

# School Grounds Climate Audit

This audit is intended to assist in understanding the risks that our changing climate brings to your school grounds, and the nature based adaptations you can make. It is not intended to be exhaustive or dictate your priorities. The intention is to provide an opportunity to reflect on your education practice and how well adapted your spaces are to our changing climate.



How to use the audit: this audit is best undertaken with a group of learners and adults from the school - different views and experiences are important. Do also undertake the audit with a map in hand and while moving around the school grounds. Pupils often know 'secret' areas, and it can also jog memories around what happens on a windy, wet, or hot day in the grounds.

To complete the audit, select the closest matching statement. You can enter your results directly in the digital version of the audit or complete the audit on paper before entering the results back in the classroom.

**On the 'Results' tab** you will find a graph of where you are currently with regards to having climate ready school grounds. It is important to be realistic in what you can achieve, and most schools will choose to focus on only a few areas.

After completing this audit and gathering the results, do engage with the pupils and other staff about what you have learned, and agree what your priorities and plans are. This audit is as much about your practice as an educator and the learning experience your pupils have as it is about adapting our schools' outdoor spaces to better prepare for a changing climate.

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## Policy & Practice

This section is for school staff to fill in. Please use a selection of staff.

Use the 'Select' box to choose the closest reply you can. Use the notes box to make deeper observations.

	Policy & Practice	Scoring	Your notes
1.01	Outdoor learning is an expectation of all our staff, who are trained and supported to deliver learning outdoors.		
1.02	We have a member of staff or external supplier to lead all or most of our outdoor learning themselves.		
1.03	Sustainability, climate change or outdoor learning are all in addition to our current curriculum, or are enrichment, or are for the Eco-Committee to undertake.		
1.04	Sustainability, climate change or outdoor learning is embedded across all the curriculum and is visible in school life.		
1.05	All our break supervision staff are trained and feel confident to support great play in the school grounds.		
1.06	We have an outdoor learning policy.		
1.07	We have a play policy.		
1.08	We have a climate change action and mitigation policy, or it is clearly integrated with other policies.		
1.09	We have appointed a lead or co-ordinator in areas around sustainability and climate in the curriculum, outdoor learning, and play.		
1.10	All our pupils are actively involved in designing and creating school grounds improvements.		
1.11	A range of staff members, both teaching and non-teaching, are actively involved in designing and creating school grounds improvements.		
1.12	We relate our play, learning, and various action plans to the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.		
1.13	We are sharing our climate action work with parents and invite them to contribute their time and skills.		

1.14	We are sharing our outdoor learning and play work with parents and invite them to contribute in time, skills or donations as they can.		
1.15	Existing features in the school grounds are generally maintained, used and loved.		
1.16	We do not yet have a shared vision and values in sustainability, climate education, outdoor learning or play. Consequently we are still planning much of the above.		
2.01	We use the grounds for outdoor learning on a regular basis - most days someone is outside for a lesson.		
2.02	We have one or more sheltered outdoor gathering spaces for classes to use or pupils to socialise in.		
2.03	Our grounds are accessible by all pupils.		
2.04	We ensure that all pupils can access warm and waterproof outdoor clothing through a clothes library or similar.		
2.05	We partner with other organisations or individuals with specialist skills or knowledge to extend our outdoor learning and play.		
2.06	We partner with other organisations or individuals who have knowledge or expertise around climate change issues.		
2.07	Our grounds are used every breaktime, even in damp, hot, cold, or windy weather.		
2.08	We cancel our outdoor breaktimes due to hot weather more than twice a year.		
2.09	We cancel our outdoor breaktimes due to wet weather more than twice a year.		
2.10	We cancel our outdoor breaktime due to high winds more than twice a year.		
2.11	We welcome our children to play in the school grounds before and after school hours.		

2.12	The community use the space by arrangement in an evening or weekend (e.g. renting out pitches).		
2.13	The community freely use the space in an evening or weekend for play and socialising.		
2.14	Our grounds are more sheletered from sun, wind, rain, or cold than the surrounding area.		
2.15	Our grounds are closed after school and not used by the community or our familes out of hours.		
2.16	We have a plan to communicate to the wider school community around climate change education, outdoor learning and play.		

