

LIGHTING THE WAY FORWARD IN EDUCATION



NSAT SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

Net Positive for Education and Children by 2030

Foreword from the Board of Trustees

Putting environmental sustainability at the heart of our Trust ethos.

In early 2020, the Northern Star Academies Trust Board of Trustees placed environmental sustainability at the core of its mission and vision. The dedication to environmental sustainability which already existed within individual schools across the Trust Partnership, gave us a firm foundation to build upon, and an important opportunity to knit together all the inspiring work that was taking place across the Trust.

As a Board, we were acutely aware that our collective choices and decisions could all add up to a significant change, and this was our starting point: to consciously weave green habits and considerations into all of our strategic decision-making. Since then, we have been proud to establish our NSAT Next Generation Board: a group of pupils representing all of our trust schools, and who report to Trustees every half-term about environmental sustainability projects happening across our estates. We have also helped to support the launch of the National Governance Association's Greener Governance campaign. Now, having built on this work, we are delighted to launch this ambitious Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy for our Trust Partnership.

Ultimately, our approach to sustainability as a Trust Partnership needs, in itself, to be sustained. This can only happen by setting bold objectives, delivering non-negotiable actions – and by monitoring the progress of this strategy, ensuring that our green, nurturing trust thrives. We will look forward to celebrating the exciting projects and initiatives our school communities embark on as a result.



Helen Flynn

Chair of Trustees





Northern Star
Academies Trust

Executive Summary

NSAT Vision: To nurture learning in a sustainable environment so that our whole community can thrive, aspire, and succeed.

We are acutely aware of the severe threats to our environment and climate. In facing such an existential crisis, we see our role as educators as leading by example; to explicitly teach our children and young people how to live and learn in a sustainable way, and to actively listen to their concerns and act upon them. In responsibly leading Northern Star Academies Trust we are bringing a new level of ambition to our strategic plans for achieving environmental sustainability over the coming years.

With global sustainability in mind, we will fully examine and review our business models, operations, systems, and structures. We will also build on existing sustainability work in our schools and from wider knowledge acquired from across the education sector. The NSAT Trustees, Trust Leaders Team (Executive and Headteachers), NSAT Green Futures Board and children and staff from across the Trust Partnership have helped to shape the development of this strategy.

The strategy describes where, as an education charity we feel we can invest resources and expertise and encourage teacher collaboration to have the most impact. It endeavours to show that with collective action and by building confidence, knowledge, and skills we can light the way forward in education.

This document sets out our thinking and key actions needed. The driving principles are to:

- Focus on issues most relevant to children and education
- Strengthen children's understanding by providing a greater appreciation of nature, and practical opportunities to participate in learning to increase climate resilience and enhance biodiversity
- Encourage new – and ground-breaking educational initiatives addressing climate change
- Reduce our school's carbon consumption
- Use our experience, influence, and relationships with the education sector as an active force for good
- Consistently exemplify best practice in our organisation for all to communities about the benefits of environmental sustainability and demonstrate how schools can tackle the climate crisis and reduce learn from

Our Values

Nurture:

Being nurturing **allows children to connect with others, to build important relationships, and to develop a sense of self-worth.**

Sustain:

To sustain as human beings, educationalists, and school communities we **work collaboratively** and **in partnership**, we are **steadfast** and demonstrate **resilience** in all our behaviours and actions.

Aspire:

Being aspirational means we collectively have strong ambitions for each one of our learners to achieve and experience success in their learning and lives.

Thrive:

In supporting our school communities to thrive we engender the characteristics of **courage, confidence, curiosity, and collaboration** through each school's distinctive curriculum.



Jenn Plews
Trust CEO





GET IN TOUCH!

Follow us: @NSATGreen

Email: governance@nsat.org.uk



Introduction

Sustainability and climate change education

Curriculum is central to achieving the ambitions set out in this strategy. We advocate a coherent and strategic approach that links sustainability and climate change education to the existing curricula at each key stage. Whilst each of our school's curriculum is bespoke and distinctive to each school context our Green Curriculum Promise unites us all. We promise to place learning about the environment, sustainability, and stewardship of nature at the forefront of school life. Our mission is to make sure that all children live and learn in a sustainable way: we are highly committed to giving our pupils and young people an 'equitable childhood' and full access to fulfilling life experiences that help them understand, explore, and respect our living planet. To support teachers and school leaders we have identified deliverable curriculum outcomes across subjects and key stages that link with the big ideas of sustainability and climate change. Our next step is to develop high quality resources to support teaching, curricula implementation and teacher workload.

“To young children...nature is full of doors...and they swing open at every step. A hollow in a tree is the gateway to a castle. An ant hole in dry soil leads to the other side of the world. A stick den is a palace. A puddle is the portal to the other side of the world.”

- ROBERT MACFARLANE



What does sustainability mean to us?

Since inception, Northern Star Academies Trust has always endeavoured to be a 'thriving trust', where all who are part of it feel connected, understood, inspired and well-supported to flourish and succeed in a challenging and ever-changing world. Fundamental to the way our Trust Partnership develops is our sustainable and ethical approach – as a collective we have the opportunity through our vision and strategy to galvanise our community and locality by bringing people together to serve the next generation.

