

Pipers Corner students have HOPE for the future of their community

A group of students at Pipers Corner have made it their mission to take responsibility for how their actions affect their community. The Helping Others Protect the Environment (HOPE) group is formed of students ranging from Pre-Prep right up to Sixth Form, each devoted to making a difference to their environment. As the only UK school to have an Environmentalist-in-Residence; a dedicated member of staff who brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in leading environmental issues across the globe, the students of Pipers Corner are highly equipped to make positive changes.

Here's their story: "The HOPE team was set up in 2019 to help channel many of the students' interest in creating a more sustainable future. "Helping Others Protect the Environment" is a message which we believe encapsulates our view of aiding our local community, in and outside of school, to understand the importance of protecting our planet. Our Environmentalist-in-Residence, Mr Williams, has empowered us to take responsibility for how our actions have the power to affect the world around us.

To establish where to focus our attention, we undertook an audit of the School's environmental impact. In groups we researched aspects such as our electricity usage, recycling process and how we were protecting the local wildlife. From this information we have been able to implement changes based on our findings and have recently launched our Sustainability Campaign which focuses on three central actions; a paper reduction scheme, energy saving scheme and becoming a litter-free campus.

When the HOPE group first formed in 2019, we organised a Green Week which has since become a yearly event alongside our annual Earth Week. Through these events we focus on respecting the environment and other people and host environmental workshops for students from Pipers and other local schools. We have previously held a no paper day as well as a 'Swap Shop', where students could swap an item of clothing they no longer used, raising over £900 which we donated to Rainforest Concern. This amount was enough to sponsor the protection of 18 acres of tropical rainforest and was the biggest single donation to the charity by any school in the UK that year. More recently, members of HOPE have attended virtual lectures - most notably a talk on the impact of plastic waste in our oceans, organised by The Guardian - which have generated more ideas and discussions about how we can change our environmental impact for the better.

We run an annual Environmental Pledge scheme where we asked members of the School community to make one pledge to change something at home that will have a positive impact on the environment. The take up of this challenge is always impressive, previous pledges include planting British wildflowers to support pollinators and purchasing locally grown produce to reduce food miles.

Each year group within HOPE focus on different environmental issues, organising events for their year group that they believe will have the most beneficial impact. The Pre-Prep team have been instrumental in making a difference, winning the national Eco Schools Green Flag. Other year groups have been considering the impact of fast fashion and how we can make the decision to choose long lasting, sustainable clothing, whilst others have been thinking about water and its importance in our global eco-system.

Ultimately, we hope that by helping others to protect the planet, we can make real environmental changes, not only for ourselves but for generations to come."