

Environmental sustainability: a whole school approach

A guide for governing boards

June 2022



Greener Governance

NGA's [Greener Governance campaign](#) aims to ensure that all schools and trusts have a strategy for their contribution to environmental sustainability and to equip governing boards to play their role in overseeing this work.

We are asking for every governing board to make the Greener Governance pledge to:

- reduce carbon at their school or trust;
- put their school's or trust's contribution to environmental sustainability on the agenda;
- ensure a climate action plan is developed to make this happen.



Greener Governance
in schools and trusts

National Governance Association

The National Governance Association (NGA) is the membership organisation for governors, trustees and governance professionals of state schools in England.

We are an independent, not-for-profit charity that aims to improve the educational standards and wellbeing of young people by increasing the effectiveness of governing boards and promoting high standards. We are expert leaders in school and trust governance, providing information, advice and guidance, professional development and e-learning.

We represent the views of governors, trustees and clerks at a national level and work closely with, and lobby, UK government and educational bodies.



The National Association of Environmental Education

NAEE is an Incorporated Charitable Organisation that is run by its members and volunteers who care passionately about environmental education and education for sustainable development.

Our charitable object is to provide a public benefit by advancing environmental education within early years settings, primary and secondary schools, and institutions responsible for teacher education within the UK and elsewhere, in particular but without limitation by:

1. facilitating curriculum development through the provision of resources, information and ideas for teachers,
2. providing financial support for pupils to visit outdoor education centres, and
3. collaborating with organisations that have related objectives.

We believe that young people have a right to first-hand educational experiences in their local environment, because these are critical in helping people understand the importance of the biosphere to all life on the planet, as well as being a source of wellbeing and fulfilment, and a motivation towards sustainable living.



Introduction

As a society we have become increasingly aware of environmental issues, climate change and the need to create a more sustainable future; young people have helped to raise awareness of these challenges.

Schools have a crucial role in achieving environmental sustainability because they help young people understand the world and develop skills and attitudes to live fulfilled lives as responsible citizens. It is a core function of boards to determine the values, vision, ethos, and strategic priorities of the trust or school it governs. Governing boards are therefore in a position to consider their role in environmental sustainability and ensure that their trusts and schools take action.

By changing our habits and culture the education sector could have a significant impact on sustainability for example:

- Schools represent 25% of UK public sector building emissions: tackling this can make a large contribution to reach net zero.
- Over 24,000 schools in England provide the opportunity to enhance biodiversity, help nature recover, as well as the greater opportunity to engage children and young people in the natural environment.
- One in 70 car miles are associated with the school commute: there's the potential to change behaviours to create significant long-term impact.

The UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) was held in November 2021 and saw parties come together to increase action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. It was also the first large summit where education and environment ministers met to scale up the role of education in tackling climate change.

Following COP26, in April 2022, the Department for Education (DfE) released their [Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy for Education](#) envisioning the UK as the world-leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030.

The strategy has four aims:

- excellence in education and skills for a changing world
- net zero
- resilience to climate change
- a better environment for future generations

Through reading this guide you will:




- Understand the role of schools/trusts in improving environmental sustainability and the impact this could have.
- Be able to initiate/develop discussions surrounding environmental sustainability with your governing board.
- Know how to lead change as a governor/trustee and monitor progress.
- Have access to resources that can support your school/trust with environmental sustainability.

This guide has been produced in collaboration with the [National Association for Environmental Education \(NAEE\)](#).

Environmental sustainability is a priority issue for NGA in the school year 2021-2022 and no doubt beyond: please see our [Greener Governance campaign](#) for the latest news and information.



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1

Being strategic: a whole trust or school approach

Governing boards can take the decision to make environmental sustainability an organisational priority by identifying it as a key element of their school or trust strategy. In doing so, environmental considerations will then run throughout the organisation's decision-making and all of their work.

