for Eco-Schools Platinum Award criteria

Background to the Eco-Schools programme in Wales

- 1.14 As of 2022, the programme covered over 90 per cent of schools in Wales, representing over 460,000 learners: one of the highest participation rates in the world. Schools participating in the Eco-Schools programme cover all 22 LAs in Wales, and include a broad range of infant, primary, secondary, and special schools.
- 1.15 As of April 2022, there were a total of 1,174 schools in Wales with an Eco-Schools award. Of these schools, 810 schools had a Green Flag accreditation, 422 of which had also reached Platinum status. As of the same date, a further 364 schools had a bronze and/or silver award, working their way towards the Green Flag, and 320 were only registered to the programme⁴.
- 1.16 Schools each have an Eco-Coordinator, who is a member of the school staff who facilitates the Eco-Schools programme within their school. Schools also receive support from a dedicated KWT Eco-Schools Officer, who guides them through the programme, application and awards process.

Strategic and legislative context

- 1.17 The aims and objectives of the Eco-Schools programme in Wales align with a number of key Welsh Government policy areas. These include policies targeted towards mitigating the impacts of climate change, protecting the natural environment and promoting wellbeing through positive engagement with communities and the world around us.
- 1.18 The programme makes a strong contribution to meeting areas of Welsh Government's sustainable development, environment and educational priorities, and wider ambitions to develop informed, empowered citizens. This forms the main rationale for the continued support for Eco-Schools over the years. Specifically, it is well-placed

⁴ Eco-Schools monitoring data

to help young people make direct connections between their learning and the ambitions of several, specific policies, strategies and legislation, outlined in the table below.

Table 1.1: Alignment between Welsh Government policy and Eco-Schools

Policy / Legislation	Eco-Schools alignment
<p>Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (WBFGA) 2015</p>	<p>The WBFGA is focused on improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act gives a legally-binding common purpose – the seven wellbeing goals – for public bodies to commit to promoting sustainable development and improving the wellbeing of Wales.</p> <p>In the Act, ‘sustainable development’ is defined as “<i>the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.</i>”. The legislation puts in place a sustainable development principle that means any public body doing something in accordance with this, must act in a manner which seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</p> <p>The Eco-Schools framework provides the ideal structure to support sustainable activities within schools and broadly aligns with all seven Well-being goals. Of particular relevance to the aims and objectives of the programme, are the goals for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘A globally responsible Wales’ – where we look after the environment and think about other people around the World.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘A resilient Wales’ – that maintains and enhances a biodiverse environment with healthy functioning ecosystems. • ‘A healthier Wales’ – where people’s physical and mental well-being is maximised. • ‘A prosperous Wales’ – an innovative, productive low-carbon society that recognises the limits of the environment and uses resources efficiently. <p>The programme plays a key role in developing global citizenship skills amongst children and young people (through, for example, volunteering and engagement with their local community and businesses), while also ensuring future generations are eco-literate – understanding the balance of natural systems and reducing the impact of climate change and biodiversity loss.</p> <p>Relevant Eco-Schools programme Topics: Biodiversity, Healthy Living, Global Citizenship.</p>
<p>Environment (Wales) Act 2016</p>	<p>The Environment (Wales) Act includes a commitment to the sustainable management of natural resources, statutory climate change targets and biodiversity duty set in the context of the WBFGA.</p> <p>Eco-Schools activity directly supports and influences progress towards achieving the legislations aims. Schools and their learners are empowered to take positive action on tackling climate change, creating a cleaner school environment and reducing personal and school-based carbon footprints. In doing so, they are able to contribute to Welsh Government targets of a Net-Zero Wales by 2050.</p> <p>Relevant Eco-Schools programme Topics: Litter, Transport, Biodiversity, Schools Grounds, Energy, Water.</p>

<p><u>Towards Zero Waste</u></p>	<p><u>Towards Zero Waste</u> is the Welsh Government's dedication to creating long-term resource efficiency and waste management.</p> <p>Waste minimisation and tackling litter are key topics for Eco-Schools. This includes the consideration of refusing, reducing, reusing, repairing and recycling waste material and resources. By engaging in the programme, schools have the opportunity to produce a long-term Waste Action Plan for their school, to address key waste streams and increase resource efficiency, directly aligning with the overarching aims of the <u>Towards Zero Waste</u> strategy.</p> <p>Relevant Eco-Schools programme Topics: Litter, Waste Management, Energy, Water.</p>
<p><u>Beyond Recycling</u></p>	<p><u>Beyond Recycling</u> is the Welsh Government's plan to transition to a circular economy in Wales. It includes a commitment to enable communities and young people to take collective action on the circular economy, in using resource efficient products and reducing waste.</p> <p>The Eco-Schools programme supports Welsh Government's circular economy ambitions through helping create aware and informed citizens who help their communities contribute towards improve wider outcomes and reducing emissions. Many schools are already engaging in this work by taking action to reduce their waste (such as plastic-free lunches, turning food waste into compost and running school uniform swap days), creating local partnerships with businesses to improve their local community and find new uses from materials.</p> <p>Relevant Eco-Schools programme Topics: Litter, Waste Management, Global citizenship.</p>

<p>Child Poverty Strategy for Wales</p>	<p>This strategy sets out the vision and strategic objectives for reducing child poverty in Wales and ensuring children and young people live happy, healthy lives that are full of opportunities.</p> <p>The Eco-Schools programme offers a platform for schools to engage in enriching activities that can support their overall physical and mental wellbeing. Schools engaged in the programme have the opportunity to focus on global citizenship activities: taking an active role in their communities and making the planet more peaceful, sustainable and fair.</p> <p>Relevant Eco-Schools programme Topic: Global Citizenship.</p>
<p>Food Strategy for Wales</p>	<p>Food Strategy for Wales sets the overall direction for the years 2010-2020 on creating a more resilient and sustainable food system in Wales. It includes scope for food education, based on a whole-school approach. Many Eco-Schools are already undertaking activities that link with local food initiatives (including community growing, creating seedbanks and sharing food waste). The Welsh Government's programme for Government 2021 to 2026 is committed to the development of a Community Food Strategy, to encourage the production and supply of locally sourced food in Wales. This presents an opportunity that can be used by Eco-Schools to promote further engagement with community food initiatives.</p> <p>Relevant Eco-Schools programme Topic: Healthy Living.</p>
<p>Woodlands for Wales</p>	<p>Woodlands for Wales lays out ambitions for Welsh Government to create high quality, resilient and healthy woodlands across Wales, which can provide social and community benefits.</p>

	<p>The Eco-Schools programme provides a framework through which learners and the wider community can support the ambitions of this strategy. Eco-Schools supports Welsh Government's <i>My Tree, Our Forest</i> programme, which in partnership with Coed Cadw offers schools the opportunity to have a small woodland planted in their grounds.</p> <p>Relevant Eco-Schools programme Topics: Biodiversity, School Grounds for people and wildlife</p>
<p>Children and Young People's Plan</p>	<p>The Children and Young People's Plan was published in March 2022 and sets out how Welsh Government intends to support children and young people who are growing up, living and working in Wales in 2022-23.</p> <p>Eco-Schools aligns with a number of Welsh Government's commitments to young people within the plan on tackling the climate and nature emergencies, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banning single use plastics • Opposing fossil fuel extraction in Wales • Delivering the Nature Networks scheme • Creating a National Forest for Wales • Promoting active travel and road safety • Reducing the cost of public transport for 16–21-year-olds. <p>Relevant Eco-Schools programme Topics: Waste Management, Biodiversity, Litter, Energy</p>
<p>Rights of the Child (UNCRC)</p>	<p>The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international agreement that protects the human rights of children up to the age of 18, by giving rights to protect them from harm by society.</p> <p>In 2011, the Welsh Government made the UNCRC law in Wales, meaning Welsh Ministers have a duty to have regard to the UNCRC when exercising their functions.</p>

	<p>In total, there are 54 articles in the convention, of which several are of particular relevance to the aims and objectives of the Eco-Schools programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 12: Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account. • Article 29: Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, their own and other cultures and the environment. • Article 31: All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities. <p>By supporting the Eco-Schools programme and working closely with KWT, Welsh Government can engage with children and young people on sustainable behaviours and natural resource priorities and involve them in the development of its environmental and climate change policies and decisions.</p> <p>Relevant Eco-Schools programme Topics: Biodiversity, Global Citizenship, Healthy living.</p>
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Source: Eco-Schools desk-based review of policy documentation

1.19 Possibly one of the most relevant frameworks that inherently aligns with Eco-Schools is the new (age 3-16) [Curriculum for Wales \(CfW\)](#). The CfW shifts away from a relatively prescribed content-based national curriculum to a purpose-based broad framework, within which schools will design their own curriculum. As part of this, one of the four purposes of every school's curriculum will be to support children and young people to become ethically-informed citizens of Wales and the world. This overarching purpose is of particular relevance to the aims of the Eco-Schools programme, in helping learners explore their natural interest in the world around them and the challenges faced globally. The founding principle of the Eco-Schools programme is a

pupil-led, bottom-up approach to increase pupil ownership for improving the environmental and social impact of their school. This principle matches the freedom the new curriculum offers in allowing learners to steer their learning direction and the themes and issues covered.

- 1.20 The CfW presents an opportunity for the Eco-Schools programme to be integrated across classroom learning. Many schools in Wales are already considering how to align their Eco-Schools activities with the outcomes of the CfW. Examples of this activity are included in Section 5 of this report.

Structure of the document

- 1.21 The remaining sections of this report are structured as follows:
- **Section 2** outlines the approach and methodology used to gather and analyse the information for the review.
 - **Section 3** describes the rationale for Eco-Schools in Wales, from the perspectives of Welsh Government, KWT and wider partners and reviews progress against the objectives and targets for Eco-Schools.
 - **Section 4** offers an assessment of delivery and management of the programme by KWT covering the period of 2018 to 2022.
 - **Section 5** provides feedback from schools on how the programme was delivered in Wales over the time period covered by this review. This includes the impact of the programme on school resources, activities undertaken by schools and any barriers and/or challenges experienced.
 - **Section 6** includes best-practice case studies of approaches to delivering the Eco-Schools programme in other nations.
 - **Section 7** presents feedback from stakeholders on the outcomes and impact of the programme on schools, learners and the wider community.

- **Section 8** outlines the conclusions and recommendations regarding the review of Eco-Schools in Wales (2018-2022).

2. Methodological Approach

- 2.1 The findings of this report are based on evidence gathered over two research phases, through a combination of qualitative interviews, workshops, an online survey and desk-based research.
- 2.2 The first research phase involved a thorough scoping exercise to fully understand the context to the programme, the development of a Theory of Change (ToC) Logic Model⁵ and the production of research materials. The second phase of the review included extensive primary research with a wide range of stakeholders and school settings, to understand how the programme was working and the effects created. The findings and conclusions of both phases are presented in the remaining sections of this report.
- 2.3 A detailed outline of the methodological and sampling approaches undertaken for the review are described in the rest of this section.

Scoping Phase: Approach

Desk research: Policy documents and monitoring data

- 2.4 A desk-based review was conducted to inform an initial understanding of the scope of the programme in Wales and the progress of KWT in managing Eco-Schools to date, and to prepare information to establish a Theory of Change and sampling approaches.
- 2.5 The evaluation team reviewed Welsh Government national strategy, policy and planning documents to assess the extent to which the activities of Eco-Schools aligned with key Welsh Government policy and strategy. Monitoring data, including quarterly project progress reports⁶ shared with Welsh Government were also reviewed, alongside case studies and newsletters produced by the Eco-Schools team within KWT. At this stage of the review, the team also drew on

⁵ See Annex H.

⁶ These included an overview of highlights from the previous quarter and progress against programme targets.

FEE documentation, to build an understanding of the wider aims and design of the programme internationally.

Scoping interviews

- 2.6 Scoping interviews were conducted with a total of 16 representatives from the Eco-Schools team and Welsh Government. These interviews focused on the rationale for the Eco-Schools programme, design and delivery of the programme, its efficiency and effectiveness, coherence with wider policy aims and relevance to Welsh Government objectives. Relevant interviewees were proposed by the Welsh Government and KWT and included both policy officials and Eco-Schools staff. Privacy notices were shared with interviewees in advance of undertake scoping interviews⁷.
- 2.7 All except two scoping interviews were conducted in virtual, group sessions involving between two and four stakeholders. One of these sessions was facilitated in Welsh. The information collected during these discussions informed and influenced the ToC logic model and evaluation framework design.

Development of research materials

- 2.8 Using information collated through the scoping activities, the theory and assumptions that underpin the Eco-Schools programme in Wales were collated into the form of a logic model. This logic model was shared with Welsh Government and the KWT team, for feedback.
- 2.9 An evaluation framework was developed, setting out a comprehensive guide for monitoring and evaluation of the Eco-Schools programme. The overarching aims of the programme were included in the **evaluation framework**, which ensured they were considered throughout primary research activities.

⁷ See Annex C for a copy of the privacy notice for scoping interviews.

- 2.10 The evaluation framework was designed by mapping the revised, updated logic model against the stated aims of the review, which then informed the creation of research questions. These built on those question areas proposed in the research specification and would be answered through fieldwork activities.
- 2.11 For each question area the framework set out the type of data required to answer the question, the likely source of the data (i.e.: type of stakeholder or programme monitoring documents) and the detailed questions required to elicit the data. This is an effective method for ensuring that all research questions are addressed, and that there are no 'gaps' in the data collected.
- 2.12 Following these activities, the evaluation team transformed the questions laid out in the framework into key research and evaluation materials for the primary research, such as topic guides for the case study investigations, interviews and workshops as well as the online survey questionnaire.

Primary Research: Approach

- 2.13 For phase two of the review, the evaluation team undertook qualitative and quantitative primary research with a wide variety of stakeholders, including learners, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff, Eco-Coordination, LA representatives and wider stakeholders⁸, to understand how the programme was working and its impact.
- 2.14 This approach included working with a small number of case study schools, spread across the five Regional Education Consortia (hereafter referred to as the Consortia). Case study schools were investigated through a 'deep-dive' in order to obtain rich, qualitative data and to demonstrate the implementation and impact of Eco-Schools on learners and each school in depth.

⁸ Including representatives from: Church in Wales, Healthy Schools, Plantlife, Keep Wales Tidy, Dwr Cymru and Size of Wales.

Case Study sampling approach

- 2.15 Ten case study schools were identified and selected using a purposive sampling approach.
- 2.16 An initial sampling framework was established for selecting the schools, based upon (i) geographical location across the Consortia⁹; (ii) language of setting (English and/or Welsh); and (iii) proportion of learners eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)¹⁰. Additional variables used in the sampling framework included:
- Primary / Secondary weighting
 - Level of Eco-Schools award
 - Governance (faith / non-faith)
 - Other characteristics (high ESL)
 - Size of school (based on the number of learners)¹¹
 - Special schools and PRUs.
- 2.17 Overall, the sample included seven primary and three secondary schools, with two schools selected in each Consortia (Table 2.1 below). Of the seven primary schools selected, four were English medium schools, with the remaining three schools operating bilingually or in the medium of Welsh. Four of the seven primary schools were categorised as small schools, with the remaining three primary schools categorised as medium in size. The three secondary schools engaged comprised of one Welsh-speaking and two non-Welsh speaking schools. All three secondary schools were categorised as large in size.

⁹ Regions within the Consortia consist of the Central South (Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Vale of Glamorgan), EAS (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen), ERW (Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot), GWE (Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd Isle of Anglesey, and Wrexham) and the Mid-Wales Education partnership (Ceredigion and Powys).

¹⁰ FSM Threshold: Medium-High = >20%, Low = <20%. In line with Welsh Government data on average FSM AT 20.9 % (all ages). [Schools' census results: April 2021 | GOV.WALES](#)

¹¹ Based on data for [pupils by school and type \(2022\)](#), the sample of case study schools were categorised by size according to the number of learners in each school. Schools with less than 200 learners were categorised as a 'small' school. Schools with between 201 and 499 learners were categorised as a 'medium' size school. Schools with 500+ learners were categorised as 'large' schools.

- 2.18 In total, eight of the ten schools had achieved Platinum status, with the remaining two schools having achieved one Green Flag and three Green Flags respectively. Overall, two schools in the sample (one primary and one secondary) were faith schools and the remaining eight schools were non-faith schools. No special schools or PRUs were included in the sample of ten case study schools but were engaged through the online survey (see 2.36).
- 2.19 The sample included a higher number of primary schools to reflect the substantially higher proportion of primary schools than secondary schools in Wales.
- 2.20 The rationale for including a mix of high and low FSM status in the sample was to ensure the review captured evidence of delivery of Eco Schools in schools in higher and lower areas of deprivation.

Table 2.1: Sampling framework for selecting case study schools

Region	English medium		Welsh medium/Bilingual		Totals
	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	
Central South , of which					0
High FSM		1			1
Low FSM				1	1
					0
EAS , of which					0
High FSM					0
Low FSM	1	1			2
					0
ERW to include Neath Port Talbot (NPT), of which					0
High FSM					0
Low FSM		1		1	2
					0
GwE , of which					0
High FSM		1			1
Low FSM			1		1
					0
Mid-Wales Ed. Partnership , of which					0
High FSM					0
Low FSM	1			1	2
					0
Totals , of which	2	4	1	3	10
High FSM	0	2	0	0	2
Low FSM	2	2	1	3	8

Source: Miller Research

- 2.21 There were possible limitations to this sampling approach. The evaluation team picked an original balance of schools (Six platinum, three Green Flag 1-3 and one Silver school), to reflect the distribution

of Eco-Schools in Wales, as of the year 2022. The majority of schools registered to the programme had a Platinum award (421), with the remaining schools progressing through their first to third Green Flag (390)¹². However, due to the timings for the review, recruitment was a challenge as many schools were unwilling to engage in the research at the end of the summer term. This required the team to contact a second and in some cases third 'backup' school to align with the characteristics of the original sample. Nonetheless, while the team were unable to engage with a Silver school, the final sample of schools reflected the sampling structure developed at the outset for all other characteristics.

- 2.22 A bilingual invitation to participate as a case study school was distributed to selected schools via KWT. Once schools agreed to participate, details were shared with the evaluation team who facilitated an introductory meeting to discuss the fieldwork process. All case study schools were further made aware of how their personal data would be processed and stored under UK GDPR via privacy notices¹³.
- 2.23 The approach to undertaking the case study investigations involved a number of interviews (discussed below) conducted with various stakeholders from the same school, in order to build a detailed picture that reflected how the programme was working in practice.
- 2.24 Case study schools were encouraged to share examples of the work and activities carried out as part of their involvement in the Eco-Schools programme, enabling the review team to undertake supplementary analysis of key themes and areas of interest. The case study approach was designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the 'user journey' of schools involved in the programme and working towards an award.

Research conducted with case study schools

¹² Eco-Schools monitoring data – April 2022

¹³ See Annex D and E

Primary school learners group workshops

- 2.25 Workshops were conducted with primary learners from the Eco-Committees of individual case study schools, to explore how the programme impacted their educational experience, and their overall awareness of social and environmental issues.
- 2.26 The evaluation team spoke to learners from five of the seven primary schools engaged during the review. All but one of these workshops were delivered remotely, facilitated in a small group setting with between three and ten learners and their Eco-Coordinator and/or a teaching assistant. Workshop discussions were steered by a topic guide that was designed around research questions included in the evaluation framework (see section 2.8 - 2.10). All workshop participants were offered the choice to undertake the session in English or Welsh – four were undertaken in English and one was facilitated in the medium of Welsh.

Workshops with Secondary school learners

- 2.27 A virtual workshop was held with secondary learners (mixed Years 7-11) from the Eco-Committee of one secondary case study school¹⁴. Here a more complex range of themes were explored with learners, including their motivations for joining the eco committee, what knowledge and skills they had gained, and future opportunities to learn about and engage with issues not covered by the programme.
- 2.28 Similar to the workshops with primary learners, this session was informed by a topic guide designed around research questions included in the evaluation framework specifically for secondary learners.

Interviews with Eco-Coordinators, teaching staff and wider school community (governors and parent reps)

¹⁴ The original intention had been to conduct five focus groups with secondary school pupils.

2.29 Interviews were held with the Eco-Coordinator(s) at each of the ten case study schools, focused on learning more about the process of implementing the programme within the respective school and the impact the programme had. Interviews were designed to collect information around areas such as:

- The experience of introducing and coordinating the programme in school settings
- The extent to which resourcing and support from the programme had been sufficient
- The extent to which the aims of the programme had been realistic/achievable
- Barriers faced to implementation
- The extent to which the programme had delivered new opportunities for schools
- The impact of the programme on learners, the school and wider community.

2.30 A total of 15 Eco-Coordinators and education practitioners were interviewed, conducted via online video calls or the telephone and informed by a topic guide - see Annex F. All but three of these interviews were conducted individually; a small number of group discussions took place with additional staff members such as teaching assistants or teacher representatives on the eco committee.

2.31 A further four interviews were conducted with stakeholders from the wider school¹⁵ community. These included an eco-governor¹⁶, parent representative, teacher representative and a local Church in Wales (CiW) representative – they were each asked a different set of questions. The mix of stakeholders helped provide an indication of views of the wider school community across a selection of the case study schools.

¹⁵ These four interviewees came from two different schools.

¹⁶ This is a school governor who sits on the eco committee.

Wider primary research

Interviews with wider stakeholders

- 2.32 To ensure that all dimensions of implementation and delivery of the programme were examined, the review team also designated time to engage with wider stakeholders of Eco-Schools. This included interviews with representatives from the following Eco-Schools partners:
- Size of Wales
 - Dwr Cymru
 - Plantlife
 - Healthy Schools.
- 2.33 These interviews were designed to learn more about the nature of engagement between the partner organisations and the programme, as well as the alignment of their work, and outcomes of collaboration. Individuals were recruited for interviews through KWT and purposely chosen due to their partnership with Eco-Schools at the time of the review. A further two interviews were held with a national representative from the CiW and a Carmarthenshire County Council representative.
- 2.34 Additionally, the team also investigated a small number of examples of the programme being delivered in other nations, to identify opportunities for Wales to learn from the global family of Eco-Schools. These international interviews focused specifically on how other nations approached and integrated the nine topic areas, and were particularly looking for examples of innovation and transferability. Organisations interviewed came from nations with similar socio-economic and political contexts to Wales (specifically Scotland and England) as well as Malta, which had been identified during the scoping phase as an example of best practice in delivery of Eco-Schools internationally. These organisations included:
- Keep Scotland Beautiful
 - Keep Britain Tidy

- Nature's Trust Malta
- FEE.

2.35 The outcomes of these international case studies are presented in Section 6 of this report.

Online Survey of registered schools

2.36 Complementing the range of qualitative activities discussed, a bilingual online survey was developed to secure a greater representation of the 760+ Eco-Schools registered in Wales, as of the year 2022. The survey provided an opportunity to capture quantitative feedback from schools that the evaluation team were unable to engage with directly through case study fieldwork exercises.

2.37 The online survey ran for three months and was distributed using SmartSurvey via KWT in the Eco-Schools newsletter and through its regional leads. The survey was targeted at a range of positions within schools, such as Eco-Coordinators, teaching and non-teaching staff, headteachers and Governors. The survey had a moderate response rate of 80 responses, of which 67 responses were in English and 13 in Welsh. In total:

- 65 out of 80 responses came from primary school settings
- Four out of 80 responses came from secondary schools
- Four out of 80 responses came from special schools
- One response came from an aged 3-16 school
- Six out of 80 responses categorised themselves as 'Other' – of which three were infant schools, and the remaining respondents were Years 5-13 Primary and Secondary schools.

2.38 This broadly reflected the proportion of primary schools in Wales, as of 2022 (85 per cent of all schools); a lower percentage of respondents came from secondary schools when compared with all secondary schools in Wales (13 per cent of all schools in Wales) and

a higher percentage of responses came from special schools than the proportion of special schools in Wales (three per cent of all schools in Wales). The remaining respondents were from larger schools incorporating primary and secondary aged learners.

Data analysis

- 2.39 Monitoring data was analysed using a combination of Excel and mind mapping software. Analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data involved a series of stages. Information collected during interviews was analysed utilising online mind mapping software and internal discussions with the evaluation team, to draw out themes within the key evaluation questions included in the evaluation framework. The online survey data was summarised and analysed using Excel, with the analysis of open-ended questions focused on identifying recurring points, as well as patterns or trends that related to more than one theme.
- 2.40 The key points emerging under each theme were then highlighted in the reporting process, and examples and quotes gathered during the primary research were drawn out to further illustrate these points. The conclusions and recommendations were drawn from the evaluators' interpretation of the findings that emerged from the analysis.

Ethics

- 2.41 All participants were made aware of how their personal data would be processed and stored under UK GDPR via privacy notices¹⁷. All participants received an email providing information about what their participation in the review would entail. Written or verbal consent was confirmed before interviews/discussion groups commenced. At least one teacher was present at all learner focus groups.

¹⁷ See Annex G for privacy notices for the online survey and engagement with wider stakeholders.

Limitations to the approach

- 2.42 The approach to reviewing the programme, as outlined above, ensured that findings were informed by the views and experiences of a range of schools and stakeholders. However, the timing for the review – close to the end of the academic year, when secondary schools in particular were preparing for exams – and a comparatively short window of time to contact and engage with schools, created challenges for achieving the desired representation of schools and stakeholders in the sample.
- 2.43 Whilst the eventual sample achieved aligned with the sample structure developed at the outset¹⁸, this required the team to contact a second and in some cases third ‘backup’ school for those included in the original sample. This inevitably made the timeframe even more restricted and consequently the evidence captured through the primary fieldwork represented the views of those who were willing to engage in the review and were therefore potentially more positive about the programme and the way it had affected their respective school.
- 2.44 A further limitation included the fact that only one workshop¹⁹ was held with secondary learners, due to the timeframe for the primary research running alongside Key Stage 4 and 5 assessment periods. This meant that most secondary learners in sampled schools were too busy to speak to the review team, thus limiting the range of views of secondary learners that were captured.
- 2.45 A further limitation was the fact that the primary research included no cross-school or regional interaction of schools, again due to the limited timescale for engagement to find dates that worked for different schools’ calendars.

¹⁸ Except for Level of Award as described in 2.21

¹⁹ The original intention had been to conduct five focus groups with secondary school pupils.

2.46 Finally, in order to understand the challenges for schools who had not been successful in their progression through the programme, the review team had intended to include some disengaged schools in the interview sample. These were schools that at some point registered with Eco-Schools but had no award at the time of the review. Unfortunately, despite numerous attempts at contacting a sample of ten schools, not one was willing to engage in the review. In most cases, either the Eco Coordinator had left the school or given up the post of Eco Coordinator; in all cases, engagement in the review was not considered a priority for the school.

