

# Reading Schools Eco Newsletter

Edition 6: June 2022

**HELLO!** This is a termly newsletter produced by Brighter Futures for Children in collaboration with Reading Climate Action Network (ReadingCAN). Its aim is to support your work on environmental education and climate change in your school.

If there is anything of interest to you in this newsletter, then please contact: [educateclimate@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:educateclimate@brighterfuturesforchildren.org).

We are here to support all Reading schools to establish themselves as sustainable hubs within the community. We look forward to hearing from you!



## DfE CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY, PUBLISHED APRIL 2022

### The main points to take from the strategy are:

#### 1 Every school to have a sustainability lead

These leads will receive carbon literacy training and will be responsible for putting in place climate action plans, by 2025.

#### 2 Carbon literacy training

DfE pledges to start rolling out carbon literacy training for at least one person in each school by 2023.

The training will build knowledge of climate change, as well as how to access public funds and engage with schemes like the nature park and climate leader's award.

#### 3 Schools to report emissions by 2024

During 2022 and 2023, the government will work with Energy Sparks to trial the delivery of energy management systems in schools, providing real-time information on energy use on a "user-friendly online portal". The aim is to have all schools reporting their emissions via a standardised framework by 2024. The strategy commits to targets set by the Let's Go Zero campaign.

#### 4 DfE to develop 'sustainable tests'

Working in partnership with the Standards and Testing Agency, the DfE has said it will develop a "sustainable assessment model".

Natural History GCSE introduced by September 2025.

#### 5 Annual climate literacy survey

This year, the government will introduce a new annual climate literacy survey.

The survey will "benchmark progress in improving the climate knowledge of school leavers".

#### 6 No more single-use plastics

By 2025, the DfE has said it will eradicate single-use plastics and "encourage the use of reusable and recyclable materials in schools".

#### 7 Annual Progress Reports

The DfE has said it will publish annual progress reports against the strategy, supported by the annual climate literacy survey, data from onsite emissions, biodiversity on school estates, and a published risk assessment of overheating, flood and water scarcity on the school estate from 2023.

#### 8 National Education Nature Park

Schools, nurseries, colleges and universities can use their own land to develop space for biodiversity.

Opportunities for pupils to learn gardening skills, create new habitats for wildlife and develop an affinity with nature. As their work starts to have an impact, young people involved will upload their progress on the park's digital mapping services. They will be able to see how the National Education Park is 'growing' while increasing their knowledge of species and developing important skills, such as biodiversity mapping, data collection and analysis. The park project would act as a digital hub where teachers and pupils could find learning resources and ideas for nature-based activities.

#### 9 Climate Leaders Awards

All of the above will provide opportunities for school staff and pupils to influence change within their communities. Pupils' involvement in the Nature Park, and directly encouraging biodiversity on their school estate and local community, will earn credits towards a Climate Leaders Award. Pupils and students will be able to progress either individually or as groups through different levels of the award, 'bronze', 'silver' and 'gold', in a similar way to the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

**In studying this GCSE, young people will explore organisms and environments in more depth, gain knowledge and practical experience of fieldwork and develop a greater understanding of conservation.**



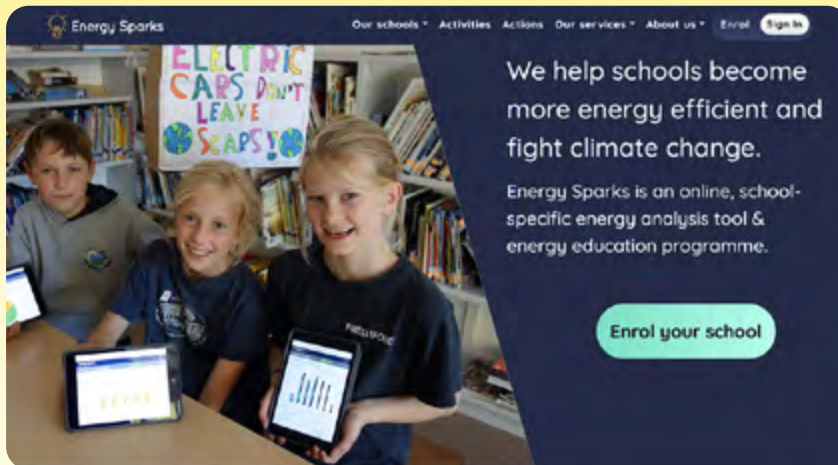
## Helping Reading schools save energy and fight climate change

**E**nergy Sparks (<https://energysparks.uk/>) is a registered charity providing a free online energy analysis tool and energy education programme specifically designed to help schools reduce their electricity and gas usage through the analysis of smart meter data.