1.1 Values and vision

The values that governing boards adopt and reaffirm every year guide the thinking and behaviour in the school or trust, underpinning all its activities. Governing boards should consider whether their existing values support environmental sustainability and consult stakeholders on whether the values need to be updated to ensure care for the environment is more explicitly incorporated. This would generate a commitment to develop policies and procedures that ensure the value is lived on a daily basis.

Ensuring clarity of vision is the first core function for every governing board. The vision is reviewed annually and should, in a few sentences, describe what the school or trust will look like in three-to-five years' time, and what their pupils will leave the school knowing, thinking and having done. Making environmental sustainability part of the vision reinforces the commitment to developing and promoting practice throughout the school or trust.

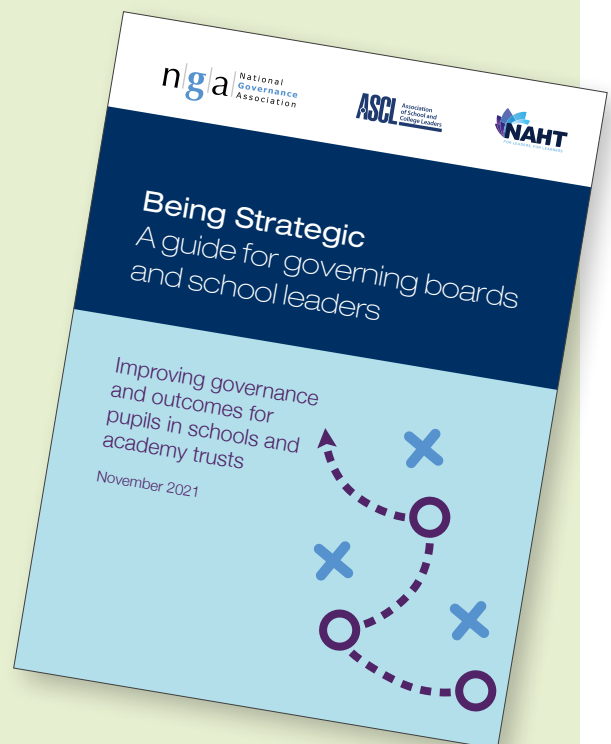
1.2 Strategic priorities

The board's strategy is a high-level document which sets out how the vision will be achieved and includes a small number of priority goals. Taking the decision to make environmental sustainability one of those strategic priorities will ensure that it is embedded in the fabric of the organisation: a whole school or trust approach. It also means that the topic will become part of the annual strategy review.

This discussion about strategic priorities will usually occur at the annual review of the strategy, often held with both the governing board and the executive/senior leadership team in the summer term or sometimes at the beginning of the autumn term. However, if environmental sustainability was not covered in that last conversation, rather than waiting for another year, it could be added to a full board meeting in the meantime.

Being Strategic: a guide for governing boards and school leaders

Our [Being Strategic guidance](#) provides leaders and those governing at all levels in a school or trust with a robust framework that they can use to set a strategy for their organisation and monitor progress within an annual cycle.



2

The four Cs approach to sustainability

A whole school/trust approach to environmental sustainability, by definition, should encompass all aspects of school life, learning and management.

NAEE explains this using the four Cs model:

