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. Please note that an incomplete audit will create incomplete results, as the questions interlink with each other.

On the 'Results' tab you will find a graph of where you are currently with regards to having climate ready school grounds.

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 wide selection of staff across age groups and subject specialism, age, gender and experience.

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

		Scoring	Your notes
P1	Outdoor learning is an expectation of all our staff, who are trained and supported to deliver learning outdoors.	Select	
P2	We have a member of staff or external supplier to lead all or most of our outdoor learning themselves.	Select	
Р3	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.	Select	
P4	Sustainability, climate change or outdoor learning is embedded across all the curriculum and is visible in school life.	Select	
Р5	All our break supervision staff are trained and feel confident to support great play in the school grounds.	Select	
P6	We have an outdoor learning policy.	Select	
Ρ7	We have a play policy.	Select	
P8	We have a climate change action and mitigation policy, or it is clearly integrated with other policies.	Select	
Р9	We have appointed a lead or co-ordinator in areas around climate change and sustainabilty in the curriculum, outdoor learning, and play.	Select	
P10	All our pupils are actively involved in designing and creating school grounds improvements.	Select	
P11	A range of staff members, both teaching and non- teaching, are actively involved in designing and creating school grounds improvements.	Select	
P12	We relate our play, learning, and various action plans to the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.	Select	

P13	We are sharing our climate action work with parents and invite them to contribute their time and skills.	Select	
P14	We are sharing our outdoor learning and play work with parents and invite them to contribute in time, skills or donations as they can.	Select	
P15	Existing features in the school grounds are generally maintained, used and loved.	Select	
P16	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.	Select	
P17	We use the grounds for outdoor learning on a regular basis - most days someone is outside for a lesson.	Select	
P18	We have one or more sheltered outdoor gathering spaces for classes to use or pupils to socialise in.	Select	
P19	Our grounds are acccessible by all pupils.	Select	
P20	We ensure that all pupils can access warm and waterproof outdoor clothing through a clothes library or similar.	Select	
P21	We partner with other organisations or individuals with specialist skills or knowledge to extend our outdoor learning and play.	Select	
P22	We partner with other organisations or individuals who have knowledge or expertise around climate change issues.	Select	
P23	Our grounds are used every breaktime, even in damp, hot, cold, or windy weather.	Select	
P24	We cancel our outdoor breaktimes due to hot weather more than twice a year.	Select	
P25	We cancel our outdoor breaktimes due to wet weather more than twice a year.	Select	
P26	We cancel our outdoor breaktime due to high winds more than twice a year.	Select	
P27	We welcome our children to play in the school grounds before and after school hours.	Select	

P28	The community use the space by arrangement in an evening or weekend (e.g. renting out pitches, birthday party hosting).	Select	
P29	The community freely use the space in an evening or weekend for play and socialising.	Select	
P30	Our grounds are more sheletered from sun, wind, rain, or cold than the surrounding area.	Select	
P31	Our grounds are closed after school and not used by the community or our familes out of hours.	Select	
P32	We have a plan to communicate to the wider school community around climate change education, outdoor learning and play.	Select	

Nature & Sustainability

	Ground Cover				
Using a	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%.				
	Percentage Do pupils have access to all or some of this area for learning and or play?				
GC1	What area of ground is covered by your buildings?				
GC2	What area of ground is sports or play surfaces such as artificial grass, rubber mattings or clay pitches?				
GC3	What area of grounds is solid / hard surfacing such as tarmac?				
GC4	What area of ground is mown grass e.g. sports pitches?				
GC5	What area of ground is for growing food or formal gardens?				
GC6	What area of ground is covered by trees, shrubs, or hedges?				
GC7	What area of ground is covered by long grass or meadow?				
GC8	What area of ground is covered by something else e.g. beach, bogland, water, stone?				
	Total %	0	<this 100%.<="" add="" always="" should="" td="" to="" up=""></this>		

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

Biodiversity & Nature Features			
N9	We have items such as bug homes, bat boxes, or hedgehog homes.	Select	
N10	We have areas which are maintained as, or allowed to be, 'wild' with minimal or careful human access.	Select	
N11	We have water features such as ponds, streams or wetland.	Select	

