

ECO-SCHOOLS IMPACT REPORT: 2023/24





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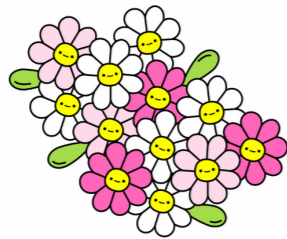
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2023-24 was Eco-Schools' biggest year yet.



"I can't change everything on my own."

1



"I feel worried too"

Many people feel eco-anxiety. But not everyone feels comfortable to discuss it. The more we talk, the more we can understand each others' fears and unite to take action. There is strength in community.

2



Meet like-minded people.

From litter-pickers to upcyclers to allotment clubs... there are lots of groups who come together to do positive things for our planet and other people. Why not find and join one?

3

Extract from 'Host an Eco-Anxiety Discussion Session', part of our Healthy Summer Toolkit.

Ultimately, that success comes down to two groups: young people and the staff that empower them.

The Eco-Schools programme is young-people-led. Our framework gives them the agency to deliver environmental action and make a difference. Through the planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of their eco-projects this year, young people have developed their 'green skills'. They've become climate leaders and gained insight into green careers that they might pursue in their future.

From early years learners to those doing their GCSEs, the environmental impacts of young people in 2023-24 have been stunning. This report is testament to their brilliance.

As ever, young people have been supported by a nation of inspiring, resolute and passionate adults – from teachers, to site managers, to canteen staff. Despite the challenging circumstances that they often face, they make everything possible.

In 2024-25, more expectation is being placed on nurseries, schools and colleges to reduce their environmental impact. With the launch of Count Your Carbon and the publication of ['Net Zero Heroes'](#) we hope to support them to form their sustainability teams and create their Climate Action Plans.

This report is evidence of the amazing, collective climate action that schools can deliver. They are an inspiration.

Adam Flint,

Eco-Schools National Manager

Highlights of 2023-24

COUNT YOUR CARBON

Count Your Carbon

Launched in March 2024, Count Your Carbon is our comprehensive carbon footprint calculator, built in collaboration with, and for, nurseries, schools and colleges.

Completing a calculation with Count Your Carbon provides schools with:

An indicative headline carbon footprint figure.

That figure itemised along 11 key operational strands.

A set of recommendations outlining ways that a school can bring down emissions. These can be referenced against their footprint to form content for Climate Action Plans.

CUT YOUR CARBON

Cut Your Carbon

Cut Your Carbon is our annual, national schools campaign, taking part throughout November. The campaign challenges young people to deliver positive actions at home, with their friends and families, to reduce their carbon emissions. In 2023...

1,969 nurseries/schools signed up to deliver Cut Your Carbon in their setting.

More than 200,000 individual carbon-cutting actions were delivered. We anticipate the actual number of delivered actions to be many, many more.

More than 600,000 kg of CO₂e reductions were made by pupils delivering Cut Your Carbon across November.



healthy summer toolkit



The Healthy Summer Toolkit

Launched on April 22nd 2024 and developed in partnership with the Bupa Foundation, our free Healthy Summer Toolkit was packed with fun activities to boost the health and wellbeing of both pupils and the planet.

Inside the toolkit was a series of simple activities and resources, supporting pupils to understand eco-anxiety and develop ways to manage it, raise awareness about climate change, take collective action to support biodiversity and become more physically active outdoors.

1103 schools accessed the toolkit, with a reach of up to **534,000** pupils.

Eco-Schools Training Programme

Thanks to the generous support of the Bupa Foundation, **1449** educators were able to access free training across **29** sessions. Training empowers educators to cover climate change and sustainability with their pupils through delivery of the Eco-Schools programme. It introduces our framework in a simple and digestible way and provides tangible ideas for activities that pupils can do in school to increase climate change learning and make their sites more sustainable.

In 2024-25, we'll be adding content relating to Climate Action Plans, Carbon Literacy and Decarbonisation.



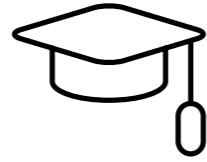
Our impact: on schools and pupils

in 2023-24...