2.1 Culture

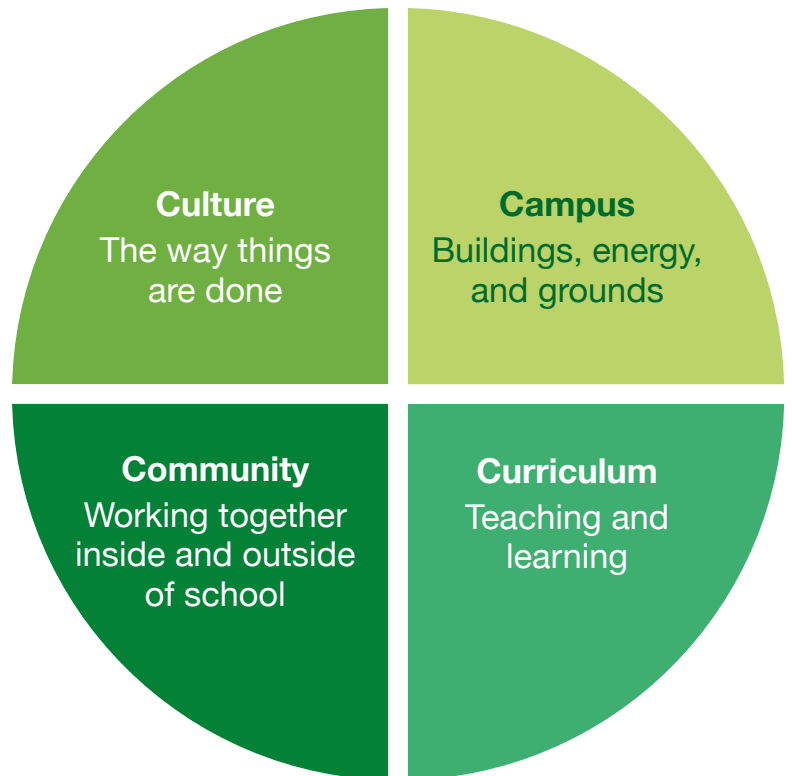
The way things are done at all levels of a school/trust is reflective of your vision and values. If environmental sustainability sits within this, your everyday practices and larger decisions will demonstrate caring and respect for the environment.

As a **starting point** you could ask your school/ executive leaders at the relevant governing board meeting:

- Do we have an eco-council/team to listen to our pupil's views on environmental sustainability?
- Do we offer meat-free meals or have meat-free days?
- What happens at school level on a day-to-day basis that encourages environmental sustainability?
- Do we encourage reduced energy usage and recycling for example?

To **delve deeper**, you could ask:

- Do we model pro-environmental behaviours transparently in the school's operation?
- How does our school/trust currently frame environmental sustainability – do we foster a sense of hope through pro-environmental behaviours or are we at risk of generating eco-anxiety?
- Do we understand the challenges posed by climate change, and go beyond seeing recycling and turning lights off as adequate responses?
- Are pupils empowered to act on climate change, both within the school and in their home environment?
- Are initiatives/actions taken by your school or trust inclusive to all pupils in terms of cost and accessibility?
- Does your promotion of physical and mental health of pupils and staff encourage being outdoors and serving nutritious seasonal food?



Helpful resource:


[Lets go Zero](https://lets-go-zero.org.uk/)

Let's Go Zero is the national campaign uniting teachers, pupils, parents and their schools as they all work together to be zero carbon by 2030. As a school, when you sign up to Let's Go Zero, you'll get support on setting your zero carbon targets and developing roadmaps for delivery.




DfE strategy link

The Climate Leaders award will act as an umbrella for existing awards, meaning children will receive credits on the completion of the Duke of Edinburgh for example. As the awards encourage a sense of social responsibility governors/trustees are encouraged to ask if their school/trust currently offer them.

Case study 


Based in Lancashire, St Christopher's C.E. High School is a single academy trust with over 1,200 pupils. Environmental sustainability runs through St Christophers like a golden thread. Intrinsically linked to environmental sustainability, St Christopher's are committed to teaching and instilling social responsibility. Most recently in November 2021, over 100 children took part in a homeless sleepout, raising money for charity and drawing attention to fuel poverty. In the run up to the event, pupils were involved in raising the profile of charities and approaching local suppliers for donations of food and cardboard. Over the course of the event, pupils made soup to be delivered to homeless shelters in the area using donated produce and then spent the night outside in conditions chosen to help replicate a small part of the struggles faced by the homeless community each winter. In addition, the school also coordinates the [North West Eco Schools Conference](#), a one day event sharing skills, knowledge and experience in promoting education for sustainable development in schools. Through these initiatives, St Christopher's work hard to create networks and community to encourage a culture of social awareness and responsibility among pupils.

