

# Holy Cross and All Saints Primary School's



## PCS journey

After introducing the children to the harmful effects of plastic pollution and caring for the environment, I began looking for something online to support my teaching. And there it was... Plastic Clever Schools! I knew straight away that this was something I wanted to be involved in. I had tried in previous years to reduce the amount of plastic used within our school however it was difficult to get this beyond my own classroom.

So I signed up for free, received my welcome email and shared the initiative and government goal with my class. Straight away they were extremely excited and on board. They could see how passionate I was about it and that passion began oozing from them as well. They loved that it had been created by kids for kids. They could relate to Amy and Ella and wanted to follow everything they were up to. They felt empowered.

So after choosing our little green avatar, we made a start on learning all about plastic pollution. Starting with 'Good old Pete', as the children like to say, learning all about the seven different types of plastic. One of the adults in our classroom was shocked that even she wasn't aware of how many different types there are and that so few of them can be recycled.

The next morning, our children came in to a sea of plastic on the floor which they had to wade through in order to get to their seats. They couldn't believe it. One child even commented asking "Is this what it's like for sea creatures?". They leaped in to action, learning all about 'Artivism' they created their own 'Monsters of the Sea' using the recycled plastic. They asked question after question as they were inspired and wanted to learn more.

Then came the challenge of hosting our very first litter pick on one of the windiest days. Storm Arwen had hit the UK! I couldn't bear to disappoint the children so off out we went, wrapped up with our littering picking equipment in hand. It's safe to say that we laughed a lot as you can imagine. We even had members of the community stopping in their cars to say thank you to the children and to tell them what an incredible job they were doing.

The children were eager to find out exactly where plastic came from and where it can end up. Writing in role as a plastic bottle, children as young as 6 were able to explain how crude oil is formed, how plastic bottles are made and the devastating affect that plastic pollution can have on our environment. You will regularly hear children around our school correcting adult behaviour, warning them that their plastic bottles etc. will end up on a landfill if they don't recycle it.

After an inspiring start and now that the children were hooked, we began to really delve in to the problem plastics in our school. Once we had completed our Plastic Clever Schools audit and tallied up how many plastic milk bottles were going to landfill from our school in just one week, the children leapt in to action. After designing their own Ocean Clean Up Machines, designing posters and creating and presenting their very own Plastic Clever School PowerPoint, the children had spread the word. Even parents were beginning to comment on their child's passion and the discussions that their children were leading at home. We were on our way to becoming a Plastic Clever School.

We watched video after video, read story after story. It was all the children could talk about. The children were leading their own learning. They had a purpose for writing and a passion for making change. My Year 2 class wrote incredible letters to crisp companies and the Department for Education. Although we have received replies for the crisp companies, of course we are still waiting on a reply from the DfE. Children as young as 6 telling our Government that learning about plastic pollution and caring for our environment needs to be prioritised in their curriculum.

Initiatives in school were becoming embedded. All milk bottles were being collected and recycled by children each day, every child in school had a reusable water bottle and all writing equipment was being collected in classrooms to take to our local recycling point. I had never seen children so focused, determined and engaged in learning. We did it! We had become a Plastic Clever School!