

The Abbey CE VA Primary School

Climate Action Plan 2026–2028

Grove Road, St Albans, AL1 1DQ

‘Together we learn, we care, we achieve – for ourselves, for each other, and for the community in which we live.’

1. Introduction and Purpose

This Climate Action Plan sets out how The Abbey CE VA Primary School will reduce its environmental impact, build resilience to climate change, and embed sustainability and climate education across the curriculum. It responds directly to the Department for Education’s (DfE) Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and reflects our school’s Christian ethos of stewardship – caring for ourselves, each other, and the wider world God has given us.

This plan supports our school vision and values, in particular our commitment to nurturing responsible citizens who are aware of the world around them, and our existing strengths in outdoor and environmental learning through Forest School, Science, Geography and Design & Technology.

2. Legislative and Policy Framework

This plan has been developed with reference to the following UK legislation, statutory guidance and national strategy:

- **Climate Change Act 2008:** The legally binding national framework requiring the UK to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with a target of net zero by 2050 (amended by the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019). This underpins all public sector, including education sector, climate obligations.
- **DfE Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (2022):** The DfE’s national framework (published April 2022) for the education and children’s services sector, setting a vision for the UK to become the world’s leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030. It requires that, by 2025, all education settings nominate a sustainability lead and put in place a Climate Action Plan, and sets sector targets to reduce emissions by 75% by 2037 and reach net zero by 2050.
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education / Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974:** Statutory guidance requiring governing bodies to have regard to health and safety, including the maintenance of a safe physical environment — relevant to climate adaptation measures such as managing overheating and flood risk.
- **Environment Act 2021 (Biodiversity Duty):** Sets a legal duty for relevant public bodies, including maintained schools, to consider how they can improve the natural environment in the exercise of their functions.
- **Procurement Act 2023:** Strengthens requirements for public bodies, including schools and local authorities, to consider social value and environmental impact in procurement decisions.
- **National Curriculum (Science, Geography, Design & Technology):** Schools are encouraged to incorporate climate and sustainability content where relevant within Science, Geography and Design & Technology, reflecting the National Curriculum’s emphasis on understanding the natural world and human impact upon it.

In addition, the DfE’s free Sustainability Support for Education service and the National Education Nature Park / Climate Leaders Award provide practical tools and recognition that this plan will draw upon.

3. School Context

The Abbey CE VA Primary School is a Church of England voluntary aided primary school in St Albans, Hertfordshire, educating children from Reception to Year 6. Our Christian values – including Thankfulness, Wisdom, Trust and Justice – provide a natural foundation for environmental stewardship, and our existing strengths include:

- **Forest School:** providing regular outdoor, nature-based learning that already builds pupils' connection with the natural environment.
- **Green Council pupil activities:** ongoing pupil-led environmental activities including pond investigation, kitchen garden, energy, heat and air monitoring.
- **Local environmental and community groups:** Engagement with the Green House, the River Ver Society and St Albans Arts Team.
- **Curriculum links:** There are climate curriculum elements in every year group, see curriculum tracking document for more information.
- **PSHE and British Values:** our British Values and PSHE curriculum provide a foundation for teaching pupils about their responsibilities as global citizens.

4. Governance and Leadership

Role	Responsibility
Sustainability Lead	Mrs Harley – coordinates delivery of this plan, reports progress to SLT and governors, and acts as the school's named contact for DfE sustainability initiatives, in line with the DfE requirement for all education settings to nominate a sustainability lead.
Headteacher / SLT	Embeds sustainability within school improvement planning and resource allocation; ensures climate adaptation is considered in site and health & safety decisions.
Governing Body	Holds the school to account for progress against this plan; approves budget for energy efficiency, biodiversity and resilience measures.
Green Council	Pupil representatives (drawn from each class, Year 1-6) who lead pupil-voice projects, run termly campaigns, and feed ideas into the plan.
Subject Leaders	Ensure climate and sustainability content is mapped clearly within curriculum planning.