N12	We have areas of flowers, wild flowers, flowering ground cover or flowering shrubs - which may or may not be actively encouraging pollinators.	Select	
N13	We have log piles or areas of deadwood to encourage insects.	Select	
N14	We encourage birdlife through providing bird boxes, tables and a source of water.	Select	
N15	Chemicals such weedkillers, pesticides or herbicides are used on our site regularly.	Select	
N16	We have a biodiversity action plan for our site.	Select	

	Sustainability Features			
SF1	All the entrances used by all our children are welcoming, clearly signed and they encourage access by foot, scooter, bike or bus.	Select		
SF2	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.	Select		
SF3	There is ample provision for secure cycle and scooter storage.	Select		
SF4	We have an active travel policy and action plan, which is shared with our local authority.	Select		
SF5	There are good composting facilities.	Select		
SF6	There are enough outdoor litter bins located in the right places.	Select		
SF7	We have renewable energy features of some kind, such as solar panels or a wind turbine.	Select		
SF8	There are good facilities for growing food in the grounds.	Select		
SF9	There is a good range of fruit trees or bushes, and we use the fruit.	Select		
SF11	We agree that there are significant compromises on your site to allow vehicle access or car parking?	Select		

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
Τl	We have areas of the grounds which get very hot in the summer, through being in the full sun.	Select	
Т2	We have areas of the grounds which are well shaded by buildings through the summer.	Select	
Т3	We have areas of the grounds which are well shaded by trees or shrubs through the summer.	Select	
T4	We have areas of the building which are shaded by trees or shrubs through the summer.	Select	
Т5	The outdoor surfaces in our school can overheat and can be too hot to touch.	Select	
Т6	Some of the indoor area of our building overheats in the summer, or requires air conditioning.	Select	
Τ7	We have green walls or green roofs on our buildings.	Select	
Т8	We have running water in areas of our grounds, even in summer.	Select	
Т9	We have or are planning temporary shades such as sun sails, tarps, or sheets we can put up in the summer.	Select	
T10	We have seating or gathering areas which are sheltered from the full sun and are cooler than surrounding areas in summer.	Select	
T11	We plan on planting trees, hedges, or shrubs in a location which will shelter the school grounds or building.	Select	

Considering: Cold Stress

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

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
T12	We have areas of our grounds which feel colder than the rest of the site.	Select	
T13	We have areas of our site where frost or ice can sit for longer.	Select	
T14	We have areas of the grounds where frost, snow or ice rarely forms, even on a sub-zero temperature day.	Select	
T15	Some areas of our building struggle to stay warm on a cold day.	Select	
T16	We have green walls or green roofs on our buildings.	Select	
T17	We have seating or gathering areas which are more sheltered on a cold day.	Select	
T18	We plan on planting trees, hedges, or shrubs in a location which will shelter the school grounds or buildings.	Select	

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
WI	We have areas of the grounds which are windy on many days through the year.	Select	
W2	We have areas of the grounds which are usually sheltered from the wind.	Select	

W3	We have trees, shrubs or hedges planted around our boundaries.	Select	
W4	We have trees, shrubs, or hedges planted close to our building (within 5 metres).	Select	
W5	We have had shrubs or trees damaged by winds within the last 5 years.	Select	
W6	Our buildings have been damaged by high winds within the last 5 years.	Select	
W7	We plan on planting trees, hedges, or shrubs in a location which will shelter the school grounds or building from wind.	Select	

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
W1	We have a stream or river, or have natural running water on site or on a boundary.	Select	
W2	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.	Select	
W3	We have areas of the school grounds which remain wet or muddy after rain, hindering use of some spaces.	Select	
W4	Water floods or flows uncontrollably ONTO our site during rainfall.	Select	
W5	Water floods or flows uncontrollably OFF our site during rainfall.	Select	
W6	Some areas of our building have flooded during rainfall in the last 10 years.	Select	
W7	Our downpipes from the school roof drain into rain gardens, water butts, swales, or similar.	Select	