3. Rationale, objectives and progress to date for the Eco-Schools programme in Wales

- 3.1 As part of the review, stakeholders involved in managing the programme in Wales (such as KWT staff and Eco-Schools Officers), and wider stakeholders working alongside Eco-Schools (including Welsh Government, Eco-Schools partners and international representatives) were asked to reflect on their views of the underlying meaning and rationale for the programme.
- 3.2 In this section of the report, the review team considered how this rationale – or need – for Eco-Schools sits alongside the programme’s aims and objectives.
- 3.3 Specifically, this chapter sets out:
- The overarching aims of the programme
 - The specific objectives for Eco-Schools agreed between KWT and Welsh Government for the 2021/22 period, and an assessment of progress against these objectives to date.
 - A review of award progress between 2018-2022.
- 3.4 The findings of this section have been informed by Eco-Schools documentation and monitoring data, alongside interviews with KWT, Eco-Schools partners and Welsh Government.

Overarching aims of the programme

- 3.5 As part of the scoping activities for the review, members of the KWT team and Welsh Government representatives were asked to reflect on their views of the **overarching aims** of the programme.
- 3.6 At this stage, several key themes relating to the broad aims of Eco-Schools were identified and were included in a logic model²⁰ setting

²⁰ See Annex H

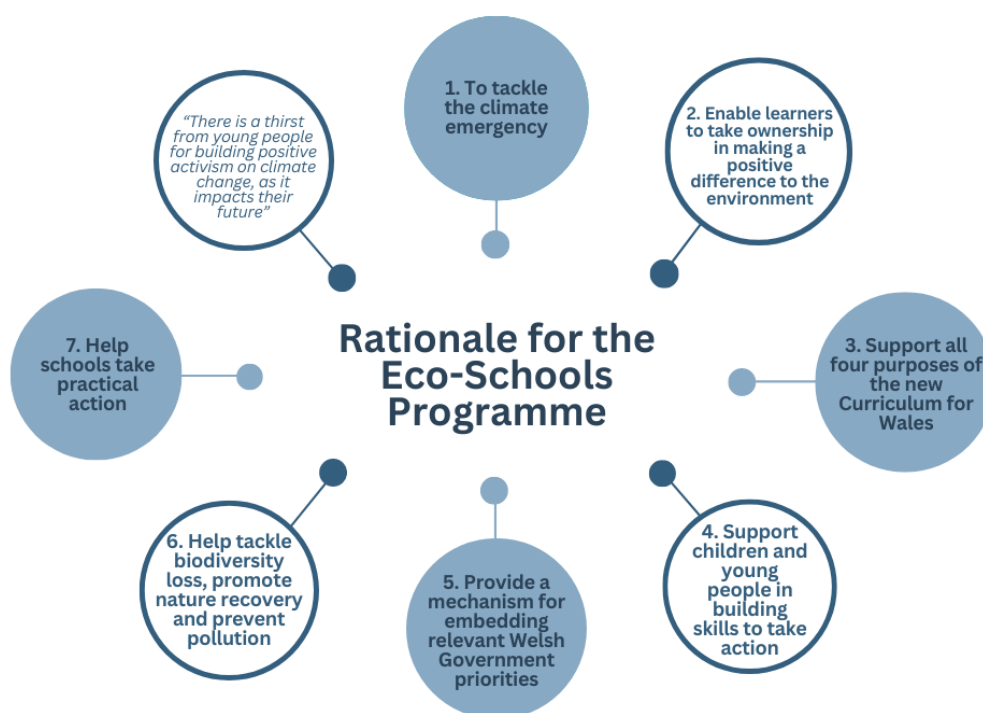
out the theory and assumptions that underpin the programme in Wales. The broad aims of the programme identified included:

- To empower children and young people to take action on climate issues
- To engage children and young people in learning about the environment
- To support and integrate Eco-Schools with the new curriculum
- To help learners develop skills to make positive environmental changes
- To protect the natural environment from damage, biodiversity loss and pollution

3.7 The aims of Eco-Schools strive to deliver against various school and learner needs in Wales – the **rationale** for delivering the programme.

3.8 A number of key themes relating to the rationale for Eco-Schools were identified during interviews (Figure 3.1) and are outlined in the sections that follow. Interviewees described why these needs were important to meet and how Eco-schools delivered against them.

Figure 3.1: Rationale for the Eco-Schools programme in Wales, grouped by theme.



Source: Miller Research, thematic analysis of scoping interview data

Theme 1: To tackle the climate emergency

- 3.9 On the 29th of April 2019, the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency in Wales²¹, highlighting the magnitude of the evidence from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C.
- 3.10 Stakeholders reported that a key rationale for Eco-Schools is to use education as a vehicle to help tackle global issues, such as the climate emergency. It was noted that schools are an effective starting point for increased environmental awareness and behaviour change. If children and young people are not supported to understand and tackle the consequences of global warming, they are less inclined to change their behaviour and adapt to the emergency at hand. As such,

²¹ [Welsh Government makes climate emergency declaration | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/welsh-government-makes-climate-emergency-declaration)

stakeholders reported that the Eco-Schools programme acts as a route for the learners themselves to help them understand the significance of issues covered, and the influence they can have. This creates a path to the teachers and the wider school community²², but importantly has a ‘ripple’ effect whereby knowledge and action from the classroom cascades into learners’ home life and families.

“We can’t be oblivious to what’s discussed outside school boundaries. climate change is a global issue that is obvious, and we need children to look at these issues creatively and understand them. Schools are a good place to do that.”

FEE Stakeholder, 2022

Theme 2: Enable learners to take ownership in making a positive difference to the environment

- 3.11 There was consensus amongst stakeholders that most young people care deeply about environmental issues and wish to make positive changes to the environment around them.
- 3.12 Stakeholders noted that this generation have an innate enthusiasm for the natural world. Activists such as Greta Thunberg have become icons of youth activism against climate change, leading many learners to ask what they can do and to express a desire for their voice to be heard.

“There is a thirst from young people for building positive activism on climate change, as it impacts their future”.

Keep Scotland Beautiful Stakeholder, 2022

- 3.13 The Eco-Schools programme provides this opportunity by a means of fostering environmental awareness across the **whole** school. Through giving learners the opportunity to use their voice and act on environmental and social issues, the Eco-Schools programme lets

²² Here, the wider school community refers to parents/carers, local community organisations, local elected members and wider members of the community

them take ownership of their school's impact and creates a sense of empowerment for learners and their peers.

Theme 3: Support all four purposes of the new Curriculum for Wales

- 3.14 Stakeholders felt another central rationale for the programme, particularly through recent and future activity, was to support delivery of the new CfW. The four purposes of the new CfW²³ are designed to support children and young people to develop as:
- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
 - enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
 - ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
 - healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.
- 3.15 These four purposes were viewed by stakeholders as highly relevant to the overall aim of the Eco-Schools programme, particularly with regards to global citizenship, engaging with contemporary social and environmental issues and health and wellbeing.
- 3.16 It was felt that Eco-Schools helps integrate the different aspects of the new curriculum, particularly because like Eco-Schools, it encourages a **whole school, learner-led** approach. Central elements, such as Areas of Learning and Experience (AOLE) and the ethos of not having 'off-the-shelf learning', were seen as the key forums through which Eco-Schools could support delivery of its vision. Further information on how schools had aligned their Eco-Schools activities with the CfW is detailed in Section 5.

²³ [Developing a vision for Curriculum Design | GOV.WALES](#)

Theme 4: Support children and young people in building skills to take action

- 3.17 Additionally, stakeholders discussed the role of Eco-Schools in supporting children and young people in developing not only their **knowledge** of the environment and climate change, but also developing the **skills** to take further action.
- 3.18 Stakeholders noted that while the subject matter of Eco-Schools is important, it is what learners do with that knowledge that leads to real change. The flexibility of the programme offers the opportunity for children and young people to build on their skills, including numeracy and literacy, by delivering projects in line with the seven-step Eco-Schools process and nine topics. One example identified during fieldwork was of learners developing their mathematical skills by counting the number of insect species in their school grounds and weighing the amount of litter collected for their environmental reviews.
- 3.19 In the views of stakeholders, the programme helps children and young people to then progress through their school life equipped with the knowledge and skills to help make a difference, that they can share with friends and family and can learn from and inspire each other.

Theme 5: Provide a mechanism for embedding relevant Welsh Government priorities

- 3.20 Welsh Government stakeholders noted the importance of considering how strategic priorities can be embedded **throughout** the learning experience of children and young people in Wales.
- 3.21 By offering a flexible programme of work for schools and the ability to focus on topics that suit their overall needs/ethos (but also capture the broad themes of several strategic policies), Eco-Schools provides a mechanism through which the Welsh Government can indirectly engage children and young people in relevant policies and priorities. Through working closely with KWT, the programme can 'move with

the times' and emphasise specific topics and pilot activities, in line with the Programme for Government published each Senedd term.

- 3.22 In addition, stakeholders felt that Eco-Schools was an effective vehicle to be used by policy leads **across** the Welsh Government, to help embed key cross-government priorities within educational settings. One example mentioned was the opportunity to form connections between Eco-Schools and Air Quality policy, to protect learners against risks to their health. Another stakeholder from KWT noted that the programme had, in a broad sense, historically sat within the Landscapes, Nature and Forestry Division of Welsh Government. It was felt that the programme could strengthen its links with Education and Skills, particularly in supporting the new CfW and making environmental education part of the curriculum more centrally from a strategic, policy perspective.

Theme 6: Help tackle biodiversity loss, promote nature recovery and prevent pollution

- 3.23 In line with the declaration of the climate emergency in 2019, this was also a turning point in recognising an unfolding **nature** emergency in Wales and stepping up action for biodiversity²⁴. There is mounting evidence around the scale of the loss of biodiversity in Wales and the need for an integrated approach to reverse this decline.
- 3.24 A key point raised by several stakeholders on the rationale for the programme was the ability for activities being undertaken by Eco-Schools to help tackle some of these issues and ensure that individuals from a young age have the right **attitudes** towards nature and biodiversity. It was noted that through Eco-Schools many children and young people are beginning to make links between local level conservation and wider issues such as biodiversity loss, nature recovery and pollution. This is a central theme of the 'Biodiversity' and 'School Grounds for People and Nature' Eco-Schools topics. A

²⁴ [The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales 2020 to 21 | GOV.WALES](#)

number of schools demonstrated positive examples of improved quality of the local environment and increased mental wellbeing through outdoor learning. Detailed examples of such activities can be found in Sections 5 and 7 of this report.

Theme 7: Help schools take practical action

- 3.25 There was consensus amongst stakeholders that there is also a need to help schools to take practical action in reducing their environmental impact. Practical opportunities to participate in activities to increase climate resilience, reduce carbon impact and enhance biodiversity enables children and young people to translate knowledge into positive action and encourage conversations with parents / peers to improve their local communities, Wales and the planet. The framework of Eco-Schools and suite of resources available to schools in Wales, are designed to help schools begin this journey and succeed in it.

Objectives agreed between KWT and Welsh Government for 2021/22

- 3.26 As part of the programme's grant funding agreement (April 2020 – March 2023), Eco-Schools delivered a number of specific objectives agreed with Welsh Government for each funded period. These objectives shaped the nature of programme activities and were accompanied by an associated set of metrics / targets to measure progress²⁵.
- 3.27 Representatives from KWT explained that the objectives for Eco-Schools for 2021/22 were focused on expanding and strengthening programme activities and building on strong foundations that had been established. The objectives became more focused, reflecting a

²⁵ A full breakdown of all metrics and targets for the programme (2021/22) is enclosed in Annex I.

targeted effort towards overcoming gaps in delivery and ensuring meaningful outcomes.

- 3.28 A greater emphasis for the 2021/22 period was on supporting disengaged schools. This was to ensure that those that registered for the programme were encouraged and motivated to make progress on the seven steps and engage on a more active basis. This output was measured through recording non-Green Flag schools who joined virtual teacher training or learner workshops during the year. These schools were ones that were registered to the programme but might not have had an award or their award had expired, or they have had an award but not progressed to Green Flag award level. At the end of 2021/22, Eco-Schools had re-engaged 93 schools into the programme, meeting its target of 75 schools.
- 3.29 The table below summarises the progress of Eco-Schools in meeting the objectives set with Welsh Government for 2021/22, including progress against targets associated with each objective.

Table 3.1: Progress of Eco-Schools programme against objectives for 2021/22, including against target metrics

Eco-Schools Objectives for 2021/22		
Objective	Activities undertaken	Progress against target(s)
Development of teacher training sessions linking Eco-Schools to the new curriculum.	The programme delivered 'linking to the curriculum' training sessions offered to teaching and non-teaching staff within schools. These sessions were focused on supporting teachers to achieve a whole-school approach to Eco-Schools, which is integrated with learner's classwork. The training was developed due to some schools being reliant on one member of staff to lead the Eco-Schools programme, which can	For the 2021/22 academic year, the programme had targets linked to this objective for number of teachers participating in training days. The target for the 2021/22 academic year was 420 teachers participating in teacher

	<p>impact on the sustainability of the programme in a school over the long-term.</p> <p>The content of the training included modelling how to link each of the Eco-Schools seven steps into classwork, to achieve a true whole-school approach.</p>	<p>training. The programme achieved this target, with a total of 453 teachers participating in training days.</p>
<p>Introduce a Climate Change training programme for teachers to help facilitate whole school action.</p>	<p>Climate Change Training was successfully offered to educators to give them the opportunity to further understand the science of climate change and its impact on the planet, and fundamentally to learn to communicate it to young people.</p> <p>The training sessions emphasised what can be done by individuals, schools, and communities to help tackle the climate crisis and was delivered in collaboration with Size of Wales. Going forward, this training is to be accredited by the Carbon Literacy Trust, helping to further the provision of schools' credentials in facilitating whole school climate action.</p>	<p>There was no direct metric related to this objective.</p>
<p>Delivery of Climate Change sessions to 20 disengaged Primary Schools.</p>	<p>In 2021/22 the programme delivered Climate Change sessions for disengaged primary schools across Wales, directly linked to COP26 and COP Cymru. Workshops were held over a week with live lessons, activities and resources to be used by schools. These sessions directly engaged with learners to address what the climate</p>	<p>For the 2021/22 academic year, the Eco-Schools aimed for 20 disengaged primary schools to attend a Climate Change session. The programme met this target, delivering sessions to a</p>

	<p>crisis is, and ideas for actions to make a difference.</p>	<p>total of 82 disengaged schools.</p>
<p>Strengthening of links to the Healthy Schools initiative.</p>	<p>The Healthy Schools Initiative²⁶ is a scheme delivered by Public Health Wales (PHW) on behalf of the Welsh Government, to promote a whole school approach to health and wellbeing. It works across 22 LA areas in Wales and is designed to encourage schools to develop good practice relating to the health and wellbeing of all who learn, work and play within the school.</p> <p>Schools work towards seven health aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food & Fitness • Environment • Personal Development & Relationships • Safety • Mental & Emotional Health & Well-Being – • Hygiene • Substance Use & Misuse <p>Schools who achieve the highest standards in all seven aspects of health and wellbeing, are able to apply for a National Quality Award.</p> <p>The Eco-Schools programme have a longstanding relationship with Healthy Schools. Healthy Schools support Eco-Schools in their school engagement, while also recruiting schools who are involved with Eco-Schools into the</p>	<p>There was no direct metric related to this objective.</p>

²⁶ See more details via the [PHW website](#)

	<p>initiative. The relationship between Eco-Schools and Healthy Schools is effectively maintained via regional interactions between local officers. Examples of collaborative activities for 2021/22 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Caerphilly Healthy Schools and the Eco-Schools South Wales regional Officer mapped how the two programmes link, to help schools to progress in both awards. For example, schools are required to meet certain indicators to achieve their National Quality Award under the Environment Pillar of Healthy Schools – indicators directly associated with activities schools undertake as part of their Eco-Schools work.• Engaged with schools in Cwm Taf with litter and health work linked to World No Tobacco Day.• Ran joint cluster events for schools in the Vale of Glamorgan• Shared engagement and assessment to support one another in Powys. <p>It was noted by Healthy School representatives that in previous years, the two organisations worked together on a more regular basis, when there was an Eco-Schools Officer for each LA</p>	
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	<p>in Wales. At the time of fieldwork, Eco-Schools Officers covered schools regionally, and the opportunities for linking work had somewhat lessened, but the shift to online delivery made it more accessible for collaboration.</p>	
<p>Undertake more focused work in Secondary Schools.</p>	<p>Eco-Schools also sought to place more focus on their engagement with secondary schools in 2021/22, which typically had a lower level of award status due to their increased numbers of competing priorities. To support secondary school Eco-Coordinators to raise the profile of Eco-Schools, and inform and involve staff across the school, KWT designed an 'Eco-Coordinators School Resource' to give an overview of the programme. It was designed to be used by the coordinators during whole staff in-service training days (INSET), to raise awareness of Eco-Schools and highlight where other members of staff can contribute. This focused work had already been used by several schools during INSET sessions for the summer term 2022.</p> <p>Additionally, the programme held 'Climate Conversations' with secondary schools on carbon literacy for engaging older learners with climate discussions and action.</p>	<p>In relation to this indicator, the Eco-Schools programme had a target for 15 schools to attend Climate Conversation pupil workshops in 2021/22. The programme completed this work through the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC).</p>
<p>Introduce and facilitate a 'twinning/mentoring'</p>	<p>In 2021/22, Eco-Schools trialled a pilot mentoring scheme, where three Platinum schools offered informal</p>	<p>Linked to this objective, the programme had a target for 2021/22 of 40</p>

<p>scheme between beacon schools and those who have not yet achieved their Green Flag status.</p>	<p>support to several non-Green Flag schools (i.e., those at Bronze and / or Silver Award Levels). The schools were encouraged to share best practice ideas on how to embed the Eco-Schools process, as well as helping with ideas for actions. Depending on the success of the scheme, and the feedback from schools, KWT plan to roll out the pilot on a larger scale for 2022/23.</p>	<p>schools attending a network / twinning / progression event. The programme achieved this target, with 326 schools in total attending an event through the pilot scheme.</p>
<p>Improvement of the Eco-Schools website</p>	<p>In 2022, KWT launched a new website for the programme, providing a space for schools to access Eco-Schools resources. The ever-updating website included recently developed bite-size videos for each of the seven steps of Eco-Schools. These were released with the purpose to quickly remind and illustrate each step in the Eco-Schools process and were created bilingually with a focus on giving young people a voice (with learners narrating each one).</p>	<p>In 2021/22, the programme had a target for developing the website with greater functionality for hosting resources, including videos. This included posting regularly updated school case studies and easier access of information for users. As of November 2021, the programme had completed these website improvements.</p>

Source: Eco-Schools monitoring data

3.30 In terms of assessing progress against the objectives outlined above, it is evident that the programme met its objectives for 2021/22 in cases where the activity was specific and / or had an associated target output. This was true in the case of:

- Developing teacher training sessions linking Eco-Schools to the new curriculum.

- Delivering Climate Change sessions to disengaged primary schools.
- Introducing and facilitating a ‘twinning/mentoring’ scheme between beacon schools and those who have not yet achieved their Green Flag status.
- Undertaking more focused work in secondary schools.
- Improvement of the Eco-Schools website.

3.31 In some cases, where objectives did not have a set measurement, it was harder for the review to determine whether objectives had been fully met. This was true, for example, in the case of objectives for strengthening links to the Healthy Schools initiative.

3.32 In terms of additional metrics, a table of the programme’s progress in relation to all targets for 2021/22 is enclosed in Annex I. Overall, the programme met or exceeded targets in all areas.

Review of award progress between 2018-2022

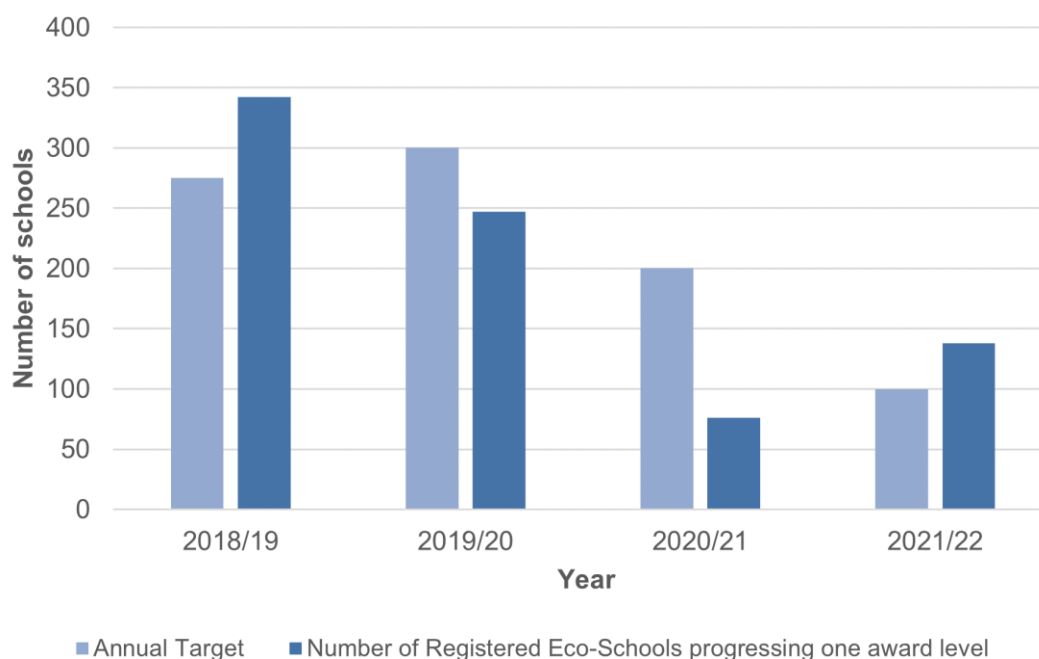
3.33 Over the last three years, the Eco-Schools programme has been delivered within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, a turbulent situation that significantly disrupted educational establishments in Wales and presented unique challenges for the delivery of the programme.

3.34 A key output for measuring success of Eco-Schools is measuring award progress (i.e., the number of registered schools progressing one award level), as the metric helps demonstrate schools’ continuous engagement and advancement through the programme.

3.35 Pre-pandemic, award progress in Wales was increasing at a considerable rate (Figure 3.2), with 342 out of 1530 schools having progressed one award level at the end of 2018/19: 124 per cent of the agreed target of 275 schools. The success of the programme in 2018/19 led to an increase in targets the following year.

- 3.36 Despite another year of steady progress, the emergence of Covid-19 in Wales in Q4 of 2019/20 led to a number of Green Flag assessments being cancelled due to restrictions and school closures across Wales on the 20th of March 2020. This was reflected in the total awards progress of schools being slightly below the target of 300 schools, by the end of 2019/20.
- 3.37 Due to the pandemic, targets set on the number of schools progressing award level were changed slightly to accommodate virtual delivery and the closure of schools, reflected in a reduction of targets for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 periods. In 2020/21 there was a noticeable drop in the pace at which schools progressed through their award levels. This was largely due to challenges with keeping schools engaged when major priorities were settling learners into a new approach to learning during Covid-19, and other additional pressures schools were facing. For many schools this meant leaving less time to develop Eco-Schools effectively.
- 3.38 Data suggests that award progression for schools had been slowly returning to a steady growth by the end of financial year 2021/22. Eco-Schools saw a steady increase in registered schools progressing through one award level, particularly over the last two quarters of 2021/22 where schools slowly phased their return to in-person delivery and the impacts of the pandemic were beginning to phase out. At the end of 2021/22, Eco-Schools had exceeded its target of 100 schools progressing one award level by 138 per cent.

Figure 3.2: Eco-Schools Award progress (2018 - 2022) against annual targets



Source: Eco-Schools Quarterly monitoring data

Table 3.2: Number of Registered Eco-Schools progressing one award level (not including platinum renewal) 2018-22 – broken down by financial quarter

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Q1	44	n/a	n/a	38
Q2	112	135 ²⁷	63	75
Q3	134		67	96
Q4	342	247 ²⁸	76	138
Target (annual)	275	300	200	100

Source: Eco-Schools Quarterly monitoring data

²⁷ In 2019/20, the programme reported on this indicator for Q2 and Q3 together.

²⁸ in Q4 (2019/20) 31 Green Flag assessments were cancelled due to restrictions and school closing due to Covid-19 and 14 pushed back to summer term as more work needed for award of Green Flag

4. Delivery and management of the programme

4.1 This section includes the findings of the review regarding the delivery and management of the programme by KWT. It is specifically focused on assessing the effectiveness of delivery between the period of 2018 to 2022, including information relating to:

- Funding and resources used by KWT to facilitate delivery of the programme in Wales
- Management and governance of Eco-Schools
- Marketing and promotion of the programme
- The role of KWT Eco-Schools Officers and support provided to schools
- The usefulness of training and online resources produced by KWT for the programme
- Links between Eco-Schools and regional / national initiatives and partnerships.

4.2 The chapter has been informed using information gathered during interviews with Welsh Government, KWT and programme partners. It also includes, where appropriate, analysis from fieldwork with case study schools and the online survey of schools registered to the programme.

Funding and resources

4.3 The programme received £420,000 of funding as part of its three-year annual budget for the period of April 2020 until March 2023, an uplift of £100,875 from previous years (equivalent to a 32 per cent increase)²⁹. Nearly three-quarters of this budget was used to fund an essential team of 9.3 FTE³⁰ posts, made up of members of staff from KWT's Education Department.

²⁹ Between April 2018-31st March 2020 the programme received annual funding of £319,125 from Welsh Government.

³⁰ This is made up of a combination of five full-time and seven part-time staff members; two of those working part-time on Eco-Schools also work on other projects within KWT.

