Haddenham St Mary's CE School

Climate Action Plan

July 2026 - Monitoring Update

2026 Monitoring Update

The Climate Action Plan, as set out in the pages following this update, was formulated in 2025 and noted that Governors would monitor progress of the various aspects.

The Senior Leadership Team has recently provided details of the initiatives taken in the following areas and the Governors consider that a positive impact is being made throughout the school.

Teaching & Learning

- Forest School sessions have become increasingly focussed on sustainability and supporting the environment. Topics include - Rainbows: Litter and Recycling, Sunshine: Water Management, and Sky: Energy).
- The school took part in the RSPB Big Schools Bird Watch and is now working towards the RSPB Wild Challenge.
- The school registered with National Education Park and the mapping of the school site and its biodiversity with children from Sky classes has begun.
- Natural habitats are being improved. Sky classes have built dead hedges to enclose an area at the back of the site - our new 'Hedgehog Hideaway'. Children have also planted spring bulbs and other plants for pollinators. They have also planted seeds (conkers, acorns, field maple seeds) in the hope that these will germinate and form the basis for a tree nursery.
- The PTA are focussing on revamping the wildlife area, improving the Forest School site and providing resources for outdoor learning through the 'Wonderful Wilderness' project.
- There are plans to reinstate a small pond and bog area, plant wildflowers, install bird feeders and animal shelters and create viewing areas for children to observe nature.
- School and Eco-Council members are undertaking regular litter picks. Littering definitely seems to have improved within the site thanks to awareness and new bins over the last few years.

Buildings & Services

- The school's oil boiler was successfully replaced in October 2025 with a more efficient gas alternative. This upgrade has improved reliability, reduced maintenance requirements, and is expected to contribute to lower overall carbon emissions compared to the previous system.
- The schools DEC continues to improve - now being D98 and continuing the trend of very modest year-on-year improvement.
- There is a focus on reducing energy usage - staff are regularly reminded to switch off lights and electrical equipment when not in use, promoting a culture of energy awareness across the school.
- The heating temperature was reduced by 1°C following the handover meeting for the new heating system, contributing to energy savings without compromising comfort.
- All radiators are now fitted with thermostatic valves, installed as part of the boiler room upgrade, enabling more precise control of heating in different areas of the school.
- A versatile timing system enables ad hoc heating adjustments to accommodate lettings and other out-of-hours use, ensuring energy is not wasted while still meeting operational needs.
- The school travel plan continues to actively promote sustainable travel options. Pupils are encouraged to participate in initiatives such as walking and cycling to school, helping to reduce congestion and environmental impact.

Introduction

Our Commitment to a Sustainable Future

In light of the growing urgency to address climate change, Haddenham St Mary's is committed to taking proactive steps to reduce our environmental impact and foster a sustainable future for the children in our care and community.

Our Climate Action Plan outlines a strategic approach to integrate sustainability into our school's operations, curriculum, and culture.

By promoting energy efficiency, reducing waste, and nurturing environmental awareness, we aim to inspire and empower children to become active stewards of the planet. This plan is not only a commitment to environmental responsibility but also an opportunity to enrich our educational experience with real-world applications of sustainability.

Statutory Background

A key initiative of the Department for Education (DfE) Sustainability and Climate Change strategy is climate action plans (CAP) and sustainability leadership. The strategy states:

"By 2025, all education settings will have nominated a sustainability lead and put in place a climate action plan".

Climate action plans can help education settings to:

- Be more resilient to the effects of climate change- all education settings face significant operational risks from climate change.
- Meet emission reduction targets- education settings are a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions within the public sector.
- Maximise biodiversity value of education estates- the green and grey space that education settings occupy can be managed in ways that provide a significant boost to nature and biodiversity and provide a space for engagement with the natural world.
- Be the catalyst for change across communities- education settings serve as critical hubs for joining people together in the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss.
- Enable and empower young people- through a better understanding of climate change, a greater connection to nature and opportunities to participate in sustainability activities we can enable young people to translate knowledge into positive action.

Action Areas

The DfE has set out five areas for action:

Action Area 1: Climate Education
Building on a foundation of fundamental numeracy, literacy and broad academic knowledge, all children learn about: nature, the causes and impacts of climate change, and the importance of sustainability

Action Area 2: Green Skills and Careers
It is critical young people and adults have the green skills that will allow them to build careers.

It is hoped to harness young people's passion and interest in climate change and sustainability to enable them to have the knowledge and skills (in STEM and other key subjects) required for green jobs. Through our education and skills system, we will seek to inspire young people to choose career paths that support the: transition to net zero, restoration of biodiversity, and a sustainable future

Action Area 3: Education Estate and Digital Infrastructure
A green, sustainable education estate that is resilient to the impacts of climate change. By improving the physical environment in and around education settings, we can impact positively on both the physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people.

Action Area 4: Operations and Supply Chains
Schools have a valuable opportunity to drive change by introducing children and young people to more sustainable practices, such as: the circular economy, waste prevention, and resource efficiency.

Action Area 5: International
A vision for the United Kingdom education sector to be world leading in sustainability and climate change by 2030.