## Nature & Sustainability

*Using a satellite map, please estimate in percentages. Bing Maps offers the best detail in aerial photo mode. Use all areas of the school, not just where pupils have access, such as car parks. The total at the bottom should add up to 100%.*

Ground Cover		Percentage	
3.01	What area of ground is covered by your building?		
3.02	What area of ground is sports or play surfaces such as artificial grass, rubber mattings or clay pitches?		
3.03	What area of grounds is solid / hard surfacing such as tarmac?		
3.04	What area of ground is mown grass e.g. sports pitches?		
3.05	What area of ground is for growing food or formal gardens?		
3.06	What area of ground is covered by trees, shrubs, or hedges?		
3.07	What area of ground is covered by long grass or meadow?		
3.08	What area of ground is covered by something else e.g. beach, bogland, water, stone?		
Total %		<b>0</b>	This should always add up to 100%.

## Biodiversity & Nature Features

Now revert back to selecting the best match and making notes.

Nature			
4.01	We have items such as bug homes, bat boxes, or hedgehog homes.		
4.02	We have areas which are maintained as, or allowed to be, 'wild' with minimal or careful human access.		

4.03	We have water features such as ponds, streams or wetland.		
4.04	We have areas of flowers, wild flowers, flowering ground cover or flowering shrubs - which may or may not be actively encouraging pollinators.		
4.05	We have log piles or areas of deadwood to encourage insects.		
4.06	We encourage birdlife through providing bird boxes, tables and a source of water.		
4.07	Chemicals such weedkillers, pesticides or herbicides are used on our site regularly.		
4.08	We have a biodiversity action plan for our site.		

### Sustainability Features

5.01	All the entrances used by all our children are welcoming, clearly signed and they encourage access by foot, scooter, bike or bus.		
5.02	There is ample seating in different areas of the grounds, and for different sizes of group, including seating with shelter from heat, wind, or rain.		
5.03	There is ample provision for secure cycle and scooter storage.		
5.04	We have an active travel policy and action plan, which is shared with our local authority.		
5.05	There are good composting facilities.		
5.06	There are enough outdoor litter bins located in the right places.		
5.06	We have renewable energy features of some kind, such as solar panels or a wind turbine.		
5.07	There are good facilities for growing food in the grounds.		
5.08	There is a good range of fruit trees or bushes, and we use the fruit.		
5.09	We have none of the sustainability features listed above.		
5.10	Would you agree that there are significant compromises on your site to allow vehicle access or car parking?		

## Carbon Management

	Carbon Management	Scoring	Notes
7.01	There are a good number of trees of different species and ages in our grounds.		
7.02	There are a good number of shrubs of different species and ages in our grounds.		
7.03	There are areas of rough and long grass, meadows, or areas of wild plants which we do not mow regularly.		
7.04	There are a variety of hedges all around the school site, not just boundaries.		
7.05	We create our own compost on site - from landscape clippings, leaves etc.		
7.06	Our school grounds are over 70% hard surface such as asphalt, astro turf or safety surfaces.		
7.07	We have an action plan to increase trees, shrubs, long grass, meadows, and hedges around our site, as a way of sequestering carbon.		

## Water Management

A warming planet puts more energy into our atmosphere. This extra energy is apparent in many ways - one way is increased water in the atmosphere, which will increase both how often it rains and increase intense rain storms.

Use this section to consider how much water arrives at your site, how it is managed on site, and how it is released from your site. In the UK it is predicted that there is a significant issue depending on your local geography: the south and south east face long drought periods, the north and west face increases in the number of rainy days, and all areas face more rain storms and surface water flooding. All school sites should look to slow down the movement of water, retaining it for longer to reduce drought periods and also reduce any contribution to flooding down stream of the school site.

The questions are looking at the whole site. You can use the notes to remind yourself where issues are, and perhaps ideas to help manage

	Water Questions	Scoring	Notes
5.01	We have a stream or river, or have natural running water on site or on a boundary.		
5.02	We have area(s) on which water puddles or pools (including a pond) when it rains, but it disappears slowly afterwards, and the water does not cause a problem for us.		
5.03	We have areas of the school grounds which remain wet or muddy after rain, hindering use of some spaces.		
5.04	Water floods or flows uncontrollably ONTO our site during rainfall.		
5.05	Water floods or flows uncontrollably OFF our site during rainfall.		
5.06	Some areas of our building have flooded during rainfall in the last 10 years.		