Case study 


In 2019, The Education Alliance (TEAL) based in Humberside, identified environmental sustainability as a key challenge for the next 10 years and added it to its strategic priorities. The trust funded a carbon footprint survey that set a baseline and informed a plan for future work. It identified opportunities for improvement, such as LED lighting, which is underway, and also phasing out single-use plastic, heating plant upgrades, electric vehicle charging points and a new waste contract. Some will require more funding to complete. TEAL has integrated several UN sustainability goals into the curriculum for both primary and secondary schools. Thinking long-term, green careers have also been a focus, securing partnerships with Siemens and Yorkshire Water, offering school leavers the chance to take advantage of new sustainable industries. There is much more planned, including training teachers to link the curriculum to sustainable job opportunities.

TIP 

All action contributes to cultural change no matter how small. Simple initiatives such as: labelling which items use more electricity, recycling, print release via a pin code, auto-power off on computers overnight, powdered chemicals versus single-use plastic used by domestic staff and switching to a green energy supplier when contracts renew are a great way to instil socially responsible behaviours.

TIP 

Changing school/trust culture won't happen instantly; things can happen at a different time when it may be more manageable. Completing a timeline of current progress and future work can help to visualise how you can facilitate a whole school/trust cultural change gradually over time.

TIP 

Facilitating pre-loved uniform provisions with the local community creates an easy to access and stigma-free way for families to get pre-loved uniform, reducing the cost for families and encouraging a culture of recycling.

2.2 Campus

This encompasses all aspects of school buildings and grounds. It is most likely that energy will already have been considered from an environmental point of view, but there are other aspects which require consideration and that can positively benefit your school or trust.

Procurement can be an accessible route into exploring sustainability by adding it as a necessary criterion for suppliers. By 2023 the DfE will support this by having sustainability as part of the assessment and validation criteria for including suppliers on procurement frameworks.

As a **starting point** you could ask your school/executive leaders at the relevant governing board meeting:

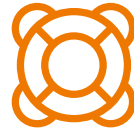
- Is energy use monitored and if not, how can we start to do this?
- Is there an existing policy on how the school/trust manages its campus in a sustainable fashion?
- What investment is needed in our buildings to improve their environmental sustainability? For example LED lighting, insulation, solar panels, ground source heat pumps?
- How do we use our outdoor space? Could we utilise this for improving biodiversity or growing our own food produce?
- What waste is recycled or composted?

To **delve deeper**, you could ask:

- Are sustainable procurement choices the first option?
- Is our energy supplier using renewable technologies and could we generate energy from renewable sources?
- Is water use monitored and how can this be reduced?
- Do we seek to increase biodiversity? For example, rewinding areas of grass or creating habitats for insects/animals?
- Is there any financial assistance/grants available that could assist us with improving our campus environmental sustainability?

DfE strategy link

By 2024 the DfE will create standardised reporting frameworks for emissions and will establish emissions targets between 2025 and 2035. The department will be working with BEIS to trial the delivery of smart meters in schools to monitor this. Governors and trustees can hold school leaders to account on energy usage and encourage energy efficient products/behaviours.



Helpful resource: [Energy Sparks](#)

Energy Sparks is a registered charity which provides a free online energy analysis tool and energy education and carbon reduction programme specifically designed to help schools reduce their carbon footprint, and teach pupils energy saving and sustainability life skills. Using a school's electricity, gas and solar data, Energy Sparks shows pupils, staff and governors how much energy the school is using each day. The unique 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.

Case study



With over 1600 children Durrington High School is a large secondary academy based in Worthing. The school has fully committed to environmental sustainability including it in their school improvement plan which is mirrored by their trust's strategic priorities.

The school began by replacing thermostatic radiator valves in their 26-year-old heating system that caused hot and cold spots improving their energy efficiency and comfort levels for staff and pupils. In 2020, the school built a new sports hall and incorporated within the design room for 414 solar panels. To date the panels have generated 150,000 kw/hours making the building carbon negative. In 2021 the school also replaced all lights and fixtures with LED's reducing maintenance and saving £30,000 in electricity that they can now reinvest into pupils' education.



