

Sustainability in the Early Years

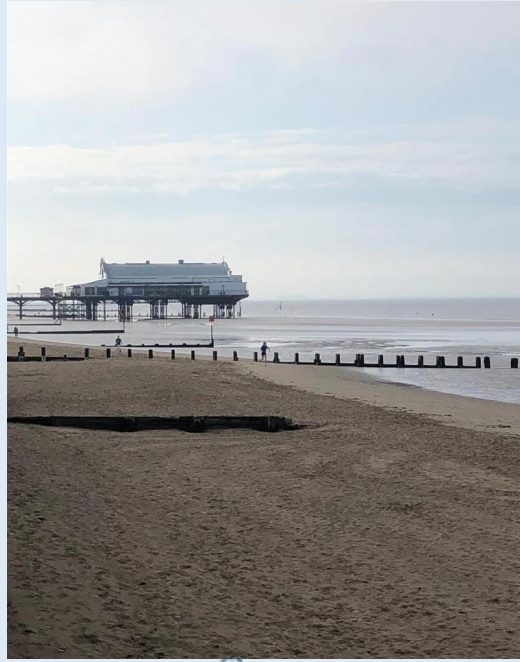


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Down at the Seaside...

Discover...



Growing up

Growing up in Wales and living in the UK I have been lucky enough to live nearby and visit some of the world's most beautiful coastlines. I have always been drawn to the ocean and its surroundings. For me going to the beach offers somewhere peaceful and tranquil to wind down and relax. A breath of fresh air. Somewhere to take my son to connect with nature and explore the surroundings. So many amazing things to discover down at the seaside. My love for the beach has certainly transferred to my son who is now an avid surfer who spends every weekend with the sand between his toes and the waves splashing on his face. Here are some of the stunning pictures of beaches around the UK that I have taken. Taking on the John Muir award as part of my university assignment has given me the motivation to look more closely at my surroundings.

Explore...

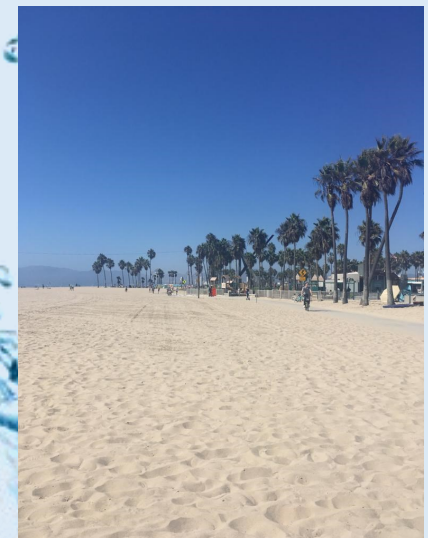
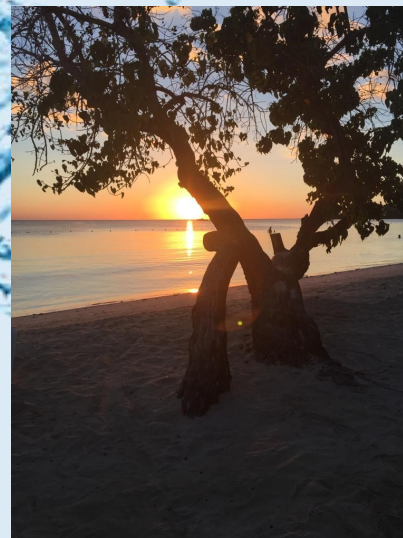
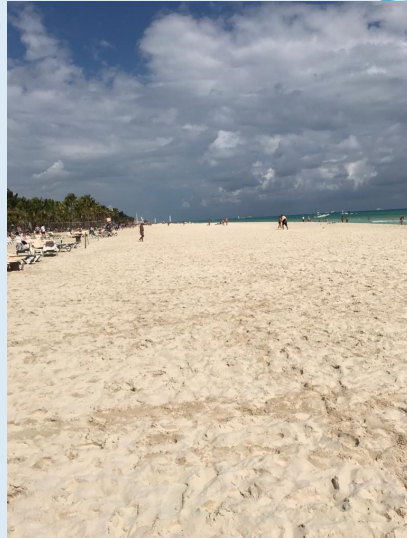


Whilst exploring beaches across the UK over the years and in particular beaches in my area such as Caswell, I have had first-hand experiences of the majestic wildlife that fill our oceans deep. From crabs to jellyfish and even sightings of dolphins nearby. All beautiful in their own right and very important pieces of the ocean. Many weekends my family and I spend searching the rockpools looking for creatures to look at in awe. Gazing out into the ocean to see if we can spot any animals! Transferring my knowledge of wildlife and the environment to the next generation. Important discussions on how to help look after our world.

