

Regional Eco-Schools Meeting

Thursday 20th October 2-4pm at the EWE Centre

Present:

Rich Hurst (RH), EWE Centre & Education Partnership Coordinator
Mike Tones (MT), Advisor/Inspector for Sustainability Education, Durham LEA
Sara Nixon (SN), EWE Centre, WasteWise & School Grounds Projects
Claire Fairclough (CF), Durham County Council
Laura Davies (LD), Groundwork South Tyneside
Paula Jamieson (PJ), Darlington Borough Council
Alison Hiles (AH), Durham Wildlife Trust
Debbie Scott (DS), Tees Forest
Steve Ashton (SA), Tees Valley Wildlife Trust
Siobhan O'Brien (SO), Newcastle City Council
Alistair Wilson (AW), Newcastle City Council
Andrea Bishop (AB), Groundwork South Tees

Apologies:

Linda Lines, Rising Sun Country Park
Keeley Metcalfe, Hartlepool BC
Lorna Blenkinsop, Northumberland County Council
Fiona Swinburne, Sunderland City Council
Claire Smith, Gateshead Borough Council

Introduction- Rich Hurst.

As there was no formally set agenda, RH explained that the purpose of the meeting was to form an agreement of where everyone felt Eco-schools needs to be going in the future.

- The new version of Eco-schools is out now and possibly going to be launched at the ENCAMS National Event/Conference
 - SO mentioned that many schools are not registered and it was agreed that we need to let schools know that they need to re-register. **Action: Everyone asked to add this information to any applicable newsletters etc**
 - SA/DF explained the current two stage process in Redcar & Cleveland to enable support for schools from the Neighbourhood Renewal Funded programme and the bid for next year. There are approx 60 schools in R&C, approx half are involved currently. The Healthy schools coordinator is also now involved.
 - MT/RH suggested working with DFES more
 - MT explained 'Every Child Matters' and the new Children Services, and also the pupil award scheme currently being piloted by DCC, 'Get Out More'
 - 3 areas to focus on are;
 1. National DFES Action Plan (December 2005)
 2. The new website for sustainable schools (main launch Spring 2006)
 3. Manifesto for Education Outside the Classroom (Spring 2006)
- MT noted that all these initiatives are interlinked, and also with the Specialist Schools Trust, secondary schools can apply to add a rural dimension to their 'specialism'.
- It was decided that we need some key points to work from, so these were discussed and noted.

Key Points to work on:

1. We need more information from the research on the impact of Eco-schools nationally to help create the links between the new SEF (School Evaluation Framework) for schools and ECM (Every Child Matters). This information will be used to influence education departments.
2. Mini Partnerships within the LA's each incorporating specialists in the 9 topic areas (e.g. energy, school grounds, bio-diversity, healthy living, transport, litter/waste, global issues etc). It was recognised that each area will be different, but the concern was that there is currently no coordination or agreement.
3. School training/contracts. It was agreed that this was necessary for schools, and if they value the training, they will pay for it. (The EWE Centre currently charge £50/hour or £350 a day)
4. LEA's still don't mention Sustainable Development in their Education Development plans. This should be changed, although this will lead to scrutiny. RH suggested that everyone finds out who is currently on the advisory staff of each LEA (almost like a mini census) and their responsibilities to find allies, aiming at people at all levels.
5. Training for ECM (understanding and agreeing on a document that we can use) It was agreed that we need to meet again before Christmas to discuss and write this document.
6. RH to mention raising achievement at the meeting on 10th November organised by Newcastle CC, where 25 LA's are invited and approx people 40 attending.

Date of Next Meeting

Monday 12th December at the EWE Centre.
Starting at 9.30am followed by lunch

Anyone else to invite along;

Clare Lowe - Tees Forest