1.4m

pupils attended a school working on the Eco-Schools programme.



50,303

pupils were on an Eco-Committee.



7,623

adults were on an Eco-Committee.

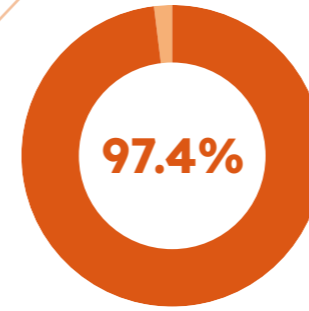


120,508

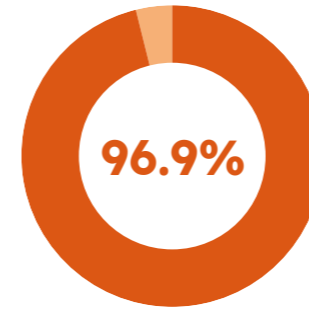
external collaborators have been involved in Eco-Schools work.

98.2%

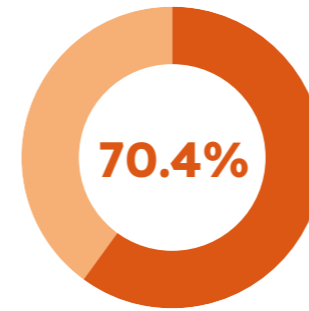
of educators felt that Eco-Schools increased environmental awareness in their school, college or nursery.



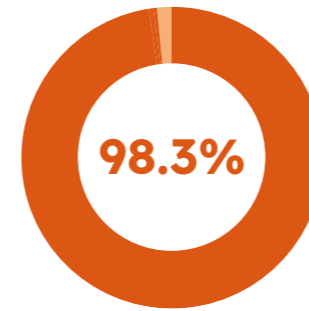
of educators felt that Eco-Schools helped young people develop their leadership and teamwork skills.



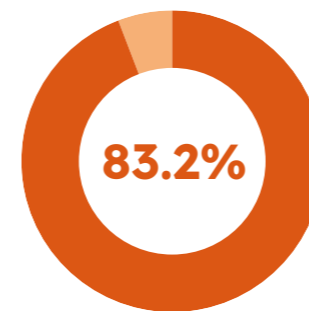
of educators felt that Eco-Schools increased young people's confidence in their school, college or nursery.



of educators felt that Eco-Schools reduced eco-anxiety in their school, college or nursery.



of educators felt that Eco-Schools helped young people develop their 'green skills' (the knowledge, abilities, values, and attitudes needed to live in, develop, and support a sustainable society).



of educators felt that Eco-Schools benefitted their local community.





Eco-Schools – a teacher's take

Eco-Schools has been at the heart of our school since 2016 when we achieved our first Eco Schools Green Flag. We have since achieved Distinction in our last two Eco-Schools Green Flags.

The Eco-Schools programme allows our children to drive eco-activity through the school where they set the agendas and help plan our projects. Children leave Damers with climate awareness, knowing the impact they can have on local, national and global environmental topics which make a real difference to everyone.

All our sustainability work is integrated into our curriculum with year groups choosing one of the Eco-Schools ten topics to link with their learning for that half term. Year groups use enquiry based questions. Examples include, "What is your favourite wildflower?" and "How can we keep our oceans looking amazing?"

Children have taken part in nature journalling, learning the names of all the wildflowers and trees in the school grounds. They have rewilded an area in the community, picking seeds from wildflowers. They raised money for a nature information board for the rewilded meadow to share their knowledge and teach the community about what is around them.

We've supported our local community through our programme to recycle difficult-to-recycle items (ie. ink cartridges, stationery and crisp packets) and by donating compost from our Ridan to other school. In turn, our local garden volunteers and garden centre have supported our work.

There is a real enthusiasm across the school to work towards being zero carbon.

Edd Moore

Year 1 teacher and Eco-Coordinator, Damers First School,
part of the Wessex Multi Academy Trust

“ I wanted to become a member of the Eco-Council because I am very passionate about helping our planet, especially helping the animals. The pictures of plastic in the ocean make me feel really angry and sad so I thought I had to do something!

