



Empowering future eco-leaders through Wastebusters

How are West Sussex schools tackling climate change?

By Katie Newham, Director (Wastebusters)



With sustainability education taking centre stage in schools, the **West Sussex Wastebusters Programme**, provided free to schools by the **West Sussex Waste Partnership**, is proving that small actions can lead to big environmental and financial benefits. Designed to support schools in embedding sustainability into the curriculum, the programme provides step-by-step guidance, tailored resources, and powerful tracking tools to make improving environmental performance simple and

measurable. Schools that participate gain access to powerful tracking tools, resources, and support, making it easy to improve environmental performance while linking activities to the curriculum. 84% of schools have logged in and used resources this academic year.

Through structured student led initiatives, such as the **Planet Protector Challenge** for primary schools and the **Climate Enterprise Award** (CEA) for secondary schools, West Sussex schools are not only reducing waste, saving energy and water, and cutting carbon emissions, but also tracking their impact easily using Wastebuster's ground-breaking **Eco-Savings Account**. Schools can also streamline their climate action planning with an automated tool that creates and adapts a plan linked to their sustainability efforts. By engaging students, reducing costs, and fostering responsible global citizens, the programme helps schools take meaningful climate action, while making the process easy, supportive, and fully integrated into school life.

In this article, we highlight the efforts of **Kingsham Primary School**, **Bohun Horsham**, and **Bourne Community College's** winning entry that inspired the creation of the *Sew It! Mend it! Make it!* Programme, all demonstrating how schools can reduce their environmental footprint, save money, and create a culture of sustainability.

Kingsham Primary School: an ambassador for change

As the West Sussex Planet Protector Ambassador Award winner for 2023/24, Kingsham Primary School has led the way in tackling waste, reducing carbon emissions, and engaging its whole school community in sustainable action. Their Green Gang, a student-led eco-team, has been instrumental in driving these initiatives. Over the past year, Kingsham Primary School has:

- **Reduced energy consumption by 192 kWh**, saving £65.28 and cutting 17 kg of carbon emissions.



- **Saved 204 kg of food waste**, repurposing food to benefit families through a redistribution scheme with UK Harvest. The school receives an average of 10 crates every two weeks filled with fresh fruit, vegetables, bread, tins, jars, biscuits, and other essentials, which they redistribute to families in their school and local community, rescuing food that would otherwise go to waste.
- **Recycled 14kg of batteries**, earning **£30 in book vouchers** through the [**Recycle to Read Batteries**](#) campaign.
- **Collected 147 kg of textiles**, earning additional funds for the school.
- **Diverted 243 pieces of litter** from the local environment.
- **Saved 1,885 litres of water** through conservation efforts.
- **Doubled their recycling rewards**, earning an **additional £230** from West Sussex Wastebusters for achieving Ambassador School status.
- They also successfully **swapped 150 second-hand toys**, raising **£75** through a **toy tombola at the Christmas fair**. Additionally, they placed 2nd in West Sussex Wastebusters **Recycle to Read toy recycling campaign**, winning **£200 in book vouchers** by encouraging families to **recycle broken plastic toys** through Tesco collection points.

"Even a small change can make a difference," says Dawn Tarrant, Sustainability Lead at Kingsham Primary School "If every student makes one change, that results in a much bigger impact. Sustainability is now part of our ethos—it's embedded in our school culture."

"The children drive these changes," explains Dawn Tarrant. "They're passionate about sustainability, and their enthusiasm has encouraged staff, parents, and the wider school community to get involved too."

Bohun Horsham: The Climate Enterprise Award winner making waves

Secondary schools across West Sussex are also stepping up, with Bohun Horsham winning the West Sussex Climate Enterprise Award (CEA) for its innovative work in tackling food waste. The CEA, part of Wastebusters' secondary school programme, challenges students to develop real-world solutions to environmental issues. Bohun Horsham's winning idea focused on food redistribution and food waste reduction, leading to the creation of a comprehensive 'School Food Waste Management Guide', which now supports schools across the County, and now the UK. Download the guide [here](#).

"It's incredible to see students taking the lead on these projects," says a Bohun representative. "Our food waste initiative started as a student idea, and now it's helping schools across West Sussex reduce waste and rethink their approach to sustainability."

As a result of their participation, Bohun Horsham has introduced on-site composting, a dedicated food waste collection system, and a student-led campaign to raise awareness about food waste reduction.

Sew It! Mend it! Make it!

Sometimes, one student's idea can inspire real change. That was the case when a Bourne Community College student won the [**Climate Enterprise Award**](#) with a project concept for a sewing club to tackle fast fashion and textile waste. The idea led Wastebusters to



develop a brand-new 'Sew It! Programme' for schools across West Sussex. This initiative provides instructional videos and guidance on repairing, reusing, and customising clothing, helping students develop valuable life skills while reducing textile waste. Explore the full toolkit [here](#).

"This is a fantastic example of how student-led ideas can drive real-world impact," says Katy Newham, Director at Wastebusters. "The Sew It! Mend it! Make it! Programme is now available to all schools in the County, supporting sustainability education in a practical, engaging way."

"It is really wonderful to learn that you have developed projects and resources with our student Emilia's ideas for reusing, recycling and repairing clothing and garments. Thank you for creating this opportunity for her to share her ideas, she is so delighted to learn that her work has and will inspire others." - Bourne Community College.

Key Benefits for Schools:

- **Curriculum enrichment** – Supports DfE sustainability strategy and Ofsted criteria, providing a structured way to integrate sustainability into daily learning.
- **Eco-Savings Account** – schools can monitor and measure their waste reduction, recycling, energy, water, and carbon savings using their own Eco-Savings Account. This easy-to-use tool auto-tracks environmental savings and provides real-time data to showcase a school's achievements.
- **Climate action planning made simple** – every school must have a climate action plan in place, and Wastebusters provides an automated planning tool that creates a tailored action plan, linked to the school's resources and savings. Schools can store, update, and adapt their plan in their Wastebusters account, making planning and reporting easier than ever.
- **Financial savings and efficiency** – reducing energy, water, and waste disposal costs, while supporting smart resource management. Primary schools have reported savings of up to 10% on their annual energy consumption when they take part in Switch Off Fortnight, which is part of the Planet Protector Challenge. Waste savings can result in significant carbon and financial savings for schools.
- **Student leadership and engagement** – encouraging students to take ownership of eco-initiatives through engaging, hands-on challenges like the Planet Protector Challenge and Climate Enterprise Award.
- **Recognition and rewards** – schools earn certificates, badges, book rewards, and funding opportunities through Wastebusters campaigns.
- **Community impact** – encouraging long-term behaviour change among students, staff, and families, embedding sustainability into school culture.

How to get started

For primary schools, the [Planet Protector Challenge](#) offers a fun and structured way to reduce waste, save money, and earn rewards. For secondary schools, the [Climate Enterprise Award](#) helps students develop enterprise skills while tackling climate issues. For more information, please visit the [West Sussex Wastebusters Programme](#) website, or email info@wastebuster.co.uk.