Our Rich Oceans and Shores



I have been fortunate enough to travel the world. Witnessing more spectacular beaches and oceans that are filled with life. Here are some snaps...



My favourite spot has to be Caswell Bay. Caswell Bay or in Welsh 'Bae Cas-Wellt' which means 'Straw Fortress', is a beach on the South East of the Gower Swansea located in Wales. It is a sandy beach that is popular with families, holiday makers and surfers. The rock pools are filled with life and you may catch a glimpse of creatures such as crabs, shrimps, small fish, limpets, and periwinkles if you are lucky!



Source: Microsoft Bing Image, 2013.



BUT... there is something very concerning....

LITTER!!



It was so disheartening to clearly see that some people are not looking after our precious local beaches by disposing of their litter wherever they want. People not using the bins provided and just throwing huge amounts of litter all over our beautiful beaches without a thought to the damage and impact it will have on our environment. Litter being washed out into our oceans. Polluting our marine systems and killing our valued sea life. Bags, bottles, tins, glass, plastic just scattered all around. What a sad site to see! My understanding of litter at this point was that is what a big problem and can cause death to living things in the sea by them getting entangled in the litter or even eating it!

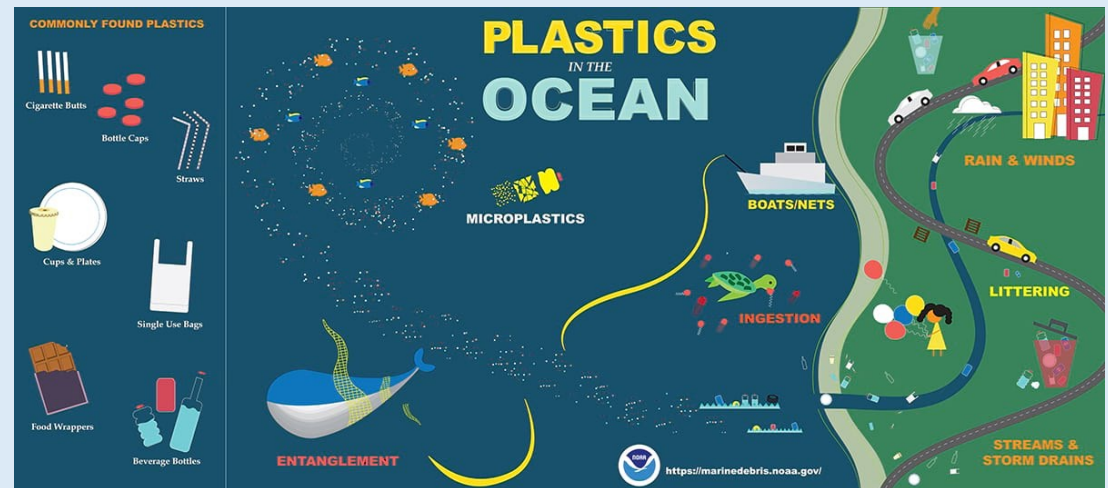
I decided to develop my knowledge and look a little further into the impact of litter and found out some very alarming things! Here is what I found....

- ◆ It is approximated that **150 million** metric tons of plastic circulate the world's oceans with an additional **8 million** metric tons are added annually. It is estimated that 250 metric tonnes of plastic will be in the oceans by 2030, and by 2050 there will be more plastic in the oceans than fish (Kiprop, 2018).
- ◆ When plastic gets washed out to sea it sometimes sits on the surface of the water which will stop sunlight from getting to the plankton or algae. These organisms **cannot survive** without photosynthesis so the plastic on the surface causes them to **die**. In turn the fish **die** as they have a shortage of food. When the fish **die** then other animals further up the food chain will have **shortages of food**. This can happen when any part of the ecosystem **fails** (Green and Ready, 2018).
- ◆ 60-90% of marine litter is plastic-based (Global Citizen, 2021).
- ◆ Plastic pollution kills around 1 million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals every year (Just One Ocean, 2021).

A litter patch in the Great Pacific—it covers an approximate surface area of **three times the size of France**.



Source: Snowden, 2019.



Source: National Ocean Service, no date.