Sustaining our people – support the generation of development opportunities through inclusive education.

Social progress must be inclusive of all people.

Sustaining our leadership – our leaders recognise that time and resources are finite and therefore we must work together to protect them.

Sustaining our estates and school outdoor environments - environmental protection.

TACKLING SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE EDUCATION TOGETHER

The NSAT Next Generation Board: A conversation with the Trustees of the future.

In early 2022, our Next Generation Board was established. The Next Generation Board is a group of pupils who represent each of our trust schools, working together from aged 8 to 18. They meet together every half-term to share their thoughts, ideas and the projects taking place across the Trust Partnership to promote environmental sustainability. They are impressive in their tenacity and enthusiasm: they lead assemblies and gatherings, develop themed discussions with their classes and tutor groups, encourage their peers and teachers to participate in eco-clubs, gardening clubs and our Big NSAT Wildlife Watch.

But their work does not just stop locally in their schools. Our Next Generation Board is a core element of our Trust Partnership's governance structure. This means that they are in direct conversa-

tion with our Trustees and as such they lead the opening item on every full board meeting. At those meetings, they present the issues that matter most to them: from recycling and conserving water usage, to working with our caterers to reduce food waste, through to establishing their own growing spaces and allotments. By speaking to, and asking their own questions of, the Board, they ensure that the rich and authentic voice of children and young people champions sustainability to those who have the responsibility to make meaningful change happen.

We are committed to making sure that every young person attending an NSAT school is supported and empowered to make a positive difference on the issues that affect their lives, their communities, and wider society.

"We want to bring awareness to others...and help them to become more involved. We don't just want to think about ourselves and our own experience, we want to create a green school for future generations too."

- NSAT NEXT GENERATION BOARD





Green Futures Board

Our Green Futures Board brings together teachers and leaders who represent the schools in our Trust Partnership. Through the work of the group our aim is to equip all school leaders, teachers and associate staff with the knowledge and skills to support children and young people understand climate change and take considered actions to protect the environment. Colleagues on the Green Futures Board are fully empowered to explore and develop their own expertise in relation to climate change education and sustainability – creating momentum and pace in their own schools, testing, and experimenting with innovative ideas and working to ensure that organisational culture shifts to place sustainability at the heart of school improvement.

NSAT and our commitment to our wider, local communities

Maximising our civic impact is an integral part of the NSAT broader strategy and the day to day work our schools carry out in their local communities. As a civic trust we aim to act as an anchor organisation in our communities to create the opportunities and conditions for purposeful collaboration. We recognise our strengths within the arena of environmental sustainability. To this end, we will design our community programmes around what our local communities want - with a particular focus on supporting disadvantaged and marginalised groups and giving everyone a voice to communicate their priorities and needs.

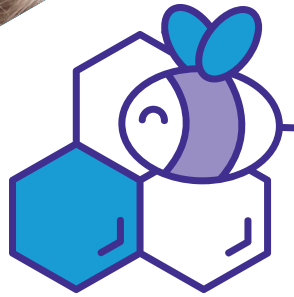


Sustainability and climate change: Development framework

We have identified five green pillars that underpin our development framework and support our thinking and ambitions as a whole organisation. Under each pillar there are a set of goals and for each of these we describe our trust approach and levels of action for educators, pupils and students and the wider community (parents, carers, and the community). To begin our collective action, we have designed a set of Trust-wide 'Green Non-Negotiables'.

1
AONB Farm
Twinning
Programme





2
apiaries



9
growing sites



Trust-wide 'Green Non-Negotiables'

To kick-start our strategy, we will implement a set of Trust-wide 'Green Non-Negotiables' to target the reduction of our carbon footprint, reduce waste in each of our schools and change the narrative regarding consumption. Our non-negotiables will also serve to strengthen our whole-trust culture where sustainability and climate change education permeate all parts of Trust and school life.

OVER THE NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR 2023 - 2024:

Green Pillars

Green Non-Negotiables

<p>COMMUNITY: Live our culture and values</p>	<p>Every NSAT school has an annual school-wide community objective to enhance their sustainability and resilience, achieved through external partnership working. (For example: Pre-loved clothes, Community Food Grocery)</p>
<p>ENVIRONMENT: Grow a better world</p>	<p>Every NSAT school has a gardening club and school allotment/ growing areas.</p> <p>By the end of 2023 all NSAT schools will have a RHS School Gardening Club Level 3 Award.</p>
<p>CURRICULUM</p>	<p>All NSAT learners have an entitlement to learn about sustainability.</p> <p>Every child and young person have at least 10 outdoor learning experiences, every year, intrinsically linked to their curriculum.</p>
<p>INNOVATION: Inspire, share and learn</p>	<p>Every NSAT school has a dedicated all staff CPD event focused on Environmental Sustainability and/or climate change curriculum.</p>
<p>CLIMATE POSITIVE: Reduce Carbon Consumption across our Trust community.</p>	<p>Every school has its own campaign to reduce waste, energy and/or water consumption through staff and pupil/ student behaviour.</p>

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



PILLAR 1

Community: Live our culture and values



Our goals are to:

- Integrate sustainability within the community ethos of our schools
- Celebrate and actively promote equality, diversity, and inclusion
- Strengthen wellbeing and wellness habits (form habits which strengthen employer of choice as well as environmental behaviours)

Trust and school-centred actions:

- Use Trust digital infrastructure to communicate information which is free-flowing and transparent
- Embed sustainability messaging through all activities and collective operations
- Codify our environmental activity (sense making that everyone understands our strategy)



TOP. A New Park Primary Academy pupil helping out at the school's community farm.

