

Learning for Sustainable Futures: Project Summary

Who was involved?

Michelle O'Neill (Principal Teacher) and the Sustainability Superheroes Pupil Leadership Team at Sighthill Primary School.



The Learning Context

Sighthill Primary School is in the west of Edinburgh and has a roll of 297 pupils, from Nursery to Primary 7. The area has seen a great deal of urban redevelopment in recent decades, and the children attending the primary come from diverse backgrounds.

For the 2025-2026 session, our Learning for Sustainability Action Plan focused on our nine Pupil Leadership Teams (PLTs). The PLTs give a platform for pupil voice across the school, develop meta skills and encourage collaboration with and between our learners when working towards our development priorities.

Our Action Plan also included community involvement and our Eco Schools work. These focuses were combined through our litter project.

PRIMARY PHASE: Sighthill PS

Learner Outcome Focus: Pupil Voice

Through contributing my views, time and talents, I play a part in bringing about positive change in my school and wider community.

HWB 1/2-13a

Curriculum for Excellence:

SOC 1/2-08a; TCH 1/2-06a;
MTH 1/2-21a; LIT 1/2-02a;
RME 1-09c/2-09d

Related policy & initiatives:

Target 2030: Sustainable
Learning Settings (Campus)
Eco Schools Scotland
HGIOS: Learner Voice

Litter and Waste

The pupils in our Sustainability Superheroes PLT were deeply concerned by the litter they saw in the area, and keen to work towards reducing litter in the school grounds and across the community. Outdoor learning is a priority at Sighthill PS and we wanted the outdoor spaces we used to be sustainable and an improved environment for play and learning.

The Sustainability Superheroes organised a Litter legends competition, in which classes received a point for each piece of litter they put in the bin. The class that put the most amount of litter in the bins were given a trip to the zoo as an added incentive to clean up their school environment.

The Superheroes also made displays to advertise the project and celebrating successes, and they organised termly litter picks in the community alongside parent volunteers. Adding parent voices to the cause helped show our learners how important for people and planet it is to keep our community free of litter.

The community litter pick has now become a monthly event.

Evidence and Impacts

The Sustainability Superheroes were aware that the habit of dropping litter is ingrained for some individuals and groups, and that it would be a steady battle to start making social change.

Since starting our Litter and Waste project however, our learners have commented on the fact that there seems to be better awareness across the school of how important it is for the community and the planet to take responsibility for your own actions, and to put your litter in the bin.

Our learners have also commented on the improvements in the school environment this

year, so our litter picks are making a visible difference.

The impact has also been positive for the PLTs in boosting their confidence when sharing their views and taking the lead to make positive change in their community.

Next steps

We would like to revisit the most successful aspects of the project in the coming session, such as organising further community litter picks and encouraging children and their families to take the lead in making the changes they want to see around them.



Community litter pick with parents, from Sighthill PS film

Practitioner Reflection

This community of practice has significantly reduced litter in our school and local area by empowering children to take direct action while educating others to shift attitudes and ingrained habits

It has developed pupil responsibility and an understanding of the impact their actions have on the environment and community. There has also been a positive impact on learner engagement with children feeling more confident and motivated using their voice to make changes. Working together with families has promoted environmental awareness while increasing a sense of pride in their community.

Time can be a barrier, but as a school we are committed to ensuring sustainability is a priority and are passionate about developing responsible citizens for the future.

-Michelle O'Neill