This makes me very concerned. It makes me think deeply about the environment around me, the implications for the beautiful wildlife, and also my son's future! Here are some species that live off our coasts in the UK that you may not know about....

Basking Shark



Sunfish



Seahorse



Bottlenose Dolphin



Angel Shark

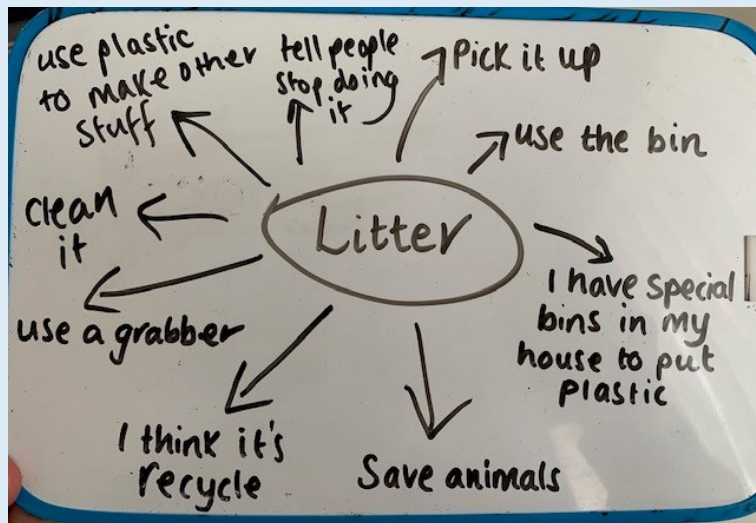


Source: WWF-UK , no date.

Amazing right?!

Conserve...

I work in a school setting as a Higher-Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) with my own Nursery class. I wanted to take my findings back to classroom regarding litter (in particular plastic) and discuss it with the children. They have great little minds and amazing ways of thinking. I knew they problem solve with me and help me with some ideas on how to tackle the litter problem. I also realised that by sharing this information and working together to develop strategies, the children would be part of my journey and be well informed! I really believe that educating our children with these sorts of things that are happening in our world is important. Making them aware and having these important conversations is vital for their future!



I wondered what I could do ...

What could I do to play a part in helping our world?

What could I do to help keep the beaches and oceans clean?

How could I support the precious wildlife?

And even more so...

How could I inform other people about what is happening in our world?

How fantastic are our ideas!



I decided that I wanted to do a litter pick of my favourite beach Caswell. Here is where I spend most of my time and on busy summer days, I do notice litter left behind on the beach. I got myself a litter picker, some bags and gloves and off I went with my little boy...

Even on a rainy day like I went there was still plenty of rubbish to find!

I made sure that everything we collected was safe to do so. By collecting the litter and disposing of it safely, I am keeping the environment clean and tidy and stopping the litter being washed out into the ocean. It is a small contribution to looking after our planet however, if everyone can take these small steps onboard then it is a step in the right direction!

We took the plastic bottles, cans and cardboard home and popped it in our recycling bags ready to be taken away to be recycled!



Also.....

A little while back I was inspired by a gigantic wave made out of plastic which was plonked in the middle of the Quadrant in Swansea. I was in awe at all the plastic collected! It stuck in my mind and I never forgot about it.



This certainly inspired me to get creative with my class! I showed them some of the litter collected on my litter pick. We decided that we wanted to make our own wave out of the plastic and present it to the other children in the school. We to wanted too inspire other children and adults with regards to litter, plastic and out ocean. We wanted to create something that would stick with people too!



Myself, the children, and other staff spent hours weaving the plastic in and out of the mesh.

Digging Deeper...

In addition to creating the wave, I also wanted to look further with the children at what could happen to animals in the sea if we kept dropping our litter and it continued to wash out into the ocean.



We placed animals that live in the ocean into a tank and dropped litter in to see what would happen. The animals became tangled in the plastic.

We also recycled our milk bottles from school and made them into various things such as sea animals, music shakers and plant pots. This demonstrated that instead of throwing things away or recycling them straight away, we can use them for other fun things first!



Exploring and discussing our environment within my setting really supported me to gain a deeper knowledge about what is going on in our world.



Share...

How amazing is the end result!!



