

Workplace Recycling case study: education

Pontyberem Primary School, Carmarthenshire

Background

Pontyberem Primary School is located in the heart of the Gwendraeth Valley and between Carmarthen and Llanelli. The school was opened in Pontyberem in September 1984. The school now has approximately 240 pupils receiving full-time education.



Image: Pontyberem Primary School

Putting workplace recycling into practice

The school is serviced by CWM Environmental, a council owned company, providing separate recycling, food and general waste collections, along with other Circular Economy initiatives and facilities (with a focus on repair and reuse). Recycling and food waste are collected weekly alongside a reduced size general waste bin, reflecting the school's efforts pushing and prioritising recycling messages with pupils and staff.

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The children and staff have really embraced (workplace) recycling. We have a school eco council, our own vegetable patch (used to teach pupils about food and where it comes from) and we support our learners to be ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world.

Indeg Griffiths, Headteacher



Image: Recycling information display at the school

Responding to the workplace recycling law

In advance of the law coming into force, CWM Environmental worked with the school to rationalise general waste arrangements (resulting in removal of an 1100L bin), supporting ongoing recycling efforts. Classrooms now only have recycling bins with general waste bins removed (they are now only in corridors) and a single 660L external bin is now in place collected weekly.

Waste production and management

Food waste has been collected separately at the school since January 2022, with buckets / caddies used to capture food in the school kitchen, staff room and at playground entry points. Placing caddies out at break times has been particularly effective in capturing fruit leftovers.



Image: Food waste caddies placed in playgrounds

Reducing single-use packaging

The school has moved away from giving young children milk in small cartons. Milk is now served in reusable cups (filled by staff from larger bottles); the children seem to prefer drinking from cups and more milk is now being consumed (not wasted).



Image: Milk served in reusable cups

Ongoing initiatives

- Wider actions and observations linked to reducing waste and increasing recycling are as follows:
- Simple visual cues (consistent colours and pictures) are important when conveying recycling information
- Increased recycling separation prompted staff to check what can and cannot be recycled, e.g. seeking clarity on some of the more challenging waste streams such as paper towels and glue sticks.



Image: Classroom recycling bins

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