



Recommendations for the school based planning and review day

### **Developing an Environmental Audit**

With the staff members, working as a whole or in groups, explore your school grounds in order to complete the handout **20 steps towards an environmental audit** that you received on your first science in-service day. A copy of the audit can be downloaded from the PCSP website. There is also a planning sheet on our website which may be helpful for planning for science – **Planning for Living things (plants and animals)**

The following are some suggestions for reviewing the audit as a group:

- Discuss and compare your audit(s).
- Develop a master record or plan, which can be used to identify any “gaps”.
- Which habitats can be explored at different class levels?

Consider:

- First and second Infants
- First and second
- Third and fourth classes
- Fifth and sixth classes
- Are there any habitats that will be explored at each class level? If so, how can we ensure progression from class to class?
- Which content objectives can be achieved through this habitat study? Can we focus on the development of science skills through a habitat exploration?
- Are there any habitats which will provide the basis for exploring seasonal change (for *example* trees, wild areas)
- Would it be possible to create new habitats or plant more trees?
- In what ways could you encourage more wildlife to visit the school grounds?



- To what extent will a class visit disturb the habitat, and how feasible is it for the habitat to be restored following a class visit?
- What would be the best way to implement strategies for improving and caring for the environment by pupils, teachers and parents?
- Discuss the implications there are (if any) for the school and the staff

**Note: Exemplar 4: *Conducting an environmental audit in the Geography Teacher Guidelines (p. 70-73)* could also be used as a resource in completing this task**

During your school based planning day you might also consider developing a science trail within your school grounds. Each teacher or group could be responsible for developing several areas of interest or stops where the children can explore various aspects of the school grounds or the immediate school environment. The following is an example of the type of questions that teachers can encourage the children to think about at an *area of interest* or *stop*. In the middle and senior classes the children could work in groups and complete a worksheet with similar questions. Please refer to the Teacher Guidelines for Science (**Exemplars 14 and 15**) for sample questions that could be included in a science trail for your school.



### **Stop 1: Silver Birch**

1. Look at the tree – touch the bark. How can you describe the bark? Touch the top and underside of a leaf? What do you notice?
2. What shape are the leaves?
3. Can you tell if this tree is deciduous or evergreen? What helped you come to your conclusion?
4. Look up. What sort of canopy does this tree have?
5. Can you measure the height of the tree? Try some different ways to measure. Compare your results.
6. How old is the tree?
7. Draw a bud/flower/leaf from the tree
8. Do you notice any minibeasts living on the tree?
9. What types of living things grow on or around the tree?