5.07	Our downpipes from the school roof drain into rain gardens, water butts, swales, or similar.		
5.08	Our site is in a flood risk area.		Please use: <a href="https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/location">https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/location</a>
5.09	We have a flood resilience plan, using a variety of strategies and solutions.		
6.01	Our school has areas which are dry and dusty for more than a month in the summer.		
6.02	We have plants or trees which have died, or are damaged, in the summer due to lack of water.		
6.03	We have deep grass/meadow areas or mulch/gravel covered soil around our trees, shrubs, and plants.		
6.04	We have a source of water other than mains water, to water our gardens or grounds with in the summer.		
6.05	We have bog gardens, ponds, or swales which retain more water on our site, allowing it to slowly be used.		
6.06	Our local area has hosepipe bans or other restrictions on water use during the summer.		
6.07	We have a water management plan for our site.		

## Temperature Management

A warming planet puts more energy into our atmosphere. This extra energy is apparent in many ways - one way is that both the underlying temperature across the UK will increase and we will also see hotter and more sustained 'heat waves' in many parts of the UK.

Use this section to consider both how much your site could be vulnerable to heat and how much your site can reduce the extreme heat. Some sites, which are dominated by buildings and dark, hard surfaces, perhaps facing south and in urban areas, are very vulnerable and heat should be a matter of urgent consideration and action.

The questions are looking at the whole site. You can use the notes to remind yourself where the hottest areas are or where they are shaded and cool regularly. You can also keep notes on ideas you have for some areas to use trees, shrubs, water, colour or wind to cool the area.

	Temperature	Scoring	Notes
7.01	We have areas of the <b>grounds</b> which get very hot in the summer, through being in the full sun.		
7.02	We have areas of the <b>grounds</b> which are well shaded by buildings through the summer.		
7.03	We have areas of the <b>grounds</b> which are well shaded by trees or shrubs through the summer.		
7.04	We have areas of the <b>building</b> which are shaded by trees or shrubs through the summer.		
7.05	The outdoor <b>surfaces</b> in our school can overheat and can be too hot to touch.		
7.06	Some of the indoor area of our building overheats in the summer, or requires air conditioning.		
7.07	We have green walls or green roofs on our buildings.		
7.08	We have running water in areas of our grounds, even in summer.		
7.09	We have or are planning temporary shades such as sun sails, tarps, or sheets we can put up in the summer.		
7.10	We have seating or gathering areas which are sheltered from the full sun and are cooler than surrounding areas in summer.		
7.11	We plan on planting trees, hedges, or shrubs in a location which will shelter the school grounds or building.		

## Considering: Cold Stress

A warming planet puts more energy into our atmosphere. This extra energy is reflected in many ways - one way is increased winds around the planet. Your site may now experience more 'cold events' in winter and a more persistent wind, cooling the site down.

Use this section to consider both how much wind you have on your site and how much your site shelters you from the winds. You should consider the average wind on your site and extreme wind events due to storms.

The questions are looking at the whole site. You can use the notes to remind yourself where you can shelter from the wind and areas which remain colder for longer.

	Question	Scoring	Notes
8.01	We have areas of our grounds which feel colder than the rest of the site.		
8.02	We have areas of our site where frost or ice can sit for longer.		
8.03	We have areas of the grounds where frost, snow or ice rarely forms, even on a sub-zero temperature day.		
8.04	Some areas of our building struggle to stay warm on a cold day.		
8.05	We have green walls or green roofs on our buildings.		
8.06	We have seating or gathering areas which are more sheltered on a cold day.		
8.07	We plan on planting trees, hedges, or shrubs in a location which will shelter the school grounds or buildings.		

## Considering: Wind Stress

A warming planet puts more energy into our atmosphere. This extra energy is apparent in many ways - one way is increased winds around the planet. Your site may now experience more wind, both average wind days and extreme wind events during storms.

Use this section to consider both how much wind you have on your site and how much your site shelters you from the winds. You should consider the average wind on your site and extreme wind events due to storms.