Isabelle (age 11), Moor Park Primary School, Blackpool

“ I wanted to join the Eco-Team because I care about the world around us. Lots of things are changing at the minute and we need to work as a team to help where we can. We need to look after our world because it is where we live. If we don't look after it, who will?

Pupil, Oasis Academy Limeside, Oldham



“ This club has given H an increased awareness of environmental issues in the community, especially litter left on the beach.

Parent, The Deaf Academy, Devon

“ My daughter has been inspired to want to do more in our community, helping to organise regular litter picks. We have bought gloves and litter pickers to use at home and in our community.

Parent, St John's CE Primary School, Thornham



“ [I like Eco-Schools] because it is nice. I like the planting and when we have to get dirty.

Olive (age 3.5), Tam's House Nursery, Hackney

“ Eco-Club has given the students to make change in their local community for a topic they're passionate about - climate change. Rather than being overwhelmed by the scale of the problem they have learned how they can influence their peers.

Parent, Elthorne Park High School, London Borough of Ealing

Our impact: on the environment

Through their incredible work, young people in 2023-24 have been fighting climate change, supporting our environment and making incredible impacts.

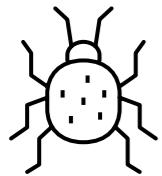
Biodiversity

From rewilded 'grow-zones' to hedgehog highways, schools and nurseries that cover our Biodiversity topic are making their sites greener and cleaner places to learn.



1,159,450 m²

of natural habitats have been created or maintained in order to support biodiversity. This might include meadows, wildflower or rewilding areas.



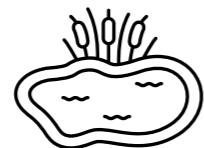
6,896

habitats have been created/installed to support insects (ie. bug hotels, log and leaf piles).



7,176

animal habitats, such as bird houses, bat boxes, hedgehog homes, bird baths (or similar amenities) have been created/installed.



755

ponds, mini-ponds or temporary ponds have been created/installed.



10,542

animal feeders (for birds, for example) have been created/installed.

Energy

Eco-Committees working on our Energy topic focus on 3 R's - **reviewing** usage, **reducing** usage and increase **renewables**. They're cutting carbon and saving money!



Supporters of the Energy topic in 2023-24



7,341

pupil energy monitors were appointed, ensuring efficient use of energy.

250,157

energy-saving devices were introduced on school sites, including motion-sensing lights, energy-efficient bulbs, electrical timers and smart meters.



4,130

renewable energy sources were introduced on schools sites, including solar panels, and heat pumps.



4,629,865 kWh

were saved on gas usage this academic year, in comparison to last year.



4,014,030 kWh

were saved on electricity usage this academic year, in comparison to last year.

Nursery Spotlight

Crescent Day Nursery, Birmingham

Crescent Day Nursery, of the Childbase Partnership group, had a fabulous year in 2023-24, achieving the Eco-Schools Green Flag with Distinction – their third year in a row!

The nursery focussed this year's activity on Litter, delivering daily litter picks of the nursery grounds and garden. The routine has built good routines and behaviours in their little learners. Children enjoyed seeing the difference that they were making and some families have been inspired to purchase their own litter pickers to use outside of nursery.

Crescent Day have also gone above and beyond in their Global Citizenship work. The Eco-Committee planned and delivered eight (eight!) charity fundraisers, raising an incredible £3000.

Their Biodiversity activities have been equally as stunning. 30 outdoor plants were planted and cared for by children in 2023-24. Additionally, they planted 10 tree saplings and 60 children received education about gardening and planting.

To top it off, they delivered environmental learning days, themed in connection to , Farm Animals Earth Day and Oceans Day, and even took part in the RSPB's Big Bird Watch.



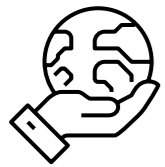
Global Citizenship

Climate change will have an inequitable impact on communities - locally, nationally and internationally. Young people who focus on Global Citizenship are embracing teamwork and taking action.



£151,454

was raised for environmental/wildlife charities.



7,125

pupils from other countries have been communicated with, allowing for an exchange of experiences and insight across a wide variety of environmental projects.



