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Hello and welcome to the first edition of 'Spotlight on Climate Action'. The aim of this bulletin is to keep you abreast of all things climate related and will be issued on a half termly basis. I hope you find it useful and informative! If there is anything specific or of particular interest that you would like to see included in this bulletin, please let me know.

Let's Go Zero

All the schools in the Learning Trust have joined Let's Go Zero - a national initiative to become zero carbon by 2030. This means that the Learning Trust through all its activities won't contribute to climate change. Key areas for us to focus on include energy use, travel, waste, water, procurement, food and school grounds. Let's Go Zero calls for more government support to hit this goal. The Let's Go Zero campaign is calling for seven government actions – achievable, affordable steps in-line with the country's zero carbon ambitions.

These would make sure that all young people understand how to create a sustainable future for all, and leave school ready to take on zero carbon jobs and live sustainably. All new school buildings would be zero carbon – while older ones would be made more energy-efficient and ready to withstand a changing climate.

Reducing CO₂ emissions from our buildings

All the electricity used in our schools is now from renewable sources. This has saved us from emitting 240 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year - equivalent to 151 return flights from London to New York. We are keen to reduce our electricity consumption too. Consequently, we're having

every school surveyed to look for ways to reduce consumption. We've already had low energy lighting installed in several schools with the rest to follow later this year. We are also having new metering set up and fitted so that we can monitor usage and then save energy.

At the moment, it would be far too costly to replace our gas and oil boilers. We need government funding to support this. However, we can and will reduce our consumption which at the moment produces over 650 tonnes of CO₂. Better insulation, radiator controls and changing our behaviour all have a part to play.

Involving students

This lies at the heart of the Learning Trust's strategy to combat climate change. We must empower them to hold us to account as we move towards net zero emissions. Each of our schools now has a student group deeply involved in working for a better and sustainable future. We have also held a Trust wide climate day involving staff and students from each school working with a range of partner organisations to celebrate our successes to date as well as planning for the year ahead.

Our curriculum

At COP26, the UK Secretary of State for Education said, "We want to deliver a better, safer, greener world for future generations of young people and education is one of our key weapons in the fight against climate change. Empowering teachers in every school to deliver world-leading climate change education will not only raise awareness and understanding of the problem, but also equips young people with the skills and knowledge to build a sustainable future." To

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achieve this ambition we will deliver climate education throughout the formal curriculum as well as taking every opportunity through our enrichment programmes. Furthermore, careers education must highlight what it will be like to live and work in a zero zero world. Finally, we know that all the staff in our schools will need more training about what climate change is, what causes it, how it threatens our way of life and, above all, what we can do to combat it. Finally, as a provider of initial teacher training we must ensure that all new teachers are thoroughly equipped to play their part in delivering a sustainable future.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity can support efforts to reduce the negative effects of climate change. Furthermore, conserved or restored habitats can remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, thus helping to address climate change by storing carbon. The combined area of school grounds in England is larger than the three largest national parks put together. Consequently, schools have a huge potential to improve biodiversity. Using the expertise of the Forest School at Abbeyfields, we will conduct a biodiversity audit at each of our schools in the coming months and then draw up action plans for how we can use this to impact positively on climate change as giving students hands on experiences and a clear feeling of doing something to make the future better.

Web links

[Let's Go Zero](#)
[Grantham Institute at Imperial College, London](#)
[Three Rivers climate change website](#)
[UK's Climate Change Committee](#)
[UNESCO climate education.](#)
[UK parliament's climate assembly](#)

Podcasts

[The climate question](#)
[Costing the Earth](#)
[Planet Pod](#)