For a list of grants available to schools and trusts (of which some are specifically environment focused) and for help in applying see the [A&S website](#).



Leaky taps and toilets add up and can cost schools significant amounts of money. You can encourage and support your school business manager to use a water calculator like [Thames water calculator](#) to work out how and where your school is using water and to improve efficiency. For other useful information visit the [waterwise](#) website.



2.3 Community

By the term 'community' we mean how the school fosters a united approach towards environmental sustainability both with the local community and within the school community itself.

As a **starting point** you could ask your school/executive leaders at the relevant governing board meeting:

- Do any current governors/trustees or staff members have any sustainability credentials that could help in this area and is this considered when recruiting?
- How are children travelling to school? Is it by walking and by bike, and how is this actively facilitated by the school/trust?
- Does the school/trust communicate with parents about what the school is doing (and why) and how they can contribute?
- How does the school currently work with the local community? Do any of these have sustainability-focused activities?
- Have environmental considerations been applied to food provision? Do you use local produce?


To **delve deeper**, you could ask:

- What is the air pollution in and around school? How can we work with others to reduce this?
- Could the school act as a hub for any environmental projects or offer premises and support to other community schemes? Could you give pupils opportunities to investigate issues that matter to the local community?
- Could staff work with pupils to develop the policies and practices for managing the campus to make biodiversity gains, save energy, and create less waste?
- How and when do children experience their local outdoor environments?

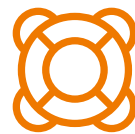
DfE strategy link

The virtual National Education Nature Park being set up by the department will use digital mapping to allow schools across the country to see and learn from one another's environmental sustainability. This is a great opportunity for schools to engage with their local and national community. In the future, the DfE will also expand the nature park globally to broaden children's understanding of global challenges.

TIP



Look to the community for extra resource. Experienced and enthusiastic individuals may not want to formally volunteer as a governor/trustee, but they could offer support or knowledge. The [Explore: Urban nature campaign](#) ran by the Natural History Museum for example supports urban schools to learn about their local nature.



Helpful resource: Living Streets

Living Streets is a UK charity that encourages everyday walking including children walking or wheeling to school. Through their walk to school initiatives, children self-report how they get to primary school using the interactive WOW Travel Tracker. If they walk, wheel, cycle, scoot or park and stride, they get rewarded a monthly collectable badge.

Case study

Educating just under 200 pupils, Hotwells Primary School is an academy located in an urban area of Bristol. Sustainability at Hotwells began over a decade ago after achieving the silver eco schools award in 2010. Upon joining the board in 2020, parent-governor Michael Martin aimed to make sustainability, specifically in line with Bristol City council's carbon neutrality by 2030, part of the School Charter. The board agreed that sustainability would be a regular agenda item and Michael was designated governor for sustainability. As an urban school, Hotwells wanted to involve the community and is monitoring air pollution, and introduced 'Big pedal fortnight' resulting in 72% of children walking or biking to school.

Case study

Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust is based in Devon and is made up of three secondary schools and 14 primary schools, educating just under 5,000 children. The trust is focused on its community and civic pride, appointing Derrick Brett as their executive director for civic leadership in September 2021. Derrick hopes to use a local farm to increase pupils understanding of sustainability and in the future incorporate green careers – usefully one of the trust's wind turbines is located nearby! The trust has also appointed a lead in learning outside of the classroom and established links with the Devon Wildlife Trust and Dartmoor National Park to ensure primary pupils to experience their local countryside.

2.4 Curriculum

The school's curriculum is an embodiment of its vision and values. Treating environmental sustainability as a core value should lead to governing boards taking a keen interest in how this is covered in the curriculum. As climate change affects many aspects of our daily life, similarly climate education should be taught beyond science and geography. When tendering for new teacher CPD, the DfE will also now include content on sustainability where relevant.

