2021 - 2022
ZERO CARBON SCHOOLS
IMPACT REPORT
Zero Carbon Schools puts climate education and action at the heart of school life so that young people can become catalysts for change, now and in the future.

Zero Carbon Schools is a comprehensive package of resources, training, and support for schools, suitable for young people in years 4 - 8 (ages 8 - 13).

In September 2020 we piloted the programme with Green Schools Project staff delivering weekly sessions in each school. In September 2021 we rolled out an online version of the programme. This means teachers can access resources online and deliver the sessions themselves, with support from the Green Schools Project team by phone, email, and video call.

“When I come in and start my day and I look at my timetable, I remember that today we have the Zero Carbon Schools project. And it makes me really excited because I know the lesson’s going to be fun. And it’s going to be a lesson we can engage in and give all our thoughts.”

Pupil

44 schools signed up to the programme in 2021/22
PUPILS DEVELOP KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

By the end of the programme, pupils were better able to identify the causes of climate change. Other areas of particular improvement in knowledge related to understanding low carbon transport options and the impact our diets have on carbon emissions.

“Pupils are learning how to [...] do our part in helping our school become a greener place. Although we may not have the power to impact the whole world, we’re still doing our part to make our area and environment a cleaner and greener place.”

PUPIL

“The children are concerned about their future and understanding ‘sustainability’ and the impact we can all have by making a difference now has been so important.”

TEACHER

PUPILS TAKE ACTION IN RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

60% of pupils who completed the knowledge quiz at the start and end of the programme improved their knowledge about the climate crisis.

By the end of the programme, pupils were taking a wider range of actions to address the climate emergency. The biggest improvements were in relation to food - working to reduce food waste, increase the number of plant based items on the menu and grow vegetables at school.

“The project has made the children hyper aware of waste - in terms of energy/ paper. Also of fossil fuels and zero carbon alternatives. They have become more aware of what they eat and discuss this awareness casually. They are so motivated to share their understanding about the zero carbon lessons across the school to pupils and staff.”

TEACHER

The proportion of pupils surveyed working with their school to reduce the amount of meat pupils and staff eat increased from 15% to 30%.

“Sixth form resource centre which is now catered for entirely by renewable energy. It’s been really fun putting our project together and actually making a change ourselves instead of just speaking but not actually doing anything.”

PUPIL
PUPILS HAVE THE SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE TO TAKE CLIMATE ACTION

Taking meaningful action to reduce the schools’ carbon footprint is a central element of Zero Carbon Schools. As well as planning and leading a project to reduce carbon emissions, pupils develop leadership, problem solving, communication and teamwork skills.

“My teamwork skills have got stronger because beforehand I used to be quite a shy person but now I feel more confident.”

PUPIL

“Following the gaps for these children since March 2020, the skills of communication and teamwork were huge for the children in my school... Even ‘friendship’ is something we have had to focus on and this project has helped with this.”

TEACHER

TEACHERS ARE SUPPORTED TO BRING CLIMATE AND NATURE EDUCATION INTO LESSONS

The session plans for Zero Carbon Schools have been designed to be comprehensive and user-friendly but we know that having good lesson plans isn’t enough. We run regular ‘how to’ sessions over video calls so that teachers can ask questions and hear how things are going in other schools. We also provide individual support by phone and email as required.

“Supporting our school and providing useful and relevant resources for us to use when needed. The team are very knowledgeable and always keen to help in your delivery of the programme.”

TEACHER

92% OF TEACHERS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND 90% AGREE THAT CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION SHOULD BE A COMPULSORY TOPIC AT SCHOOL (TEACH THE FUTURE)
SCHOOLS TAKE ACTION AND ENGAGE THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

“[Adults] should stop saying they want to make a change, they should start making a change in life.” – Pupil

If we are to work towards zero carbon on a societal level we need to harness the energy and enthusiasm of young people. Through the programme schools are encouraged to celebrate their pupil projects and use them as an opportunity to inspire other pupils, parents and the wider community.

“We’ve got visitors coming in from our caterers to listen to the children’s queries about their use of beef in the menu, and they’re going to listen to them and tell them what they’re going to do about it. So, that’s really good. They’re all prepared for that, and that took lots of letter writing and emailing, and that sort of thing so I thought that was really brilliant. Because they’ve done something and adults have reacted and they’re going to discuss it, so that’s the activist part of it, you can do something. It’s so empowering, they listened to you, and they’re coming in.”

TEACHER

A CHANGING CLIMATE AFFECTS US ALL. BUT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THE MOST TO LOSE.

Their education must show them why it is necessary to take action to live sustainably, how it is possible to achieve the necessary changes, and that they can take leadership to make change happen.

For more information about how we’re helping schools embed climate and nature education into the curriculum with Zero Carbon Schools, contact info@greenschoolsproject.org.uk