5. Strategic Aims and Actions

In line with the DfE strategy's four strategic aims, our actions are organised under the following themes. Timescales are indicative and will be reviewed annually by the Sustainability Lead and governors.

5.1 Excellence in Climate Education

Preparing every pupil for a world affected by climate change through learning and practical experience.

Intention	Lead	Action/Timescale
Have a whole school approach which incorporates climate change into the curriculum and school life.	Subject leaders	Autumn Term – assess against any new planning or schemes. Map existing climate/sustainability content across all subjects. Through lessons, assemblies and the curriculum plan we encourage behavioural change by the students.
Lead a pupil-led Green Council with representation from each year group, (Year 1-6)	Sustainability Lead	Ongoing – children are voted to be class representative by their classmates each year.
Seek out resources and awards that support climate education.	Sustainability Lead	Achieved Gold for the Woodland Trust award. Registered for the National Education Nature Park, will explore the Climate Leaders Award
Whole-school sustainability initiatives	Sustainability Lead/ Green Council	2023-24 – Energy consumption and reduction – heat gun and survey of the school site, plugging energy gaps. 2024-25 Plastic tat – campaigned for Tesco to stop selling children's magazines with plastic toys attached. Wrote to the CEO of Tesco and sent a petition – response. Meeting with Daisy Cooper MP to share concerns – Early Motion in Parliament completed. 2025-26 Clean air – Air monitoring by Green Council, Year 4 created art work to encourage sustainable travel which will be displayed on the Westminster Lodge bus shelter. 2026-27 Clean water – pond dipping and art work along the River Ver. 2027-2028 – Food waste reduction and education – link to Green House
Provide CPD signposting for staff on embedding sustainability in teaching	Sustainability Lead	Ongoing – initiatives signposted when relevant and accessible. Ongoing assess to Sustainable St Albans.
Forest School accessed by all children across the school	Sustainability Lead	Forest School Practitioner Level 3 award achieved. Forest School sessions timetables for all children. Forest School sessions

		provide regular outdoor, nature-based learning that already builds pupils' connection with the natural environment.
Food is grown on the school site	Sustainability Lead/ Site Manager/PTA	Food is grown in the kitchen garden, in classrooms and around the school site (grape vine). All children are exposed to food production, explore it at different stages and with different types of cultivation. Children have opportunities to cook and eat the food that they have grown – link to curriculum. Abbey 11 before 11 – grow something to eat.

5.2 Net Zero – Decarbonising Our Estate

Reducing emissions from our buildings and grounds, and engaging pupils practically in the transition to net zero.

Intention	Lead	Action/ Timescale
Carry out an energy audit of school buildings (heating, lighting, insulation) and improve infrastructure where necessary.	Site Manager / SLT / Governors	Ongoing – students take part in monitoring and recording. Hot and cold water pipes upgraded with insulation. Roof upgrade underway. Lighting changed to LED.
Reduce energy consumption	Site Manager / Sustainability Lead/ teachers	Heating on a timer to heat school but not waste energy, boilers off over the summer. Boards turned off when not in use, lights off when not in use, and lights on a timer where possible.
Reduce our water consumption	Site Manager / Sustainability Lead/ teachers	Water butts on the school site to use for the gardens. Green Council share water saving habits. Water pipes upgraded. Solar powered irrigation system for kitchen garden.
Review travel to school and promote walking, scooting and cycling.	Sustainability Lead/ teachers	Engage with walk to School Week and bikeability. Parents are able to allow their children to be responsible for getting themselves to and from school.
Reduce our paper consumption.	Sustainability Lead/ teachers	We continually work to minimise our paper use e.g. through reminders to only print when necessary, by using new display boards which do not need backing paper, photocopier default set to print on both sides. Scrap paper drawer in every classroom and scrap paper used when possible. Paperless communication with parents. Network drive is saved on the cloud.