LEFT. Our Harrogate based schools recently got involved in a Walk to School Day initiative across the local community.

PILLAR 2

Environment: Grow a better world



TOP and LEFT. Growing our own produce at our various school allotments.
ABOVE. An example of a green space for our pupils to learn and relax in.



Our goals are to:

- Connect with children and young people through regular dialogue about the environment and climate change education
- Bring nature in
- Extend our 'green learning spaces' across all NSAT school estates for education, recreation, growing food and appropriate community use
- Working in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society to improve, modify and adapt our school grounds

Trust and school-centred actions:

- Initiate a programme of support from the Royal Horticultural Society, including the Campaign for School Gardening, seasonal planting framework, RHS Big Seed Sow, RHS Summer Plant Swap and Big Food Share
- Initiate pond projects at Starbeck Academy, Willow Tree, and Greatwood Community Primary Schools
- Link schools with local Bloom Groups and allotments
- Creative and adaptive ways of growing that support schools located in urban areas

PILLAR 3

Curriculum



Our goals are to:

- Devise and implement a climate-adapted curriculum

Trust and school-centred actions:

- Work in partnership with Leeds Trinity University/CAPE
- Using primary science as a starting point identify and map knowledge and opportunities for the future world
- Deliver an innovative farm twinning programme in partnership with Nidderdale AONB (Year of Nurture 2022, Year of Food 2023, Year of Energy 2024)
- Devise a Primary and Secondary Careers Information Advice Education Programme

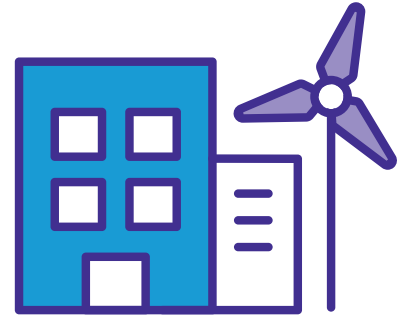


ABOVE. A student getting directly involved in beekeeping at one of our two school apiaries.

LEFT. Our farm twinning programme directory contains an ever growing list of partnered farms and landowners in the Nidderdale area.

PILLAR 4

Innovation: Inspire, share and learn



Our goals are to:

- Work with the Department for Education (DfE), the education sector and Further and Higher Education organisations to influence and shape change
- Commit to being informed and research-engaged by using high quality evidence to inform transformation in our practice and policy
- In partnership with CAPE develop professional development that promotes sustainability and climate change education to the education workforce
- Engage in international partnerships

Trust and school-centred actions:

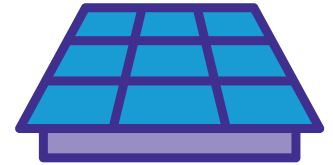
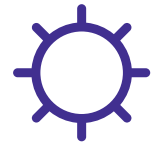
- NSAT Sustainability Champions in every school who will encourage others in their home schools to play their part
- Widen participation in the NSAT Green Futures Board by inviting partners representative of communities, business and organisations working in the field of sustainability and the green economy.
- Our sustainability progress will be reported to our Trust Board, which retains oversight of our progress

PILLAR 5

Climate positive: Reduce carbon consumption across our Trust community



ABOVE. Reducing waste and consumption across the Trust. Here examples of our clothingswap initiatives, at Hookstone Chase Primary School and Skipton Girls' High School for pupils and parents.



NSAT must:

- Reduce our carbon footprint as rapidly as possible
- Tackle waste through refuse, reduce, recycle, repair, re-use, and swap initiatives (e.g., school uniform pre-loved)

To achieve this bold ambition, we are going to:

- Develop a sustainable travel plan for children, visitors, and staff
- Develop energy strategies for NSAT schools, analyse our energy needs and infrastructure
- To reduce our collective use of water, gas, and electric consumption we will gather and synthesize pertinent information and data
- Develop an energised community (e.g. lead a community response to global heating)
- Increase renewal and sustainable energy use in our schools
- Devise a circular procurement approach
- Work closely with our main suppliers to reduce the impact of our supply chain and integrate ethical and environmental considerations when choosing suppliers and services

LIGHTING THE WAY FORWARD IN EDUCATION

Northern Star Academies Trust

SGHS Business Centre,
Gargrave Road, Skipton,
North Yorkshire
BD23 1QN

Tel: 01756 707600
Email: info@nsat.org.uk

www.nsat.org.uk

Northern Star Academies Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee.
Company number: 07553531

