

What Makes Footprinting Work in a School?



School Profile

Lawthorn PS is on the edge of a new town with a roll of 400 pupils (2009). Amanda Milne, the teacher leading on footprinting, is a full time Principal teacher (currently of a composite 3/2 class) and has had Eco-Schools in her remit for the past 9 years. Amanda is also an assessor for Eco-Schools.

Approach to Footprinting

Schools Global Footprint has been used in the school for two years. Responsibility is shared across years P4 - P7, with each year group taking readings in a different area each week (P4 measure waste, P5 measure water, P6 measure energy and P7 oversee and support the other years). At primary, middle and upper school levels there is a teacher who is responsible for ensuring readings are accurate and up to date. The school's Ecological Footprint is calculated from these measurements on an annual basis as part of the Eco-Schools environmental review and used to decide where most reduction is needed in the following year.

Key Points Ensuring Success

1. Eco-Schools work has high status in the school
2. Motivation comes from a desire to constantly improve environmental performance
3. Responsibility for footprinting is shared by all staff, pupils and non-teaching staff
4. The lead teacher has a personal commitment to the work and confidence in the topic
5. The lead teacher is well supported by other staff, non-teaching staff and external adults
6. The lead teacher and other staff responsible for footprinting are given adequate time
7. Footprinting is well integrated into P4 - 7 teaching

Download [Schools Global Footprint Resources](#)

Use the [Schools Footprint Calculator](#)

For more information and support contact:

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Detail on the Key Points

1. Eco-Schools work has high status in the school

Environmental responsibility is very much at the heart of the school's ethos. It is the default setting for decision making and is written into its policies. The school has been very successful in achieving three Green Flags to date and is working towards its fourth and permanent flag. As an Eco-Schools assessor Amanda is able to promote Eco-Schools very effectively to pupils and colleagues.

2. Motivation comes from a desire to constantly improve environmental performance

Previously the school had been using other footprint calculators until two years ago when Amanda learnt about the *Schools Global Footprint* [online footprint calculator](#) through being an Eco-Schools assessor. The other calculators had been used to make decisions about offsetting and areas for energy use reduction.

3. Responsibility for footprinting is shared across staff, pupils and non-teaching staff

The work of taking and collating readings is undertaken by four year groups with three staff and the janitor given specific responsibility for supporting the process. As part of the school's environmental policy all class teachers commit to supporting and positively promoting footprinting. The results, i.e. the school's annual Ecological Footprint size, are reviewed by the Eco-Schools committee which includes parents and external organisations such as a local Housing Association.

4. The lead teacher has a personal commitment to the work and confidence in the topic

Amanda became interested in environmental issues over ten years ago as a result of being asked to take on Eco-Schools and starting to read around the subject to prepare for the role. With support from the Head teacher environmental responsibility has been embedded at the heart of the school's ethos and Amanda has become an Eco-Schools assessor which keeps her at the forefront of the field. Her enthusiasm for footprinting means that she is happy to spend extra time ensuring that the work is going well.



5. The lead teacher is well supported by other staff, non-teaching staff and external adults

Amanda has the full support of the Head teacher and has been given full responsibility for ensuring that footprinting is a success in the school. As a result of the structured approach taken to footprinting, i.e. readings shared across years and footprint results integrated into the annual environmental review, Amanda has a large group of colleagues and external adults who have an interest in footprinting.

6. The lead teacher and other staff responsible for footprinting are given adequate time

The school recognizes that in order to maintain accuracy, time and training are necessary. The three staff who are responsible for ensuring the readings are regular and accurate devote 10hrs of their annual CPD time on footprinting. Time is given in staff meetings for Amanda to demonstrate the calculator and show colleagues teaching activities from the *Schools Global Footprint teachers' handbook*. Inservice time is also given to training on footprinting.

7. Footprinting is well integrated into P4 - 7 teaching

As part of PSD and Citizenship lessons there is a monthly discussion prompted by a component of the school's Ecological Footprint (i.e. waste, energy, travel, food, buildings, water) which addresses fair share and community resources. P6s use the data to create graphs and charts as well as footprinting being taught within their Rainforest and Environmental Pollution and Conservation topics. Footprinting is also referred to as part of other Science teaching.