The questions are looking at the whole site. You can use the notes to remind yourself where sheltered areas are, where constantly windy areas are or where wind has or does cause problems.

	Question	Scoring	Notes
6.01	We have areas of the grounds which are windy on many days through the year.		
6.02	We have areas of the grounds which are usually sheltered from the wind.		

6.03	We have trees, shrubs or hedges planted around our boundaries.		
6.04	We have trees, shrubs, or hedges planted close to our building (within 5 metres).		
6.05	We have had shrubs or trees damaged by winds within the last 5 years.		
6.07	Our buildings have been damaged by high winds within the last 5 years.		
6.08	We plan on planting trees, hedges, or shrubs in a location which will shelter the school grounds or building.		

## Air Quality

	Air Quality	Scoring	Notes
8.01	We have plants, shrubs, hedges, or trees immediately next to sources of pollution (e.g. on the verge next to a road, but outside the school site).		
8.02	We have barriers such as a hedge or shrubs on the boundary, which could help block out sources of pollution next to the site.		
8.03	We have sources of pollution on our site and below adult head height - such as a boiler flue.		
8.04	We have more trees, shrubs, and hedges around the site, but not on the boundary.		
8.05	We are next to significant sources of pollution from traffic - such as a busy road or intersection.		
8.06	We have sources of significant pollution such as factories or heating systems near to our site.		
8.07	We have an air quality plan which both reduces our school sources of air pollution, and/or which includes a planting scheme to reduce the pollution which gets onto our site.		

# School Grounds Climate Audit



## Results: Overall

<p>You have a range of policies in place across climate change, sustainability, outdoor learning and play (themes which interact with each other).</p>	<p>Above 50%? You are doing well, but you may want to develop this further</p>
<p>You have a lack of policy, or policy which is not focussed on the themes of climate change, sustainability, outdoor learning and play (themes which interact with each other).</p>	<p>Above 50%? You should look at what policies you have and perhaps consider your practice.</p>
<p>You have an ambition to improve, and hope for many changes in the future.</p>	<p>Below 50%? Look to improve your vision and how you share that with others.</p>
<p>Is your site problematic for nature (for example you have a lot of tarmac), or does the management of your site reduce nature (for example, you use weedkillers)?</p>	<p>Above 0%? Your site has some fundamental issues with providing nature, and/or your site management is working against nature.</p>
<p>How much are we currently doing for nature on our site or plan to help nature on our site?</p>	<p>The higher the score, the more you are doing or plan to do for nature.</p>
<p>How sustainable is our site?</p>	<p>Below 50%? There are more sustainability features you should consider for your site.</p>
<p>Can we add more sustainable facilities/features to our site?</p>	<p>A higher score here shows you need to consider the sustainability features of your site.</p>
<p>How much is wind an issue/could be an issue on our site?</p>	<p>Over 30%? Wind could be an issue on your site.</p>
<p>We have features or plan features which will shelter us from the wind</p>	<p>The higher the score, the more features you have which shelter you from wind.</p>
<p>How much is heat an issue on our site?</p>	<p>Over 30%? Overheating could be an issue on your site.</p>
<p>We have shade from nature, buildings or temporary shade to reduce overheating on our site.</p>	<p>The higher the score, the more you are doing or plan to do to cool your site.</p>
<p>Does our site have cold areas?</p>	<p>Over 30%? Your site might have an issue in freezing conditions.</p>

Do we currently provide shelter from the cold?	The higher the score, the more you are doing or plan to do to create a site which is less prone to freezing conditions.
Is excess water an issue on our site?	Over 30%? Your site might have an issue with too much water, including flooding.
How does our site currently manage excess water?	The higher the score, the more you are doing or plan to do to manage water on your site, reducing the possibility of flooding.
Is our site affected by or vulnerable to drought?	Over 30%? Your site might have an issue with drought conditions.
How well do we manage water on our site to reduce drought on our site?	The higher the score, the more you are doing or plan to do to manage water on your site, reducing drought conditions.
Our site can sequester carbon and/or we have plans to sequester more	The higher the score the more efforts you have made to sequester more carbon into the soil of your site - such as trees, shrubs, plants and composting.
Our site sequestrates little carbon at present	Over 30%? Your site is unlikely to sequester much carbon, and is probably dominated by hard surfaces such as tarmac and artificial
Do we have poor air quality on our site?	Over 30%? Your site might have poor air quality.
Your site currently protects the pupils from poor air quality.	The higher the score, the more your site does to clean or protect the pupils from poor air quality.