As a **starting point** you could ask your school/executive leaders at the relevant governing board meeting:

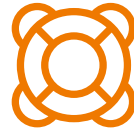
- What and when do pupils learn about environmental sustainability? Does this go beyond science and geography for example?
- Have pupils been consulted on their experience of the curriculum and teaching and learning on environmental sustainability?
- Do you offer the chance for children to learn outdoors for example through forest school, local visits or residential trips?

To **delve deeper**, you could ask:

- Is working across subjects and collaboration between teachers encouraged? How could this be facilitated?
- How do pupils develop knowledge and understanding of their local environment and wider global environmental issues?
- Do pupils develop positive attitudes and behaviours towards the environment?
- Does the curriculum best prepare this generation for the world in which they will live, laying the foundations for green technology skills and green careers? Does our careers advice include this?
- Do children learn about food production and nutrition?

DfE strategy link

Green careers is a key action area. The government will be developing and creating apprenticeships, T-levels and other qualifications to enable green career pathways. Schools should be encouraged to offer career advice and guidance on these green career updates and governing boards can hold school leaders to account to do so.



Helpful resource:

[UN CC: Learn](#)

To help teachers and those involved in education to learn about environmental sustainability, The One UN Climate Change Learning Partnership (UN CC:Learn) has developed a selection of free e-courses on climate change. The courses include interactive lessons, tutorials, and videos, and are all based on official UN content. Each course results in an official UN CC: Learn certificate of completion for those who pass.

Case study



St Edmund Campion Primary School is an academy in Maidenhead that serves over 400 pupils. Head teacher turned foundation governor Patricia Opalko began the school's sustainability journey in 2001 by creating a school eco team. This quickly progressed to embedding sustainability within the curriculum introducing sustainable doorways – a sustainable topic (either travel and traffic, energy, global citizenship, school grounds, food and drink, water and waste) that each year group is taught throughout the year, either discretely or cross curricular. By the time children reach year 6, they have a good understanding of a range of sustainability issues and empowering them on how they can make a difference to the world. The doorway approach was taken so that teachers did not have to become experts in all areas of sustainability and stretch their capacity, their doorways each feed into the wider jigsaw.

TIP



A quick win for many schools can be utilising their outdoor space for learning. This reduces electricity usage and can allow children to become inquisitive about the environment they are learning in.

3

Leading change

3.1 Roles and responsibilities

Climate action plan

Within their strategy the DfE state that by 2025 all education settings will have a climate action plan in place outlining how schools will incorporate environmental sustainability within their curricular and extra-curricular activity, procurement, adaptation, and decarbonisation plans. To facilitate the plan, they expect every school to nominate a sustainability lead who will receive carbon literacy training.

The board

The DfE Governance Handbook states that governors and trustees should have “determination to initiate and lead strategic change when this is in the best interests of children, young people and the organisation, and to champion the reasons for, and benefits of, change to all stakeholders”.

The governing board needs to initiate the discussion on environmental sustainability if it has not yet begun at the trust/school. Where discussion has been limited to one aspect of school life, the board should ensure the approach is extended to cover all aspects of the work of the trust/school. Boards could also appoint an eco/sustainability governor or trustee that has responsibility to liaise with school sustainability leads to ensure a joined-up approach and oversee the development of climate action plans.

Multi academy trusts

The DfE does not give mention to multi academy trusts (MATs) when discussing sustainability leads in their strategy however it would be sensible for certain individuals in a trust to be responsible for reporting on each of the four Cs. For example, the CEO for culture and the CFO or operating officer for campus. A decision would also need to be made as to the curriculum and community.

School leaders

It needs to be clear which leaders are tasked with progressing what. It may be that a single sustainability lead is appointed and takes input from those with greatest knowledge relating to each of the four Cs or that several sustainability leads are appointed. For example, the headteacher of a school for culture, the school business professional for campus, and a school teacher for curriculum and community.