I called it 'Wave Goodbye to Plastic'

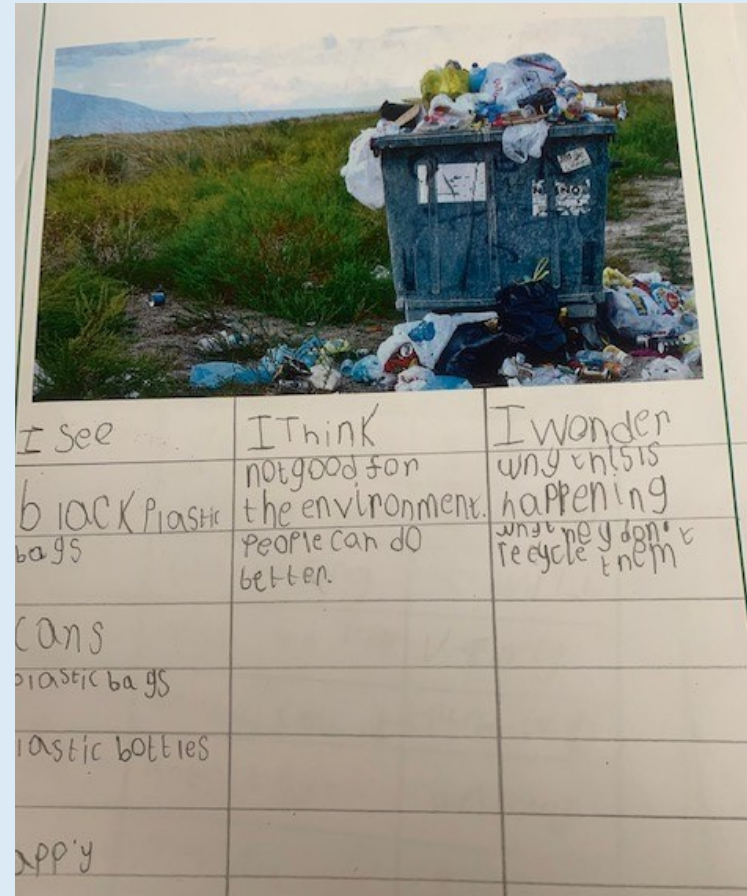
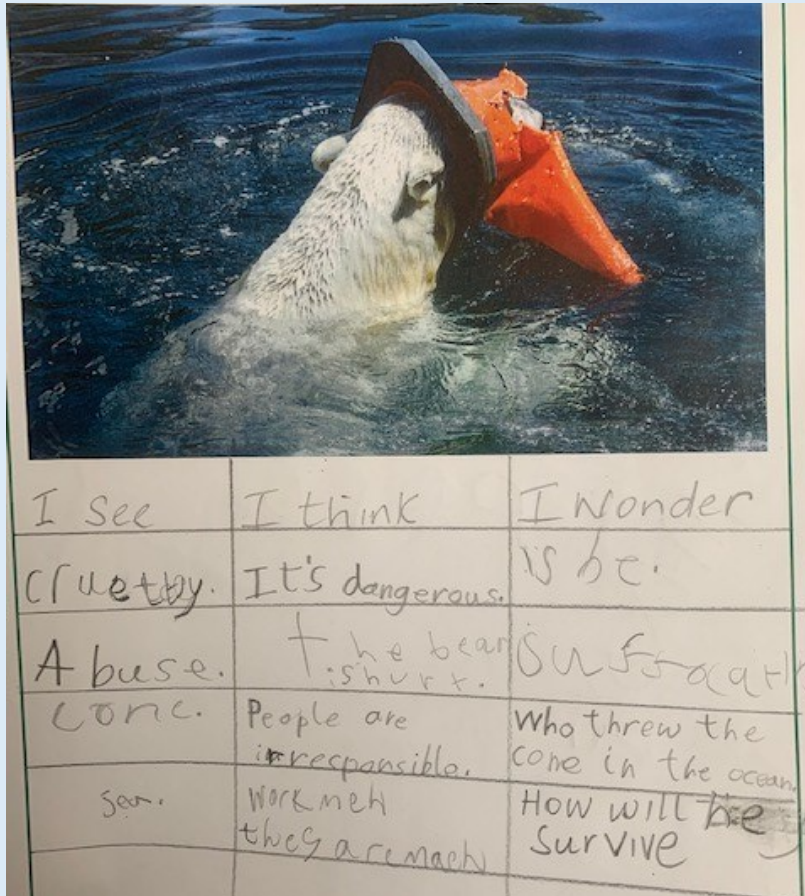
Here I exhibited our own wave which is made out of plastic collected. I also displayed some of the recycled materials such as the milk bottles which were made into sea creatures and music makers. I hope to inspire other people with my John Muir journey so they too can think about taking responsibility for our planet and support its wildlife.

Reflection...