Litter picking	Sustainability Lead/ teachers	Regular litter picks completed around school site by pupils / Green Council.
Explore feasibility of renewable energy (e.g. solar) as part of any future capital works	Sustainability Lead / Site Manager / SLT / Governors	Suitability lead took part in a meeting with Daisy Cooper MP regarding Solar for Schools. Viability ongoing.
Advocate for sustainability and reuse items of clothing.	PTA	Second hand uniform shop available to parents. Clothes swap throughout the year.
Clear recycling, composting and waste management systems in place.	Teachers / Site Manager / Kitchen staff	Clear expectations on what can be recycled. Separate recycling bins are clearly labelled. Site manager, teachers, cleaners and kitchen staff ensure systems are kept to. Target 2017-2037 reduce by 75%. Data held in site folder. Leaf and composting areas on school site. Composters on KS1-2 playgrounds. Food waste is separated by kitchen and put into food waste bins. All paper, plastic, metal and food is separated and recycled. All compost used in digging areas is created onsite.
Energy costs/consumption monitored.	Site Manager	Energy costs and consumption are monitored weekly and concerns are investigated.
Resources are managed carefully	Teachers/ Office	Resources are bought with a 'just in time' mindset ensuring a reduction in over ordering and reducing waste. Reduction in backing paper is significant as we no longer back boards that have a material finish. We have hand dryers in some toilets to reduced the use of hand towels.

5.3 Resilience – Adapting to a Changing Climate

Adapting our buildings, grounds and routines to protect pupils and staff from heat, flooding and other climate-related risks.

Intent	Lead	Action/ Timescale
Review and update the school's extreme weather policy (heat and flood/storm guidance)	SLT	See policy review.

Identify shaded outdoor spaces and review classroom ventilation/cooling for hot weather	Site Manager/ teachers	Outdoor mats support use of shaded areas. Forest School and canopy provide further shade for outdoor lessons. Teachers encouraged to go outside into shade when the weather is hot.
Assess site drainage and surface water risk; report findings to governors	Site Manager / Governors	Resurfacing of playground and associated drainage.
Ensure water bottles, sun safety and uniform guidance are reviewed each summer	SLT	Summer Term/ Autumn term – communication with parents.

5.4 Biodiversity, Nature and a Better Environment

Enhancing biodiversity, improving air quality and increasing pupils' connection with nature in and around school.

Intent	Lead	Action/ Timescale
Continue developing the school pond and kitchen garden; link to curriculum learning	Green Council/Sustainability lead/ Site manager/ PTA volunteers	Growing a variety of edible plants on the school site, children picking and eating and picking and cooking with the ingredients. Ongoing.
Enhance biodiversity on the school site	Green Council / Sustainability Lead/ Site Manager	Use pockets of land that otherwise do not have a purpose. Pollinator bed planted with pollinator-friendly planting. Installation of bird/bug/ hedgehog boxes and small sink to support local wildlife. Areas left to rewild. Green Council continue to audit the biodiversity of the school grounds (trees, hedgerows, wildlife areas). Care of the pond area, assess water quality. Plant native trees. Ongoing.
Reduce air pollution	SLT / Sustainability Lead/ Green Council/ Site Manager	Reduce idling traffic outside school to improve local air quality (parent communication Autumn 1 and banner outside school gates). Green Council air pollution monitoring. School is planted with a variety of plants to reduce air pollution. 200 trees planted in the last 3 years.

6. Monitoring, Review and Reporting

- **Termly progress updates:** The Sustainability Lead will report progress against this plan to the Headteacher and governors termly.
- **Annual review:** This plan will be formally reviewed and updated annually, in line with the DfE's expectation that schools report progress on their Climate Action Plan from 2025 onwards.
- **Community communication:** A summary of progress will be shared with parents/carers via the school newsletter and with pupils via assemblies and the Green Council.

7. Links to Other School Policies

This Climate Action Plan should be read alongside the school's Vision, Values & Aims, Health & Safety policy, Curriculum Overview, and Educational Visits/Forest School handbook, all available via the school's Policies page.

Action Plan created by Mrs Harley (Sustainability Lead) July 2026 | Approved by: Mrs O'Melia (Headteacher) July 20226| Next review: July 2027