The Thomas Coram Church of England School

Climate Action Plan

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In this document, the term 'headteacher' means the Executive Headteacher of the Federation except where the Executive Headteacher or the Governing Body has delegated the responsibility to the relevant Head of School.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Thomas Coram School and the Castle Federation recognise climate change as a defining challenge for today's children and future generations. We are committed to supporting the UK's net-zero ambitions and delivering the Department for Education's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy, while ensuring that pupils engage with climate issues in a way that is truthful, age-appropriate, and grounded in hope rather than fear.

Within our school, climate change is understood as the long-term alteration of climate patterns, driven largely by human activity such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and air pollution. Pupils are taught both the causes and impacts of climate change, alongside the message that positive action and informed choices can make a difference.

We believe children must be equipped with knowledge and a sense of agency. Through knowledge-rich teaching, practical learning, and real-world experiences, pupils are supported to see themselves as part of the solution. In line with DfE guidance, our approach balances honesty about climate challenges with opportunities for action, empowerment, and awareness of future green careers.

This Climate Action Plan builds on strong foundations, including our Forest School status, active Eco-Council, and our Eco-Schools Green Flag Award. Regular contact with nature is central to our ethos, supporting pupils' environmental understanding, physical health, and mental wellbeing.

Through curriculum learning and lived experience, pupils develop an understanding of sustainability, biodiversity, and climate responsibility. They are encouraged to spend time in nature, improve their local environment, and understand the benefits of green spaces for wellbeing and community life.

This Climate Action Plan is structured around four Department for Education priority areas:

- Decarbonisation
- Adaptation and Resilience
- Improving the Environment and Biodiversity
- Climate Education and Green Careers

Together, these priorities reflect our ambition to create a school where children grow up informed, hopeful, and empowered to care for the planet and for one another.

As part of this Climate Action Plan, Thomas Coram School will actively explore initiatives that create clear and progressive links between curriculum learning at Victoria School and pupils' experiences at Thomas Coram. This joined-up approach reflects a holistic Castle Federation commitment, supporting continuity of learning and action from early years through primary education, with an awareness of how this learning can be built upon at secondary level, including at Ashlyns School.

In parallel, the school will continue to engage with local community stakeholders to strengthen and extend the impact of our climate and sustainability work. This includes collaboration with parents, local organisations, and partners such as Berkhamsted Town Council, ensuring that learning within school is connected to real-world action and the wider community we serve.

Progress against this plan will be reviewed regularly by school leadership and governors as part of the Castle Federation's sustainability oversight.

SECTION 1: DECARBONISATION

We aim to reduce the school's carbon footprint through energy, procurement, and travel choices. Thomas Coram has already taken practical steps to reduce its carbon footprint through targeted investment in energy-saving technologies, including capital works to upgrade lighting and improve the efficiency of key building elements. The school has strengthened its travel plan, promoting Bikeability and wider active travel initiatives to reduce emissions associated with the school journey. In parallel, the school continues to raise awareness of decarbonisation among parents and stakeholders, engaging proactively with the wider community, including dialogue with Berkhamsted Town Council.

Planned Actions:

- Develop an opportunity for solar PV for the site if there is an economically positive case and ensure any installation links to the KS2 STEM curriculum.
- Review energy audit outputs (heating, lighting, insulation) and develop options for further improvement linked to capital project evaluation.
- Develop school-wide energy-saving campaigns (e.g. "Switch Off" monitors and lights).
- Work with Hertfordshire County Council on longer-term retrofitting opportunities (e.g. heat pumps).
- Reduce single-use plastics in lunches and stationery with further initiatives through the years.

SECTION 2: ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE

Thomas Coram is taking early steps to prepare for the physical impacts of climate change. Initial energy audits have identified opportunities to improve insulation, upgrade heating systems, and integrate renewable energy, strengthening both efficiency and resilience. Options for EV charging infrastructure and solar panel installation have been explored to support long-term energy resilience. While rainwater butts are in use, wider water conservation measures are still at an early stage, and emergency planning for extreme weather events such as heatwaves and flooding is currently under review and not yet fully embedded in day-to-day operational procedures.

Planned Actions:

- Enable the students to undertake a heat, shade and cooling audit of the building linking to STEM objectives and learning outcomes linked to KS2.
- Conduct a school site risk review (flooding, overheating, drainage).
- Expand water conservation beyond the water butts un use and investigate rainwater harvesting and drought-resistant planting.
- Review emergency plans to explore the inclusion of climate resilience (e.g. summer heatwave learning guidance, safe shade areas).
- Investigate leveraging the support of Climate Ambassadors to support the schools resilience journey.

SECTION 3: IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT & BIODIVERSITY

Thomas Coram is committed to enhancing nature on and around the school site to support pupils' wellbeing and contribute to environmental sustainability. The school makes active use of its Forest School area and green spaces for learning. Pupils regularly engage in eco-conscious activities through assemblies, curriculum themes, and community initiatives, including walking to

school, litter picking, and growing produce. This work is underpinned by a strong school ethos that promotes respect for nature and sustainability, aligned with the Castle Federation's wider strategic vision.

Planned Actions:

- Students to conduct regular biodiversity audits (plants, pollinators, hedges, trees) and take part in national initiatives such as butterfly counts.
- Increase wildlife-friendly planting (wildflower patches, hedges along perimeters).
- Use Eco-Council assemblies to encourage families to improve biodiversity at home.
- Integrate biodiversity themes into curriculum and Forest School activities, linking learning to real-world environmental stewardship.
- Explore registering as part of the National Education Nature Park initiative.

SECTION 4: CLIMATE EDUCATION & GREEN CAREERS

Thomas Coram embeds climate and sustainability learning across the curriculum, supported by its Forest School status, which enables regular outdoor learning and strengthens pupils' environmental awareness. Eco-School accreditation has been achieved, with a well-established Eco-Council leading assemblies and pupil-led sustainability initiatives. Environmental responsibility is woven into teaching and learning and is closely linked to the school's Christian values of stewardship and care for creation, helping pupils understand their role in protecting the world around them. Initiatives to highlight green careers have undertaken.

Planned Actions:

- Further integrate climate topics into core subjects (e.g. biodiversity surveys in science, energy consumption data in maths, persuasive writing on climate action in English).
- Seek engagement with local initiatives to provide opportunities for student engagement and learning e.g. forums, writing in local news articles and participation in the Berkhamsted Green Week.
- Support staff training on sustainability using Climate Ambassador and DfE resources.
- Promote pupil leadership through Eco-Council and project leaders.
- Link with local secondary schools and community groups to showcase green skills and careers.
- Explore partnerships with local businesses and parents for green careers workshops and mentoring opportunities.