3.2 Equipping staff

Capacity

Through the new sustainability lead role/s, school/trust leaders will have increased responsibility. The board needs to ensure time is available to those who have been identified in delivering this change. They should seek assurance that the budget reflects this priority and the resulting policies and plans.

Knowledge

The governing board must be prepared to invest in time and resources to ensure staff are able to develop and deliver the climate action plan, especially as knowledge grows on environmental sustainability and practice evolves. For example, to accompany a focus on the curriculum, teachers are likely to need high-quality CPD that helps them to engage with the topic and to confidently deliver the an up-to-date curriculum.

Support is available from a range of providers, such as [United Nations Climate Change Learning Partnership](#) and [Future Learn](#) who offer free climate education modules. Resources such as [NAEE's curriculum guides](#) detail opportunities for schools and trusts to focus on climate change and environmental issues in a way which helps pupils develop a global perspective, foster responsible attitudes and inspire them to take action in order to live more sustainably.

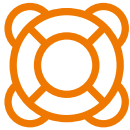
NGA's [CPD guide](#) provides advice on how boards can establish a culture where all school/trust staff CPD is both valued and prioritised.

Creating a climate action plan

The four Cs provide a model for leaders to follow when undertaking an audit of existing practice and developing a climate action plan.



Designated environmental sustainability positions can help co-ordinate and drive activity as well as bridge the gap in communication between school and the governing/trust board.



Helpful resource: [Environmental sustainability audit tool](#)

SchooliP, the NAEE and NGA have come together to provide schools and trusts with a free online tool to help governing boards adopt environmental sustainability as a strategic priority and for school leaders to develop a climate action plan. Based on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, the online tool is designed to cover all aspects of school life and is organised into the four Cs of Curriculum, Campus, Community and Culture. It consists of a series of questions and guidance to help schools and trusts focus their efforts on pertinent actions.

3.3 Resourcing the climate action plan

When asked about funding sources to support work in this area, the DfE highlighted the [BEIS public sector decarbonisation scheme](#) as the main source of funding available for the foreseeable future and have committed to improving the application process. Schools and trusts will likely need to identify funding from within their own budgets or other grants.

3.4 Board practice

The ways of working and practices that governing boards adopt set an important tone and exemplify the value placed on environmental sustainability to the whole school. 'Quick wins' can be achieved by reducing the amount of paper generated by board meetings and a schedule that combines face-to-face with virtual meetings, therefore reducing the need to travel and the carbon footprint. Many governing boards now use a digital document storage system for papers, and many are adopting a blend of face-to-face and virtual meetings: communicating this progress to others is useful. The use of e-learning, including NGA's [Learning Link](#), also has a part to play: reducing paper and the need to travel for training.



Helpful resource: [Choice Voting](#)

Choice Voting is a safe and quick process to set up and launch your online elections. Online voting improves the environmental impact that your school or trust has by eliminating paper and ink waste and by removing the need to post and return paper voting slips. Other benefits include lower overall costs to run the election, lower staff time and importantly, higher voter turnout.

3.5 Engaging stakeholders

Engaging stakeholders and listening to their views is a core function of governing boards. The environment is a topic with which stakeholders are likely to be eager to engage. Involve them from the beginning to find out their concerns, understanding and what they would like to see.

Discuss with your leadership team how to harness the knowledge, energy and enthusiasm of:

- **Pupils, classes, year groups and school councils** – young people are increasingly concerned about sustainability and climate change and are looking for opportunities to learn more and to make change.
- **Parents and parent forums** – when schools have the support of parents, they are in a much stronger position to achieve their aims around environmental sustainability. Some parents may have specific expertise in the topic. NGA has produced [a guide to successfully engaging with parents and carers](#).
- **Staff** – teachers are fundamental to pupil learning about sustainability and school business staff have an important role in making sustainability a part of resource management.
- **The wider community** – there are many examples of businesses, charities and local authorities willing to collaborate with schools and support them to build a more sustainable infrastructure.
- **Colleges, universities and employers** – the government has launched the Green Jobs Taskforce, working in partnership with business, skills providers, and unions, to help develop plans for good quality green jobs by 2030; they may be able to support schools with preparing pupils for the future world of green work.

