



Make Waste History summit, trash
fashion show © Changeworks

Changeworks delivers:

hands-on advice that produces results

Working with schools is a key part of the Scottish Government's Zero Waste Plan. Educating people of all ages about waste and its impact on the environment is a key priority along with promoting the benefits of effective waste management. One school that has a high waste management pedigree is Portobello High, which has worked successfully with Changeworks to develop a sound and award-winning waste action plan.

CHANGeworks PROVIDES THE NECESSARY BOOST

Portobello High was the third school in Scotland to be awarded five Green Flags under the Eco Schools accreditation programme. This represents 10 years of active involvement in awareness raising and waste management. While Portobello has an excellent reputation for its proactive approach to the environment, maintaining that high standard has been supported by the help and practical advice from Changeworks.



Make Waste History summit © Changeworks

Changeworks has over 15 years' experience of engaging young people through delivering a range of fun and practical eco activities. Educational activity provided to schools includes litter, waste and the three Rs assemblies (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle); waste and energy audits; food waste and composting workshops.

"Changeworks has been a huge help to us over the years. They are so knowledgeable and have great ideas for raising awareness," says Sophie Bigg, Eco Schools Co-ordinator at Portobello High School. "And they are so encouraging; we want to recycle more and they are really spurring us on to do so, coming to us with options. When it comes to raising awareness in the schools and communities, it really is essential to have organisations like Changeworks."

"Changeworks has been a huge help to us over the years. They are so knowledgeable and have great ideas for raising awareness. When it comes to raising awareness in the schools and communities, it really is essential to have organisations like Changeworks."

Sophie Bigg, Portobello High

MAKE WASTE HISTORY SUMMIT

In 2012, when Changeworks approached Portobello High to host the Make Waste History summit, Sophie jumped at the opportunity. "The Make Waste History event is a great way to raise awareness and also to empower the students to take action."

A day-long event, which students from neighbouring schools also attend, the Make Waste History summit features workshops, guest speakers and group activities such as the Trash Fashion Show. The focus is on sharing best practice and inspiring action while also engaging the students in activities and practical workshops. "Pupils from Portobello hosted one of the workshops at last year's summit. It was a great opportunity for them to showcase what they've learned and share tips they have been given on reducing paper in schools," explains Sophie.

From her experience, Sophie knows that standing up at an assembly and talking about waste and litter does not have as much impact as interactive and innovative events like the social reporting workshop and Trash Fashion Show. “Clearly the workshop format is an effective approach – you can involve more students and they are generally more engaged. Having an outside organisation like Changeworks involved really works to get the message across,” she says.

LOSE THE LITTER PROJECT

Portobello High was also one of five schools participating in Changeworks’ Lose the Litter project, which aimed to raise awareness of the problem of litter in and around schools and pilot innovative ways to tackle it. Run over a five-month period, Lose the Litter included a specially commissioned drama, social reporting workshops, assignments, action planning, litter prevention work and a competition.

“Social reporting helps us find ways to share what we’ve done with the rest of the school. With such a large school of 1,300 pupils it can be difficult to keep everyone up to date on our activities, but we work hard to tell people what we’re doing,” explained Sophie. “We have a blog, and we also sometimes use the school’s homepage as well as the offline notice boards around the school. Social reporting is an important part of our strategy as it helps us to spread the message.”





Portobello High's eco team worked on their action plans and came up with effective ways to reduce litter in and around their school. Standards were extremely high and both Portobello High and Queensferry High Schools were awarded joint first prize winners in the competition. They also shared the £1,000 prize money – a great incentive for the eco team and the school, according to Sophie.

ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

“Projects like Lose the Litter are a great way for the school and the wider community to work together and get involved in making real changes,” confirms Sophie. “It is this kind of activity, developed by experienced organisations like Changeworks, which really make a difference,” she explains.

“Joe, Changeworks’ Waste Education Officer, is keen to have ongoing activities and projects in between the Make Waste History summits. He is so enthusiastic about everything and the important thing is he understands how difficult it is to maintain this issue at a high level. With that experience and knowledge he has been so helpful and given us some really great ideas.”

Changeworks’ Waste Education service helps reduce waste, increase recycling and guides schools along the Eco Schools journey.



To find out more about our Waste Education service and the educational activity we provide to schools, contact:

Hanna Plant
 Waste Prevention Team Co-ordinator
 t: 0131 555 4010
 e: wasteeducation@changeworks.org.uk
 w: www.changeworks.org.uk