W8	Our site is in a flood risk area.	Select	Please use: https://flood-map-for- planning.service.gov.uk/location
W9	We have a flood resilience plan, using a variety of strategies and solutions.	Select	
W10	Our school has areas which are dry and dusty for more than a month in the summer.	Select	
W11	We have plants or trees which have died, or are damaged, in the summer due to lack of water.	Select	
W12	We have deep grass/meadow areas or mulch/gravel covered soil around our trees, shrubs, and plants.	Select	
W13	We have a source of water other than mains water, to water our gardens or grounds with in the summer.	Select	
W14	We have bog gardens, ponds, or swales which retain more water on our site, allowing it to slowly be used.	Select	
W15	Our local area has hosepipe bans or other restrictions on water use during the summer.	Select	
W16	We have a water management plan for our site.	Select	

Carbon Management				
	Carbon Management	Scoring	Notes	
C1	There are a good number of trees of different species and ages in our grounds.	Select		
C2	There are a good number of shrubs of different species and ages in our grounds.	Select		
С3	There are areas of rough and long grass, meadows, or areas of wild plants which we do not mow regularly.	Select		
C4	There are a variety of hedges all around the school site, not just boundaries.	Select		
C5	We create our own compost on site - from landscape clippings, leaves etc.	Select		
C6	Our school grounds are over 70% hard suface such as tarmac, astro turf or rubber safety surfaces.	Select		
C7	We have an action plan to increase trees, shrubs, long grass, meadows, and hedges around our site, as a way of sequestrating carbon.	Select		

Air Quality				
		Scoring	Notes	
A1	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).	Select		
A2	We have barriers such as a hedge or shrubs on the boundary, which could help block out sources of pollution next to the site.	Select		
A3	We have sources of pollution on our site and below adult head height - such as a boiler flue.	Select		
A4	We have more trees, shrubs, and hedges around the site, but not on the boundary.	Select		
A5	We are next to significant sources of pollution from traffic - such as a busy road or intersection.	Select		
A6	We have sources of significant pollution such as factories or heating systems near to our site.	Select		
A7	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.	Select		

School Grounds Climate Audit Results



The scoring below is only a broad assessment: hold them as a general indicator of your policy and practice. Reflecting on the questions to understand your strengths and areas for improvement therefore is an important part of the process. Please involve and discuss this with pupils, staff, parents and/or your LtL staff member. The more voices you can hear from, the stronger the vision you can develop from this work.

Note that many of the scores draw on questions across all 6 themes and therefore some results will require all sections to be completed for the full scores to be shown.

Results: Culture, Curriculum and Community

You have a range of positive & constructive policies and practice in place across climate change, sustainability, outdoor learning and play (themes which interact with each other).	0%	The higher your score here, the more your policies align with best practice in climate change education, sustainability, outdoor learning and play. Positive indicators include such things as involving all staff and pupils, a holistic approach, embedding climate and sustainability across both formal learning and creation, managment and use of your outdoor space.
You have some polices or practices which are not as positive or helpful in furthering climate change, sustainability, outdoor learning and play themes.	0%	Above 50%? You should look at what policies you have and perhaps consider your practice. Negative indicators include such things as: very few staff or pupils involved in consultation or delivery, lack of embedding in overall curriculum, use of chemicals on site, and more.
You have an ambition to improve, and hope for many changes in the future.	0%	Below 50%? Look to develop your shared vision among staff and pupils, and how you communicate that vision to all.
Your staff broadly share the same vision and share a responsibility to teach about climate change and sustainability, utilising outdoor learning when appropriate.	0%	A high score here suggests that your policy and practice aligns with best practice - that of a shared responsibility and deliver of climate change education, sustianability, outdoor learning and play.
A small group of staff deliver all of the climate change, sustainability and outdoor learning experiences in the school.	0%	A high score here suggest you need to consider how you move towards a practice which includes all staff in climate change education, sustainability, outdoor learning and play for all learners.
Themes such as climate change education and sustainability, or the use of outdoor learning, are cross-cutting and embedded in your wider curriculum.	0%	A high score here suggest that your curriculum has elements of best practice.
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.	0%	A high score here suggest that your curriculum does not have elements of climate change education or sustainability as cross cutting themes or included in all subjects of the curriculum.
Your policy & practice increases opportunities for play.	0%	A high score suggest your policy and practice support good play.
Your policy & practice restricts opportunity for play.	0%	A high score here suggests you need to consider how play (at breaktimes, before and after school) requires some improvements.
Your wider community is involved in supporting climate change, sustainability, outdoor learning, play and the use of your school grounds.	0%	A high score suggests that the wider school community are involved in the creation and use of your school grounds, reflecting best practice.
Do you exclude community from being involved in or accessing our grounds?	0%	A high score suggests that your school would benefit from more community engagement to both support creation and maintenance of school grounds, as well as benefits from wider community using your spaces out of school hours.
How well do you partner with specialists to extend learning?	0%	Partnerships with both expert or specialist suppliers reflects best practice.