3.6 Monitoring progress

Governing boards and school leaders regularly monitor progress against their strategic priorities and goals linked to them. As laid out in [Being Strategic](#), they should agree the arrangements for monitoring the strategy, along with the data and information used to evaluate progress and assess impact. This should be recorded in the strategy document. Therefore, if environmental sustainability has been adopted as an organisational priority within the strategy, its monitoring and review will become part of the board's regular business.

If your board has not yet adopted environmental sustainability formally as a strategic priority, there will need to be a separate governing board discussion on the expectations and how the approach to environmental sustainability will be monitored.

Governing boards will need to work closely with their leadership team to agree:

- Which aspects of the Four Cs plan will be reported to relevant committees, such as premises?
- What is important to know about how the school/trust is progressing towards its strategic goals for environmental sustainability?
- What data and information will tell the board what it needs to know?
- Whether this is best discussed in a full governing board meeting or is a working group required to monitor the whole school/trust approach?

The resulting monitoring routine should use all or a combination of the following:

- Feedback from themed [governor/trustee visits](#).
- Engagement with pupil and parent forums.
- Survey data (this could apply to a range of audiences and topics, such as a travel survey).
- Resource data (such as recycling rates or data on energy bills) and results from procurement exercises.
- Oral presentations to the board from a variety of individuals, including the leads for each of the Four Cs.

Case study



Eynsham Partnership Academy

Eynsham Partnership Academy (EPA) is based in the West Oxfordshire region and is made up of two secondary schools and six primary schools. The focus on climate change and biodiversity is included in the trust's five-year strategy, and a working group gains insight into how to tackle this. Pupils from the trust also came up with their own manifesto with EPA hoping pupils will hold them to account based on this. Trustee Rain Newton-Smith describes that EPA want to achieve a trust wide culture that goes in both directions, leading from top-down and bottom-up.

3.7 Questions to ask when reviewing the approach

Governing boards can ask and adapt the following questions when discussing the impact of the whole school approach:

1. Can we point to examples of how our approach and policies have led to sustainable practices and changes to habits throughout the school/trust and among stakeholders?
2. Can we point to the benefits of our whole school approach? Have there been other unexpected impacts, such as financial efficiencies or to pupil learning?
3. Have there been any negative consequences of our whole school approach to environmental sustainability – what are they?
4. Based on what we have learned, what should we be doing more of or doing differently?
5. How are we supporting our staff (such as through CPD) to stay up to date with the issues and help embed our whole school approach?
6. How is this work balanced against staff's other workload demands?
7. How do staff work with pupils to develop all Four Cs?
8. What do our stakeholders, especially our pupils, think of our whole school/trust approach? – how do we know?
9. Which local, regional and national expert organisations and networks is the school/trust engaged with to enhance our learning, action and impact in relation to environmental sustainability?



See our [Greener Governance campaign](#) for the latest news and further resources.

Greener Governance
in schools and trusts

Thank you for reading this guide

If you have any feedback or experience you'd like to share, please email Megan.Tate@nga.org.uk

We are very eager to hear what schools and trusts have achieved or are trying to achieve on environmental sustainability.

More from NGA

Knowledge Centre: best practice guidance

NGA members get exclusive online access to best practice school and trust governance guidance from [NGA's Knowledge Centre](#). Go to NGA's Knowledge Centre and log in to browse and download guidance, templates, model policies, information sheets and more.



GOLDline: bespoke advice

NGA's [GOLDline advice service](#) provides independent and timely advice to governing boards with GOLD membership. Our advisers guide members through topics including governance roles and responsibilities, admissions, exclusions, complaints, and board constitution.



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