Using a school's electricity, gas and solar data, Energy Sparks shows pupils, staff and volunteers how much energy the school is using each day. The online tool presents bespoke analysis of the energy data with suggestions of actions the school community could take to save energy and reduce the school's carbon emissions.

Energy Sparks has over 100 energy and sustainability education activities and accompanying resources which pupils can participate in through eco-teams or curriculum learning. These activities support learning about climate change and the reduction of carbon emissions, investigating energy use around the school site, taking action to reduce energy use and spreading the energy saving and carbon reduction message across the wider school community. Energy Sparks also has over 60 adult-led actions with supporting guidance on saving energy through behaviour change, heating system configuration changes, policies, operational changes and changes to building fabric.

The charity is currently working with over 275 schools across 26 local authorities and multi-academy trusts. Please see the Energy Sparks



website (<https://energysparks.uk/>) for further details. Participating schools are supported with free online training, education workshops and energy management mentoring.

Although Energy Sparks is provided free of charge, schools who procure energy through WME will need to upgrade to the Platinum service at a cost of £40 per electricity meter pa, and £45 per gas meter pa, so that your half hourly consumption data is provided to Energy Sparks. This charge will be added to your energy bill by WME.

If you would like your school to join Energy Sparks, the head teacher or school business manager should complete the enrolment form at <https://energysparks.uk/enrol-our-school>



## FREE Renewable Energy Kits for schools

Don't forget that Brighter Futures for Children has FREE renewable energy kits available for schools to hire! These kits are available on loan to schools for up to half a term at a time. All of the kits come with instructions, training, lesson plans and risk assessments available from: [harriet.neville@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:harriet.neville@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)

*"We absolutely loved the renewable energy kits! The children in class are extremely environmentally aware and love finding out how things work. The quality of the kits was quite unbelievable and it was so easy to assemble and use. The children gained such a valuable learning experience that they won't forget in a hurry. Thank you so much for providing such a high-quality resource and for letting us use them!"*

– The Heights Primary School

*"Thank you so much for letting us use them, the children really enjoyed seeing how they worked! Might even consider getting some for the school now."*

– Churchend Primary Academy

### Wind Turbine Kit

This kit demonstrates how wind energy is used to produce electricity.

### Solar Photovoltaic Kit

This kit demonstrates how the sun's energy is used to produce electricity.

### Solar Water Heater Kit

This kit demonstrates how the sun's energy is used to heat water.



# A guide to running an eco-aware school event.

Work through the questions below with the team planning a school event to help limit its impact on the environment, global inequality and the climate.

## Nature and Green Spaces



Does the event provide the opportunity for

- allowing people to appreciate nature?
- promote or raise money for environmental causes?
- include activities that promote green habits (e.g. wax food wraps, seedlings in paper pots)?

If the event involves atmospheric pollution from fireworks, is there an alternative (e.g. laser display)?

## Transport



If the event involves travel, can the total distance be reduced by choosing a nearer venue or reduce car travel by using the venue near a main station?

Will guests be informed about how they can reach the event by walking, cycling, using public transport or sharing vehicles?

## Water



Can drinking water be served as tap-water from jugs rather than plastic bottles?

Can fruit or vegetables be washed in the sink rather than a full-flowing tap?

Can a fully-loaded dishwasher be used rather than cleaning items in the sink (dishwashers use 6 gallons per load while hand washing uses 3 gallons a minute)?

## Energy



Who is responsible for turning off lights and electrical devices at the end of the event?

Are fridges or freezers needed which are empty a lot of the year? Can they be turned off during the holidays? Are cool boxes sufficient?

## Purchasing, recycling and waste



Who is responsible for making sure that items used, or products being sold, are eco-friendly and ethical (e.g. long lasting, biodegradable, Fairtrade)?

If items are to be sold, can they be long lasting items that people really need? Can they be replaced with experiences?

Are decorations being bought single-use? Could students make decorations from recycled/upcycled materials?

Can guests be encouraged to bring their own items (e.g. cups)?

Are recycling and food waste easily available and clearly labelled?

## Health & Wellbeing



Is the amount of food excessive to the number of guests?

Can food waste be separated from other waste and included in the council's waste collection?

Can guests be asked to bring tupperware to take leftovers?