- 4.4 The programme was also supported through additional resource covered by KWT, to keep the programme running efficiently. At the time of fieldwork, Eco-Schools Officers were in the process of writing bids to source extra funding from other sources to cover additional costs for the programme.
- 4.5 As of 2022, 1,494 schools were registered and involved in the programme in Wales. In order to provide necessary levels of support, nine Eco-Schools Officers (including one Senior Eco-Schools Officer) were funded to deliver the programme. The Eco-Schools Officers facilitated workshops, delivered teacher training sessions and offered general support, and were responsible for assessing schools' progress and presenting their awards.
- 4.6 It was reported during interviews with Eco-Schools Officers that funding from Welsh Government for the 2018-22 period had been adequate to achieve a reasonable reach of schools across Wales. It was felt that the programme had been able to adapt and use human resources more effectively during the pandemic, due to the shift to online delivery and associated changes in virtual engagement with schools. Two Eco-Schools Officers noted that Covid-19 led to a considerable reduction in travel and subsistence costs, which helped sustain activity. As schools return to in-person delivery, there were some concerns that these costs were beginning to re-emerge, due to Eco-Schools Officers visiting schools again to give specific types of support. This included activities like award assessment days, which the team felt worked more effectively in-person for maximising school engagement. At the time of fieldwork, it was shared that KWT were looking at how they can optimise the use of resources using a hybrid delivery approach to best support schools following the lifting of pandemic measures.
- 4.7 In the face of salary increases and challenges such as the cost-of-living crisis, there were also understandable concerns from the Eco-Schools team over staff retention and maintaining delivery of the programme at the same scale. A challenge raised by one Eco-

Schools Officer was the trade-off between more schools being registered to the programme, and the level of support KWT were able to provide to schools. Eco-Schools Officers covering a smaller number of LAs were able to provide more support to the schools in their footprint. For example, through arranging targeted meetings tailored to the needs of the individual school rather than sending blanket emails and providing generic support. There was concern that as participation in the programme grew and numbers of engaged schools across LAs increased, Eco-Schools Officers might be stretched too thinly. One Eco-Schools Officer explained that they covered two LAs in Wales where over 300 schools were involved in the programme. While higher rates of participation were seen as a success, it was felt that with existing human resources, there would be limited capacity for the Eco-Schools team to continue strengthening and supporting relationships with all schools to the same quality and level.

- 4.8 One scenario discussed in a short workshop with the KWT Eco-Schools team was the opportunity to appoint an Eco-Schools Officer per LA through increased grant funding³¹. If funding increased, the KWT Eco-Schools team felt they would be able to strengthen support and relationships with existing schools and LA partners, while also pursuing further engagement with new schools that may not be aware of the programme or are aware but have become disengaged. A further suggested benefit of increased funding for Eco-School Officer resource was that it could help to increase consistency across Green Flag schools. Members of the team recognised that there was an issue with quality of Eco-schools with Green Flag status. It was explained that there were some Green Flag schools who go over and above in embedding activities, while others approached the

³¹ The average annual salary of a full-time Eco-Schools Officer is £37,000 with an additional one-off onboarding cost for KWT of £2,400. Analysis of these figures shows that under this scenario, the programme would require an additional £402,000 of grant funding to employ ten FTE staff members to the team and double the capacity, to have an Eco-Schools Officer for every local authority area in Wales.

programme in less depth. In addition, Eco-Schools Officers noted issues with Eco-Coordinators at schools leaving their role, and the level of that school's engagement with the programme consequently decreasing. Additional resource to dedicate to schools with staffing changes was seen as a way of supporting schools to maintain their awards and progression with the programme.

- 4.9 It was further suggested that increased resource would relieve pressures on KWT staff members and afford them additional time to work on specific areas of interest such as climate change literacy, the circular economy and well-being. This might include participation in wider training, the development of resources, networking, developing annual celebratory events and delivering workshops locally in schools.
- 4.10 Taken together, there was a general sense of optimism amongst Eco-Schools Officers that sustained or increased funding from the Welsh Government would enable continued success of the programme. In particular, it could facilitate active work with existing schools and engagement with further schools who register in the future.

Management and Governance

- 4.11 Regarding the relationship between the Eco-Schools team and Welsh Government, delivery staff within KWT spoke highly of the support they had received from Welsh Government in delivering the programme over the years.
- 4.12 Stakeholders from KWT felt that Welsh Government valued their knowledge as an organisation and shared that they are increasingly trying to connect Eco-Schools across other Welsh Government areas, including the Transport and Education departments. The KWT team shared they had attempted to push and coordinate activities with the Welsh Government Education team after identifying a knowledge gap to support learners on issues like climate change, biodiversity and water, linked to priorities for education in Wales. Eco-Schools Officers

had proposed developing a suite of online child development and pedagogy resources to fill this gap for the Education department, but shared they were unable to take this work further due to limited capacity.

- 4.13** KWT Officers noted opportunities for other Welsh Government departments to critically assess shared opportunities for learning, so that future online resources can be developed by Eco-Schools that align with overlapping priorities and help achieve cross-departmental outcomes.

Marketing and promotion

- 4.14 As outlined in Chapter 3, an overarching objective of the Eco-Schools programme for 2021/22 was focused on expanding and strengthening programme activities. Eco-Schools used a variety of communications approaches to promote benefits of the programme, disseminate best practice and engage new schools. This included the use of the Eco-Schools newsletter, press and social media channels, case studies, networking/events, partnerships and individualised contact with schools. In this section, we outline how marketing and promotional activity between 2018-2022 has helped the programme increase engagement and reach a broader network of schools in Wales.
- 4.15 Eco-Schools Officers felt the introduction of a bilingual Eco-Schools newsletter in 2019-20 had been a useful tool in helping to engage schools and the wider community and demonstrate the success of the programme. Analysis of data suggests that the newsletter was well received in 2022, with over 2,600 views of past editions, averaging at 150 views per newsletter³². One Eco-Schools Officer shared that the newsletters can also have a wider reach, for example, in cases where schools forwarded the newsletter to parents and staff through their own e-communication channels, and in pinning it to blackboards within the school for other staff to read.

³² Figures derived from Eco-Schools monitoring data.

- 4.16 Another important tool for promoting the programme and engaging with more schools, identified by two Eco-Schools Officers, was support and backing from the LAs. It was felt by these Eco-Schools Officers that engagement with schools was more successful in LAs where contacts within the LA were able to push out information about the programme themselves and use networks of contacts to achieve a wider reach of schools. Additionally, survey findings highlighted the role LAs can play in promoting Eco-schools. A notable proportion of school staff surveyed (32 out of 80) reported that they had first heard about the programme through their LA.
- 4.17 In terms of promoting the benefits of the programme, one Eco-Schools Officer felt that networking was a trusted form of widescale marketing. They highlighted the importance of strengthening and establishing connections with schools through networking events, referrals, the Consortia and consistent one-to-one contact between Eco-Schools Officers and Eco-Coordinators. Responses to the online survey highlighted the success of these approaches with 13 out of 80 respondents having found out about the programme through being directly contacted by KWT, ten out of 80 respondents finding out through another school, a further six out of 80 respondents hearing about Eco-Schools through a networking event and four out of 80 respondents becoming engaged through their Consortia.
- 4.18 A further marketing strategy that another respondent highlighted as being particularly effective was the use of press and social media to promote events and share anecdotes, stories, activities, and other Eco-Schools related updates. One Eco-Schools Officer noted that the programme received good interactions through social media, with 65,693 impressions (people who had seen a post, even if they did not click, comment, or otherwise engage with the post) received collectively across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter between April and June 2022. In addition, Eco-Schools was mentioned 23 times in the press across the same period, including stories from the Tidy

Woof campaign³³. The Eco-Coordinator from one secondary school felt that while existing marketing approaches for Eco-Schools were useful, the programme might benefit from trying to engage with secondary learners through newer social media channels, such as TikTok.

Eco-Schools Officers

4.19 One common theme identified during interviews with KWT Eco-Schools Officers was the potential relationship between schools achieving Green Flag status and the number of staff delivering the programme. Eco-Schools Officers felt that the individual relationships forged between Eco-Schools Officers and the Eco-Coordinator within schools was the key to success and continued engagement through the programme. This was because the more staff involved in delivering the programme, the more tailored, bespoke support they could provide to schools.

4.20 Across case study schools interviewed and online survey respondents, there was an appreciation reported of the support and guidance provided by their KWT Eco-Schools Officer who were praised for being efficient, creative and positive:

“Our Eco-Schools Officer is very open, candid, proactive and present.”

Eco-Coordinator, Case study primary school, 2022

4.21 The support provided by Eco-Schools Officers was highly praised by case study schools, where staff reported this support being sufficient in scope and adapted to suit the needs of each school. One case study school spoke positively of the relationships between Eco-Schools Officers, Eco-Coordinators, learners, parents, and members of the wider community. The Eco-Coordinator explained that face-to-

³³ A campaign as part of Caru Cymru to help tackle dog fouling, encouraging owners to pick up after their pets.

face assessment days involved the whole school, and learners would look forward to showing their progress with their Eco-Schools Officer.

4.22 In total, 51 out of 80 respondents strongly agreed and 24 out of 80 respondents agreed that Eco-Schools Officers provided sufficient support when needed. A further 51 out of 80 respondents strongly agreed and 22 out of 80 respondents agreed that there was good communication between Eco-Schools Officers and their school.

4.23 An open text box in the online survey invited respondents to provide additional comments on the effectiveness of Eco-Schools support. This yielded five out of 80 respondents to share positive examples specifically of support given by Eco-Schools Officers.

“Keep Wales Tidy are an amazing support and always there if you need any help. [Name] has been our Eco-Schools Officer for many years and he is always so enthusiastic about everything the school and the pupils have done.”

Eco-Schools Questionnaire Respondent, 2022

4.24 It was also reported by some Eco-Schools Officers interviewed that as schools progressed with their involvement in the programme, they sometimes found that they benefitted from more light touch support. Activity generation, content delivery, and learner involvement in the programme became so second nature that schools became less dependent on seeking external guidance and support. It was felt by Eco-Schools Officers that this was a sign of how support had successfully enabled schools to have the space and knowledge to continue their Eco-Schools journey independently.

Engagement with Primary and Secondary schools

4.25 With regards to engagement with primary and secondary schools, interviews with KWT Eco-Schools staff and case study schools led the research team to conclude that engagement with the programme was more challenging at the secondary level. As a result, the Eco-Schools

team had consciously chosen to bring in personnel with secondary school experience into the team, to help bridge the gap into new schools.

- 4.26 Eco-Schools Officers identified a number of challenges in engaging secondary schools in the programme. Firstly, it was felt that big schools, particularly larger secondary schools, found it more difficult to understand and implement cross-curricular and whole school delivery, due to time pressures on staff to be released from the classroom and embed Eco-Schools work into lesson planning across the curriculum. Secondly, Eco-Schools Officers shared that secondary schools experienced competing priorities with examinations and revision, particularly with older learners, which can make it challenging to commit time to the programme. In addition, in some cases, a school's success in the programme was dependent on one teacher, meaning continuity was lost if and when that person left the school. This challenge was reinforced during fieldwork for this review, where the intention had been to include disengaged secondary schools in the sample, but this was not possible where Eco-Coordinators had left the school, given up the post of Eco Coordinator and/or engagement was not considered a priority for the school.
- 4.27 Comparatively, at the primary level, Eco-Schools Officers felt the curriculum afforded younger learners more time to participate in various types of activities for the programme and was more flexible to allowing a whole-school approach.

Online resources, training and events for schools

- 4.28 As outlined in Chapter 3, the Eco-Schools programme had delivered a variety of support for schools by the end of 2021/22 financial year, including developing and highlighting useful tools and resources, delivering teacher training and providing networking and learning opportunities for schools through workshops and events.

- 4.29 This section outlines feedback from Eco-Schools Officers, case study schools and survey respondents on the effectiveness and success of these activities, as well as potential improvements.

Online resources

- 4.30 The reach and popularity of the programme means that KWT developed a number of resources freely available to schools online, to assist them in facilitating delivery in their school. These resources included information on Eco-Schools processes such as the environmental review, action plan, litter toolkit, day-of-action resource and guides on various environmental improvements across the nine Eco-Schools topics. The resources such as the environmental review and action plan assist with the Eco-Schools core process, fundamental to the successful running of the programme, whilst the toolkits, resources and guides help with the practical activities run by schools and ensuring there is alignment with the overarching objectives of the programme.
- 4.31 The Eco-Schools team within KWT also produced resources on relevant topics on behalf of Welsh Government such as the Period Resource for schools, the Easy Read consultation on the Deposit Return Scheme, the Our Wales 2050 competition and promotion of Young Dragons.
- 4.32 In case study schools, Eco-Coordinators interviewed shared that the Eco-Schools online resources were used as a source of inspiration for ideas on facilitating the delivery of the programme within their school. One Eco-Coordinator shared that they had used specific videos on sea pollution whilst running sessions on minimising litter, while another used a guide focused on birdwatching to support the initiation of biodiversity activities. One secondary school head teacher interviewed referenced how they had been directed by their Eco-Schools Officer towards resources on Hwb for embedding Eco-Schools into the new CfW.

- 4.33 Of the school staff who responded to the online survey, 22 out of 80 respondents strongly agreed and 46 respondents agreed that they had all the tools, guides and resources they needed to deliver the Eco-schools programme efficiently and effectively in their school. One respondent noted that online resources were of high quality and motivated the activities of learners and teachers.

Training

- 4.34 Provision of training is one of the key means that Eco-Schools try to support Eco-Coordicators to deliver the Eco-Schools programme effectively within their school. Training events for teachers were run throughout the year by KWT on a number of themes including areas such as back-to-basics, linking to the curriculum and climate change.
- 4.35 A small number of Eco-Coordicators within case study schools had attended teacher training run by KWT and felt that sessions improved and enriched programme delivery within their schools. One Eco-Coordinator shared that training events provided an opportunity for them to meet other teachers delivering the programme to share information, mutual experiences and ideas. In light of the shift to remote delivery during Covid-19, one Eco-Coordinator reported that virtual sessions were more accessible and time-efficient for schools, as it removed the need to travel in order to attend. In instances where Eco-Coordicators were not available for scheduled training times, it was recommended that KWT record training sessions so that those who were unable to attend could catch up in their own time.
- 4.36 Online survey respondents also shared positive sentiments around the training offered to schools. In total, 35 out of 80 respondents strongly agreed and 29 out of 80 respondents agreed that the Eco-Schools teacher training was useful for delivering the programme. In addition, a number of opportunities for further teacher training were identified, including training tailored to delivering the programme within special schools.

- 4.37 There was a desire from two survey respondents working in special schools to see further support from Eco-Schools in the form of online resources and training specifically adapted to special schools, informed through engagement with special schools to understand their needs. One survey respondent, for example, explained they worked in an Autistic Spectrum Disorder special school with 75 per cent non-verbal learners, meaning they had to adjust Eco-Schools activities to fit their learners' needs. Another respondent from a special school noted they struggle to apply the learner-led model advocated by Eco-Schools as their school catered for a high proportion of children with severe learning disabilities, making it difficult to implement this in a meaningful way. They explained that the majority of learners in their school were not able to do an audit, and instead, the best they could do is empower/show the best way of behaving in an environmentally responsible way. For these reasons, both schools had been reluctant to apply for a Green Flag Award.
- 4.38 There was also emphasis from one stakeholder working for the CiW, around the importance and possibilities of Eco-Schools extending training beyond teachers to include volunteers. In faith schools, for example, it was explained that Eco-Committees often engaged with the local community through working with church representatives and volunteers to undertake eco actions on church grounds. It was recognised that while some schools are stretched for resources and time to deliver the programme, many church volunteers are retired and have a greater amount of free time to engage in activities. As such, they saw an opportunity to establish volunteer networks for schools participating in the programme. These networks could consist of volunteers trained by Eco-Schools in programme content and delivery, which schools could then partner with to host focused and well-planned sessions for learners.

Workshops and events for schools

4.39 In addition to the provision of training, Eco-Schools also hosted a variety of networking and learning opportunities for schools through local and national workshops and events. Case study schools and survey respondents were asked about the impact of the programme's engagement with learners through these means, with common themes including enhanced knowledge-sharing and idea-generation opportunities.

4.40 In total, 33 out of 80 respondents strongly agreed and 25 out of 80 respondents agreed that workshops and events for learners delivered by the programme had been interesting and inspiring. Online survey responses shared a variety of positive examples of the success of these initiatives, and their benefits to the school.

"We have really enjoyed the online workshops this year. It has enabled the school to involve all classes in Key-Stage 2 (KS2) and provided up-skilling for the staff."

Eco-Schools Questionnaire Respondent, 2022

"We plan to repeat the activities covered in the online workshops regularly with all classes so that all children experience them during their time at our school."

Eco-Schools Questionnaire Respondent, 2022

4.41 When asked about the impact of the online workshops on learners' engagement with the programme, the Eco-Coordinator from one case study schools stated:

"The online workshops which Eco schools have led this year have inspired some excellent learning opportunities in class and supported teachers in delivering purposeful learning linked to the Eco-Schools programme. It has also helped develop their confidence in exploring eco schools with their class."

Eco-Coordinator, Case Study school, 2022

- 4.42 In addition, a number of opportunities for further workshops and events for schools were identified, including extending sessions to the Foundation Phase³⁴ in the future. One school, for example, felt that while they enjoyed the digital workshops attended in the previous year, they were targeted more towards learners in Year 3 and above. Another survey respondent also shared this view, with the suggestion that they would like to see cluster workshops across younger year groups. The concept of getting involved in early years or preschool ages was also noted by the Eco-Schools delivery team, who had a desire to extend some activities to include “Eco-Tots”.
- 4.43 While the Eco-Schools programme hosted face-to-face events pre-Covid-19, it was recognised by KWT Eco-Schools Officers that virtual delivery during the pandemic provided opportunities to engage with learners from a wider reach of schools. For example, it was reported that one workshop during lockdown was attended by over 300 learners from ten different schools in Wales. One survey respondent felt these online sessions were a useful substitute for the face-to-face support they were unable to have during the height of the pandemic including visits from their Eco-Schools Officer and assessments.
- 4.44 At the time of fieldwork, Eco-Schools Officers noted that the programme was transitioning into hybrid approaches, having hosted its first face-to-face event since the start of the pandemic for the National Eco-Committee event in June 2022.

Partnerships

- 4.45 Collaboration between Eco-Schools and wider partners presents a mutually beneficial opportunity for organisations and campaigns across the environmental advocacy space. Within Wales, the Eco-Schools programme has established partnership links with several key organisations across different sectors, including:

³⁴ The Foundation Phase is the statutory curriculum for all three-to-seven-year-olds in Wales, introduced in September 2010.

- Size of Wales: a charity that work to protect tropical forests and raise awareness about deforestation.
- WWF Cymru: fighting to restore and protect Welsh nature.
- Dwr Cymru (Welsh Water): responsible for supplying drinking water in Wales and disposing of wastewater that is produced.
- Plantlife: working to raise the profile and protect the future of Welsh wildflowers, plants and fungi.
- Marine Conservation Society
- Friends of the Earth
- Repair Café Wales
- Healthy Schools Scheme.

4.46 At the school level, there were several examples reported by Eco-Coordinators from case study schools of Eco-Committees, teachers and parents, who drove forward initiatives to partner with their LA, local groups and / or businesses to collaborate on Eco-Schools activities. In some cases, targeted organisations were approached by schools who applied for grants, donations, or other kinds of support and resources from these organisations. One Eco-Coordinator from a case study school stated that this included working with a parent's transport company, who offered transport services for learners during Eco-Schools activities. Further details of how schools integrated activities with wider partners and the community is discussed in Section 5.

4.47 The sections below outline feedback from partner organisations on the relevance and impact of their partnership with Eco-Schools.

Outcomes of partnerships

4.48 Due to the well-established nature of the Eco-Schools programme across Wales, and the positive relationships it has nurtured with schools, Eco-Schools can be viewed as a trusted partner for climate change-related organisations. In terms of key themes of importance,

interviews with Eco-Schools partners demonstrated that Eco-Schools' relevance and connection can be linked to the following core areas of interest:

- Awareness
- Education
- Collaboration
- Working towards shared goals

4.49 In terms of what the programme offers wider stakeholders, the diversity of Eco-Schools topics enables a number of entry points through which external organisations can collaborate and increase their own engagement opportunities with young people and the wider community. This is particularly relevant for organisations such as Dwr Cymru, which has an obligation as a not-for-profit water company to deliver programmes to schools linked to the environment and sustainability and to promote Dwr Cymru campaign messages on water efficiency, reducing sewer misuse and the water cycle. For example, in 2022 Dwr Cymru was required to engage with 73,000 learners. As a broad approach, the organisation targets 95 per cent of their own delivery of content to schools at the primary level, as they believe that is where one can affect the most change and influence pro-environmental behaviour:

“It’s actually KS2 where we think we can have the most impact, so that learners are old enough to understand some of the more complex messages but young enough to still be excited about it and go home and talk to parents about it.”

Dwr Cymru Stakeholder, 2022

4.50 The interviewee from Dwr Cymru was aware that one of the Eco-Schools topics is specifically focused on water – providing an opportunity to undertake collaborative work with primary learners that complemented and overlapped with their own priorities and objectives. As an organisation, they viewed the partnership work that

they had undertaken with the Eco-Schools programme as a key part of their strategy going forward.

- 4.51 As well as assisting with engagement, there was also an opportunity for climate-related organisations to support delivery of the practical elements of the programme. Schools working towards the seven steps create an enhanced requirement for specialist and technical expertise in order to deliver their ambitions for projects. For example, schools seeking to reduce their water waste and consumption create an increased demand for educational outreach from Dwr Cymru. Similarly, schools wishing to gain more practical knowledge on sustainability and the circular economy create a need for knowledge exchange through partnership with Repair Café Wales. As schools working towards their awards begin to implement changes, a natural opportunity is created to draft in the services of external partners.
- 4.52 It was widely reported by partner organisations that a particular benefit of the programme was the ability to work collaboratively and use Eco-Schools connections and network to facilitate their own work. Size of Wales, for example, stated that they would have made fewer inroads without Eco-Schools, and would have spent more time developing connections, and less time delivering their activities. They were, as a result, able to work with a minimal marketing budget. Similarly, stakeholders from the Healthy Schools Programme explained that without Eco-Schools, they would have to cover more ground with teaching about the environmental aspects relating to their remit. This enabled Healthy Schools to focus on a more targeted range of topics with learners. Plantlife noted that they would not have the same type of reach or audience without Eco-Schools, and that the programme was “invaluable and vital” to their success.

5. Programme delivery within schools

5.1 This section includes findings on **how** the Eco-Schools programme had been implemented and delivered in schools across Wales for the 2018 to 22 period, including specific information relating to:

- Schools' motivations for joining the programme
- Key eco-activities undertaken
- The impact of Eco-Schools on school resources
- Integration of Eco-Schools with the new CfW
- Barriers and challenges that schools experienced when delivering the programme.

5.2 The chapter has been informed using information gathered from interviews with stakeholders from case study schools³⁵, as well as analysis of the online survey of schools registered to the programme.

5.3 Delivery of the Eco-Schools programme differed across schools based on a number of factors, including the type of school, size and the location, all of which will be discussed further in this chapter. Eco-Coordinators had a range of substantive roles within their school alongside their responsibility for facilitating the programme, including classroom teachers, teaching assistants and senior leadership team (SLT) members; they were also closely supported by school governors, parents and community representatives.

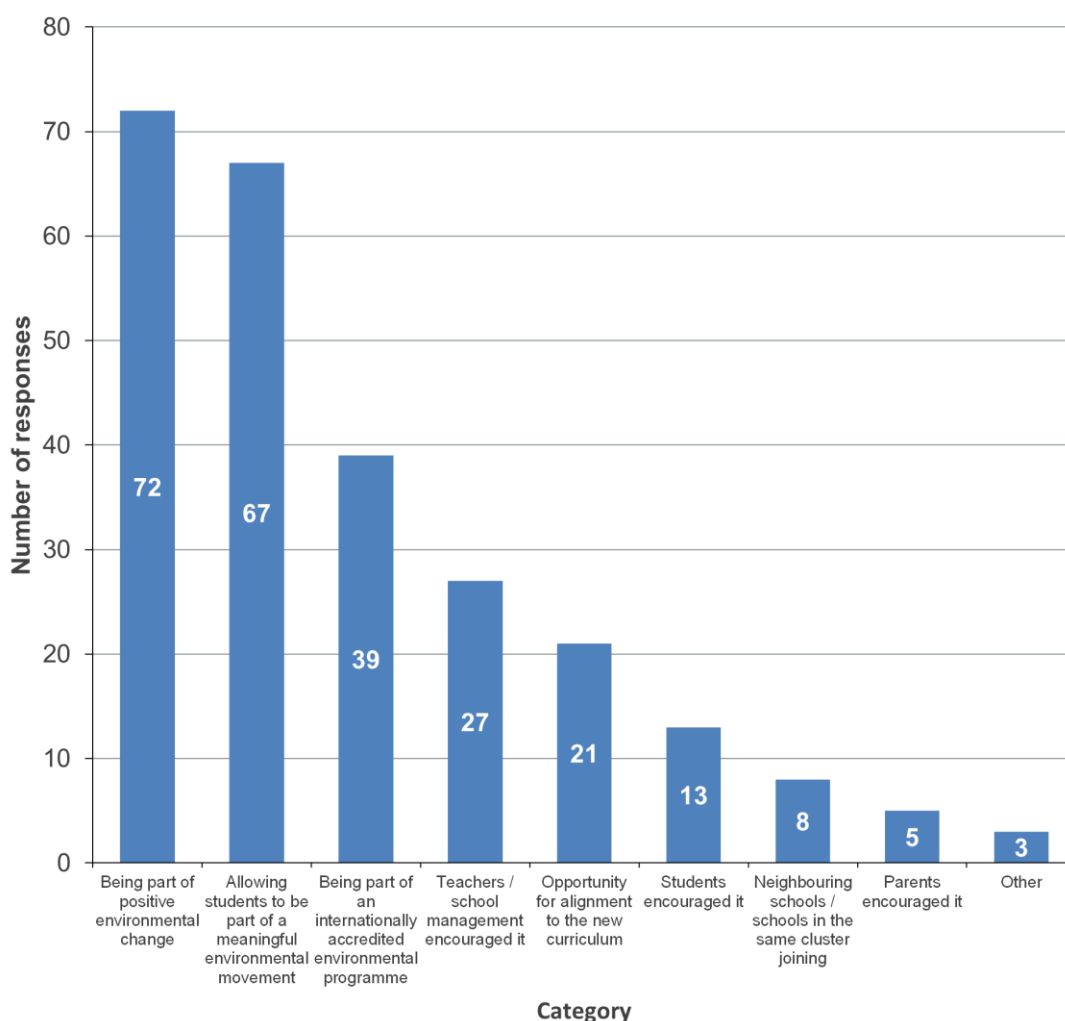
Motivations for joining Eco-Schools

5.4 Schools surveyed were asked about their motivations for signing up to the Eco-Schools programme³⁶, with the results presented in Figure 5.1 below.

³⁵ These stakeholders included including Eco-Coordinators, head teachers, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and representatives of the wider school community

³⁶ Respondents were given the option to provide multi-part answers, so the number of responses does not add up to 80.

Figure 5.1: Motivations for joining the Eco-Schools programme



Source: Miller Research, Eco-Schools Evaluation Survey, n=80. Respondents were asked 'What was/were your main motivation/s for signing up to the Eco-Schools programme? You may select multiple options.'