44,763

young people have been involved in planning/organising fundraising events this academic year.



£955,977

was raised for charity.



2,147

charity fundraisers were delivered.



JUST ONE TREE.

2,162 trees will be planted with JUST ONE Tree.

This Summer, we're once again teaming with the brilliant JUST ONE Tree, who will be planting trees on behalf of our Eco-Schools Green Flag award winners. Every £1 raised for JUST ONE Tree plants a tree where it's needed the most.

Head to justonetree.life/schools-sustainability for more info about their amazing work and to join their schools JUST ONE Tree day.

Healthy Living



Supporters of the Healthy Living topic in 2023-24

The health of our planet impacts the health of our bodies and minds. They're intrinsically connected, at the core of what we drink, eat, breathe and, how we move around. Young people in 2024 have delivered a wealth of activities to improve the wellbeing of themselves and their community.



174,373

young people learnt strategies and exercises to improve mental wellbeing, including mindfulness, yoga or increased time spent out in nature.



63,849

young people were actively involved in growing fruit, vegetables or herbs.



14,210 kg

of fresh produce have been harvested from nursery, school and college grounds this academic year.



61,952

pupils learnt how to cook a planet-friendly, plant-based meal.



17,202

meat-free days were planned.



Primary Spotlight

Moorside Primary School, Salford

The Eco-Committee at Moorside Primary School in Salford delivered a stunning year of eco-action in 2023-2024, achieving their school's first ever Eco-Schools' Green Flag!

They chose to tackle the issues that they were most passionate about: saving energy, reducing waste, and improving their school grounds. A focal point of their activities was the delivery of a whole-school Eco-Week, following a petition from the Eco-Council to their school's leadership team. This brought their school community together to learn about environmental challenges, before taking positive action. Their year of action has led to a noticeable increase in engagement from all members of their school community. Teachers are using less paper, canteen staff are eliminating single-use plastics, and more pupils are choosing to travel sustainably to school.

An Eco-Committee member said, 'I want to make a difference to our school environment for me and for others who come next.' We certainly think that they have achieved their goal!



Litter

This year, the young people focusing on our Litter topic have shown pride in their communities. From street cleans to beach cleans, their actions have made their public spaces cleaner for everyone.



Supporters of the Litter topic in 2023-24



3,145

litter-picks were delivered by young people outside of school in their local communities.



25,681

litter-picks were delivered by young people.



106,433

young people participated in a litter-pick.



27,333

bags of litter were collected on litter-picks.



50,536

young people took part in the Great British School Clean.

Marine

Eco-Committees that focus on our Marine topic deliver activities to support marine based eco-systems. From reducing plastic waste to hosting awareness raising exhibitions, they achieved amazing things in '23-24!



246

schools banned use of a single-use plastic in their school.



442

schools restricted use of a single-use plastic in their school



79,569

young people were involved in Marine-themed environmental action.



577

beach, river or canal clean-ups were delivered.



10,355

young people participated in a beach, river or canal clean.

Secondary Spotlight

Parkside School, Bradford

“ We can't quite believe how far we've come in the last four years.

A quote from Parkside's Eco-Coordinator when she and her Eco-Committee secured their school a third consecutive Green Flag in 2023-2024.

Parkside's activities built impressively on previous achievements to continue their sustainability journey. Litter-picks were delivered in and around their school, providing students in all year groups the opportunity to protect wildlife and enhance their local environment. Gardening areas continued to improve, funded by the sale of produce grown on site. Now plans are in place to share gardening skills and knowledge with a local primary school in a joint project. Finally, a new stream of recycling has also been introduced on the school site resulting in nearly a tonne of waste being diverted from landfill!

Looking ahead to next year, Parkside hopes to host a local Eco-Summit, so they can share their passion and inspire others to act.



School Grounds



Supporters of the School Grounds topic in 2023-24

The sites of education settings offer a wealth of opportunity for sustainable action. From greening roofs to adding renewable energy sources, young people have excelled in 2023-24!



8,522

raised beds, greenhouses, polytunnels, or other growing facilities are now present across education setting sites.