Climate Action Plans

Key areas of a climate action plan should typically cover the following four areas, to align with DfE's sustainability and climate change strategy:

- **Decarbonisation** - Reduce emissions and support children to be part of the transition to net zero.
- **Biodiversity** - Enhance biodiversity, improve air quality and increase access to, and connection with, nature.
- **Adaptation and Resilience** - Adapt our buildings and systems to prepare for the effects of climate change.
- **Climate Education and Green Careers** - Prepare children for a world impacted by climate change through education & practice.

Monitoring

The governors will monitor progress of the proposed actions through regular reports from the School Leadership Team.

Background

Current Energy Usage

The latest school DEC recorded an operation rating of D100 - a marginal improvement on the E103 from the previous year.

	Rating
November 2024	D100
November 2023	E103
November 2022	E106

This was based on energy use as follows:

	Actual (kWh/m²/pa)	Typical (kWh/m²/pa)
Electricity	42.15	40.00
Oil	101.47	127.42

Clearly oil usage at the school is a substantial issue and long term this must be addressed from a decarbonisation point of view.

Steps already taken

Materiality Assessment

In order to assess and prioritise our actions we have undertaken a materiality assessment of sustainability issues related to the school.

Initially, in order to make quick progress, this has been prepared by the governors and Senior Leadership Team. However, an early priority is to widen this consultation to encompass the pupils and wider staff.

We have reviewed a broad range of sustainability topics and assessed the combination of their impact on the climate and our ability to influence them.

Forest School

Haddenham St Mary's adopted the Forest School ethos in 2018 and as such already has an emphasis on the natural world built into the curriculum.

Building Improvements

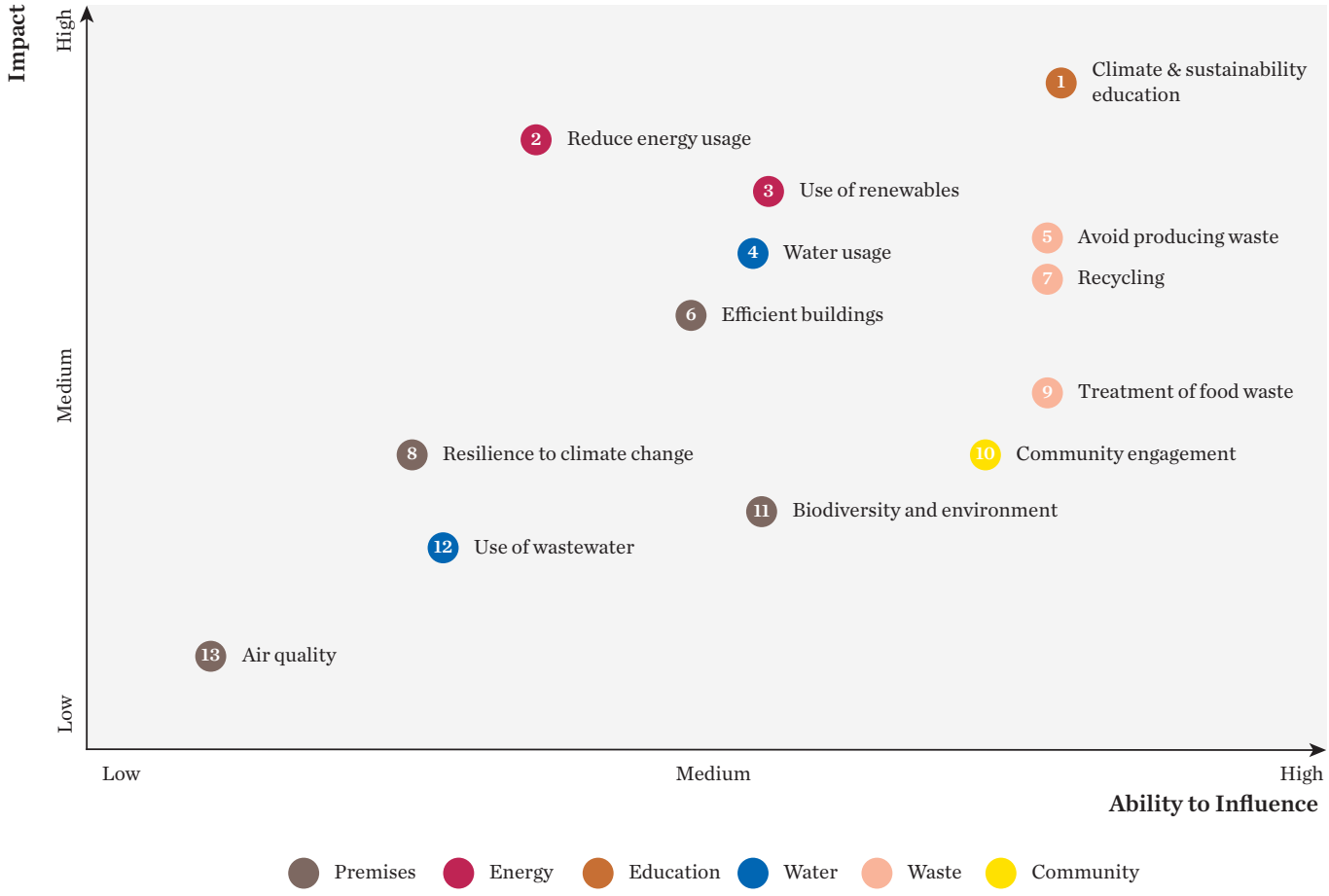
In recent years we have sought to improve the school premises through LED lighting, installing new windows, introducing smart metering and installing loft insulation.