5.5 The main motivation for joining the programme for 72 out of 80 respondents was the opportunity to be part of positive environmental change, followed by allowing learners to be part of a meaningful environmental movement (67 out of 80 respondents).

5.6 Just under half of respondents, 39 out of 80, expressed that their motivation came from a desire to be part of an internationally accredited environmental programme. Other motivations included:

- The encouragement from teachers and school management (27 out of 80)

- The opportunity to align work with the new CfW (21 out of 80 respondents).
- Encouragement from their students (13 out of 80)
- Neighbouring schools joining the programme (eight out of 80)
- Encouragement by parents (five out of 80)

5.7 Case study schools also cited a number of motivations as to why they had chosen to implement the Eco-Schools programme, with strong factors including an alignment with the school's overall ethos, raising awareness of vital social and environmental issues, and being part of a global environmental movement.

5.8 For several schools engaged during the review, a key driver for joining the programme was that Eco-Schools aligned with their school's values and mission statement. One Eco-Coordinator described how the programme fits into the overarching sustainability agenda for their school, noting that the programme helped synthesise and embed their previous environmental activities into general classroom learning. For another school, a substantial draw to the programme was overlap between the school's ongoing work around global citizenship: one of the nine Eco-Schools topics.

5.9 Similarly, both faith schools interviewed noted how Eco-Schools complemented their beliefs. One Eco-Coordinator from a Catholic school, for example, shared that the programme strongly aligned with the Christian ethos around a duty of care for God's creation and nature. They felt that Eco-Schools provided a framework through which the school could teach learners the value of being mindful of their impact on the planet.

5.10 In one instance, a school joined the programme following encouragement from staff members and seeing how the programme was being delivered in other schools in their local area. One Eco-Coordinator described how prior to joining Eco-Schools, their school was only delivering environmental activities through incidental

curriculum links and integrating the Healthy Schools initiative. They explained that the appointment of a new headteacher who supported Eco-Schools acted as a springboard for their school's involvement in the programme. In their early stages of registering, the school was able to gain ideas and learn practices from other neighbouring schools who had successfully integrated the Eco-Schools framework into their activities.

- 5.11 For other schools, the programme provided an opportunity to promote learners' voices and be part of a meaningful movement. One Eco-Coordinator noted that by implementing the programme, the school benefited from the Eco-Schools awards process, which gave learners both a sense of achievement and empowerment. At the same time, in their view, the programme also helped raise awareness of global issues to both learners and the wider school community. This sentiment was echoed by a parent representative for an Eco-Committee within another school, who was impressed by the pupil-led approach of Eco-Schools and how learnings were encouraged to filter back into learner's home life, outside of the classroom.
- 5.12 Learners shared a variety of positive sentiments and reasons why they felt Eco-Schools was important. Examples included wanting to learn how to look after the environment better, recognising the importance of improving and maintaining the health of the planet and enjoying being in a clean environment. This is illustrated in the case study below.



**Case Study: Bryncoch Church in Wales (CiW)
Primary School – thoughts from the school’s Eco-
Committee members (i.e., learners)**

Eco-Schools is important because...

“It teaches us that you can make a difference, no matter how small, with the environment. It shows that every little helps.”

“You can make a difference not just to the school, but the world as well.”

“It helps make sure people are careful in the forest and woods, and not ruin animal’s homes by littering.”

- 5.13 Secondary learners also described the **future** importance and impact of their work, through creating a better, more environmentally friendly school for future learners and the wider community.

“[Eco-schools] is important because we want to make the school a better place for when we’re older, and for other pupils in years to come”.

Secondary learner, Crickhowell High School, 2022

Activities undertaken

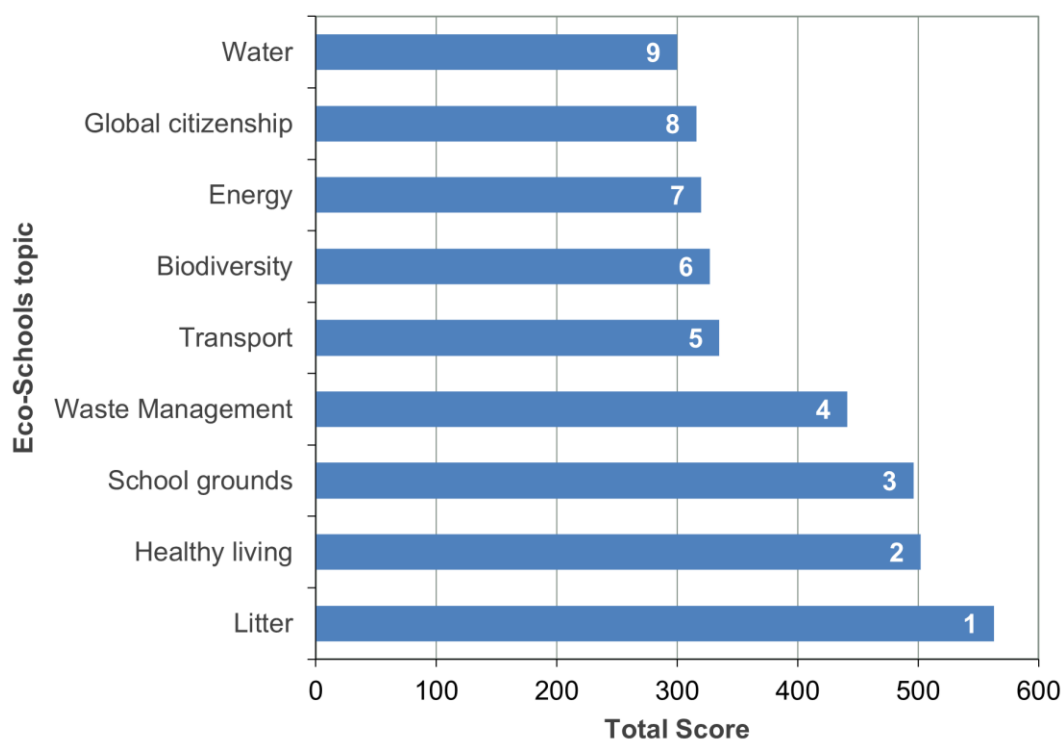
Eco-Schools topics

- 5.14 As part of the review, online survey respondents and case study schools were asked about their success in embedding each of the nine Eco-Schools topics within their setting. Supporting information on examples of the different types of activities undertaken for each topic were gained from stakeholder interviews with Eco-Coordinators and workshops with learners across the ten case study schools consulted. Common feedback across schools engaged was that activities were

predominantly learner-led, meaning that many ideas and initiatives came directly from the Eco-Committee themselves.

5.15 Survey respondents were asked which Eco-Schools topics they had been able to cover most successfully within their setting by selecting a ranking number for each area – 1 being most successful and 9 being least successful. The responses were analysed by calculating a weighted score for each topic. Topics ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks, the score is a sum of all weighted rank counts. The findings are presented in the graph below.

Figure 5.2: Eco-Schools topics ranked according to school's implementation success



Source: Miller Research, online survey of registered schools, n=80.

Respondents were asked 'Which Eco-Schools topics do you believe you have you been able to cover most successfully within your setting? By using a ranking number, 1 being most successful and 9 being least successful, please indicate the appropriate rank in the box.'

5.16 The topic of litter and its associated activities was ranked the highest by survey respondents as the area in which they had been able to

implement the programme most successfully. One survey respondent from a primary school noted that this was because the litter topic is easier for younger learners to digest, where the impact is seen immediately, compared to other topics where concepts are more abstract and therefore may be more challenging for learners to understand.

- 5.17 Across case study schools, litter picking was a common activity for learners and in many cases, included engagement with the local community. One school engaged described how they had undertaken a 'Poo Patrol' campaign in collaboration with local waste crime officers, to help reduce litter and bagged dog faeces surrounding the school. The Eco-Coordinator described how officers had given talks to the Eco-Committee and hosted walks in local green spaces for learners to help pick up and properly dispose of any dog fouling. Alongside their waste-reduction walks, learners were encouraged to produce posters to show individuals their impact on the environment and help reduce the problem over the long-term.
- 5.18 Following litter, the topic of healthy living was ranked the second most successful topic that survey respondents felt they had been able to implement within their Eco-Schools work. One survey respondent noted that this was due to their school's existing links with the Healthy Schools initiative, meaning that work in this area was covered comprehensively through the curriculum. Case study schools shared several examples of a wide range of gardening and growing activities that allowed learners to be exposed to nature, improve their wellbeing, learn about the importance of soil and the dependence of humans on food in the face of climate change. Some schools encouraged learners to plant flowers and herbs and to plant and maintain vegetable patches.
- 5.19 Improving school grounds was also ranked highly amongst survey respondents (third out of the nine Eco-Schools topics). Two respondents noted that this was due to them having limited access to

wider green space and instead choosing to focus their activities on school grounds projects.

- 5.20 Examples from case studies schools on improvements being made to school grounds were diverse. The Eco-Coordinator from one primary school described how they had received a donation of trees that they planted on the school grounds. They explained how each tree was planted by a “troop” of learners from the Eco-Committee who planted, named and held personal responsibility for the tree. A secondary school was exploring the possibility of building outdoor classrooms for school-wide engagement, to help promote learner wellbeing. Learners also had the opportunity of practicing maintenance in their school’s garden and grounds by weeding and taking general care of the area.
- 5.21 Regarding more challenging topics to introduce, transport (ranked fifth out of the nine topics by survey respondents) was considered a more complex topic to integrate through Eco-Schools work, due to varied contextual factors. One survey respondent, for example, explained that all learners were offered free bus transport to school, and whilst they had been working to develop better active travel methods, they struggled to get their LA onboard due to safety concerns. Comparatively, the Eco-Governor for another case study school described how their school’s Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) developed a “road safety and bike-it” team to promote cycling and walking but this was only made possible because they already benefited from existing safe routes around the school.
- 5.22 In terms of activities relating to the topic of biodiversity (ranked sixth out of the nine Eco-Schools topics by survey respondents), learners across several primary schools engaged in the review chose to monitor birds and insect species both in the school grounds and in the surrounding area. This was achieved through building bird-hides, birdfeeders or bug-feeders that would allow species to graze in the area and provided Eco-Committee members with the opportunity to understand and track them. This activity was multi-faceted, as

learners were involved in practical skills, and on a more conceptual level, were able to observe nature respectfully and from a distance.

- 5.23 Topics ranked the **least successful** amongst survey respondents included global citizenship, energy and water. One survey respondent noted that it had been difficult conserving water and energy over the past few years due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the need for additional hand washing and ventilation in schools. Another respondent from a secondary school stated that energy changes were harder to implement in the school as this was managed by an external third party and lights/windows within the school were automatic.
- 5.24 From the learner perspective, across all nine Eco-Schools topics, the activities of Eco-Committees were the highlight of the programme and made a considerable impact on their learning experience. During workshops with learners from case study schools, it was clear that there was palpable excitement around the activities that learners participated in, and this led to pro-environmental behaviours. Examples of such activities are highlighted in the case study below.



Case Study: Ysgol Y Graig primary school –
thoughts from three of the school's Eco-Committee
members (i.e., learners)

What have you learnt from being involved in Eco-Schools...

"We designed a trail around the forest and used sticks to make arrows, so you don't get lost. The trail picked out areas of special interest, like the bluebells."

"Went across the river with wellies. It was really fun, I really enjoyed it. We identified different creatures and bugs that can be found in the river, and animals like frogs."

"We've done lots of activities outside. [The school] has done planting, we've grown potatoes and tomatoes. We also planted sunflower seeds and watched them grow, they're taller than us now!"

5.25 A critical aspect of Eco-Schools is to encourage environmental consciousness and awareness in learners, and evidence from the review indicated that activities delivered in schools as part of the programme had been successful in doing this. An example shared by learners from one primary school was when they made information leaflets themselves, informing people about the harm of littering, and a “how-to” guide to recycling. These activities demonstrate the actions undertaken by some case study schools to promote environmental awareness amongst their peers.

Format of delivery

5.26 In terms of the **format** of Eco-Schools delivery in Wales, the flexibility of the programme and its seven-step framework resulted in schools being able to tailor delivery of the programme to their setting.

5.27 Across the school year, the majority of schools surveyed (71 out of 80 respondents) delivered Eco-Schools activities all year round, with only one out of 80 schools reporting they focused Eco-Schools work in the spring term. In terms of the proportion of learners involved in the programme, 29 out of 79 respondents stated that between 75 and 100 per cent of pupils were involved in Eco-Schools activities. A further 15 out of 79 respondents stated that due to nature of the programme, learners from the **whole** school were involved and engaged in some way, through outdoor activities, class projects and events. Similarly, 26 out of 80 survey respondents said 75-to-100 per cent of staff were involved in the programme at their school, but additionally all ‘other’ responses (eight out of 80 respondents) claimed that every staff member was involved with the programme at some level whether it be through contributing to the curriculum or planning events.

5.28 Just over half of respondents reported that they delivered Eco-Schools using a blended approach working both in person and online (44 out of 80 respondents), with several noting that online delivery

had increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. Further information on the impact of the pandemic on schools' delivery of Eco-Schools work is outlined from section 5.66.

- 5.29 School Eco-activities and lessons were hosted in either Welsh or English, depending on the language medium in the particular school. From survey analysis, 55 out of 80 respondents were part of English-speaking schools. Welsh-speaking schools accounted for 20 out of 80 schools, and the remaining respondents came from bilingual school settings.
- 5.30 Within each school, the Eco-Committee took the lead on the school's involvement in the programme. Across the ten case study schools engaged, the committee consisted of learners from all year groups and included a variety of roles for members. Some schools facilitated a full election process for learners to join the Eco-Committee, including election pitches and ballots to fill various positions on the committee³⁷. It was felt by Eco-Coordinators that this was an important level of democracy for learners and helped promote leadership skills early on by giving them the responsibility for establishing their own practices.
- 5.31 In terms of content delivery, a number of Eco-Coordinators from across case study schools reported that for each Eco-Schools topic being covered during the term, teachers would firstly deliver a knowledge session for learners that would later inform the school's Eco-Actions. It was widely reported by schools that there was emphasis on getting learners to develop a broad understanding of wider social and environmental issues, prior to delving into activities. Eco-Coordinators felt that this approach helped their Eco-Committees feel a sense of purpose and make considered, intentional, and meaningful choices regarding their Eco-Actions.
- 5.32 Across several case study schools, Eco-Coordinators also shared that the content of Eco-Schools work was also informed by current

³⁷ Positions included Eco-Committee Chair, Vice Chair, and President.

issues/affairs, to build momentum and drive relevant conversations forward. One Eco-Coordinator, for example, shared that the global climate summits, better known as COP events, provided learners and teachers with a useful starting point for Eco-Schools content that was then adapted according to areas that learners were interested in more specifically. According to a wider stakeholder from Climate Cymru, COP26 youth climate ambassadors provided feedback to their school on what they had learnt in their role and used this knowledge to guide the delivery of Eco-Schools in their particular school. Another example provided by KWT was the use of Climate Action Week as an opportunity to develop content and discussion topics for schools participating in the programme. They stated that live lessons were hosted each morning for the week with a reported 15,000 learners in attendance, as of 2022. These interactive lessons were hosted online with learners and teachers and covered a myriad of topics relating to climate change.

- 5.33 As part of the review, online survey respondents were also asked about their favourite element of the programme. A key theme amongst 25 out of 63 respondents to the question was the innate enthusiasm from learners about the environment and ability for them to lead and take ownership of Eco-schools themselves. It was reported that the shared passion of learners and school staff, acted as motivation for programme delivery and offered a self-esteem boost to learners. Additionally, a number of respondents (ten out of 63) expressed that they enjoyed the focus on engagement with the wider school community and opportunity to integrate Eco-Schools with curriculum work. A key observation from one survey respondent (an Eco-Coordinator for the programme in one school) was that during delivery of the programme, it was the teachers and the Eco-Coordinator who had a “lightbulb moment”. The respondent commented that adults go through life without necessarily having a deeper connection to or understanding of something environmentally related, but they were now being exposed to these concepts, and

“learning just as much as the learners”. This demonstrated the wider impact the programme may have on not just the learners, but those facilitating the programme within the school itself.

Impact on School Resources

- 5.34 As part of the review, participating schools were asked about the impact of the Eco-Schools programme on school resources, such as funding, staff, physical space, equipment and time. The resources which schools were able to **access** to effectively deliver the programme, varied considerably according to the type of school, size and location.

Funding for Eco-Schools work

- 5.35 One of the key challenges many Eco-Committees faced was finding ways to fund their Eco-Schools work and projects. In terms of financial resources, several case study schools incorporated fundraising elements in their Action Plan to fund their activities. One Eco-Coordinator, for example, noted that their Eco-Committee had run stalls for recycling old toys at school events and had held a stall for Mother’s Day selling donated items of jewellery. The money gathered was used by the school to purchase items to use in their community garden including seeds, planters and gardening tools.
- 5.36 Outside of fundraising activities, other schools secured additional funding for important Eco-Actions through local projects, their PTA or private sector companies. One school, for example, won funding from their community councillors to purchase litter pickers and other equipment during KWT’s ‘Litter-Less’ project³⁸, in which the Eco-Committee used plastic litter they had picked from the town centre to create a sculpture for the school. Another school received a donation

³⁸ The Litter-Less project is a campaign run by KWT to support 20 schools to carry out a litter review each year and decide on actions to raise awareness of litter issues and develop solutions.

from one of their private sector partners to support the school's Eco-Actions.

- 5.37 In some cases, schools looked for large-scale investment through applying for specific grants or loans, to undertake larger eco-projects that would result in impactful changes being made to the school. One school, for example, sought additional funding through a loan to install solar PV panels on the school roof. The Eco-Coordinator noted that they had been unable to access funding for the project through their LA and were apprehensive to undertake fundraising activities within the local community due to the school being situated in a diverse catchment area with high levels of deprivation.
- 5.38 In one instance, a parent-rep for an Eco-Committee noted that their school's Eco-Coordinator had donated some of their own funds to help purchase items to support programme activities. While this was an uncommon occurrence amongst schools interviewed, it indicated the importance of delivering Eco-Schools work to those facilitating the programme within the school.
- 5.39 A common theme across both case study schools and survey respondents was a desire for support from Eco-Schools on finding ways to fund their work and projects. One survey respondent shared that there was a lack of materials for schools to use to identify suitable sources of additional funding (including grants and schemes) outside of fundraising activities. It was felt that schools would benefit from case studies on how different schools and settings had financed their Eco-Actions, or through mapping out and signposting different routes schools could choose.

Physical resources

- 5.40 In terms of **physical resources**, all ten case study schools had at least a classroom or dedicated space within the school to deliver Eco-Schools work. Some case study schools were based in more remote, rural areas where they had access to green space on their doorstep.

One school, for example, situated within a national park, had frequent opportunities to undertake outdoor learning activities (including tree planting and installing bird-boxes) in the nature reserve adjacent to their school and by using their own minibus to travel to other locations.

- 5.41 While this might have been more prohibitive for schools situated in urban settings, access to physical space, particularly outside the school itself, was not a substantial issue for most schools engaged. Instead, urban schools undertook an abundance of activities on their own grounds and in instances where they wished to engage in further outdoor learning, capitalised on opportunities to work with their local communities. One faith school for example, explained how they had previously worked with their local church to give learners an opportunity to utilise graveyard space for seed planting.

Time

- 5.42 Another resource that was frequently mentioned by case study schools and online survey respondents was the **time** needed to effectively deliver the programme, particularly where staff coverage was limited, or staff were pressured to organise the programme outside of teaching time. For some Eco-Coordinators, further challenges existed in finding regular time to speak to other members of staff and embed practices across the whole school.
- 5.43 On average, schools surveyed spent less than one hour (21 out of 79 respondents) or between 1 to 3 hours per week (28 out of 79 respondents) on Eco-Schools work. A few survey respondents noted that it was difficult to quantify time spent on the programme because Eco-Schools was embedded into their curriculum and varied based on the time of year and the topic being covered each term. One survey respondent explained, for example, that their KS2 Spring Term 2022 topic was “Spring Watch” so outdoor learning occurred more

regularly, up to once a week. Comparatively, their Autumn Term's topic was "Chocolate", so outdoor learning was about once a month.

- 5.44 The majority of schools delivered the programme during classroom hours (69 out of 80 respondents), due to Eco-Schools content aligning with the curriculum, allowing teachers to merge lessons and activities more seamlessly. One challenge shared by an Eco-Coordinator from one case study school was that whilst they mostly integrated Eco-Schools work into teaching hours, it was difficult to find spare time to expand delivery beyond the classroom unless preparatory work was undertaken outside their own planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time. Other schools undertook Eco-Schools work during lunchtime hours and in other free time (47 out of 80 respondents) including after school clubs, or on weekends.
- 5.45 One case study school noted that putting evidence together for the assessment process was time-consuming to complete. They shared that while they collect a large amount of photographic evidence of their Eco-Schools work, compiling written evidence takes much longer. Another school shared that they had overcome similar issues by compiling information on each activity they undertook onto a Microsoft One Note file, as it took place. Further information around barriers to the assessment process are included in 5.65.

Integration and delivery of the new Curriculum for Wales


- 5.46 Many schools across Wales had considered and aligned their Eco-Schools activities with the outcomes of the new CfW. As part of the programme, KWT developed specific Eco-Schools materials for linking Eco-Schools topics to the curriculum in educational settings. These resources were created through a consultation process with teachers across a range of subjects to identify where there could be overlap between the programme and usual in-school classes.
- 5.47 Across the ten case study schools engaged, there was consensus that the Eco-Schools programme aligned strongly with the overall

ethos and all four purposes of the new CfW. Much of the feedback received from schools and wider stakeholders noted their mutually beneficial relationship, with one school noting how Eco-Schools fits in “brilliantly” with the “being a good active citizen”³⁹. Schools shared a diverse range of examples of how Eco-Schools activities were being embedded into their curriculum work across key stages, to ensure a **whole-school** approach where all learners were involved in the process.

5.48 It was widely reported by Eco-Coordinators that ideas on how to link their Eco-Schools work with subjects came through discussions with other teaching staff across departments and during lesson planning. This allowed case study schools to fill gaps and create links between Eco-Schools topics and AOLE, enabling learners to acquire knowledge through real world examples. In the instances of two case study schools, the programme also helped pinpoint additional areas in the curriculum that were not originally planned, including responsible global citizenship and waste minimisation. These are examples of how the programme impacted curriculum delivery, in addition to the curriculum driving Eco-Schools work. Examples of such activities are illustrated in the case study below.

³⁹ This comment refers to the [What Matters Statement](#): “Informed, self-aware citizens engage with the challenges and opportunities that face humanity, and are able to take considered and ethical action.”

5.49



Case Study: Crickhowell High School – thoughts from the school’s Eco-Committee members on how Eco-Schools links to their subjects

In which subjects do you learn about Eco-Schools...

“We’ve been learning in Geography about the water cycle and the importance of the global circulation of water”

“Desertification in geography and its links to climate change”

“We learned about global environmental history and fair trade. We looked at the use, trade and flow of resources. We then held fairtrade stalls using sustainable baking with fairtrade chocolate.”

5.50 Findings from the online survey echoed the views of case study schools, with respondents sharing several examples of aspects of the curriculum they had been able to link with Eco-Schools topics and activity. Out of a total of 80 responses, 63 schools strongly agreed or agreed, that they had been able to embed Eco-Schools across their teaching and learning as a whole. The table below highlights where surveyed schools demonstrated they were able to make Eco-Schools links to the CfW.

Table 5.1: Links between subjects and Eco-Schools activities amongst surveyed schools

School setting	Subject	Topic / Activities	Eco-Schools topic
Infant School (Five out of 80 respondents)	Humanities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic pollution / Ocean pollution • Habitats through forest schools 	Litter Biodiversity Water
	Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links with Healthy Schools • Encouraging active travel 	Healthy living Transport

	Expressive Arts (design and technology)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking with designing and improving the school grounds, • Recycling through making models out of recycled materials. 	Schools Grounds Waste
Primary School (65 out of 80 respondents)	Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewable energy • Eco-systems, habitats and biodiversity – links to forest schools • Waste management 	Energy Biodiversity Waste Litter
	Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links to healthy schools • Sustainable diets • Food waste 	Healthy Living Waste
	Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change • Global goals • Orienteering / outdoor learning • Mapping school grounds • Impacts of plastics • Farming 	Global citizenship Litter Water Waste
	Art and Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing birds' nests • Drawing trees • Upcycling products 	Biodiversity Litter
	Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic surveys • Living graphs • Data collection (litter, energy) 	Transport Litter Energy
	Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poetry writing • Creating posters promoting less litter • Writing to LA / campaigns 	Global citizenship Litter
Secondary School (Four out of 80 respondents)	Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable development • Water and energy supplies • Climate Change and population growth 	Global citizenship Water Energy Biodiversity

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecosystems and biodiversity 	
	Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecosystems and biodiversity work looking at the ages of trees Sustainable diets 	Biodiversity Healthy Living
Special School (Four out of 80 respondents)	Health & Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Links to forest schools Gardening and school ground maintenance 	Biodiversity School Grounds
	Humanities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linking with Geography through looking at plastic pollution / waste management Exploring endangered species. 	Water Biodiversity

Source: Miller Research, Eco-Schools Online Survey, n=66. Respondents were asked 'What aspects of the curriculum have you been able to link with Eco-Schools topics / activity? Please provide information below on curriculum areas that Eco-School activity has supported.'. Answers were analysed thematically.

5.51 While work was underway from schools to embed Eco-Schools work into the curriculum, it was acknowledged by representatives from case study schools that there were opportunities to create further links. Firstly, within larger primary schools, it was noted by Eco-Coordination that there were challenges in finding time to release teachers from classroom work to map out where Eco-Schools activities could be aligned and incorporated into normal curriculum planning. To combat this issue, one school separated key stages by different Eco-Schools topics and encouraged a whole-school 'Green Day' each term, to pool together and share learnings across each area.

5.52 Other barriers highlighted by schools were different levels of support from staff members. It was noted by Eco-Coordination that some members of staff were wholeheartedly behind the programme, and

others lacked initiation with their curriculum. Within secondary schools specifically, one headteacher noted that staff members were faced with competing priorities around exams, the diversity of their lessons and cross-curricular links. They felt that while Eco-Schools and the CfW naturally fit together, there needed to be greater incentives for teachers to make ties and plan activities, so they were not viewed as add-ons. One recommendation was the possibility of creating more off-the-shelf resources targeted specifically at secondary schools on making Eco-Schools a more prominent part of the new curriculum. Additionally, proposals to align qualifications with the new CfW must also be considered in how Eco-Schools is delivered. Qualifications Wales looked at updating qualifications to support the new curriculum introduced from September 2022⁴⁰. This included making qualifications more flexible, with more engaging subject content, and placing learner wellbeing first. At the time of reporting, the consultation was in progress and soon to be published.