117,946

outdoor plants were maintained by pupils across schools sites.



133,341

young people have received a gardening lesson or tutorial.



54,591

trees have been planted by or with the funds raised by pupils.



23,157

indoor plants were maintained by pupils across schools sites.

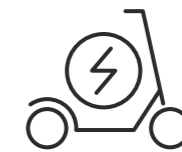
Transport

Did you know, approximately 25% of the nation's carbon emissions come from transport? Eco-Committee's do! And this year, they've been raising awareness and taking action!



7,372

walk/cycle/scoot to school/college/nursery days were delivered.



18,641

bicycles or scooters can now be securely stored by Eco-Schools.

131

EV charging points are now offered for use to staff/visitors.

94,434

young people walk, cycle, scoot or use public transport daily.



75,882

young people have been taught to safely walk/cycle/scoot to school/college/nursery.

SEND Spotlight

North Ridge Community School, Manchester

This year, North Ridge students have gone above and beyond in their work to make their school more sustainable. This hasn't gone unnoticed.

The school was named the 2024 Sustainability Star at the Jamie Oliver Good School Food Awards. Eco-Schools had the privilege of being a judge on the award panel this year, meeting pupils and hearing about their incredible efforts.

Their inspiring work ranges from their allotment, to their school kitchen, to their second-hand shop, to the café. Sustainability is embedded school-wide and pupils are at the forefront of their activity.

Pupils, have explored topics such as biodiversity, composting, nutrition and plant care. They've been hands-on, helping to grow,

cook and serve daily school meals in their canteen. They've had the opportunity to get a flavour of a real workplace environment, developing their 'green skills' and confidence, setting them up for their next steps beyond education.

“ We're trying to keep the future people safe by being sustainable. It's better for you, better for your health and better for your body to grow organically.

Pupil, North Ridge Community School, Manchester



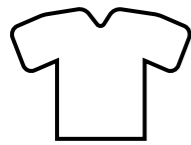
Waste

Waste at landfill sites can pollute soil and water, and release harmful methane into the atmosphere. So reducing our waste is vital. Young people are leading the way!



194,064

young people took action on waste in 2023-24.



81,912

items of school uniform were redistributed to other young people.



4,096

second hand sales / swap-shops were delivered.



438,587 kgs

of food waste was composted.



1,815,107 kgs

of waste were diverted from landfill.

Water

In 2023-24, young people have been inspiring their communities to use less water. This reduces water shortage frequency and impacts, whilst saving on utility bills!



3,175

water-saving tips have been shared with young people and their families.



1,233

leaking devices have been identified by pupils and then fixed.



109,710

young people now use a reusable water bottle daily.



1,064

water-butts are now installed across school/college/nursery grounds.



2,632

water-saving devices have been installed. Devices include water-hippos, tap inserts or self-stopping taps.

Thanks to our supporters and friends



The Bupa Foundation and Eco-Schools are working together to help people make our communities greener, cleaner and healthier. This year, the Bupa Foundation have been incredible partners. They've collaborated with us to produce the Healthy Summer toolkit, supported educators to access free Eco-Schools training, sponsored our Healthy Living toolkit and supported 66 schools to achieve the Eco-Schools Green Flag accreditation. We're proud to continue this relationship into 2024-25.



Since 2018, Eco-Schools has been supported by Player's of the People's Postcode Lottery through Postcode Earth Trust. The Trust supports and appreciates the natural, creative, and built environment through activities that promote awareness and understanding. This year the Earth Trust has supported the Eco-Schools Team to deliver the Cut Your Carbon campaign and launch Count Your Carbon.



This year, Calisen have been proud supporters of both our Energy topic and Count Your Carbon. Calisen is a leading owner and manager of essential energy infrastructure assets – making them perfect supporters for our Energy topic. Calisen's work with smart meters is transforming the energy landscape in Britain, moving our nation towards decarbonisation. Alongside Eco-Schools, Calisen aim to cut energy-use in schools and involve young people in energy-saving behaviours.



As a real estate services company, supporting Eco-Schools School Grounds Topic in 2023-2024 is a perfect fit for Cushman and Wakefield. Through their charitable foundation, Cushman and Wakefield aim to positively impact the world with a particular focus on the success and wellbeing of children and youth – the future leaders of our built communities.