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

0%

A high score suggests you should consider building partnerships with expert, specialist and local suppliers to extend learning and play in your school grounds.

Results: Campus			
There are features in your grounds created and maintained to facilitate learning and play.	0%	A high score indicates that in general your grounds are a rich learning and play environment, resourced to enable use by all.	
Your grounds lack features to encourage use by teachers and/or your policy and practice discourages them from using the space.	0%	A high score here suggests that improvements to the school grounds are needed across formal and informal learning, as well as play in all seasons.	
How good is your site for nature?	0%	The higher the score, the more you are doing or plan to do for nature.	
Can you improve our site for nature?	0%	Above 0%? Your site has some fundamental issues with providing nature, and/or your site management is working against nature.	
How many wider sustainability features does your site offer?	0%	Below 50%? There are more sustainability features you should consider for your site.	
You have features or plan features which will shelter us from the wind	0%	The higher the score, the more features you have which shelter you from wind.	
How much is wind an issue/could be an issue on your site?	0%	Over 30%? Wind could be an issue on your site.	
You have a features which reduce heat on your site	0%	The higher the score, the more you are doing or plan to do to cool your site.	
You may have a site vulnerable to overheating	0%	Over 30%? Overheating could be an issue on your site now or in the future.	
Does your site have cold areas?	0%	The higher the score the more your site has an issue with cold. This can be through wind, shade or freezing conditions	
Do you currently provide shelter from the cold?	0%	The higher the score, the more you have thought about spaces which shelter us from cold, whethere that is wind or freezing conditions.	
How does your site currently manage excess water?	0%	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 excess water an issue on your site?	0%	Over 30%? Your site might have an issue with too much water, including flooding.	
How well do you manage water on our site to reduce drought on our site?	0%	The higher the score, the more you are doing or plan to do to manage water on your site, reducing drought conditions.	
Is your site affected by or vulnerable to drought?	0%	Over 30%? Your site might have an issue with drought conditions.	
How well does your site manage carbon, particularly sequestrating it in into the soil?	0%	The higher the score the more efforts you have made to sequestrate more carbon into the soil of your site - such as trees, shrubs, plants and composting.	
Could you sequestrate more carbon on your site?	0%	Over 30%? Your site is unlikely to sequestrate much carbon, and is probably dominated by hard surfaces such as tarmac and artificial surfaces.	
Do you have poor air quality on our site?	0%	Over 30%? Your site might have poor air quality.	
What are you doing to improve air quality on our site?	0%	The higher the score, the more your site does to clean or protect the pupils from poor air quaility.	
Your grounds are inclusive.	0%	A high score here suggests your grounds are accessible to all and that you have thought about inclusive practice.	
More work is needed to make your grounds inclusive.	0%	A high score here suggests you need to consider inclusive pratice in your grounds, for formal learning and play.	

Results: Culture

Culture: Vision & Values

Your shared vision and values will be the starting point of high quality climate change and sustainability education.

Leaders should consider the henefits of co-



Results: Curriculum

Curriculum: Climate Change & Sustainability Education Themes such as climate, sustainability and outdoor learning are restricted to a few staff leaders and/or a small group of pupils and/or

Best practice for a quality climate change and sustainability education is embedded in all areas of the curriculum. The learning is often crosscurricular, based in first hand outdoor experiences, and connected to sicentific evidence.

To find out how you can address these issues,



Results: Campus







Results: Community



Results: Existing Space



Results: End