- 5.53 Within the prospective development of qualifications, there was potential for further tying in the presence of Eco-Schools. Specifically, there was a desire from the KWT team for the development of resources linking Eco-Schools with exam specifications for GCSEs and further qualifications to support secondary schools. This would align with the proposal for more engaging and diverse subject content.

Monitoring and Evaluation of progress

- 5.54 As part of the Eco-Schools Seven Step process, Step Four: Monitoring and Evaluation, requires schools to evaluate the impact of the topic work in their action plan, assessing what worked well and how the Eco-Committee can develop their Eco-Actions in the future. Data collected through this process is also used in some cases to


⁴⁰ [Qualifications Wales. Qualified for the Future: Our Decisions. 2021](#)

show evidence of a progression towards the four levels of Eco-Schools awards.

- 5.55 Interviews with case study schools revealed that internal monitoring and evaluation was carried out differently between schools, based on their context and setting. Within some case study schools, monitoring was undertaken as part of classwork and weekly activities. One secondary school, for example, shared that they had undertaken a review of weekly recycling during maths lessons, which was since used as part of their Platinum renewal audit each year. The Eco-Coordinator explained that learners spent a considerable amount of time counting plastic bottles and paper from wheelie bins and created a calculation for approximate quantities of recycling. In another primary school, learners monitored the amount of food and other waste by weighing litter and leftover food from plates in the canteen each week.
- 5.56 In another case study school, the Eco-Committee mentioned the usefulness of their environmental review which they undertook at the start of each year, to use as an annual monitoring tool. The Eco-Coordinator explained that the environmental review was informed by each year group being assigned an Eco-Schools topic, who provided feedback on key areas for action and collectively developed an Action Plan. This outlined objectives for where there were gaps in the school's progress that need to be actioned using targets for each year/term.
- 5.57 Across case study schools, the progress of the schools' Action Plan was discussed not just by the Eco-Committee, but instead as a whole school. The Eco-Coordinator at one faith school, for example, shared that a representative from each year group provided feedback to the whole school during workshop time each week, to demonstrate progress and keep all learners engaged.

Eco-Schools awards: assessment process

5.58 The usage of the Eco-Schools award scheme was highlighted as an essential element of the programme for learners, school stakeholders and the wider school community. The Eco-Committees within case study schools, shared an overwhelming sense of pride around the award process, providing both a sense of achievement and motivation. In cases of Green Flag and Platinum schools, the visit from Eco-Schools Officers to undertake the assessment was an exciting opportunity to showcase the work that learners had been undertaking over the year. Highlights of learners' experiences achieving their Eco-Schools award is illustrated in the case study below.



Case Study: Bodnant Primary School – thoughts from the school's Eco-Committee on their Eco-Schools award

How did you feel when you got your last award? How did you celebrate...

"[We] showed the Eco-Assessor around the school. He really liked our school grounds and how we have a lot of bins so if you have rubbish, you can put it in the bin."

"Proud of ourselves in achieving the honour. Not a lot of schools around Wales would get that. Happy because more people are getting involved, and I'm excited by people being more aware [of Eco-Schools]."

"We also cheered and things in assembly."

5.59 Eco-Coordination within case study schools also noted the importance of the **accreditation** for awards at Green Flag and Platinum levels, which served as a clear goal and metric of success for schools participating in the programme. Representatives from KWT highlighted that an overarching goal and ambition for the programme, was for more schools to achieve Green Flag status, to enable further growth and development of schools. The Green Flag also acts as a measurement of KWT's own progress as it indicates that schools have been adequately supported to receive the award.

- 5.60 Throughout fieldwork with case study schools, Eco-Coordinators and teachers maintained their support for the assessment system used by Eco-Schools and the award criteria for auditing progress in the programme. There was consensus amongst school staff that the process was a fair and supportive way to undergo assessments, though some noted several opportunities for the process to become even more efficient and user-friendly for schools.
- 5.61 For example, a small number of case study schools felt there were better ways to apply for an award than by using an online form. The Eco-Coordinator from one school pointed out that as an assessment approached, it took a substantial amount of time to gather all the relevant documentation and photographs required to evidence progress, which was particularly challenging during busy periods. This had resulted in one school monitoring progress in a 'living document' over the year, to ensure all evidence was stored in one place. There was a desire from these case study schools for the programme to offer more flexibility to report in different ways. For example, by being able to simply upload a copy of their own document, rather than filling in the form, or by reporting 'on the go' as soon as information was collected throughout the year.
- 5.62 Another case study school felt there were further opportunities to consider the **types** of data being collected and reported on for assessments. The Eco-Coordinator for one case study noted that the most important and transformational impacts were the ones that were seen during activities relating to learner attitudes changing and adapting. Schools said that this evidence was difficult to gather, quantify and communicate.
- 5.63 Eco-Schools Officers had ideas to minimise some of these issues through the development of an Eco-Schools Wales app that incorporates the Environmental Review in each school, their Action Plan and the application for awards. The app would both enable Eco-Schools to collect data on the number of schools doing specific

actions, while also streamlining the assessment and evidence gathering process for schools themselves.

- 5.64 For Platinum schools, a challenge raised by one case study school was the ability to sustain activities to renew Platinum status each year. The Eco-Coordinator felt that the school could only do so much in the year between each assessment period and suggested the programme could improve by extending the timeframe between assessments. They felt this would allow more time for the school to develop new ideas and undertake larger projects, potentially in collaboration with other schools in their area, to help with continued, shared success. A small number of survey respondents also shared these views, with six out of 54 respondents noting that they had struggled to sustain Platinum activity.

“Our school is now approaching our 3rd or 4th platinum renewal. As Eco-Coordinator, I am struggling to submit new plans, ideas and evidence every year.”

Eco-Schools Questionnaire Respondent, 2022

- 5.65 In other instances, Platinum schools felt the assessment process became much easier once schools had reached this level, as their activities were more refined and data collection systems were already in place. In these instances, there was a desire from two case study schools for the programme to offer additional levels of award beyond Platinum, with new criteria, to help maintain momentum and their engagement with the programme.

Barriers and challenges for schools

- 5.66 In addition to the barriers already outlined in this chapter, schools also referenced several other challenges to their successful participation and progression through the programme.

Covid-19 pandemic

- 5.67 With regards to Covid-19, a number of Eco-Coordinators and their Eco-Committees continued to deliver the programme despite working under restricted conditions in school or learning from home. Case study schools shared a variety of examples of how the pandemic both positively and negatively impacted their Eco-Schools work.
- 5.68 One of the largest impacts of the pandemic for Eco-Coordinators and learners across case study schools was the shift from in-person to online delivery, and the knock-on effects this had on the scale and type of activities schools were able to undertake. Although Eco-Committees were still able to meet virtually, it was noted by some schools that due to competing priorities and more limited staffing, meetings were held less regularly than normal. Similarly, another issue raised by two case study schools were the implications of restricted conditions in their school during learners' phased return. For example, one school shared that learners on the Eco-Committee had been unable to cross bubbles and mix with other year groups. This had resulted in learners being unaware of the previous expectation of the Eco-Committee and their specific roles.
- 5.69 Due to lockdowns, most case study schools noted learners also experienced a reduction in outdoor learning opportunities with their peers, and work with the local community. Despite this, schools were able to tailor their Eco-Actions so that they were delivered from home and therefore extended involvement to learners' families. The Eco-Coordinator from one school, for example, shared that they were able to organise a socially distanced litter picking afternoon in woodlands close to the school, with members of their Eco-Committee from KS2. The activity involved parents and their children taking photos of how much litter they had picked, to share with their peers. Another Eco-Coordinator developed an electricity survey with their Eco-Committee that was sent out to all pupils in the school; encouraging families to assess their energy usage at home.
- 5.70 Another interesting observation made by one case study school, was that they were able to better utilise school resources during the

pandemic, as a result of the shift to virtual delivery. This was because they were able to save a considerable amount of time and funds through virtual delivery and learning. The schools Eco-Coordinator explained that their school were able to reallocate funding that was previously used to deliver classroom activities, towards Eco-Schools work. As a result, they were able to revise their plans and purchased additional equipment for the Eco-Committee and school to use, when they returned to in-person delivery.

Other barriers

- 5.71 A barrier for a number of schools in more urban areas was a lack of space for outdoor learning, particularly where they had no greenspace or forest land close to the school.
- 5.72 Lack of support for the programme from other staff members were other barriers raised by a number of survey respondents. It was felt that in some instances, colleagues were fully behind facilitation of the programme within their school, whereas others showed apathy towards the Eco-Committee and Eco-Actions. This created barriers for schools in ensuring a whole-school approach to the programme and difficulties in embedding Eco-Schools across the curriculum. Furthermore, the size of the school sometimes affected the ability to implement a cross-curricular, whole-school approach.
- 5.73 Finally, a barrier cited by both case study schools, and online survey respondents was the inability to undertake larger Eco-Schools projects where resources were limited and/or already being used for other Eco-Actions. One case study school, for example, felt that there were more opportunities to work in clusters with other schools in their local area to achieve greater outcomes through collaborative pieces of work. One example used here was a desire to install renewable energy sources for their school, but inability to undertake this project without considerable resources and support from the LA. It was felt that there was opportunity to engage with other neighbouring schools

participating in the programme, to share ideas and co-ordinate a joint project where all schools could be powered by local renewables. A benefit of this approach was the possibility of also establishing new information on county wide professional contacts that could be used for further Eco-Actions.

6. International comparison of best practice

- 6.1 To learn more about the programme's delivery in international contexts and provide insight into potential avenues of exploration in a Wales context, the project team engaged with National representatives from FEE, Eco-Schools England (run by Keep Britain Tidy), Eco-Schools Scotland (run by Keep Scotland Beautiful), and Nature's Trust Malta.
- 6.2 Discussions provided insight across a number of relevant and common themes, including:
- Differences in award structure
 - Differences between rural and urban school settings
 - Challenges in engaging secondary schools.

International element of the programme

Role of FEE

- 6.3 The project team engaged with principal stakeholders within FEE to assist the team in understanding more about the international element of the programme, as well as the varying contexts of delivery across different countries.
- 6.4 FEE's insight surrounding the drivers for different countries becoming involved in facilitating Eco-Schools delivery related primarily to supporting young people to become informed global citizens. Emphasising climate change as a global challenge, the FEE stakeholders spoken with presented the Eco-Schools programme as an obvious platform for understanding this and thinking about what could be done in their own country to address this. Additionally, FEE saw Eco-Schools as enabling a vital cultural shift in the way that education was delivered.

- 6.5 By placing an increased focus on participation and empowering young people to shape their own Eco-Schools journey from within, it was shared by the FEE stakeholders that the programme produced benefits in terms of supporting the agency and potential of young people. In alignment with this, it was seen to nurture and promote critical thinking capacity – encouraging learners to be more proactive and become better problem solvers. Broadly, it was worth highlighting that FEE’s values and ambitions represented a clear fit with the actions of Welsh Government, which has placed a strong focus on the importance of empowering young people. As detailed in the policy analysis in Section 1, the development of the WBFGA, enshrinement of the Rights of the Child in law, and development of the new CfW all reflect purposeful efforts to both value young people and better equip them for later life.
- 6.6 For the Eco-Schools programme, the value of the international element was best understood through its emphasis on global citizenship – designed to help learners understand the connections between local and global issues. Through this, learners are encouraged to make positive changes not only in their schools, but also to understand how changes can be carried through to wider society. This provides a key entry point for helping young people to learn about relevant policy areas and the wider structural issues which may either inhibit or enable environmental progress in their country.
- 6.7 Centrally, placing an emphasis on linking activities globally also reinforces the message that the climate crisis must be addressed in a way that is united and fair. Given that the crisis will affect different countries in different ways, it also presents an authentic and practical opportunity through which learners can learn about contexts and cultures outside of Wales.
- 6.8 With the new CfW placing an increased emphasis on the importance of developing ‘ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world’, engagement with Eco-Schools was one of the clearest, most-effective

ways of facilitating international awareness for a school setting. The skills acquired through Eco-Schools (leadership, global awareness, taking action, accountability) are all transferrable and beneficial for the creation of responsible citizens.

Critical success factors

- 6.9 In terms of shaping the programme's success in a given country, FEE cited the importance of Government funding on the evolution of Eco-Schools in the UK. Crucially, FEE highlights a key quality link between successful programmes which have the backing of Government in terms of shared vision and values. Particularly, this was most valuable when the education system within a country as a whole was actively enabled to support the programme. For FEE, gaining public support helped to provide a better mandate for integrating the programme as a central part of school activities.

Emerging themes

- 6.10 When asked about the evolution of specific themes, FEE detailed that energy saving had become a key theme across schools worldwide – with schools exploring ways to reduce consumption or transition to renewables. Accordingly, the theme of transport was seen to be 'catching up slowly' – with an increasing trend emerging of schools addressing it as an issue.
- 6.11 Additionally, FEE cited a pilot two years ago which presented a clear appetite for schools' desire to work on Circular Economy principles – starting with lesson plans aimed at increasing circularity within the school environment. At the time of reporting, there were a range of projects taking place in the circular economy space in Wales, which provide extensive opportunities for engagement with learners.
- 6.12 In terms of future themes, FEE also posed the potential of Eco-Campuses as a topic of discussion. It was suggested that a separate

HR team would be needed to deliver the programme at the HE level however, to cover scale of engagement with college and university campuses. Whilst Eco-Campuses provide a number of opportunities (namely in the research space), increased capacity at all levels would be essential for its success.

Case Studies

Scotland

- 6.13 In Scotland, Eco-Schools is managed by Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) and funded by the Education and Climate Change Directorates, within the Scottish Government. As such, reporting mechanisms feed into the national Climate Action Plan, as well as feeding into Scottish Government's Biodiversity Plan, and more recently, the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan.
- 6.14 Stakeholders from KSB shared that in 2018, the charity celebrated Eco-Schools' 25th year of delivery in Scotland, and discussion centred around the evolution of the programme that had taken place over time. The primary needs for the programme identified by KSB related to building positive activism and wider behaviour change among young people and their communities. The nature and structure of the programme was seen as an enabler for embedding sustainability and positive behaviours both for learners, as well as improving professional standards for teachers.
- 6.15 In terms of delivery, KSB recognised a shift in focus that had taken place over recent years, reflecting the enhanced urgency of the need to tackle the climate crisis. As observed by schools engaged within Wales, the drivers have shifted beyond surface level environmental considerations, e.g., preventing litter and waste, improving the school grounds, and encouraging walking/cycling to school. Now, schools were more motivated to consider the wider *impact* of their actions over the long term. This was also seen to open opportunities to link topics and themes more holistically across the curriculum.

- 6.16 Relating to the limitations of delivery, KSB explained that their staffing model had posed constraints as it operated on the basis of a core staff team that delivered at a national level, as well as having responsibilities to cover other programmes. A preferred option for KSB would be to move to a regional model, however consistent reductions in public sector funding have made this scenario unlikely. As a result, stakeholders viewed the maintenance of funding year on year as a positive, given wider challenges across the funding landscape.

Structure of delivery

- 6.17 Stakeholders from KSB noted that they had removed the bronze/silver/gold award progression levels for Eco-Schools in Scotland, keeping only the recognised Green Flag in place as an award. Emphasis instead surrounded achieving Green Flag status as a 'journey' and continued renewal and maintenance of this by schools year on year. Schools were then supported with reviewing their progress, to identify new actions to work towards for the new two-year period, when applying to renew their status.
- 6.18 KSB placed emphasis on the numbers of schools engaging with the programme, for which figures were reported to stand at around 50 per cent, as of 2022. At one stage the organisation cited that Scotland had achieved a 95 per cent sign-up rate, but whilst being extremely positive this also prompted the team to remove awards and look more closely at active participation.

Engagement

- 6.19 Looking more closely at barriers, KSB cited several challenges for schools in Scotland registered to the programme, including geographic location and the differences between school settings. It was highlighted that schools in urban/inner-city settings had many more factors to contend with and often needed to be more creative to

integrate Eco-Schools activities within the school. At the other end of the scale, school based in rural school settings with natural grounds often had an advantage to implement activities such as planting, food growing, and improving biodiversity. Location was also seen to have a knock-on effect in terms of accessibility and the practical realities of improving transport to and from schools.

- 6.20 On the theme of natural advantages and disadvantages, obvious differences in terms of scale of school settings were also noted to have an impact. For example, village schools were much better placed to implement the programme at the whole-school level (in a shorter timeline) than inner city comprehensives, which needed to influence a significantly larger school community. In summary, KSB felt that the bronze/silver/gold award system did not compare like with like, as every school setting was unique.
- 6.21 Finally, the other common barrier noted by KSB was time – given that involvement in Eco-Schools was not a compulsory activity. It was felt that competing priorities can mean that schools who are already doing good work as part of their regular activities were not participating in the assessment process to be officially recognised. This meant that KSB were conscious of the need to simplify the process as much as possible, whilst maintaining the integrity and value of the programme without compromise.
- 6.22 All challenges raised by KSB were similarly transferrable to the Welsh context. In terms of lessons learned, to overcome the common, natural disadvantages that some schools faced, additional considerations may be required in Wales, in order to ‘level the playing field’ and ensure that larger, urban schools gain specialist support.

Challenges engaging secondary schools

- 6.23 KSB also cited similar challenges to Wales in engaging schools at the secondary level. Stakeholders recognised that it was often easier to begin engagement at the early years level, given the natural increase

in parental involvement during primary years. As such, it was felt it also became easier to engage the school as a 'community' given the involvement and enthusiasm of families. Beyond Key-Stage 3 (KS3) however, at the secondary level, the sudden focus by both teachers and learners on exam cycles dictated priority and placed a further constraint on time.

- 6.24 To tackle this, KSB were exploring a refreshed focus on positioning young people as the leaders of Eco-Schools delivery. A number of stakeholders engaged with over the course of the review highlighted a marked increase in the appetite of young people to learn about the true impact of climate change, taking inspiration from young people's movements around the world. As such, KSB was reviewing the assessment system, to investigate whether young people could take the lead in coordinating activities and reporting on progress, instead of teachers and Eco-Coordinators. This could considerably decrease the level of burden that teachers may perceive to be involved in the delivery of Eco-Schools, particularly at the secondary school level.
- 6.25 Furthermore, in order to further engagement, it was noted that KSB were continuously looking at additional ways to engage secondary learners, reflecting on what works for secondary schools who have engaged with the programme for several years. KSB shared that some schools who are on their 12th Green Flag Award had been with the programme since it was introduced in Scotland and are still innovative and active schools due to the positive activism undertaken by learners taking ownership of award renewals. In addition, KSB worked with Skills Development Scotland to ensure that resources were focused upon the ways that the Eco-Schools programme could equip young people to develop the green skills required to enter future employment markets.

England

6.26 Keep Britain Tidy (KBT) coordinate the Eco-Schools programme in England and consist of a team of 3.5 FTE who manage resources and delivery. KBT stakeholder felt their overall purpose was to enable young people to be environmentally minded, and as of 2022, had undergone a dramatic change in programme delivery due to limited resources.

Structure of delivery

6.27 Delivery by KBT in England differs to programme delivery in Wales, in that KBT do not deliver any Eco-Schools events or visit schools for assessments. Instead, KBT have relied on communications to their 11,000 schools through newsletters, targeted emails and training.

6.28 In 2022, the programme shifted to an online-based system without operating procedures. The online system consists of a 7-step process, costing schools £200 + VAT to submit an application to be considered for an award, which requires supporting evidence. At the time of interview, , 1,736 submissions had been received since the system had been implemented. It was noted that Eco-Schools staff in England read and review every application before certifying the school using a tiered system of Green Flag, Merit and Distinction levels.

6.29 KBT shared that direct contact with schools is delegated to LA reps who highlight events and activities. However, the programme is not prescriptive, as schools can take the general framework and amend this to suit their own goals. The newsletter highlights activities related to Eco-Schools to aid their applications.

Engagement

6.30 KBT saw an increase in engagement with schools in 2022 which they attributed to the success of COP26 in Glasgow. Any in-person event

or engagement with schools was said to be limited due to the amended scope of Eco-Schools in England at the time of fieldwork.

Malta

- 6.31 Eco-Schools in Malta is managed and delivered by Nature's Trust – and as of 2022, covered around 84 per cent of the nation's school population (from pre-school to post-secondary). The programme is delivered across state, church, and independent schools, and Nature's Trust is currently exploring the possibility of extending into eco councils at the university level.
- 6.32 The programme's establishment in Malta coincided with discussions to introduce and promote the Blue Flag⁴¹, of which Nature's Trust is the national operator for Malta. Due to alignment between Eco-Schools and the Blue Flag, the decision was made to deliver and run the programmes cohesively. In terms of success factors, stakeholders also highlighted the importance of political backing in terms of driving the programme forward. Eco-Schools introduction to Malta in 2002 was seen to arrive at 'the right moment' given existing political discussions, surrounding cultural changes in Malta regarding the separation of waste and updating of environmental policy.
- 6.33 Drivers of the programme in Malta shared similarities with the Welsh context, with stakeholders highlighting the importance of social justice and empowerment – in terms of involving young people directly in decisions which shape their futures. Additionally, there was a decisive focus in policy making to introduce a space for children and young people, who are so often excluded and overlooked. At the time of fieldwork, Nature's Trust explained that negotiations were in place to establish regular meetings between young people from Eco-Schools

⁴¹ The [Blue Flag](#) is an international award given to beaches, harbours, marinas and sustainable tourism boats. The Blue Flag works towards sustainable development at beaches/marinas through strict criteria dealing with water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management, safety and other services. The Blue Flag programme is one of the five programmes run by FEE.

and a permanent committee of parliament on environmental progress and sustainable development.

Wider impact

- 6.34 As within Wales, Eco-Schools delivery in Malta makes a considered effort to link with other programmes of relevance. As an example, Nature's Trust shared that programme used the summer months for topical education, getting young people involved in learning about beaches and working towards the Blue Flag. They also involved 'young reporters' to encourage information sharing and accountability (from local Government) – who were encouraged to get involved with Ministers questions etc. Additionally, Eco-Schools work was valued through the environmental and resources agency in Malta citing their performance as a top indicator in their state of the environment reports.

Funding structure

- 6.35 Eco-Schools in Malta is funded directly by the Maltese Government, through the Ministry of Education. However, the programme has secured additional streams from cross-governmental departments who run their own programmes under the Eco-Schools umbrella. Such is the case for the Transport Ministry and the Ministry of Environment.
- 6.36 In addition to this, banks and private sector partners have also committed annual funds to Nature's Trust to continue their work for Eco-Schools, utilising a mixture of Government and private enterprise funding to deliver the programme. One example of private sector investment into the programme in Malta was by the HSBC Malta Foundation, who donated up to €10,000 to further the programme in schools in 2020.

- 6.37 Finally, it was noted that schools in Malta were charged a nominal fee of 15 Euros which helps to feed into a wider fund covering materials, training and school exchange visits. Whilst schools were not penalised for not paying nor actively held accountable for their payment, the fee represents a contribution for the services schools gain from participation and provides an additional source of investment for the programme.

Engagement

- 6.38 Challenges surrounding engagement in Malta were mostly concerned with the longevity of schools' commitment to the programme. It was noted that while projects relevant to contextual events were considered well-suited to the school environment in the short term, the idea of developing a programme which needs to integrate as part of the school ethos was more challenging. Specifically, Nature's Trust highlighted the fluidity of teachers changing roles/ moving around in state schools – which was felt as a real loss when the programme was being driven (as was often the case) by a singular core leader in the school community. It is worth noting that similar issues were indicated in attempts made by the review team to connect with disengaged schools in Wales at the time of fieldwork. On this theme, an example was shared by Nature's Trust through a school which had achieved Green Flag status six times (a Green Flag school for 12 years) but lost their award due to a change in staff. Such experiences demonstrate the importance on embedding Eco-Schools into the whole school community.

Emerging themes

- 6.39 In terms of future progress and developing topics, Nature's Trust placed an emphasis on efforts to boost the level of influence the programme has, including a potential joint venture with the Minister for the Environment to create a hub for education on sustainable development. It was felt this would ensure a space for organising

activities and training sessions for teachers. Another key goal was to ensure better accountability and enable young people's voices to shape decision making.

- 6.40 Whilst the activities taking place as part of the programme's delivery were recognised to have intrinsic value, Nature's Trust stressed the importance of building the advocacy element of Eco-Schools' work, particularly at the international level. Stakeholders noted:

"The culprits are the politicians. If there is no real policy change, we will end up making the mess and the kids cleaning up after them".

Nature's Trust Malta Stakeholder, 2022

- 6.41 For Nature's Trust, they believed that their focus should be on equipping young people with better negotiating power and enabling parliamentary sessions on Eco-Schools in order to influence policy.

Lessons learned from best practice elsewhere

- 6.42 Insights provided from the examples above identify a number of shared challenges between programme delivery in Wales and the delivery of Eco-Schools in other nations. These common barriers included:
- Difficulties of engaging with secondary schools due to exam cycles that dictate priority and place further constraint on time to deliver the programme.
 - Differences between schools in their ability to undertake certain activities due to factors like size, setting and location. For example, some schools located in rural settings having had the advantage of proximity to green space and ability to implement activities more easily such as planting, food growing, and improving biodiversity.
 - The reliance on one particularly engaged school staff member to drive progress forward, and the risks of discontinued engagement with the programme if they change role or leave.

- Challenges of resourcing the programme under current budget constraints and cost increases.

6.43 In order to combat these issues, suggestions which may be transferrable for the future delivery of Eco-Schools in Wales are summarised below for the consideration of the Welsh Government and Keep Wales Tidy:

- Consider reviewing the assessment structure so that secondary learners (as young leaders) can take charge of coordinating the programme and reporting on progress within their schools. This may alleviate the perception of increased burden on teachers associated with the programme beyond KS3.
- Given shared challenges of sustaining engagement with secondary/larger urban schools – a scaled system of support could help to level the playing field and reach schools at a disadvantage. A support strategy, based on the characteristics and criteria of schools, could be introduced to ensure that schools at a disadvantage receive an enhanced level of targeted communication, to ensure their continued participation.
- When considering how the programme can be used to embed Welsh Government priorities (including targets for a Zero-Waste Wales 2050 and the Beyond Recycling Strategy) there is an opportunity to build on the wider success of FEE in bringing the circular economy forward as an area of interest for schools across Wales. In 2021/22, KWT undertook work to develop specific resources aimed to promote student understanding of the circular economy, and there is an opportunity to further strengthen these links to Welsh Government policy by actively exploring potential partners and wider activities in this space. This might include, for example, engaging with Welsh companies leading the circular economy transition, like Riversimple.