## Check out these websites for CPD and teaching resources:

[www.aimhi.earth](http://www.aimhi.earth)  
[www.friendsoftheearth.uk](http://www.friendsoftheearth.uk)  
[www.leedsdec.org.uk](http://www.leedsdec.org.uk)  
[www.practicalaction.org/schools](http://www.practicalaction.org/schools)  
[www.thoughtboxeducation.com](http://www.thoughtboxeducation.com)  
[www.worldwildlife.org](http://www.worldwildlife.org)



We encourage all Reading schools to sign up to Eco Schools, an international award scheme that empowers pupils, raises environmental awareness and improves your school environment.

### Already an Eco School?

Get in touch and we can link you to local teachers who have achieved Green Flag status and are very happy to support you through the journey in the simplest, easiest way, with minimal effort!

You can also join this very useful Facebook group for further advice and support:

[www.facebook.com/groups/ecoschoolsenglandecocoordinators](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ecoschoolsenglandecocoordinators)

# THIS MONTH'S TOP TIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS

## Green your classroom

Use hessian to back your displays, rather than paper. This long lasting material provides a neutral backdrop to your classroom, making it calming as well as sustainable.

Available here:

<https://www.tts-group.co.uk/paper-backed-hessian/1014157.html>



## Add indoor plants

Studies show that indoor plants naturally purify the air and provide health benefits, like fewer cold symptoms and improved behaviour. Start with easy-to-grow plants, like a spider plant, snake plant or golden pothos. Get your pupils involved in the plant care and nurture mini gardeners!



## M O F E E Ministry of Eco Education

MEE brings together all the best sustainability teaching resources available into one cohesive and holistic curriculum for all primary schools in Britain. The curriculum explores questions like: What's really renewable? Is nature the answer? Is the climate breaking down? MEE seeks to unlock wider enrichment opportunities to develop learning beyond the classroom, embedding nature within every aspect of the pupil's life experience.

Email [paul@ministryofeco.org](mailto:paul@ministryofeco.org) or visit <https://ministryofeco.org/> to learn more.



## Join like-minded teachers and students with the Berkshire Eco Network!

A platform of schools that was created in 2019, interested in supporting and empowering students that want to take action on local, national and international issues. They aim to promote strong connections between students across all types of schools in the region that want to collaborate and share good practices around areas of interest like climate change, the environment and sustainability. The BSEN is a collection of networks that exist in different regions. We all together form part of the UK Schools Sustainability Network (UKSSN).

**Students:** There are one to two representatives from each school in Years

9-12. There can also be one to two observing, non-participating younger representatives for continuity from year to year.

**Meetings & Events:** There are monthly meetings online and face to face. All member schools can host BSEN meetings and share events they are interested in promoting with the BSEN and the UKSSN. For monthly meetings, schools take turns to chair and take the notes to be shared with all members. There can also be video meetings with other Eco-Networks around the UK to work on joint campaigns, design future events and talks, etc. Selected students from the network will be attending and representing the BSEN at the general meetings taking place at the UKSSN.

The BSEN invites schools and students interested in this initiative to join! Contact Ana Romero at [berks@ukssn.org.uk](mailto:berks@ukssn.org.uk)

## Calendar

Here are some key environmental dates for your diaries, to inspire work you do with your classes and Eco Councils this half term!

- June 16 ..... National Clean Air Day
- June 17 ..... World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
- July 1-30 ..... Plastic Free July
- July 24 - Aug 8 ..... National Marine Week
- TBC ..... Climate Education Network Meeting
- Sept 1-29 ..... Organic September
- Sept 16 ..... International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
- Sept 16-25 ..... Great British Beach Clean
- Sept 20-25 ..... Recycle Week
- Sept 22 ..... Car Free Day
- Sept 23 - Oct 23 ..... Seed Gathering Season

## Reading Schools Climate Action Network – Join us!

We have set up the Reading Schools Climate Action Network (RSCAN) to support and link up primary and secondary school staff who are working with the challenges of environmental education. This gives all school staff concerned about climate change and sustainability the opportunity to meet others interested in similar issues and share ideas. We would like to offer shared practice, areas for collaboration, access to training and shared resources.

Get in touch if you are interested in joining us!  
[harriet.neville@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:harriet.neville@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)

### Reading Climate Action for Schools Website

[www.readingcan.org.uk/schools](http://www.readingcan.org.uk/schools)

Find out more about what you can do in Reading to promote sustainable choices at your school. Access our suite of planning and resources and be inspired by our tips to lead a carbon neutral lifestyle.



## Contact us:

[harriet.neville@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:harriet.neville@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)  
[www.readingcan.org.uk/schools](http://www.readingcan.org.uk/schools)