The following local authorities and organisations also supported schools to achieve the Eco-Schools Green Flag accreditation in 2023-24.



A look ahead to 2024-25

Eco-Schools: Early Years

Launching in September 2024, 'Eco-Schools: Early Years' is our new strand of Eco-Schools, designed specifically for the littlest of learners and nursery practitioners.

The programme will feature new resources, adapted Eco-Schools Seven Steps, a dedicated training programme and a new application pathway, all designed specifically for nurseries.

Eco-Schools Early Years has been developed with the expert guidance of Dr. Diane Boyd, author of *Sustainability Matters*, and a review team consisting of three of the nations leading early years providers:

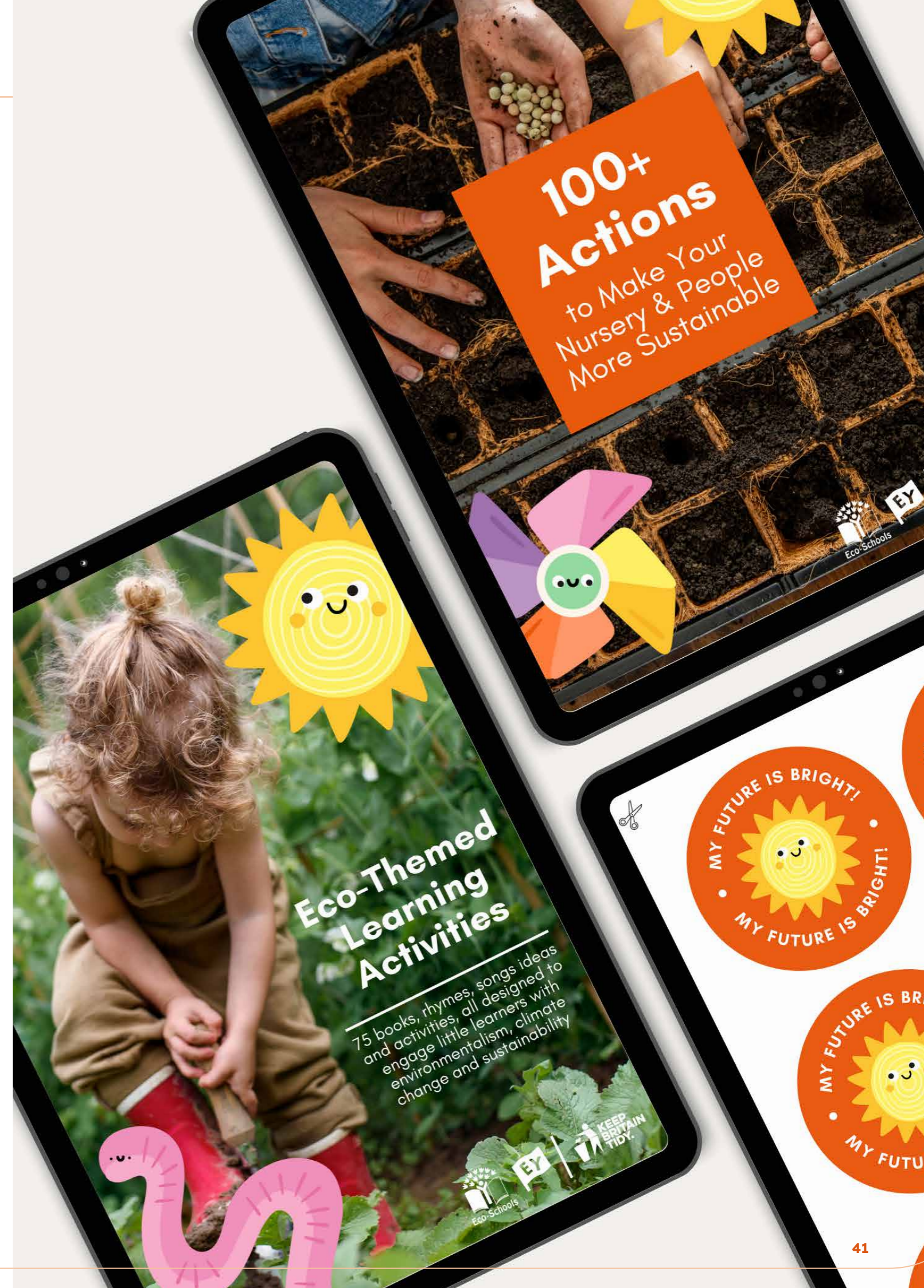


Storal

Childbase Partnership

An Employee Owned Company

Find out more at www.eco-schools.org.uk/early-years



COUNT YOUR CARBON

In 2023-24, we launched Count Your Carbon. In '24-25, we're taking it to the next level.