- Consider inviting funding streams from private enterprises – though it may be more appropriate to be selective/ determine a level of sustainability criteria that must be met to encourage suitable partners. In Wales there are a growing number of organisations and businesses who are certified B-Corps, or members of environmental campaigns such as Climate Cymru, who may have an interest in financially supporting the programme.
- There is opportunity to try and encourage other departments within Welsh Government, particularly through Education / the new CfW to run programmes under the Eco-Schools umbrella, in order help increase Welsh Government funding to Eco-Schools as a whole.

7. Outcomes and Impacts of Eco-Schools in Wales

7.1 This section sets out the findings on outcomes and impacts that arose from the review.

Outcomes of Eco-Schools

7.2 Outcomes will be considered for the following: schools, learners, local environments and the wider community.

Outcomes for Schools

7.3 The picture from feedback received depicts a programme that has delivered positive outcomes for schools, with all schools interviewed having reported positive outcomes as a result of their involvement with the Eco-Schools programme.

7.4 Eco-Schools has provided schools with guidance, ideas, and a roadmap for how to implement an educational programme about the environment. As stated by an Eco-coordinator from one case study school, the programme helped to pinpoint areas to look at and provided a framework or structure for schools and Eco-Coordinators to start with and develop upon. This provided a valuable set of options – albeit with sufficient autonomy for schools to choose their own path and involve learners in different ways. Feedback from interviews demonstrated that Eco-Schools support can provide an impetus to getting started, as well as a sense of security to school administrators that school projects focused on the environment can be implemented successfully.

7.5 A notable outcome for schools engaged with was raising the profile of the environment within the curriculum and school priorities and providing legitimacy to placing an emphasis on the topic.

“Eco-Schools has lifted the status of needing to address climate change.”

Eco-Schools Questionnaire Respondent, 2022

7.6 Others noted the impact that the programme has had in embedding environmental learning and action within the school ethos. This was

most evident in primary schools, where feedback described engaged pupils who had developed an understanding of environmental problems, and their role and responsibilities in addressing them.

- 7.7 Evidence from the review further indicates that Eco-Schools has helped schools to share resources and ideas, an added benefit of the core work undertaken as part of the programme. One case study school for example explained that they had engaged in sharing practices and ideas with other schools through the programme. However, a small proportion of qualitative feedback from schools through the survey (circa five out of 80 responses) suggests that schools would like more opportunities to share resources, ideas, and good practice with others.

Outcomes for Learners

- 7.8 Evidence from the review denotes a number of benefits for learners, with the programme appearing to have achieved against intended outcomes for inspiring and empowering learners, engaging them in learning about the environment and providing new skills on how to tackle climate change issues.
- 7.9 Eco-Schools outcomes can be seen on learners' sense of empowerment. A consistent theme among survey respondents and Eco-coordinators interviewed was the reported effect that the programme has had on learners' understanding of the **power** of their actions, and on their sense of responsibility for looking after the environment. Several respondents noted that learners have come to understand the positive change that they are able to make.

“Children know they can make small changes to make a big impact”

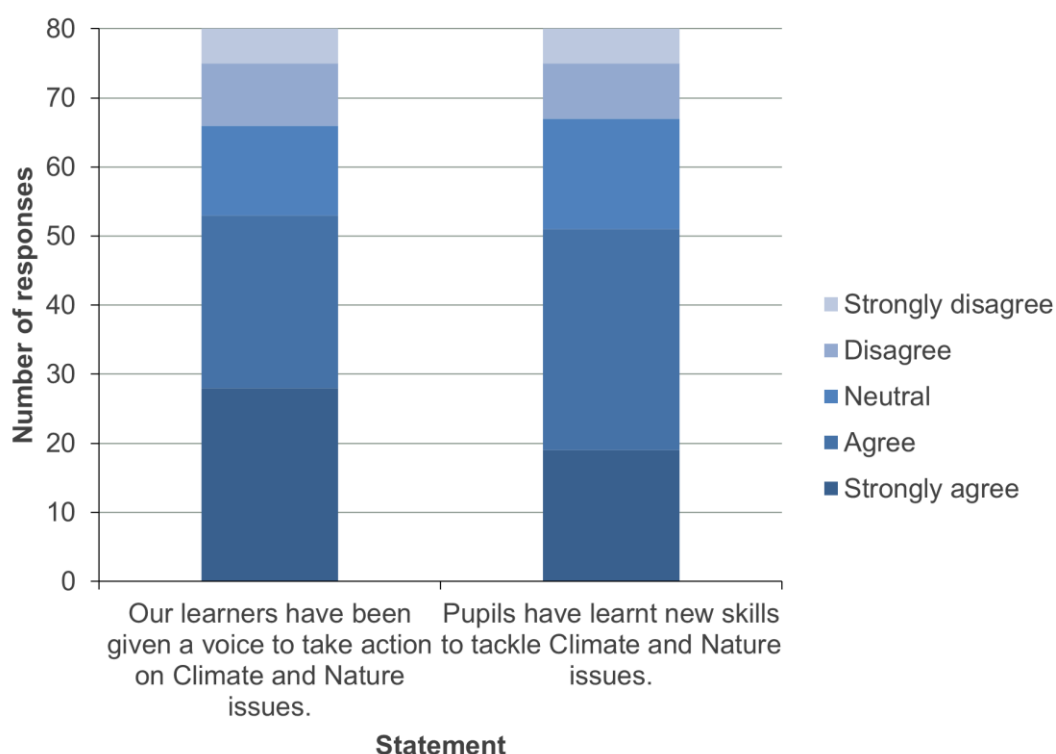
Eco-Schools Questionnaire Respondent, 2022

“We recently undertook a survey in our school with our pupils, which found they believed they can have an impact on the world and their community.”

Eco-Schools Questionnaire Respondent, 2022

7.10 A related outcome has been giving learners the opportunity to use their voice and act on environmental and social issues. For example, 53 out of 80 respondents agreed that their learners had been given a voice to take action on Climate Change (see Figure 7.1 below). Some schools survey respondents described the Eco-council’s role as important by providing a forum for members to vote on tasks around the school. One Eco-coordinator interviewee described how the Eco-Committee gave learners a sense of ownership over the delivery of Eco-Schools, while another described it as an opportunity for learners to lead the change within the school. Additionally, outcomes for learners also included learning new skills, with 51 out of 80 respondents agreeing that their learners had developed new skills to tackle Climate and Nature issues.

Figure 7.1: Impact of Eco-Schools on learner voice and the development of new skills



Source: Miller Research Eco-Schools Evaluation Survey, n=80. Respondents were asked ‘To what extent do you agree with the following statements. Through being an Eco-School...’

7.11 Feedback was also received about learners' sense of responsibility for the environment, with some Eco-Coordinators noting how learners were not only taking more of an interest in their environment and in nature but understanding the role they could play in protecting it. One respondent described Eco-Schools as learning that helps learners become more aware of their own responsibility regarding the environment. The sense of belonging that the international dimension of the programme provided was also raised by one stakeholder as being a benefit, with learners being able to feel like part of a global movement.

7.12 Eco-Schools appears to perform well against the intended outcome to engage children and young people in learning about the environment. The thematic analysis of survey responses set out in Table 7.1 below found learner awareness about the environment to be the joint most mentioned theme, cited by 15 out of 63 respondents. Improved understanding and awareness of environmental issues was also a common theme raised by those interviewed as part of the evaluation. One Eco-Coordinator noted that their primary school learners really understand climate change. Another noted that the learners realise that global warming will affect their future, while an Eco-Coordinator described the programme as a way to raise awareness of relevant issues without scaring the learners about global issues. A survey respondent noted:

“Learners surprise me every time we meet. They have a genuine concern for the planet.”

Eco-Schools Questionnaire Respondent, 2022

Table 7.1: Thematic breakdown⁴² of responses to survey question: Please write a few words on how the Eco-Schools programme has positive impacted pupils and / or the wider community

Theme	Count
Learners more empowered	15
More informed and aware of environmental issues	15
Taking environmental action / more positive environmental behaviours	8
Litter reduction / improved environment	7
Positive impact on the community	2
Part of the Curriculum	1
Have won awards as a result of Eco-Schools	1
Eco-Committee working well together	1
Other	1

Source: Miller Research Eco-Schools survey, n=63.

7.13 The learners themselves in case study schools were able to tell the review team what they had learned as part of the programme. This included the following:

- The scale of the problem of litter, and the fact that it is a bigger issue than they thought
- The pollution of oceans and forests
- Learning about the purpose of every insect
- Lighting fires can cause wildfires, which spread to animal habitats
- Ice melting due to global warming, and the need to prevent global warming and animal extinction
- The problems that plastic causes and the need to reduce waste.

⁴² Comments were broken down into themes, with the key overriding theme from each comment counted.

7.14 Beyond learning about the environment, a small number of survey respondents and Eco-Coordination also noted wider learning benefits. One respondent described how learners were more resilient and engaged in problem solving through Eco-School activities. They also noted that learners work better as teams. Providing learners with a sense of achievement was also noted as a valuable contribution made by the programme, making the process rewarding for the learners.

7.15 Additionally, some learners within secondary schools reported on Eco-Schools inspiring them to explore environmental issues more widely when they left school. Examples of this included increased interest in environmental science as a subject they could explore in further education and employment. Here, there was a desire from Eco-Schools Officers to bring future employment opportunities into the programme for secondary schools in an informed and interesting way, to link into the curriculum and tie in with developing areas of Welsh Government strategy, such as the new Plan for Employability and Skills in Wales⁴³. This might include for example, opportunities to increase awareness of green jobs for older learners and create partnerships that increase work experience opportunities.

7.16 Importantly, the learners' enthusiasm also appeared to be beneficial for wider teaching and non-teaching staff:

"Through our Eco-Schools work, I am being inspired by the learners."

Eco-Schools survey respondent, 2022

"Teaching about the environment makes you proud as a teacher as you are instilling this at Primary school."

Eco-Schools survey respondent, 2022

7.17 The practical nature of Eco-Schools has led to its meeting the intended outcome to enable learners to develop new skills to tackle climate change issues. Schools engaging with the programme

⁴³ The new [Plan for Employability and Skills in Wales](#) wishes to prioritise and consolidate Welsh Government led, national employability support to target young people

facilitated a wide range of activities and initiatives. Evidence collected as part of the review indicates that these activities are providing learners with new skills and knowledge of ways to tackle climate change. This practical aspect of Eco-Schools was described by some as a real strength, with one such survey respondent noting:

“The Eco-Schools programme engages learners to tackle real life problems and come up with solution to make positive change. this encourages global citizenship and confidence to make a difference.”

Eco-Schools survey respondent, 2022

7.18 Learners were also learning about more environmentally friendly behaviours through Eco-Schools, with feedback from the adults and children from the schools engaged as part of the review describing a range of behaviour changes, including:

- Using recycled materials to play with or do crafts
- Avoiding food with palm oil
- Recycling and reducing waste
- Avoiding bringing single use plastics to school
- Walking to school instead of using the car
- Turning lights off when not in use.

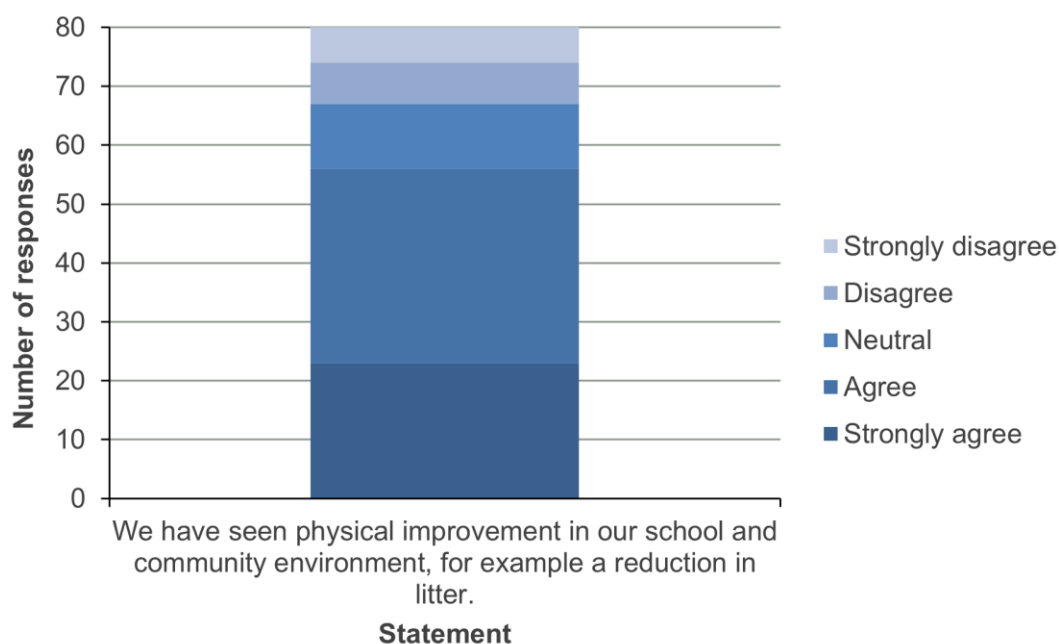
7.19 It should be noted that the scale of outcomes appears to differ between primary and secondary schools. Involvement in Eco-Schools from learners in secondary schools was lower as a proportion of the learners in the school. Some secondary schools that have submitted feedback through the survey had found ways of involving either the whole school or larger sections of the school in Eco-Schools events, either through organising school-wide events, have a large Eco-Committee that brings in a wider proportion of learners into the programme, or tying Eco-Schools into other programmes and activities such as the Welsh Baccalaureate. However, there was not consistently high involvement in secondary schools, as indicated by survey respondents. Learners in secondary school who do engage

with Eco-Schools and Eco-Committees appeared to benefit from the programme and value the opportunities that it provided, however the benefits of the programme were not necessarily shared as widely across the school as they are for primary schools.

Outcomes for the surrounding nature

- 7.20 A theme from feedback received was increased interest from learners in the school's immediate environment, including the school grounds and other local green spaces. This included taking more interest in looking after grounds, showing more interest in nature, and being actively engaged in planting and gardening. One survey respondent, for example, noted how learners were motivated to care for their environment, take pride in the grounds, and keen to join in with planting and looking after playgrounds.
- 7.21 A related outcome has been visible physical improvements to schools' environments and the wider community (see Figure 7.2 below). For example, 56 out of 80 respondents agreed that they had seen physical improvements in their school and community environment, for example, through a reduction in litter. Approximately ten respondents to the survey of schools further cited a reduction in the amount of litter on school grounds, as an unprompted example of how the Eco-schools programme has positively impacted pupils and/or the school and/or the wider community.

Figure 7.2: Eco-Schools impact on the physical environment of school and community



Source: Miller Research Eco-Schools survey, n=80. Respondents were asked ‘To what extent do you agree with the following statements. Through being an Eco-School...’

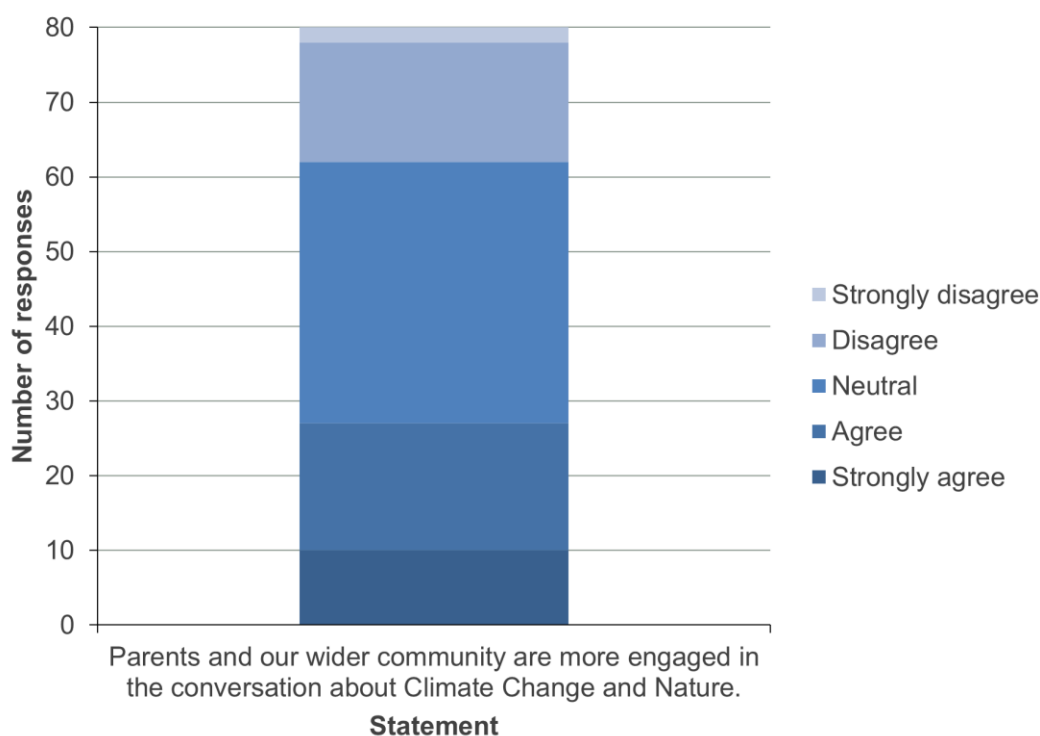
Outcomes for parents and the wider school community

- 7.22 A core element of the Eco-Schools programme is raising awareness of school activities both across the school and in the wider school community. As part of the Eco-Schools process, case study schools and survey respondents identified a number of opportunities and benefits from collaborating with parents and/or carers, community members and local organisations.
- 7.23 Examples from case study schools of activities involving the wider community included working with residents during litter picking efforts and engaging allotment societies for gardening schemes both in the school and surrounding local area. A teacher from one primary school noted they had established links with an Education Officer at Tesco to look at local ‘Food Forts’ with learners and understand the impact of food miles on the environment. In secondary schools, one Eco-Coordinator shared examples of older learners from their Eco-

Committee establishing links with the local town council. They noted that their sixth form students had joined the Youth Council to feed ideas back to their elected members and LA on ways to improve environmental and social issues within their community.

7.24 Questions regarding this aspect of Eco-Schools in the online survey, received a more muted response than other outcome-based questions (Figure 7.3). In total, 27 out of 80 survey respondents strongly agreed and 28 out of 80 respondents agreed that Eco-Schools had supported them in widening their influence and involvement in the local community. Eighteen of the 80 respondents disagreed, while the remainder were neutral on this question.

Figure 7.3: Impact of the Eco-Schools programme on engagement with parents and the wider community



Source: Miller Research Eco-Schools survey, n=80. Respondents were asked 'To what extent do you agree with the following statements. Through being an Eco-School...'

- 7.25 Common activities involving community members amongst survey respondents included litter picks done either outside of school times with parents, or where events were organised (11 out of 68 respondents), the establishment of gardening clubs (13 out of 68 respondents), fundraising activities (five out of 68 respondents) and projects to promote community recycling (eight out of 68 respondents).
- 7.26 Four schools survey respondents explicitly described the benefits that the programme had on parents, which included encouraging them to change practices, and becoming more aware of Climate Change issues. Encouraging changes at home was highlighted several times, with the children taking home what they had learned, and encouraging family members to make changes.

“[Eco-Schools] plants the seed and creates the ripple effect that we need, the learners take these messages home with them.”

Eco-Schools Questionnaire Respondent, 2022

- 7.27 This was supported by wider initiatives run by many schools such as plastic free lunch and walking to school days to engage parents further. One case study primary school described how they invited parents who work in green industries in to give talks as a way to foster parent engagement in the programme. Amidst a small number of case study schools, it was noted that the opportunity to establish links with the wider community had slowed down during the Covid-19 pandemic and in some cases resulted in the loss of previous connections with organisations. While these schools were now looking to build new links with community groups, it was recognised that the pandemic had also offered new opportunities for parental involvement.
- 7.28 For example, the Eco-Coordinators of three case study schools mentioned how the nature of teaching through lockdown meant parents and carers played a more central role in facilitating home-based Eco-Actions with their children. Following the success of these initiatives, these schools were now looking to continue developing

their links with parents and carers post-pandemic, by including them as Eco-committee members or during after school clubs. This was true in the case of two other case study schools, where the Eco-Committee had successfully introduced the role of an 'Eco-parent', responsible for communication between learners, families and other members of the community. The parent representative of one Eco-Committee shared they would step in to support delivery of the programme within their school where required and helped facilitate the after school Eco-club for parents and grandparents to attend. They viewed themselves as a safe space for learners, a point of understanding for parents/carers, and source of trust for the Eco-Coordinator and teachers.

- 7.29 Incremental links to the wider community were also made in case study schools through the use of social media and/or the school newsletter, and through campaigns or poster initiatives created by learners and deployed within community areas. These were common themes amongst a number of survey respondents, of which 18 out of 68 shared updates on their Eco-Schools work and success to the wider school community through Parent Mail, Google Classroom, the school website, Twitter and Newsletters.

Impact and Counterfactual Assessment

- 7.30 Assessing the impact of Eco-Schools presented challenges due to the nature of the programme. Data availability for this review has shaped the assessment that could be carried out. At the time of analysis, over 90 per cent of schools in Wales were registered with the Eco-Schools programme. The ability to identify other schools not registered with Eco-schools and matching them with schools who were registered with the programme on key characteristics to allow for comparison was considered too difficult. Additionally, longitudinal data following students and schools does not exist so impacts could not be considered by comparing data from the same learners or schools at

different time points. Within the review, qualitative and quantitative data has been collected through interviews, case studies and the survey, which has provided insights into the reflections of school staff on the success and contribution of the programme. The assessment of impacts in this section involves reflections from school staff on whether they think similar activities or outcomes could be achieved through other means, if the Eco-schools programme did not exist.

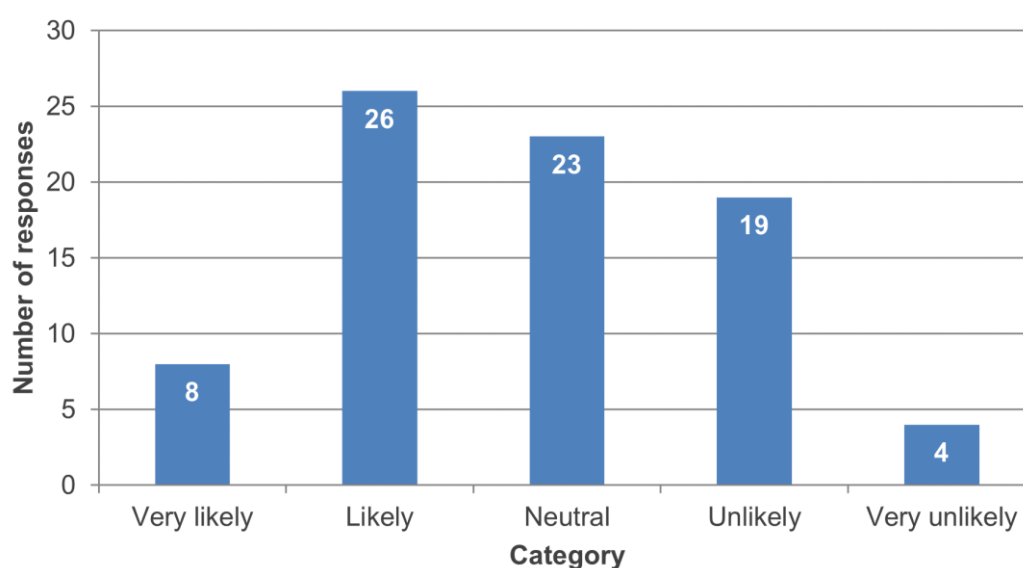
The Additionality of Eco-Schools

- 7.31 To understand the impact of the programme, the review considered the extent to which outcomes that have occurred as a result of the Eco-Schools programme would have still occurred if the programme did not exist – a counterfactual scenario.
- 7.32 Data from the survey (Figure 7.4) suggests that 34 out of 80 schools thought that they would have likely carried out similar activities in the absence of Eco-Schools, 23 felt this was unlikely, while the remainder were neutral on this question. What this data does not capture is the extent to which the activities would be at the same scale, or the extent to which they would be run across multiple years as a long-running part of the school's activities. One comment added to an answer given to this question in the survey noted that Eco-Schools gives the school the impetus to start and finish activities. Indeed, based on the evidence set out in the section above, it can be posited that Eco-Schools provided a stimulus for schools to establish and maintain ambitious environmental learning programmes through its framework and support, and the accountability that the awards bring. Schools would also be unlikely to receive further external funding or other resources to support these activities in the absence of Eco-Schools. Feedback from Eco-Schools Officers noted a small number of LAs offering their own schemes, but the majority were not aware of anything on the same scale or with the same scope of the Eco-Schools programme.

7.33 For example, Pembrokeshire Council run a Sustainable Schools Award Scheme (SSAS) that aims to incorporate Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) into the school curriculum and activities. The SSAS establishes a framework for schools to integrate ESDGC and like Eco-Schools, cover similar topics that include Biodiversity, Global Citizenship, Energy, Water, Waste and Litter, Health, Transport, Community Citizenship. Schools work on the award at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels and are provided support by a SSAS Officer to assist with planning and developing activities. KWT staff noted that the presence of this scheme was a reason why Eco-Schools had made less progress in registering schools across the LA.

7.34 The efforts of Gwynedd Council to reduce single-use plastic in school kitchens was also mentioned alongside the Anglesey school garden project designed to improve biodiversity. It was noted that there is some connection with Healthy Schools in this region, but this offers a different focus, and so in the absence of Eco-Schools, would not provide a direct replacement.

Figure 7.4: Likelihood of carrying out similar activities to those of Eco-Schools had the programme not existed



Source: Miller Research Eco-Schools Evaluation Survey, n=80. Respondents were asked 'How likely would you have been to carry out similar activities to

those done through Eco-Schools had the programme not existed? Please explain your answer.'

- 7.35 Assessing the contribution of Eco-Schools to the intended outcomes was made challenging by external factors, such as the general awareness of environmental issues and their increasingly prominent place in public discourse.
- 7.36 Relating also to the counterfactual scenario, it is also likely that some focus on environmental teaching would have taken place in schools, especially considering the focus within the new CfW 'What Matters Statements' on creating ethical, informed citizens. However, once again, evidence collected through this review indicates that the programme provided additional outcomes compared with if the programme did not exist. This is through both the scale of activities carried out by schools (i.e., schools engaging in a number of different activities, and pursuing activities and environmental lessons in enough depth over a long-enough time period), and the opportunities provided by Eco-Schools that may not otherwise have been available.
- 7.37 Case study schools painted a picture in which learners have engaged heavily with a wide range of environmental topics and activities, which have had a key impact on their understanding as well as their values.
- 7.38 In some cases, schools suggested that they would have been able to undertake similar activities without the Eco-Schools programme. However, this was not felt by all schools surveyed. If schools had no support from Eco-Schools at all, it is likely that such activities would be at least partially picked up within the new CfW, but not of the same quality and scope of those developed with the support of the Eco-Schools Programme. Evidence from this review provides an indication that Eco-Schools has contributed to the outcomes achieved in terms of the scale of the activities engaged in by schools rather than the activities themselves. Assessing the impact of Eco-Schools and the convenience of the support provided through the programme on the scale and quality of activities would be a valuable topic of further

study, which could be carried out through a focused survey of a schools' environmental activities during initiation into the programme.