## Results: Policy & Practice - Details

You have a range of policies in place across climate change, sustainability, outdoor learning and play (themes which interact with each other).

You have a lack of policy, or policy which is not focussed on the themes of climate change, sustainability, outdoor learning and play (themes which interact with each other).

You have an ambition to improve, and hope for many changes in the future.

Our staff broadly share the same vision and share a responsibility to teach about climate change and sustainability, utilising outdoor learning when appropriate.

A small group of staff deliver all of the climate change, sustainability and outdoor learning experiences in the school.

Themes such as climate and sustainability, or the use of outdoor learning, are cross-cutting and embedded in our wider curriculum.

Themes such as climate, sustainability and outdoor learning are restricted to a few staff leaders and/or a small group of pupils and/or a short period of time in the year.

Your policy & practice increases opportunities for play.

Your policy & practice restricts opportunity for play.

Your wider community is involved in supporting climate change, sustainability, outdoor learning, play and the use of your school grounds.

Do we exclude community from being involved in or accessing our grounds?

Your grounds are inclusive.

More work is needed to make your grounds inclusive.

How well do you partner with specialists to extend learning?

You lack partnership and sharing of vision around climate change, sustainability, outdoor learning and play.

There are features in our grounds created and maintained to facilitate learning and play.

Our grounds lack features to encourage use by teachers and/or our policy and practice discourages them from using the space.

The scoring above gives you an estimate of where you are with current policy and practice. It is no substitute for a conversation and deeper thought, but rather is a reaction to a few key questions in the survey of your policy and practice. Take time to consider each statement and interpret to your situation.

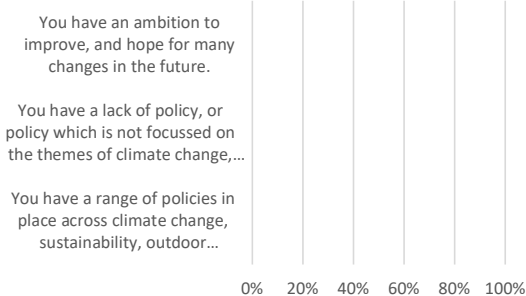
For example, there were questions about if you have various policies in place - from a foundation of outdoor learning and a play policies, through to a policy around welcoming pupils to use the school grounds before or after school, or ensuring all staff are involved in climate education and use the outdoors as a context for learning.

There were also questions about your ambition. For example, do you plan to plant more trees and shrubs? Have you plans to tackle certain issues? These will improve over time as you develop your plans.

Finally there are a couple of questions around the school grounds you have. Some schools have amazing spaces, but perhaps are not using or improving them. Some schools are starting with a challenging space and

## Results: Climate Adapted School Grounds

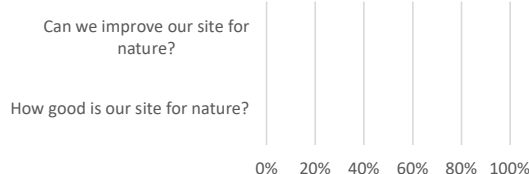
### Ambition & Policy



The foundation of quality education is about our intention, our policy and practice. In regard to climate change education, it is important that these issues are considered as a whole school and embedded in our curriculum. While ambition is vital at the start, we must put in place policy, practice and curriculum which matches our ambition. To find out how you can address these issues, please visit [www.ltl.org.uk](http://www.ltl.org.uk)



### Nature



Nature is an amazing thing, and as we address climate change, nature-based solutions are one of the most important tools we have. Nature can cool areas, slow windspeeds, absorb water and carbon, and create spaces which shelter us all. Even the most concrete of school grounds can be transformed with vision, time and effort. To find out how you can address these issues, please visit [www.ltl.org.uk](http://www.ltl.org.uk)

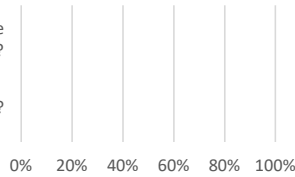




### Sustainability Features

Can we add more sustainable facilities/features to our site?

