

## What Makes Footprinting Work in a School?



### School Profile

St Mary's PS is located in Hamilton, a medium sized town, with a roll of 281 pupils (2009). John McManus, the teacher leading on footprinting, is a science teacher and has the school's Sustainable Development Education programme in his remit. The school has an Eco-Schools coordinator with whom John works closely. John does not have his own class but teaches Science across the school; he has one hour's teaching time per week with the P7s.

### Approach to Footprinting

The concept of footprinting has been used as the vehicle for delivering 12 weeks worth of the Science curriculum to the P7s. For an hour a week the P7s have learnt about all six components of an Ecological Footprint (i.e. energy, transport, waste, water, food and buildings) and the work culminated in presentations to parents. Access to the school's energy meters was not possible so the work focused on domestic bills and the financial cost of the school's energy use. The class teacher has also extended the footprinting work into ICT, Language and Maths teaching.

### Key Points Ensuring Success

1. Motivation comes from a desire to progress in the Eco-Schools programme
2. Footprinting is well integrated into P7 teaching
3. The lead teacher has a personal commitment to the work and confidence in the topic
4. The lead teacher is given adequate time
5. The lead teacher is well supported by other staff and non-teaching staff

[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. Motivation comes from a desire to progress in the Eco-Schools programme

The school has a very strong Eco-Schools committee supported by the Eco-Schools coordinator. The school started working on footprinting in January 09 and was due an Eco-Schools assessment for its first Green Flag in June 09. Having attended the 'Introduction to Footprinting' and 'Follow On' courses John was aware that footprinting would help achieve the Green Flag. This factor was used to motivate the pupils. The presentations created about footprinting were all given as part of the assessment.

### 2. Footprinting is well integrated into P7 teaching

Footprinting was approached from the start as a way to deliver the Science curriculum. Using the *Schools Global Footprint teachers' handbook* and online footprint calculator John designed interactive, creative and practical teaching materials.

Activities included: exploring wattage; plants, food and life cycles; comparative properties of insulation materials; measuring water flow and pressure; creating a garden; measuring and recording temperatures; displacement of water with bricks. All this learning allowed for the development of research skills, 2D presentation skills and ICT skills as the class teacher decided to use the work to teach the pupils how to do a powerpoint presentation. The cost of the school's energy was used as the basis for Maths work.

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

John is a green thinker who regards environmental responsibility as part of being a good citizen and is very committed to teaching sustainable development through science.

### 4. The lead teacher is given adequate time

John was able to devote a whole term's teaching to footprinting. The success with which he motivated the pupils led to the class's main teacher using ICT, Maths and Language time so that by the end of term two and a half hours a week were being taught through footprinting.

### 5. The lead teacher is well supported by other staff and non-teaching staff

The Head teacher was very supportive of the work and took on the work of inviting all the parents to the end of term presentations. The office and janitorial staff were helpful in providing information about the school's bills. John also has the support of the Eco-Schools coordinator and the Eco-Schools committee.