Assessment of impacts

7.39 Having developed a ToC for the intervention, it was possible to assess contributions made against intended impacts identified when developing the theoretical model for the programme. The key identified impacts were as follows:

- **Improvement of an Eco-School's local environment.**
There are indications from both survey and interview feedback that positive contributions have been made against this intended impact, as much of the activities of Eco-Schools themselves had been geared towards working on the outside environment of schools. This was in the form of litter picking (both on and off school premises), and engaging in gardening, growing, and tree planting. While other factors will also influence schools' decisions to carry out activities that improve a school's local environment, the evidence collected does indicate that much of the impetus for schools that have engaged in such activities came from Eco-Schools.
- **Creating future generations of ethical, informed citizens.**
While there are positive indications from the fieldwork data that learners were being engaged in learning about the environment, and were empowered to act positively, the long-term impact of Eco-Schools on learners would require further research. Understanding how learners' views and engagement with the environment change as they move through school requires a long view to be taken. The data collected thus far indicates that a lower proportion of a secondary school's learners engaged with the programme as compared to primary schools. However, this impact

indicator would need to be measured across a broader timescale, such as assessing how early engagement with the environment through Eco-Schools has shaped their views and behaviours into adulthood. Further research could take the form of longitudinal research with a sample of learners, or greater engagement with school leavers to gather data on their experiences with Eco-Schools. The latter option would rely on self-reported, retrospective reflection, but would nonetheless provide more indication of the impact of Eco-Schools in the long term. Longitudinal research following a sample through their schooling would also allow for a better understanding of the enablers and barriers to continued engagement with the environment for learners.

- **A more responsible and engaged school community.** There are positive indications that some schools have been able to engage successfully with the wider community, particularly with parents. However, through the survey, this outcome indicator had a muted response as compared to other outcomes (see Figure 7.3). Data on this indicator largely came through the schools' own self-reporting, and through data collected during learner-interviews. Making an assertion as to the scale of this impact was therefore not possible, however there is nonetheless some indication that engagement has been successful, with schools having experienced a positive response from members of the community. This indicator would benefit from more robust data gathered from parents themselves, and from wider members of the community that have engaged with local Eco-Schools.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1 The conclusions of this report are based upon the iteration of findings over the two phases of the Eco-Schools review: scoping and primary research. Extensive engagement undertaken with stakeholders (with the specifics highlighted in Chapter 2) included learners, Eco- Coordinators, representatives from KWT and Welsh Government, parents, teachers and community stakeholders were vital to ensure a holistic perspective of the programme in Wales.
- 8.2 This report has addressed the key aims of the review for the period covered (2018 to 2022), namely to understand:
- How Eco-Schools was being delivered in Wales,
 - The impact of the programme on schools and learners, and
 - How it has supported key Welsh Government policies.
- 8.3 It also has outlined the ways in which the programme provides an opportunity to engage children and young people with specific Welsh Government priority policies as they develop in the future.
- 8.4 In this chapter, we structure the conclusions and recommendations based on the overarching sections of this report.

Rationale for programme in Wales and alignment with Welsh Government priorities

- 8.5 Stakeholder views from the review on the rationale for delivering the Eco-Schools programme in Wales were categorised into the following seven themes:
- To tackle the climate emergency;
 - Enable learners to take ownership of making a positive difference to the environment;
 - To support all four purposes of the new Curriculum for Wales;
 - To support children and young people in building skills to take action;

- Provide a mechanism for embedding relevant WG priorities;
- Help tackle biodiversity loss, promote nature recovery and prevent pollution;
- Help schools take practical action.

8.6 The contextual review undertaken as part of this research (see Sections 1 to 3) demonstrates that the Eco-Schools programme is highly coherent with the policy context surrounding climate change, sustainable development and education in Wales. Engagement with schools revealed a breadth of creative pupil-led activities being undertaken, ranging from litter picks in the local community, tree planting in school grounds, designing forest trails, connecting with wildlife and nature through school-based conservation, reducing plastic waste, hosting uniform swap days and much more.

8.7 A key finding was the importance of Eco-Schools in aligning with, and supporting delivery of, the new CfW. There was consensus amongst schools that there is a natural alignment between the pupil-led nature of the programme and freedom that the new curriculum offers in allowing learners to steer their learning experience and the themes and issues covered. Schools shared several examples of how they were already integrating Eco-Schools content across STEM subjects, the Humanities and through more focused outdoor learning. In some cases, content taught within the programme inspired work in schools that was then incorporated into their new curriculum design.

Programme delivery by KWT

8.8 Delivery of the Eco-Schools programme appeared to work efficiently, having achieved all objectives and associated targets agreed between KWT and Welsh Government for the 2021/22 academic year.

8.9 Over the last three years, the programme was delivered within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic which presented unique challenges and impacted on the number of schools progressing through their award levels. Pre-pandemic, award progress in Wales was increasing

at a considerable rate, though the emergence of coronavirus in Q4 of 2019/20 led to a number of Green Flag assessments being cancelled, and in 2020/21 there was a noticeable drop in the pace at which schools progressed through the programme, due to the additional pressures schools were facing. However, data suggests that award progression for schools was slowly returning to a steady growth at the end of financial year 2021/22.

- 8.10 It was reported by a number of respondents from KWT that central funding from Welsh Government had been adequate to achieve engagement with a reasonable reach of schools in Wales. Eco-Schools Officers acknowledged they had been able to adapt and use resources more efficiently through the pandemic, due to the shift towards online delivery of the programme and reduction in travel and subsistence costs. A key theme identified from the review was a relationship between schools achieving Green Flag status and the number of staff delivering the programme in Wales. The individualised support provided to schools and relationships forged between Eco-Schools Officers and Eco-Coordination were central to the success and continued engagement of schools through the programme. However, the number of schools covered by each Eco-Schools Officer is varied and those that cover a smaller number of LAs can provide more targeted support.
- 8.11 In terms of best supporting schools post-COVID 19 pandemic measures, there were understandable concerns over staff retention and maintaining delivery of the programme at the same scale and quality, in the face of salary increases, returning to a hybrid delivery approach and challenges such as the cost-of-living crisis. As such, the Eco-Schools team felt continued or additional funding would enable sustainable growth of the programme, achieving more for learners and for schools. One suggestion by Eco-Schools Officers was a future scenario in which additional funds could support the introduction of an Eco-Schools Officer for every LA in Wales, which

could help increase consistency across Green Flag schools, and the maintenance of awards through more tailored support.

Recommendation: The programme should consider seeking additional funding to mitigate against the increased costs of moving away from sole virtual delivery and the cost-of-living crisis.

- 8.12 In relation to management and governance of the programme between KWT and Welsh Government, the Eco-Schools team spoke highly of the support received from Welsh Government. The programme had increasingly tried to connect Eco-Schools across other areas of Welsh Government policy, including Transport and Education, to deliver cross-departmental outcomes. In terms of the significance to Welsh Government, there are opportunities for further cross-departmental working on Eco-Schools to deliver a wide range of action plans and frameworks. The international comparison identified lessons on how these opportunities were being harnessed in other countries, where multiple government departments run their own programmes under the Eco-Schools umbrella. There is an opportunity for the programme to encourage this way of working in Wales, to increase funding for the programme as a whole and further support the delivery of targets relating to wider Welsh Government ambitions.

Recommendation: In addition to the funding currently received from the Welsh Government Land, Nature & Forestry Division, the programme should consider what public sector investment could be obtained by encouraging other directorates to run programmes under the Eco-Schools umbrella. With the support of Land, Nature and Forestry, the programme should look to strengthen links with the Education Directorate in Welsh Government to help achieve this. Through adopting this way of working, the programme could provide more opportunities for shared learning and support the delivery of further cross-governmental outcomes.

- 8.13 The Eco-Schools programme used a variety of communications approaches found to help increase engagement, promote the benefits

of the programme and reach a broader network of schools in Wales. Findings from the online survey and interviews with Eco-Schools Officers, demonstrated a potential relationship between LA support and the number of schools engaged across the region. It was felt that engagement with schools was more successful in areas where the programme had established strong links with departments within the LA, to drive out information about Eco-Schools to their own networks and contacts. There is an opportunity for the programme to continue developing partnerships with key organisations within the public sector, to promote the benefits of schools and support increased participation.

- 8.14 Additionally, networking events, referrals and consistent one to one contact between Eco-Schools Officers and schools were found to be other important channels for strengthening and establishing new connections with schools. The use of social media, such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook received good interactions from schools through sharing Eco-Schools updates, anecdotes and stories.

Recommendation: the programme should consider scoping out new opportunities for increased networking with LA partners, to help promote the benefits of the programme and engage new schools. This might include working with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and the Partnership Council for Wales.

- 8.15 The level of support offered by Eco-Schools was highly praised by schools throughout the review, who viewed Eco-Schools Officers as critical friends. One trend identified by Eco-Schools Officers was the level of support required by schools and time involved in the programme. Schools became less dependent on seeking external guidance and support over time, as activities became second nature. In this sense, KWT staff were described as enablers for schools to continue their Eco-Schools journey more independently.
- 8.16 The programme has delivered a variety of support for schools, including developing and highlighting useful tools and resources,

delivering teacher training and providing networking and learning opportunities for schools through workshops and events. The online resources available to schools were felt to be of a high quality and motivated the activities of learners and teachers through providing a source of inspiration for ideas. Local and national events for schools were seen as interesting and inspiring for learners, providing opportunities for knowledge sharing and purposeful learning opportunities. A suggestion from some primary schools was that sessions should be extended to the Foundation Phase in the future, as past workshops were felt to be targeted towards KS2 learners. These opportunities were echoed by the Eco-Schools team who had a desire to engage more with younger years or 'Eco-Tots' in the programme.

Recommendation: explore opportunities to tailor the content of online sessions for primary schools, so that materials can be used for the Foundation Phase.

- 8.17 Training sessions were also felt by Eco-Coordination to improve and enrich programme delivery within schools. Efficiencies were seen during Covid-19 where training opportunities took place online. These were encouraged to continue after face-to-face training sessions resumed, as they were described as more accessible and time-efficient for schools. In instances where Eco-Coordination weren't available for scheduled training times, it was also recommended that training sessions were recorded so that those who were unable to attend could catch up in their own time.

Recommendation: the programme should continue deliver teacher training using a hybrid approach, to allow as many teachers to attend as possible.

Recommendation: Alongside the provision of training, the Eco-Schools team should ensure sessions are recorded for teachers who were unable to attend, and uploaded to Hwb, so that individuals can catch up in their own time and have a wider dissemination to schools.

- 8.18 In addition, several opportunities for further teacher training were identified, including training tailored to delivering the programme within special schools. This was due to special schools including a high proportion of children with learning disabilities and non-verbal learning, where the learner-led approach of Eco-Schools was reported to be more challenging to implement in a meaningful way. As such, there was a desire to see further support from Eco-Schools in the form of online resources and training specifically adapted to special schools, informed by engagement to understand their needs for the programme.
- 8.19 It was also felt that the programme might benefit from extending training beyond teachers to volunteers. Volunteers were viewed as an important element of the programme for schools, particularly in terms of engagement with the wider community. It was recognised that while some schools were stretched for resources and time to deliver the programme, many volunteers were retired and have a greater amount of availability to engage in activities. As such, efficiencies could also be felt in the opportunity to establish volunteer networks for schools, consisting of volunteers trained by Eco-Schools in programme content and delivery, that schools could then tap into for delivery of focused and well-planned sessions for learners.

Recommendation: the programme should consider the development of online resources and training materials specifically focused on how special schools can adapt Eco-Schools activities to fit their learners needs. These should be informed through KWT engaging further with special schools to understand what specific support they need for the programme.

Recommendation: explore opportunities for extending current training for teachers to volunteers, as a means of creating additional networks of human resources for schools Eco-Schools work. These options could be explored through engaging with organisations such as the CiW and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

Partnerships with the Eco-Schools programme

- 8.20 In terms of what the programme has offered partners, the diversity of Eco-Schools topics enabled several entry points through which organisations could engage with young people and tap into practical elements of the programme. Eco-Schools provided opportunities for partners to build on learner awareness of the social and environmental issues they cover. This relationship was found to be reciprocal in that partners also supported Eco-school projects with their technical expertise on one of the nine Eco-school topic areas. This informed the practical delivery of projects and actions that schools took forward.
- 8.21 Additionally, another key benefit of partnerships with the programme was the opportunity to collaboratively work towards shared goals. Organisations were able to use Eco-Schools connections to facilitate their own work and covered a wider audience of learners than through their own engagement alone.

Programme delivery within schools

- 8.22 Feedback from schools and wider stakeholders demonstrated the importance of the programme in a number of ways. Within schools, participation of learners enabled empowerment and active learning for learners of all ages and abilities, while also offering a flexible framework within which schools could create their own portfolio of work that aligned with their values and mission statement. The relevance of the programme was reflected strongly in examples shared by learners of their passion to help make a positive difference to their own school, community and the planet. This was strengthened by effective links put in place between schools and the six Eco-Schools partners.
- 8.23 Motivations from schools for joining the programme largely centred around being a part of positive environmental change, and allowing learners to be involved in a meaningful environmental movement.

Other key motivations included the opportunity to be part of an internationally accredited programme, with the awards progress for Eco-Schools giving learners a sense of empowerment but also providing legitimacy to schools for their Eco-Actions.

- 8.24 In terms of the nine Eco-School's topics covered by the programme, the review found that some topics were more successful and easier for schools to cover within their setting. For example, the majority of schools engaged through the survey ranked the topics of Litter, Healthy Living and School Grounds the highest for being able to integrate in their Eco-Schools work. These subject areas were also prominent in the activities of case study schools, such as litter picking and tree planting, where the impact was seen immediately.
- 8.25 Comparatively, the topics of Water, Global citizenship and Energy were ranked amongst the least successful topics for schools to deliver. In some cases, schools found these topics harder to embed in their Eco-Schools work due to concepts being more abstract to learners and therefore potentially more difficult to understand, alongside external factors that influenced the activities and changes they were able to make. For example, the increased need for additional hand washing and ventilation over the past few years due to the pandemic, and the difficulty in conserving energy and water because of this.

Recommendation: The programme should consider what further partnerships and additional support may be required to help schools deliver activities against less successful Eco-Schools topics such as Water, Global citizenship, and Energy. There is an opportunity at a more strategic level to identify where existing partnerships can support and inspire schools to undertake doable projects and encourage cross-school engagement on harder to deliver areas.

- 8.26 Case study schools and online survey respondents faced a number of barriers that impacted their ability to implement the programme. Firstly, one of the key challenges facing many Eco-Committees was

finding ways to fund their Eco-Schools equipment and work, particularly for larger projects that would result in impactful changes being made to the school. It was felt these challenges could be alleviated through support from Eco-Schools on signposting / identifying ways schools can fund their Eco-Actions. It was felt that schools would benefit from case studies on how different schools and settings have financed their Eco-Schools work, or through mapping out and signposting different routes schools can choose.

Recommendation: Explore options for developing additional online resources for schools on different ways they can fund Eco-Schools activity.

- 8.27 Time pressures and competing priorities for staff were another challenge in some schools for engagement with the programme. Depending on the size of the school, it was harder for Eco- Coordinators to find time to release staff and learners from the classroom and embed Eco-Schools work through lesson planning and curriculum delivery. Staff within secondary schools, also experienced competing priorities with the diversity of lessons, examinations and results, particularly with older learners, which made it challenging to commit time to the programme. These challenges were further compounded in instances where there were mixed levels of support for the programme across staff within the school, that created issues in implementing a cross-curricular, whole-school approach. Here, it was felt that the programme needed to develop more incentives for teachers to embed Eco-Schools links into CfW delivery, so that the programme is not viewed as an 'add-on' activity. As recommended earlier, this scenario could be supported through strengthening links between the programme and the Education Directorate within Welsh Government, alongside the development of further online resources, or opportunities for schools to share best-practice approaches with one another.

Recommendation: the programme should consider consulting with secondary schools to develop off-the-shelf resources on making Eco-Schools a more prominent part of the new curriculum.

Recommendation: Explore options for strengthening existing resources for schools on integrating Eco-schools with the CfW. For example, through strengthening links with the Education Directorate in Welsh Government, and through establishing knowledge-sharing sessions among groups of schools to share best practice on how other schools integrate Eco-Schools across the curriculum.

8.28 Additionally, other barriers for schools included:

- Covid-19: which created knock-on effects on the scale and types of activities schools were able to undertake, including reduced outdoor learning.
- Lack of physical space: whereby schools in more urban areas had reduced access to space for outdoor learning, particularly if they had no greenspace or forest land close by.
- Inability to undertake larger Eco-Schools projects where school resources were limited and/or already being used for other Eco-Actions. In these instances, schools wanted more opportunities to work in clusters with other schools in their local area to achieve greater outcomes through collaborative pieces of work.

Recommendation: It is recommended that more emphasis is placed on developing opportunities for increased collaboration amidst schools, to develop cluster projects and activities that will achieve outcomes on a larger scale using less resources. For example, joint local energy projects, sharing equipment with other schools, or county-wide activities.

8.29 The Green Flag system was seen as an opportunity leading to further growth and development of schools in the programme, partly due to its international standard and as a measurement of their own progress and metric for success. Eco-Coordinators maintained their support for

the assessment system used by Eco-Schools but identified a number of opportunities to streamline the awards process. Firstly, schools felt there were better ways to apply for an award than by using an online form, which required a substantial amount of effort and time to compile the necessary evidence. There was a desire for the programme to offer more flexibility to schools to report in different ways, by being able to use their own documentation, or by reporting 'on the go' as soon as information was collected throughout the year. These ideas from schools tied into technical aspirations from the Eco-Schools team, who wished to explore the idea of virtualising the assessment process and including gamification through an app. Other opportunities also included the types of data being collected and reported on for assessments, whereby schools struggled to capture 'softer' outcomes of learner's participation.

Recommendation: explore opportunities for streamlining the online form currently used by schools for award assessments, through added flexibility to schools to report evidence in different ways and times of the year.

Recommendation: It is recommended that additional focus is given to exploring how schools can best capture 'softer' outcomes of learner participation in the programme, to gather and evidence impact. Possible methods of collection for this type of data is outlined in 8.42

8.30 Also mentioned were suggestions about amendments that could be made to the accreditations for schools who had consistently obtained the Platinum award. One challenge Platinum schools experienced was the ability to sustain activities to renew their status each year. It was felt that the year between assessment periods left little time to develop new ideas, plans and evidence. Schools felt their progression through the programme would benefit from an extension of the time-period between assessments. Regarding award criteria, other Platinum schools felt that additional levels of award beyond Platinum would help maintain momentum and engagement with the programme.

Recommendation: the programme should explore options for extending the gap between assessment periods of Platinum schools, to provide more time for schools to undertake new Eco-Schools work.

Recommendation: consider the development of an award level beyond Platinum.

- 8.31 In terms of future diversification of activities, Eco-Schools Officers identified an opportunity to increase engagement with secondary schools by placing more emphasis on skills acquisition, professional development and green job opportunities. In doing this, it was felt programme content would be more aligned with the priorities of learners beyond KS3, particularly older learners in sixth form in ensuring developmental progression.

Recommendation: there is an opportunity to consult with secondary schools to develop a resource to help learners get involved with green jobs or green volunteering opportunities as part of the Welsh Baccalaureate / their compulsory work experience and Careers and work-related experiences guidance.

Insights and potential lessons from the international comparison

- 8.32 Feedback from international partners and wider stakeholders presented several layers of useful context and applicable learnings to Wales. Not only has Wales' connection to a global network of Eco-Schools played a vital role in ambitions to shape young learners and progress in alignment with the four purposes of the curriculum, but it reinforced the message that the climate crisis must be addressed in a way that is united and fair. Given that climate change will affect different countries in different ways, Eco-Schools presented an authentic and practical opportunity through which learners can learn about contexts and cultures outside of Wales. Further to this, with the CfW placing an increased emphasis on the importance of developing 'ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world', engagement with Eco-Schools was identified as one of the clearest, most-effective

ways of facilitating **international** awareness of social and environmental issues for a school setting.

- 8.33 The international comparison provided insight into shared challenges between the delivery of Eco-Schools in Wales and in other nations. These common barriers included the difficulty in engaging secondary learners; frequent reliance on one engaged school staff members to drive progress forward within a school; challenges of resourcing the programme under current budgets; and the differences between schools in their ability to undertake certain activities due to size, setting and location.
- 8.34 Possible future delivery models that may be transferable to Wales were also found. This was especially useful when considering the scale of outcomes and general engagement with secondary schools. For instance, other countries considered having secondary learners lead on the coordination and reporting on the programme. Other countries shared Wales' difficulty in effectively engaging with secondary schools and acknowledged that location and access to open space affected school engagement with the programme.

Recommendation: Consider reviewing the assessment structure so that secondary learners (as young leaders) can take charge of coordinating the programme and reporting on progress within their schools. This may alleviate the perception of increased burden associated with the programme beyond KS3.

Recommendation: Given shared challenges of sustaining engagement with secondary schools – a scaled system of support could help to level the playing field and reach schools at a disadvantage. A support strategy, based on the characteristics and criteria of schools could be introduced to ensure that schools at a disadvantage receive an enhanced level of targeted communication – to ensure their participation.

- 8.35 Furthermore, when considering how the programme can be used to embed wider Welsh Government priorities there is an opportunity to

build on the success of FEE's circular economy pilot to promote circularity further in schools in Wales. In 2021/22, KWT undertook work to develop specific resources aimed to promote student understanding of the circular economy, and there is an opportunity to strengthen these links to Welsh Government policy by actively exploring potential partners and wider activities in this space.

Recommendation: Consider exploring opportunities to strengthen links to Welsh Government circular economy policy through actively exploring potential partners and wider activities in this space, to bring it forward as an area of interest for schools across Wales. This might include engaging with private sectors partners to support the delivery of new resources under this work.

8.36 Finally, the international comparison raised the question of whether it would be useful to consider inviting funding streams from private enterprise to support the programme in Wales, such as certified B-Corps or members of environmental campaigns such as Climate Cymru, who may have an interest in financially supporting the programme.

Recommendation: Consider options for securing additional funding through collaboration with private sector partners who have an interest in financially supporting the programme.

Outcomes and impacts

8.37 Feedback received from schools indicated that the programme has delivered positive outcomes for the majority of schools that have taken part. Eco-Schools has provided schools with guidance, ideas, and a roadmap for how to implement an educational programme about the environment. In turn, this raised the profile of the environment within school priorities and the ethos and aims underpinning the new CfW. Schools were also able to engage in sharing best practice with other schools through the programme, but these opportunities could be extended and there was a desire for this.

- 8.38 Evidence from the review denotes considerable benefits for learners, with the programme appearing to achieve against intended outcomes for inspiring and empowering learners, engaging them in learning about the environment, providing new skills on how to tackle climate change issues. During the review, learners themselves in case study schools were able to tell the researchers what they had learned as part of the programme. Being able to share their learnings with the wider community to encourage positive behaviour change with peers, neighbours and parents also came across as a strong theme, across wide ranging environmental topics.
- 8.39 There also appears to have been a contribution made toward intended outcomes and impacts relating to improving the local environment as a result of Eco-Schools through activities like litter picking and tree planting and local food growing.
- 8.40 Some outcomes have emerged from the programme that relate to engaging and influencing parents and the wider community. Eco- Coordinators interviewed and survey respondents noted a range of benefits and outcomes for the wider community, including working with local growers and carrying out periodic visits to community gardens, inspiring members of the local community to start a gardening club and developing local “food forts.”. The opportunities to engage in activities with parents and carers were also emphasised during the pandemic, with activities linking Eco-Schools to involve the whole family. While some examples were shared, the survey denoted that some schools did not feel they had successfully engaged parents and the wider community in conversations about Climate Change.

Recommendation It is recommended that additional focus is given to sharing best practice and lessons learnt around ways of engaging with the wider school community, and that additional advice is provided to schools to encourage more successful wider engagement. Barriers to wider school community engagement should be identified for schools, with measures taken to address this shared as best practice.

- 8.41 Eco-Schools provides opportunities for learners to learn about the environment, fostering an interest which other organisations can add to, or build upon. These included the Healthy Schools Programme, Plantlife, Size of Wales and Dwr Cymru. A key impact of the programme was seen through the overarching partnerships with Eco-Schools and KWT as well as individual partnerships obtained by school stakeholders. This was seen through the collaborative efforts and mutually beneficial partnerships gained.
- 8.42 Due to the nature of Eco-Schools, many of its impacts were hard to measure and assess. Evidence from this review provided an indication however that the programme has contributed to the outcomes achieved through encouraging the scale of the activities engaged in by schools rather than the activities themselves. In terms of future activity to evaluate impact, some options could involve the Eco-Schools team surveying learners at periodic intervals or exploring the possibility of returning to sampled learners following engagement to ascertain the additionality or difference achieved. Teachers in a select sample of schools, or Eco-Coordinators, could take part in this exercise by carrying out periodic questionnaires with their learners to ascertain the progress made against various factors. A limited programme of monitoring such as this would provide Eco-Schools with more concrete data on its impacts. This approach can also involve a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures, capturing “softer” outcomes that may otherwise be missed in the Eco-Schools Green Flag assessments, and that schools wished to report on.

Recommendation: Eco-Schools should consider undertaking a focused review of a school’s environmental activities during initiation into the programme, to help build a better picture of the additionality that Eco-School achieves within its engaged schools. Such data would enable a better picture to be developed of the impact of the programme on the scale of activities carried out within a school due to engagement with Eco-Schools. Monitoring this data and making

comparisons against this baseline would help Eco-Schools to review its impact.