The 'Playground'

Supported by [Let's Go Zero](#) through their Zero Carbon Fund, we're currently in development on the 'Playground'. The 'Playground' will be a completely new section of the Count Your Carbon website. It will allow staff and pupils to take their most recent carbon footprint, apply hypothetical changes to school policies, actions and infrastructure, and model the potential carbon-reduction impacts, in real time.

Improved recommendations

The next phase of Count Your Carbon updates will focus on improved recommendations, supporting school Sustainability Leads to populate their Climate Action Plans. We will be widening the scope and increasing the number of carbon cutting recommendations, presenting them in a way that enables schools to identify actions that will work for them.

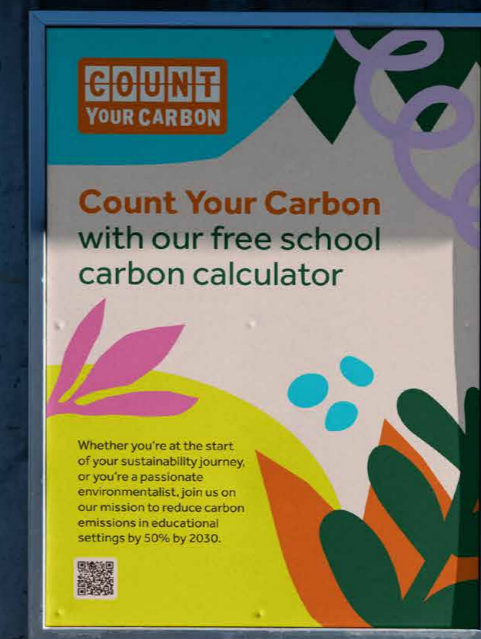
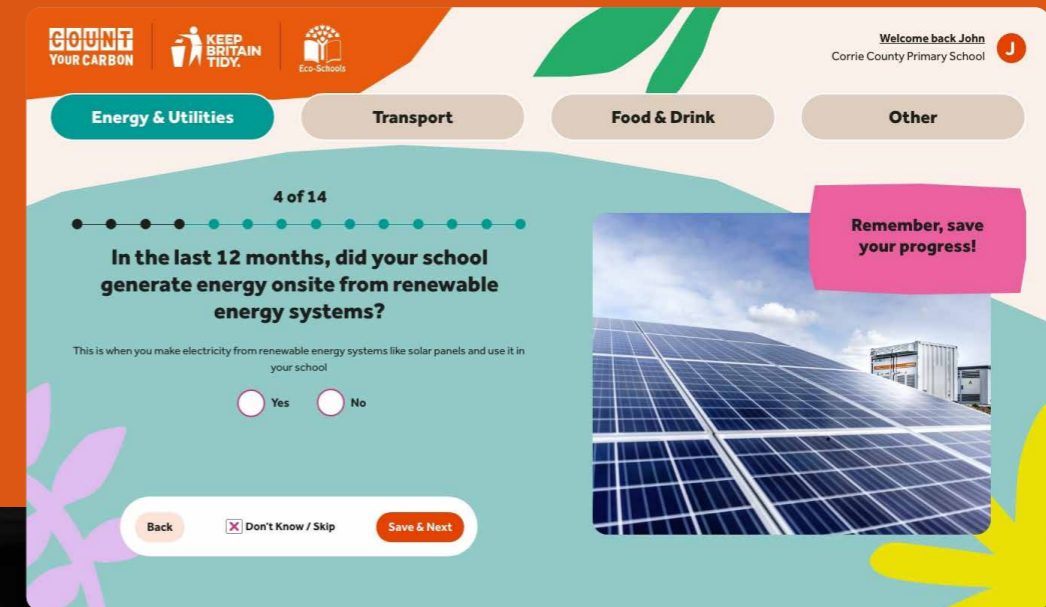
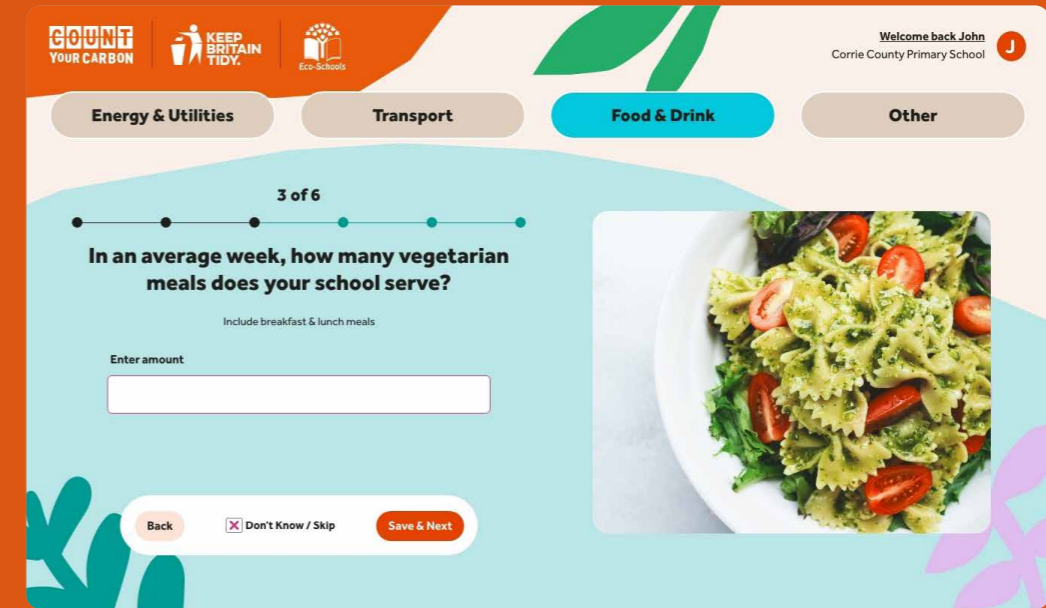
[Count Your Carbon today.](#)