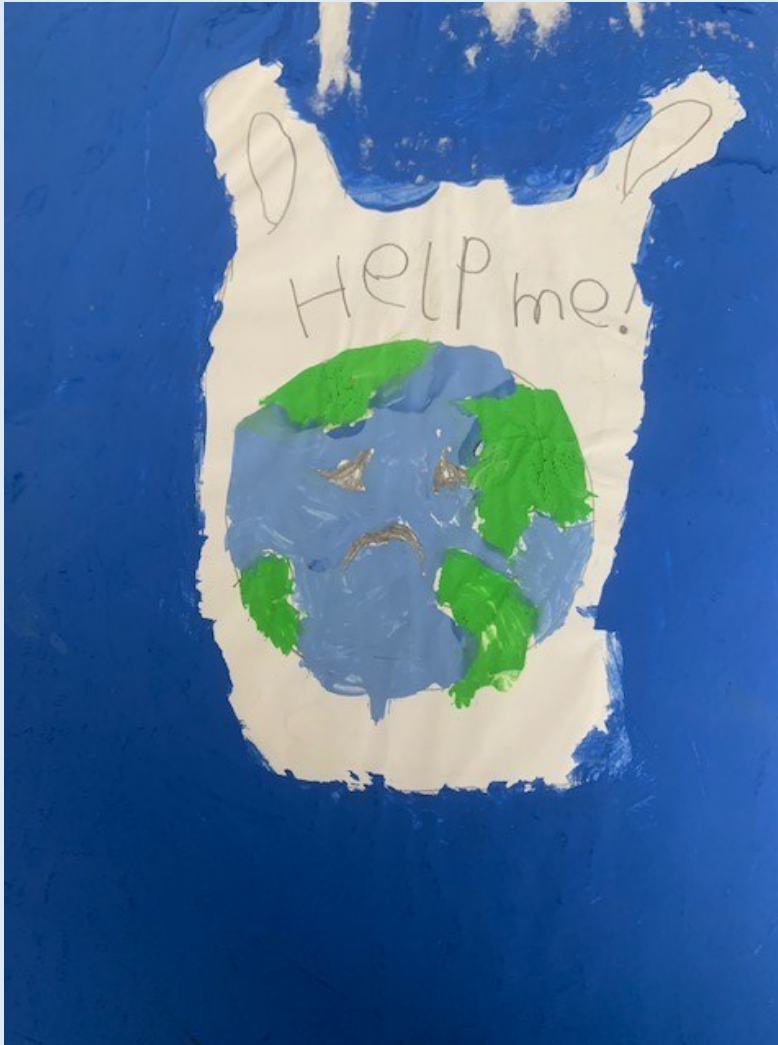
On reflection the John Muir award has allowed me to look deeper into the difficulties that wildlife down at the seaside face. For me personally, I have always been mindful of my own litter. I would always find a bin for my litter or take it home. The award has allowed me to dig deeper into the effects of throwing litter near our coastlines. It has made me realise how serious the situation is and has encouraged me to share my experience and new knowledge with other people. With my first-hand experience of seeing litter on beaches, researching the effects of this, and taking it upon myself to clean up other people's litter, it has definitely had an impact on me and makes me appreciate even more so what is around me. I will certainly continue to do all I can in keeping Caswell a clean and tidy beach for all the wildlife and of course my little boy who can continue on his quest with his surfing on a clean and tidy beach! We want many more years of exploring the amazing area with its many rockpools which are filled with life.

I was so pleased to hear that I inspired children from other classes. Some children created posters for me to support me on my everlasting journey.



Please keep our beaches clean!!

Here are some more posters... and the children even took a quiz!



24.6.2021 Questions End Plastic Pollution

1. Whose responsibility is it to look after the earth and everything in it?
Tick one.

- ☐ adults
- ☐ children
- ☒ everyone
- ☐ people who live near the sea

2. Draw lines to match these sentences.

By 2050 there could be...	we can do to help end plastic pollution.
Many things we use...	every day are made of plastic.
There are lots of things...	more plastic in the ocean than fish.

3. Number the events below to show the order in which they happen.

- ☒ 1 Plastic ends up in oceans and rivers.
- ☒ 2 People use plastic and throw it away.
- ☒ 3 Plastic traps and harms fish and other sea animals.

4. Find and copy one word that describes plastic.

lots of plastic in deep oceans

5. Find and copy one thing you can do to help end plastic pollution.

reuse a water bottle instead of buying a new one -

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