Annex A – Eco-Schools Bronze, Silver, and Green Flag Award Criteria

The Seven Steps	Bronze	Silver (Bronze criteria, plus below)	Green Flag (Bronze and Silver criteria, plus below)
Eco-Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have a committee to represent all pupils and adults at our school. This could be a sub group of your school council or simply your school council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This group communicates with the rest of the school and gathers their ideas. We keep a record of what we discuss. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The members meet regularly (once per half term or more often)
Environmental Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have had a good look around school to see what could be improved to make us more eco-friendly. We may have used the Eco-Schools Environmental Review Document. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By now we have a clear idea of our school's current eco-performance. The whole school are aware of areas where we are performing well, and areas where we can make improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All nine Eco-Schools topic areas have been reviewed within the last year. We have produced a summary of the main findings of our review.
Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have discussed how some of the ideas brought up by our review will be achieved. We have decided on timescale and who will be responsible for the actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have put together an action plan that clearly maps out what we intend to improve, and details of how this will be achieved, including the timescale and who is responsible. This is appropriate for the age and ability of the pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Head Teacher supports our Action Plan. It is in a format that any one of the staff could understand, and pick up from if necessary.
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have discussed how eco-friendly we are at the moment and how we will be able to see if we are improving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have started to record what impact our action plan targets are having. We may take meter readings, record how well we are recycling, or survey people's opinions if the impact is difficult to measure quantitatively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have discussed the progress of actions, either as a Committee or with the whole school. Some of the monitoring work has been undertaken as part of curriculum work. Targets from at least three topic areas have been actioned and evaluated over the course of our eco-journey to date.

Review of the Eco-Schools Education programme: Final Report, Version 1.5

Eco-Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have discussed how we will come up with an Eco-Code for our school. The Eco-Code will help to raise awareness of our targets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have created an Eco-Code that represents what we are trying to achieve as an Eco-School. The whole school have been made aware of it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Eco-Code is current and has been revised or at least reviewed within the last year.
Informing and Involving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We keep the whole school informed of what we have been discussing (e.g. assemblies, notice board). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an opportunity for all pupils to input suggestions and ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The whole school are somehow involved (e.g. whole school day of action) and are aware of our action plan and how it's progressing. We celebrate achievements. The wider school community are also made aware of our activity (e.g. newsletters, website).
Linking to the Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our teachers have discussed how they will integrate this process into our class work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspects of the Eco-Schools process are undertaken as part of class work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspects of the Eco-Schools process are undertaken as part of curriculum work in more than one class.
	<p>All Bronze criteria happening?</p> <p>Login to your Eco-Schools account to claim your Bronze award and download a certificate.</p>	<p>All Bronze and Silver column criteria happening?</p> <p>Login to your Eco-Schools account to claim your Silver award and download a certificate.</p>	<p>All Bronze, Silver & Green Flag criteria in place?</p> <p>It's time to make an application for your Green Flag award by logging in to your Eco-Schools account.</p>

Source: KWT

Annex B – Eco-Schools Platinum Award Criteria



Criteria for a Platinum School

A Platinum Eco-School is a school that has been continuously involved in the programme for nine years, or the time it has taken to get to the fourth flag. By this point, the Eco-Schools process should be well embedded into the life of the school and the Green Flag criteria met without exceptions or recommendations. During your assessment we would like to see an overall evaluation of all your achievements across the nine topic areas presented by the pupils.

In addition to meeting the requirements for a green flag, a platinum school should be able to meet the essential criteria below and at least half of the desired criteria.

Essential Criteria for a Platinum Eco-School		
1	You will need to provide evidence/figures demonstrating the improvements you have made in all nine topic areas throughout your Eco-Schools journey to date. This should be used to celebrate your achievements as a whole school and could be presented in the form of a display, presentation, video or assembly	
2	The school should be regularly undertaking projects in the wider community to further the Eco-Schools message (at least once a year)	
3	Eco-Schools is on the agenda for staff/curriculum meetings at least once a term	
4	Eco-Schools and related issues raised are regular assembly themes	

Desired Criteria for a Platinum Eco-School (tick at least 7)		
1	A short case-study of improvement is available for each topic area over the four flag timescale	
2	There should be wide adult representation on the committee as well as pupils.	
3	A whole school Eco-Schools Inset should have been run for current staff	
4	All classes in the school are involved in an aspect of the Eco-Schools process	
5	The whole school have an input into the environmental review process	
6	Parents and the wider community also have input into the review and action planning process	
7	Most action plan targets and their monitoring are achieved through classwork	
8	Pupils take the key role in leading their meetings (with the exception of Infant and Nursery schools)	
9	Consistent messages are provided/mixed messages avoided in relation to ESDGC issues (e.g avoiding fast food as a treat for good behaviour, or ensuring peat-free compost is sourced for gardening)	
10	The governing body is fully informed and involved in aspects of the programme / There should be an actively involved Governor on the committee	
11	The school has spread good practice ideas to organisations and businesses in the local community	
12	Pupils have responsibility for record keeping, recording and analysis of data and feedback to the whole school community	
13	The school has undertaken an annual Carbon Footprinting exercise, showing improvement over the years	
14	An extra-curricular club is provided for pupils outside the Eco-committee to partake in environmental activities	

Source: KWT

Annex C – Privacy Notice, scoping interviews

Review of Eco-schools Education Programme – Scoping Interviews

The Welsh Government has commissioned Miller Research to undertake a review of the Eco-schools Education Programme. This aim of this review is to understand how the Eco-Schools Programme is being delivered, its impact and how it is supporting Welsh Government policies and priorities. As part of this review, Miller Research will be gathering information through scoping interviews with Welsh Government, Keep Wales Tidy and partners of the scheme.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Miller Research will delete any personal data provided through the interviews and anonymise the transcripts before it is shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website.

Your Participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Miller Research is Megan Byrne.

E-mail address: megan@miller-research.co.uk

Telephone number: 01873 851884

PRIVACY NOTICE

What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?

Personal data is defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as 'any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier'.

Miller Research have your contact details for one of the following reasons:

- If you are a member of staff at Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) then your contact details (name and email address) are held by the Welsh Government because of your involvement in delivering the programme.
- If you are a partner of the programme then KWT hold your contact details because of your involvement in the programme and asked if you are happy to have your name and email address passed on to Miller Research in order for them to contact you to arrange an interview. Your details are only passed on to Miller Research where you have agreed to this.

Miller Research will only use your personal data for the purposes of this research project.

Your participation is voluntary and if you no longer wish to take part or receive reminders then please reply to the invitation email and you will no longer be contacted for this research.

There is no requirement to provide any additional personal data during interviews other than your image if you agree to a video recording of the interview. Interviews will be conducted via Microsoft Teams. We wish to record interviews for operational reasons. We will make this clear to you before the interview, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. If the interview is recorded, personal data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon as this process is completed. If discussions are not recorded, personal data will not be included in written notes prepared during or following the interviews. The retention period for any comments made within the chat bar will be 7 days. Therefore, any responses provided through the chat bar function will be deleted 7 days following the interview and will be included in any written notes in an anonymous format with personal details removed.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

What is the lawful basis for using your data?

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task; that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence about its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to improve the running of the Eco-Schools Education Programme in the future.

How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to Miller Research is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Miller Research will only use this data for research purposes. Miller Research has cyber essentials certification.

Miller Research has procedures to deal with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Miller Research will report this to the Welsh Government who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Miller Research will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Miller Research will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed during transcription will be deleted by Miller Research three months after the end of the contract. This includes your contact details. Miller Research will provide Welsh Government with an anonymised version of the data which will not include information that could identify you.

Individual rights

Under UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information you provide as part of this review, you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in that data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and

- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113. Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Further Information

If you have any further questions about how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Julie Garrard

E-mail address: Julie.Garrard@gov.wales

Telephone number: 03000 259901

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email:

DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales.

Annex D – Privacy Notice, Case Studies

Review of Eco-schools Education Programme – Case Studies

The Welsh Government has commissioned Miller Research to undertake a review of the Eco-schools Education Programme. The aim of this review is to understand how the Eco-Schools Programme is being delivered, its impact and how it is supporting Welsh Government policies and priorities.

As part of this review, Miller Research will be gathering information through interviews with stakeholders from a sample of schools in order to develop case studies on individual schools who are receiving funding to deliver the Eco-schools Education Programme.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Miller Research will delete any personal data provided through the workshops and anonymise the transcripts before it is shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website.

Your Participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Miller Research is Megan Byrne.

E-mail address: megan@miller-research.co.uk

Telephone number: 01873 851884

PRIVACY NOTICE

What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?

Personal data is defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as 'any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier'.

Miller Research have received your contact details from:

- Keep Wales Tidy (KWT), who have your details due to your involvement in the Eco-schools Education Programme. Miller Research, in collaboration with KWT have identified your school as being of interest. KWT have emailed you to ask for your permission for your name and email address to be shared with Miller Research.
- Your Eco-coordinator/staff member (whose details are held by KWT) has identified you as being a relevant stakeholder in the Eco-schools Education Programme in your school. Your Eco-coordinator has asked for your permission for your name and email address to be shared with Miller Research.

Miller Research will only use your name and email address for the purposes of this research project. Where your details have been provided by KWT you will also receive a survey and while no personal information is requested via this survey this is covered by a separate privacy notice.

Your participation is voluntary and if you no longer wish to take part or receive reminders then please reply to the invitation email and you will no longer be contacted for this research.

There is no requirement to provide any additional personal data during the interview other than your image if you agree to a video recording of the interview. The interview will be conducted via Microsoft Teams. The retention period for any comments made within the chat bar will be 7 days. Therefore, any responses provided through the chat bar function will be deleted 7 days following the interview and will be included in any written notes in an anonymous format with personal details removed.

We wish to record the interview for operational reasons. We will make this clear to you before the interview begins, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. Where an interview involves a group then the discussion will only be recorded if no one objects. If the interview is recorded, personal data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon as this process is completed. If the interview is not recorded, personal data will not be included in written notes prepared during or following the workshop.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

What is the lawful basis for using your data?

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task; that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence about its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to improve the running of the Eco-Schools Education Programme in the future.

How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to Miller Research is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Miller Research will only use this data for research purposes. Miller Research has cyber essentials certification.

Miller Research has procedures to deal with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Miller Research will report this to the Welsh Government who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Miller Research will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Miller Research will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed during transcription will be deleted by Miller Research three months after the end of the contract. This includes your contact details. Miller Research will provide Welsh Government with an anonymised version of the data which will not include information that could identify you.

Individual rights

Under UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information you provide as part of this review, you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in that data;

- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

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Name: Julie Garrard

E-mail address: Julie.Garrard@gov.wales

Telephone number: 03000 259901

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email:

DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales.

Annex E – Privacy Notice, Workshops with Children and Young People

Review of Eco-schools Education Programme: Workshops with Children and Young People

What is the research about?

This research is about the activities you do in your school to help the environment as part of the Eco-schools Education Programme. Welsh Government has asked a research company called Miller Research to find out what children and young people think about the activities you do in your school as part of the Eco-schools programme and the kinds of things you've learned from doing the activities.

What is involved?

If you agree to talk to us, what we will ask you to do will depend on your age:

- If you are in **primary school**, we will carry out interactive workshops based around play activities to understand what you might have learned from the things you have been doing at school.
- If you are in **secondary school**, we will be having a discussion to understand the kinds of things you have learned from taking part in your school's activities to help the environment.

You will not be asked for any personal information like your name or age.

Collecting this information will help us learn more about what children and young people think about the activities they have been doing in their school to help the environment as part of the Eco-schools Education Programme, and the kind of things they have learned.

We will be speaking to up to 10 children and young people at the same time in one workshop. The workshops will be with children and young people from your own school, but may have children and young people who are a similar age to you from up to five different schools, or you can talk to us by yourself if you prefer. Staff/teachers who are in charge of the activities at your school will help to organise this workshop. We will speak with you over video call. The workshop will last up to 60 minutes, but may take slightly more or less time.

We will be asking your permission to make an audio and video recording of the workshop. The workshop will only be recorded if everyone in it agrees. This information will be used only for research purposes and will not be shared with anyone other than the researchers. It will be deleted when the project ends. You do not need to agree to being recorded if you do not want to be recorded but you can still take part.

We will keep your information safe and once we have finished writing about what we have been told (in our report in late 2022) we will destroy all the data we hold about you.

Do I have to take part?

You can choose if you want to speak to us and your choice will make no difference at all as to anything else. You might want to ask a parent/carer, or a member of staff who does the activities with you, if you need help to decide.

If you take part, then you can decide what parts of the workshop and which of the questions you would like to take part in or answer and which you do not. You can also stop at any time. If you change your mind afterwards, then you can ask us to delete your information using the details at the end of this sheet.

How will the information be used?

The information will help us understand more about what children and young people think about activities run through the Eco-schools Education Programme and the kinds of things they have learned.

Is it private?

Yes, the research is private. We will use what everyone says to help write a report for Welsh Government, but we will not include your name or anyone else's, or the name of your school. We will keep your information safe, and we will delete it after the end of the project.

The only time we would have to tell someone what you said is if we were concerned that you or somebody else was at risk of harm. We must report this.

Are there any risks to taking part?

The questions we ask are as easy as possible for young people to answer and should not be difficult or upsetting. However, if you do find anything upsetting or would like to chat to somebody, support is available from:

- Teachers or other adults at your school

- You can also contact Childline to talk online (childline.org.uk) or on 0800 1111

If you would like to contact us about the research, please email Megan at Miller Research on megan@miller-research.co.uk

Your rights

You have certain rights, including:

- **the right to ask us** to look at any information we have about you, change any information, delete it or stop us looking at it
- **the right to be informed** about who is collecting and processing your data
- **the right of access**, to understand what information about you is being used and how

Further information about your rights can be found on the Information Commissioner's Website: www.ico.gov.uk and the Office address is: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113.

How to ask any questions or complain

If you have any further questions about how the information provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Julie Garrard

E-mail address: Julie.Garrard@gov.wales

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

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DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales.

Annex F – Eco-Coordinator and teaching staff topic guide

Review of Eco-Schools Education Programme:

Eco-Coordinator / teaching staff interviews (Topic Guide)

Interviewee	
Interviewee email	
Role/ organisation	
Time/date	
Interviewer	

Introduction

Miller Research have been commissioned to evaluate the Eco-Schools programme. A key component of our research is a series of interviews with Eco-Coordinators. The data collected in this interview will be anonymous and will be used to inform our evaluation.

Introduction	
Can you tell me about yourself and your role within your school?	
Motivations for joining the programme	
Why did the school decide to sign up for the Eco-Schools programme?	
Did you decide to follow E-S in preference to other programmes focused on environmental education?	
Prior to joining Eco-Schools, what (if any) activities were you doing that focused on environmental action, and to what extent did you see E-S linking with this activity?	
How were you first introduced to the programme? What was the onboarding process like for you?	
Activities	
How was your Eco-Committee (or club / group) developed? How are the groups of YP's formed? Which topics or initiatives did you direct your first actions towards? Why?	

<p>What have been the challenging areas / barriers for your progress in the programme so far?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Eco-Coordinator: <i>Have there been any particular responsibilities that have been easier / more challenging than others?</i> 	
<p>How much of your resources does Eco-schools use up, (e.g., time, money, physical space, equipment)?</p> <p>Where have these resources come from? (e.g., how much input comes from pupils' households?)</p>	
<p>What is the Monitoring and Evaluation process like? How do you assess progress / gather evidence on the impact of the topic work in your school?</p> <p>Are there any challenges to doing this / what would help you to do this more easily?</p>	
<p>What's the balance between pupil action and practitioner support needed?</p>	
<p>What is the best/your favourite activity or topic that your school has engaged in?</p>	
<p>To what extent do you feel the whole school has been able to be involved in eco-projects and action? What are some of the barriers to engaging the entire school?</p>	
<p>How has the pandemic (and the move to more online delivery) shaped Eco-school delivery?</p> <p>What is your preference going forward in terms of online/physical delivery?</p>	
<p>What opportunities has your school had to work with other Eco-schools? (To share ideas, resources, learning etc.)</p>	
<p>Have you attended and taken part in any events for learners?</p>	
<p>Support from E-S</p>	
<p>Do you feel there has been sufficient support from Eco-Schools Officers for your school to get the best out of the programme?</p>	

Is there any specific support you would like to receive as part of E-S? For example, would any specific information have helped / help you move from registration through the stages of the award?	
Have you taken part in training for Eco-coordinators? If so, was it useful? How could it have been made better?	
Have you used online resourced made available by Eco-schools? If so, were they useful? How could they be improved? Are there any gaps or resources missing that would be helpful to have access to?	
WG policy / wider issues	
To what extent do you feel Eco-Schools gives your learners an opportunity to engage in pressing global concerns?	
How could the programme offer more opportunities to get CYP engaged in global issues in the future?	
How does Eco-schools link with your delivery of the new curriculum? Have there been any challenges/barriers in doing that?	
Outcomes and Impacts	
What effects has Eco-schools had on the pupils at your school?	
What impacts has it had on the wider school community? (e.g., effects on parents and the wider community)	
What impacts has Eco-schools had on the physical environment of the school and local community?	
What changes are now evident in the way the school operates than came out of Eco-schools?	
Have the learners been involved in any campaigns that go beyond the school?	

Have there been any stand-out instances of pupils that have had a positive experience with the programme?	
Are there any other outcomes you'd like to see over the next few years?	
Have the effects of Eco-schools on the school been what you expected?	
Without the Eco-schools programme, do you think you could have achieved similar outcomes through other means?	
Recommendations / Future of the programme	
In what ways could the Eco-schools programme at your school be improved in the future?	
Are there any new topics you'd like to focus on over the next school year?	
What would you want the school to look like in 5 years' time?	
Close	
Do you have any other final comments?	

Annex G – Privacy Notice, Surveys and Workshops

Review of Eco-schools Education Programme – Survey and Workshops

The Welsh Government has commissioned Miller Research to undertake a review of the Eco-schools Education Programme. The aim of this review is to understand how the Eco-Schools Programme is being delivered, its impact and how it is supporting Welsh Government policies and priorities.

As part of this review, Miller Research will be gathering information through fieldwork with registered schools and wider stakeholders involved in the Eco-schools Education Programme. The information will be gathered through the following methods:

- workshops with a sample of Eco-coordinators and teaching staff,
- a workshop with wider stakeholders of the Eco-schools Education Programme
- a survey with all schools registered for the Eco-schools Education Programme

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research. However, Miller Research will delete any personal data provided through the workshops and survey anonymise the raw data before it is shared with the Welsh Government.

The information collected during the project will be included in a report published on the Welsh Government website.

Your Participation in this research is completely voluntary. However, your views and experiences are important in order to help inform Welsh Government policies.

The contact for this research at Miller Research is Megan Byrne.

E-mail address: megan@miller-research.co.uk

Telephone number: 01873 851884

PRIVACY NOTICE

What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?

Personal data is defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as 'any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier'.

Your contact details are held by Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) due to your involvement in the Eco-schools Education Programme.

If you have been contacted for a workshop then Miller Research, in collaboration with KWT have identified your school or you as an individual stakeholder as being of interest to contribute to a workshop. KWT have emailed you to ask for your permission for your name and email address to be shared with Miller Research. Miller Research will only use your name and email address for the purposes of this research project.

If you have been contacted for the school survey only, then Miller Research do not hold your contact details. Miller Research provided the survey link to KWT who emailed you using the personal details they hold.

Your participation is voluntary and if you no longer wish to take part or receive reminders then please reply to the invitation email and you will no longer be contacted for this research.

Workshops

There is no requirement to provide any additional personal data during the workshop other than your image if you agree to a video recording of the workshop. The workshop will be conducted via Microsoft Teams. The retention period for any comments made within the chat bar will be 7 days. Therefore, any responses provided through the chat bar function will be deleted 7 days following the workshop and will be included in any written notes in an anonymous format with personal details removed.

We wish to record the workshop for operational reasons. We will make this clear to you before the workshop begins, and you will have the opportunity to tell us if you are not happy for the discussion to be recorded. The workshop will only be recorded if no one objects. If the workshop is recorded, personal data will be removed during the process of transcribing. Recordings will be deleted as soon as this process is completed. If discussions are not recorded, personal data will not be included in written notes prepared during or following the workshop.

Survey

There is no requirement to provide any personal data in response to the survey. Completing the survey does not capture your email address or IP address and so the responses will be anonymous. If you choose to provide additional personal data in open text questions we will try not to identify you from, or link your identity to, the responses you provide.

If you raise a query or complaint and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it from the research data.

What is the lawful basis for using your data?

The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task; that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government.

Participation is completely voluntary. Research studies such as this are important for the Welsh Government to collect information and actionable evidence about its ability to deliver government priorities. The information collected in this research, for example, might be used to improve the running of the Eco-Schools Education Programme in the future.

How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to Miller Research is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Miller Research will only use this data for research purposes. Miller Research has cyber essentials certification.

When conducting surveys, Miller Research use a survey software programme called SmartSurvey. We have ensured that SmartSurvey software is UK GDPR compliant and meets our expectations in terms of the security of any data collected via the software and all data is processed within the UK.

Miller Research has procedures to deal with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs, Miller Research will report this to the Welsh Government who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Miller Research will use the information gathered to produce a report that will be published on the Welsh Government website. This report will not include any information that could be used to identify individual participants.

How long do we keep your personal data?

Miller Research will hold personal data during the contract period, and any personal data not already removed during data analysis will be deleted by Miller Research three months after the end of the contract. This includes your contact details. Miller Research will provide Welsh Government with an anonymised version of the data which will not include information that could identify you.

Individual rights

Under UK GDPR, you have the following rights in relation to the personal information you provide as part of this review, you have the right:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in that data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and
- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Phone: 01625 545 745 or 0303 123 1113. Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Further Information

If you have any further questions about how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

Name: Julie Garrard

E-mail address: Julie.Garrard@gov.wales

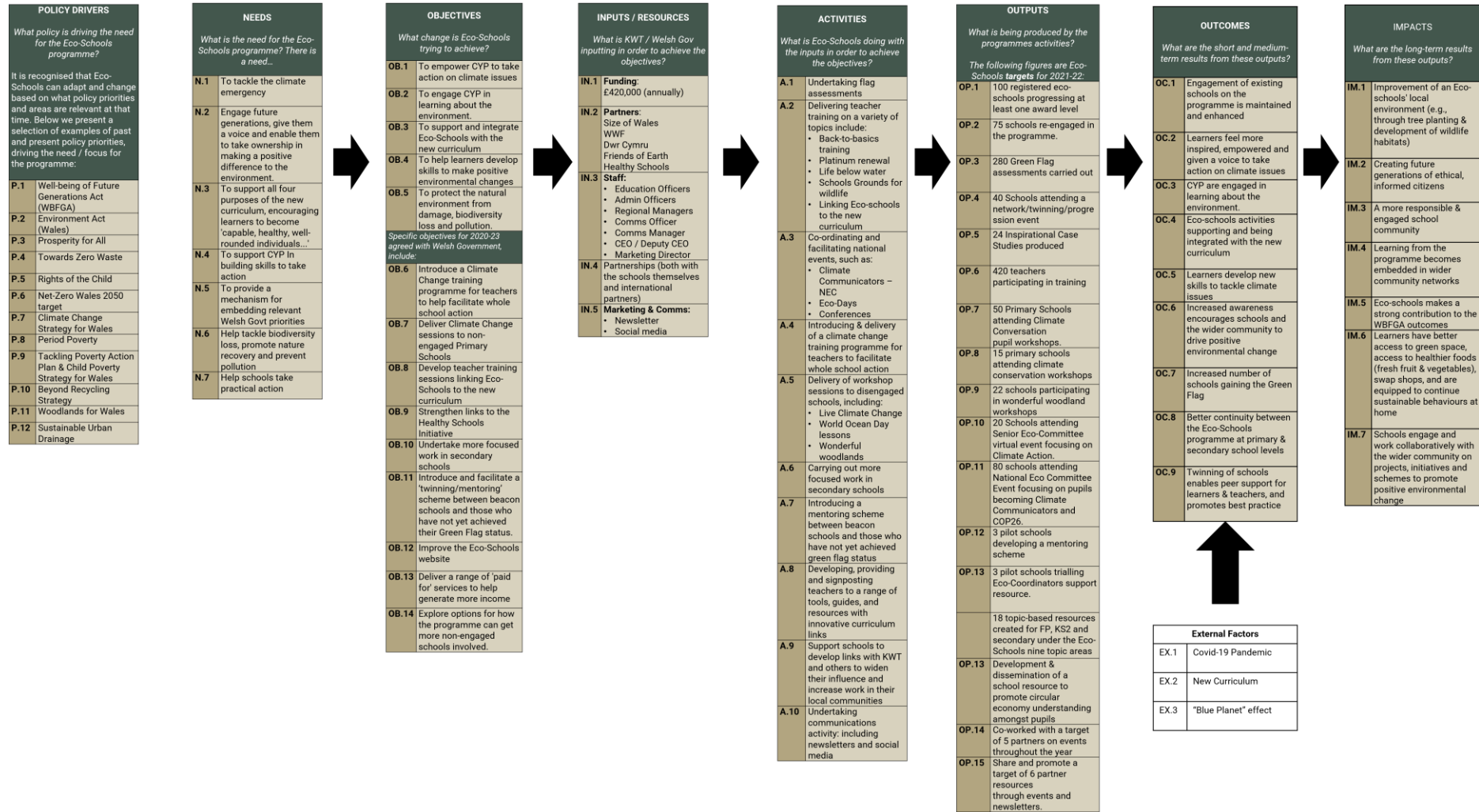
Telephone number: 03000 259901

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ, Email:

DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales.

Annex H - Eco-Schools ToC Logic Model



Annex I - Eco-Schools progress against output indicators 2021/22

Output	Target	Achievement
Number of registered Eco-Schools progressing one award level	100	138
Number of schools re-engaged with the programme	75	93
Number of Green Flag assessments carried out and action plans produced	280	334
Number of schools attending a network/twinning/progression event	40	326
Number of case studies	24	38
Number of teachers participating in training	420	453
Number of primary schools attending a climate change workshop	50	427
Number of secondary schools attending Climate Conversation pupil workshops.	15	WJEC work completed in lieu
Schools participating in Wonderful Woodland pupil workshop	22	24
Senior Eco-Committee virtual event focusing on Climate Action, running over 5 days in July, and a whole day event in November	20 schools	21
National Eco Committee Event focussing on pupils becoming Climate Communicators and COP26. To be run virtually over 4 days in June and November.	80 schools	135
Number of pilot schools developing Mentoring Scheme	3	3
Number of pilot schools trialling Eco- Coordinators support resource.	3	3
Topic based resources for Foundation Phase, KS2 and secondary under each of the 9 topic areas.	18	54
Development of a school resource aiming to promote student understanding of the Circular Economy.	1	1

Partnership Links – Co-working with partners on events throughout the year.	5 partners	6
Partnership links – share and promote partner resources through events and newsletters.	6	6
Website Development – new website with greater functionality for hosting resources, including videos. Regularly updated school case studies and easier access of information for users.	November 2021	Completed