

# Get YOUR school involved in the Energy Challenge!

Have you ever wanted to tackle climate change in your school but never known where to start? Well, look no further. The Energy Challenge is an easy step by step guide to sustainable energy.

Devised by the Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes, the Energy Challenge will help you incorporate sustainability into your campus, curriculum and community. We all know schools have limited resources and yet many are wasting energy and money needlessly. In fact every year UK schools are wasting around £20 million and 300,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> due to poor energy management. That's equivalent to all the emissions from every home in Middlesbrough!

The best way to success is to adopt a whole school approach to sustainable energy. In doing so you will reduce your energy bills, educate and inspire your pupils and help the environment.

The Energy Challenge comprises of three easy steps:

Step 1 Get the whole school involved – from the head teacher and leadership team, to teachers, site staff, governors, parents and students.

Step 2 Carry out an environmental audit of your school. It will identify where improvements can be made and will form the basis of a plan of action.

Step 3 Look to incorporating sustainability into your school policy or management plan and start installing sustainable energy measures

To help you every step of the way, all the information you need can be found in 'Tackling Climate Change – Guidance for Secondary Schools', which is available for download from [www.se-2.co.uk/energychallenge](http://www.se-2.co.uk/energychallenge).

Many schools across the UK are already tackling climate change in some way. Here are three examples.

Located in a deprived area of Nottingham, Top Valley School has worked hard over the years to become more sustainable. They employ a full time Environmental Coordinator who over the years has run a whole range of sustainability projects in the school. They started with a small team of students and looked at energy, water and waste. Once these students had become proficient in a topic they would train up the next team. The result was an eco team of over 140 students and a 5% saving on their electricity bills.

Sustainability has very much become part of their curriculum and is tackled in subjects such as geography, humanities, PHSE, science and design and technology. Students have planted wildlife meadows and a community garden, run energy audits and recycling projects, built wind turbines and even hosted an environmental rap off. Their work has also involved the local community with the installation of a wildlife corridor spanning the grounds of three schools and a local housing estate.

"Becoming an eco school where the emphasis is on the children themselves to take responsibility is a good starting point. Get the backing of the Governors and senior managers and then start with a small group of children. Train them on a project such as energy where they do an audit of the whole school and the children come together to draw

up with an action plan. That process can then be repeated for other areas such as litter and water.” advised Caroline Hendy, Environmental Coordinator, Top Valley School.

Copies of the worksheets, lesson plans and other resources developed by Top Valley School are now available on [www.enviroaction.co.uk](http://www.enviroaction.co.uk)

St Katherine’s School in North Somerset has taken a unique approach. They are one of twelve schools in the area that has signed up to a ‘Performance Partnership’ contract set up by North Somerset Council. The contract combines utility supply via EDF Energy and energy reduction services through a maintenance programme provided by Dalkia. This involves the school paying a fixed annual fee in exchange for energy supply, a full energy audit and a programme of work. The latter includes the replacement and upgrade of boilers, lighting and insulation, as well as the installation of a computerised energy management system. Dalkia’s package also includes health and safety management, and a series of interactive workshops for pupils. These workshops have been extremely successful in engaging with pupils and getting them to consider the impacts of energy use.

The results speak for themselves – St Katherine’s School has achieved a 35% saving that’s £35,000 per year off their energy bills.

At Ringmer Community College changing behaviour has been key. Energy wasting is discouraged or even penalised. Every class has two Eco Representatives who are responsible for turning off radiators, closing windows and doors, and switching off lights. If a member of staff leaves their computer on overnight, they receive an email the next morning reminding them to switch it off in future. If they leave it on again, they are charged £5 from their teaching budget. Pupils, cleaners and caretakers all play a part in monitoring.

“The school spends £84,000 a year on its energy bill and has saved 10% with easy common sense stuff.” Steve Green, Environmental Coordinator at Ringmer Community College.

The school has photovoltaic panels and a wind turbine, which are monitored and studied during science lessons. An Energy Bike is also used in assemblies to power a mocked-up child’s bedroom with lights, TV, stereo and MP3 charger.

The school has also introduced a policy whereby every curriculum leader has to have a sustainability element as part of their Self Evaluation Form. In many cases, the school’s sustainability co-ordinator has brought together the resources and literature that teachers need to embed sustainability into the curriculum. This has helped provide the teachers with both the information they need and the confidence to deliver it.

So as you can see becoming more sustainable can be fun, easy, save you money and inspire your pupils. What are you waiting for? Take the Energy Challenge and start tackling climate change today.

The Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes (EEPH) is a network of over 540 organisations from the public private and voluntary sectors. By working together EEPH aims to reduce the energy consumed by UK households as well as the number of people who are unable to sufficiently heat their homes during winter.