The school developed its Eco-Lodge in 2012 using upcycled materials, solar panes and an air-source heat pump.

Eco-Council

The school has establish and Eco-Council forum to enable the children in our care to have a voice and promote sustainable ideas and activities.

Materiality Assessment



Action Plan

Action	Classification	Description	Timescale	Cost
School Consultation	Climate Education	Engage with pupils and staff to incorporate a broader range of priorities and support for the CAP. The school's Eco-Council should be a forum for developing ideas and making proposals.	H1 2025	£
Replace oil boiler	Decarbonisation	Long term aim to remove ageing oil boiler and replace with a more sustainable alternative. This would not only assist with reducing emissions but would also be an important step towards increased school resilience against breakdowns.	Medium term	£££
Reduce energy use	Decarbonisation	Encourage all users of the school to pay attention to wasteful use of electricity by encouraging people to switch off lights and equipment that is not being used. Consider turning heating temperature down one degree - if that maintains a comfortable, safe working environment. Ensure all radiators have thermostatic valves.	Ongoing	£
Increase use of renewable energy - PV panels	Decarbonisation	Increasing the supply of solar power to the school would both reduce emissions and save costs. The school premises are well situated to incorporate a substantial amount of PV panels - large south facing roof areas - and the hours of operation work well with solar.	Medium term	£££
Ensure efficient use of heating	Decarbonisation	Temperature settings and operation timings to be checked regularly to ensure heating only operating when required. Ensure boiler has automatic switching, and that it is operating.	Ongoing	£
Reduce car journeys to school	Decarbonisation	The school encourages parents to use alternative methods of transport to reach the school instead of travelling by car. Encourage car-pooling if no other option. Staff are also encouraged to cycle to work - this could be improved with a dedicated bike rack and promotion of the Cycle to Work Scheme. This has multiple benefits including reducing fuel use and congestion, improved safety, promoting a healthy lifestyle and be considerate to our neighbours.	Ongoing	£
Join National Education Nature Park	Biodiversity	The National Education Nature Park programme aims to embed nature-based learning in the curriculum, and encourage children and young people all over the country to take action to improve their site for people and wildlife.	H1 2025	£

Action Plan

Action	Classification	Description	Timescale	Cost
Actively improving natural habitats	Biodiversity	As a forest school we already have a strong focus on integrating the natural world into the school curriculum. We can expand this through specific projects such as upcycling old items to create planters, creating insect hotels, making bird feeders and planting wildflower areas.	Ongoing	£
Mitigate flooding risk	Adaptation & Resilience	Climate change leads to more extreme weather patterns and in the UK this is more and more frequently experienced as flood damage which can cause damage and more often disruption to normal operations. We should ensure that the school site, and the access to it, is not at risk of flooding and be able to deal with any emergencies that arise.	Medium Term	££
Mitigate heat risk	Adaptation & Resilience	Climate change is leading to higher temperatures and occasionally these can become excessive in the UK. The school should be prepared to deal with heat waves in a manner which enables its usual operation to continue with minimal disruption. The National Education Union has produced a guide on short and long term measures that can be taken.	Medium term	££
Reduce waste in school	Waste & Consumption	Excessive and unnecessary use of materials is costly and potentially harmful to the environment in terms of waste disposal. We should seek to utilise recycled materials where possible (e.g. school paper supply). This is particularly true of our food waste given the substantial catering operation that is undertaken on a daily basis. Consider schemes such as the Green School Project. Reduce use of single use plastics: Plastic Free Foundation.	Ongoing	£
Maximise recycling and re-use	Waste & Consumption	Ensure that waste is properly segregated and disposed of in order to maximise recycling and minimise landfill. Consider a PTA managed "Swap Shop" where students can swap clothes, books, games etc.	Ongoing	£
Reduce water usage	Waste & Consumption	Review water usage to ensure low-flow taps, reduce water use cisterns and monitor for leaks. Collect rainwater for watering grounds in sealed water butts (to prevent child access).	Ongoing	£

Action Plan

Action	Classification	Description	Timescale	Cost
Pupil litter survey and litter picking	Climate Education	Litter not only makes our environment look unpleasant, but it impacts the health of thousands of animals every year, as well as reaching and polluting our oceans and rivers. A litter survey will highlight the impact of litter on the local environment and positive action will lead to clearing up litter in the local area.	2025	£
Provide CPD for embedding sustainability in curriculum	Climate Education	Consider use of resources such as UCL's free course, Teaching for Sustainable Futures, which is available for teachers of primary and secondary children. Ensure that teachers are given time to make curriculum changes and necessary resources. Use tools such as Our City Our World to map out conceptual development of climate and sustainability. Consider external speakers such as Climate Ed.	2025	£