CUT YOUR CARBON

Cut Your Carbon will be returning in November, once again spotlighting actions that connect to the various aspects of our lives that contribute to our carbon footprint, prompting families to take action.

Find out more at www.eco-schools.org.uk/cut-your-carbon/

Alongside the central challenges, Cut Your Carbon 2024 will feature a wrap-around programme including free carbon literacy training, social media campaigns and competitions, all designed for a variety of audiences within the school community.





Conclusion

Eco-Schools gives children and young people the chance to join a global movement and do something really positive for the environment. As Sir David Attenborough said “I never met a child who was not interested in natural history”. The future belongs to the young and giving them the tools to act to protect that future and address their widespread concern about the state of the environment is a priority for all teachers and partners who have joined the Eco-Schools community.

The success of Eco-Schools England is reflected in this year’s increasing renewal rate. We are seeing more schools than ever returning for a consecutive year telling us that the long-term commitment to sustainability is growing within schools and education settings, as is the appreciation for the effectiveness of the programme.

Thanks to the incredible work undertaken by all those who participated in the programme this year almost two million kilograms of waste were diverted from landfill, making Eco-Schools England’s most impactful carbon saving programme in schools. Over one hundred thousand pupils delivered a litter pick, demonstrating the willingness of young people to make a difference and send the message that littering behaviour has no place in schools or communities.

We were delighted that a staggering 54,591 trees were planted in education settings by Eco-Schools England participants, setting the scene for another year of new milestones, meaningful impact and magic.

Allison Ogden-Newton OBE

Chief Executive
Keep Britain Tidy



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