Climate Ready School Grounds
Action plan: Newmilns Primary, East Ayrshire

Description of outdoor space

Large school grounds comprising a tarmac playground and large, grass playing field to the rear, with a tarmac outdoor quad space in the middle of the building and a busy main road to the front of the building. The school also has walking access into the community woodland at the back of the school.

The P5 class were involved with the four workshops.

Summary of feedback

What is climate change and why is it happening?

- There is a blanket of gas around the Earth.
- People are not looking after the world.
- Climate change is everything getting hotter and hotter.
- Animals will die.
- You have bad water from litter.

What changes might we see because of climate change?

- All the rubbish is killing the environment.
- More rain.
- Plants will die if it gets hotter and they need rain.
- The Earth gets hotter and hotter and it might explode and become more like Venus.
- We might hurt animals, rubbish and environments being ruined.
- Our seas are dying form rubbish.
- The Arctic is melting.

What can we do to help stop climate change?

- Cut down on plastics – don't throw away plastic that could end up in the ocean.
- Stop littering – it is bad for the environment.
- Cut down on heating, go outside more, shower instead of bath and use electrical items less.
- Cut down on car use, walk or cycle, use public transport and buy an electric car.
- Stop cutting down trees – plant more instead.
- Protect animals in gardens and stop killing endangered species.
- Cut taxes.
- Fly less.

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Summary of School Grounds Climate Survey

The survey highlighted:

- Despite being surrounded by woodland at the back of the school, the school grounds are not very biodiverse and primarily comprise large areas of tarmac and large areas of mown grass.
- The P5 classroom is at the front of the school overlooking the busy main road. The classroom gets very hot in the summer.
- Most children walk or cycle to school.
- More wind in the playground at the rear of the building.
- Limited shelter from the wind and rain.
- Limited shade except the planted willow structure and it gets very hot on the tarmac in the summer.
- No renewable energy opportunities, compost bins or recycling bins outdoors.
- Pupils have planted young trees on the playing field. There is room for more.

Priorities for practical changes identified:

- Attach heat reflecting window film on P5 classroom windows.
- Plant more trees around the periphery of the playing field – both native trees and fruit trees and reduce mowing. This will support wildlife, moderate the temperature, reduce wind blow across the field and create natural shade.
- Bird boxes, bird feeders and create hedgehog homes (in the woodland).
- Create a green wall using recycled bottles in the quad to encourage wildlife, moderate the temperature on the tarmac and capture carbon. Create a green wall at the front of the school to encourage wildlife, help improve air quality by the busy main road and capture carbon.
- Plant and grow fruit, vegetables and wildflowers in the new raised beds. Link to the curriculum, support wildlife and enhance the tarmac space for children.
- Install a water butt to gather rainwater, reduce surface run off and as a source of water for new planting.
- Build an outdoor shelter in the back playground that offers shade from the sun and shelter from the wind and the rain.

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Plans for sharing information and promoting change:

- Create signs for any new planting to make sure the mowers don't mow the grass.
- Update the school community in assembly and request everyone donates plastic bottles for the green walls.
- Update the local community group and request help with planting, donating seeds and support with fundraising.

External help needed:

- Contact the local authority about installing a water butt.
- Contact heat reflecting window film company for support.
- Contractor to build new shade and shelter structure.
- Investigate the possibility of solar panels for the school roof.