How sustainable is our site?



Your school site is part of a wider set of issues around sustainability. From using active transport to site, to better insulation, renewable energy and growing food. See if you can develop a vision of what your school could be, and then work through a process of change to make practical decisions.

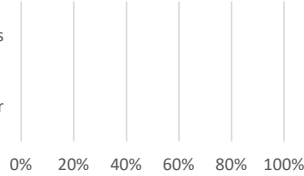
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### Wind on our site

We have features or plan features which will shelter us from the wind

How much is wind an issue/could be an issue on our site?



As our climate changes the average and peak wind speeds will increase. Any wind issues you currently face will increase in the future.

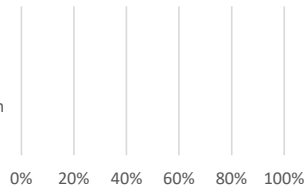
Nature-based solutions can provide shelter from average winds and protect children and buildings in high winds.

To find out how you can address these issues, please visit [www.ltl.org.uk](http://www.ltl.org.uk)



### Heat on our site

How much is heat an issue on our site?



As our climate changes we are likely to see higher peak temperatures and more 'heat events' where we have high temperatures for a week or more.

Nature-based solutions can create shade and retain moisture, keeping temperatures much lower than hard surfaces such as tarmac or play safety surfaces do.

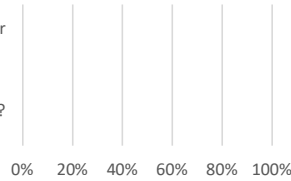
To find out how you can address these issues, please visit [www.ltl.org.uk](http://www.ltl.org.uk)



### Cold on our site

Do we currently provide shelter from the cold?

Does our site have cold areas?



As our climate changes we are likely to see some 'cold events', where we see extreme cold weather for periods of winter.

It is worth considering how we can reduce the ice and snow build up, keeping our children and buildings warmer using nature-based solutions.

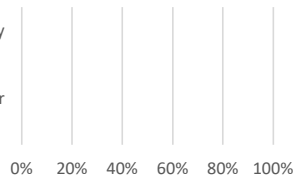
To find out how you can address these issues, please visit [www.ltl.org.uk](http://www.ltl.org.uk)



### Excess water on our site

How does our site currently manage excess water?

Is excess water an issue on our site?



As our climate changes we will see both more rainy days and an increase in intensity of rainfall. This means our school grounds will both remain wetter and be more prone to flooding.

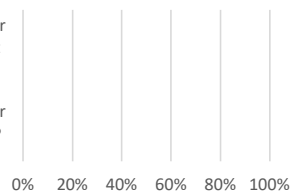
To find out how you can address these issues, please visit [www.ltl.org.uk](http://www.ltl.org.uk)



### Drought and our site

How well do we manage water on our site to reduce drought on our site?

Is our site affected by or vulnerable to drought?



As our climate changes we will see more drought conditions in our schools and communities. Adapting our environment to retain water on site can help support more nature, including the plants, shrubs, hedges and trees we rely upon for all sorts of nature-based solutions.

To find out how you can address these issues, please visit [www.ltl.org.uk](http://www.ltl.org.uk)



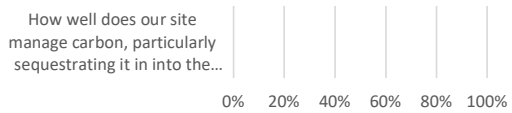
### Carbon management and our site

Could we sequester more carbon on our site?



Our school sites can play a part in absorbing (or "sequestering") carbon. Sites with more trees, shrubs, hedges and plants create better soils, and so are far superior to sites with hard tarmac or plastic play surfaces.



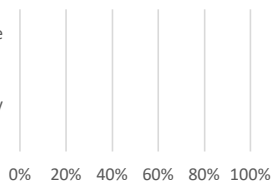


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### Air quality and our site

What are we doing to improve air quality on our site?

Do we have poor air quality on our site?



Linked to our changing climate and weather is an increase in air pollution, particularly at ground level. When created well, natural barriers such as trees, hedges and shrubs can all reduce air pollution levels on site significantly.

To find out how you can address these issues, please visit [www.ltl.org.uk](http://www.ltl.org.uk)

