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ACS Cobham International School

ACS Cobham International School, introduced a 'Reduce, Re-Use, ReCycle' campaign in 2007 as part of the ACS Sustainability Project. In 2006, ACS International Schools, which consists of sites, Cobham, Egham and Hillingdon, were sending 85% of their waste to landfill.

The school's aim is to achieve a recycling rate of 80% by 2012. Figures for 2008 showed that the school had significantly increased its recycling compared to 2006 and was recycling 59% of the waste. However, to reach the 80% goal the school had to recycle its food waste. The local council did not offer the facility to do so which led the school to look for cost effective ways of recycling the waste.

How was the waste disposed of?

1,600 pupils pass through the canteen everyday, producing 32 tonnes of food waste per year. One of the main drivers behind the "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" campaign was to reduce waste, carbon emissions and the school's overall impact on the environment. With the food waste going to landfill, 360 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent was being produced every year as a direct result of the school's activity.





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Not only was the food waste having an impact on the greater environment, it was also having an effect on the school's environment. Black bags full of food waste were sitting by an overflowing waste skip; this was both unpleasant to look at and unhygienic. Furthermore, cost of disposal was high and the disposal method was a bad example to the students.

How is the food disposed of now?

In November 2009 the school installed an A900 Rocket® in-vessel composter. The A900 Rocket® can effectively compost up to 3,500 litres of mixed organic waste per week.

The school takes waste food, including leftovers from the kitchen, mixes this with wood chip and puts it in the Rocket Composter. A few weeks later, this food emerges from the Rocket as compost that can be put on the grounds to help keep the fields and flower beds looking good all year round.

The project started in late November 2009, with the catering team collecting all the waste food, before putting it through a dedicated machine to remove the water, which leaves it looking like dry coleslaw for the Grounds team to collect and take to the Recycling Centre for it to be processed.



Pat Adams, Facilities Manager commented “We are proud of the work we have done and the progress we have made in recycling so much of our waste and are promoting it within the school community and to parents. We believe it will encourage potential parents and students to see ACS as a progressive school which cares for the environment and has made substantial and tangible investments in this area.

“Once the project is running fully, we intend to integrate the recycling project into the environmental studies programme and involve students more in ensuring we collect as much food and other materials for recycling as possible. We are considering installing smaller machines in our schools at Egham and Hillingdon which do not generate the same volumes of food waste as the Cobham site but could still benefit from the food recycling initiative.”

For more information on how Tidy Planet can help you save the planet, as well as a tidy sum contact us on 01625 666 798 or hello@tidyplanet.co.uk