



Witham St Hughs Academy

Climate Action & Sustainability Plan

2026 – 2030

RESPECT
BELIEVE
ACHIEVE

*Caring for
each other,
our community
and our world*

Learning Today for a Brighter, Greener Tomorrow

*Small actions
make a big difference*



DECARBONISATION AND NET ZERO

Using energy and
resources responsibly



ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

Preparing for a
changing climate



BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE

Protecting and
enhancing our natural
environment



CLIMATE EDUCATION AND GREEN SKILLS

Inspiring the next
generation

Our Vision

*"To provide an exceptional education while helping
our pupils understand their responsibility towards
the environment and the world in which they live."*

At Witham St Hughs Academy, we are committed
to creating a more sustainable future through
learning, action and community.



PUPILS
Leading change



OUR SCHOOL
A sustainable place to learn



OUR COMMUNITY
Working together



OUR PLANET
A brighter future

*"Caring for
today,
protecting
tomorrow"*

Climate Action & Sustainability Plan

2026–2030 • DfE-aligned whole-school action plan

PLAN PERIOD September 2026 – August 2030	SUSTAINABILITY LEAD Jo Hartley/ Sam Coy	REVIEW Annual
SLT OVERSIGHT Headteacher / designated senior leader	PUPIL LEADERSHIP Eco Representatives	GOVERNANCE Academy Governing Body

Our Vision

“To provide an exceptional education while helping our pupils understand their responsibility towards the environment and the world in which they live.”

At Witham St Hughs Academy, we will build on the strong sustainability measures already established across our estate, curriculum and grounds. Climate action will be practical, proportionate and evidence-led, supporting high-quality education while reducing environmental impact and strengthening resilience.

Our starting point

The Academy begins this plan from a strong position. Our school building is approximately 20 years old and already benefits from significant energy-efficiency, active-travel, biodiversity and climate-education measures.

- LED lighting.
- Updated boilers within a relatively modern school estate.
- Electric vehicle charging points being fitted.
- Bike racks and scooter storage, alongside encouragement to walk to school.
- Climate change and environmental learning within the curriculum.
- Pupil Eco Representatives providing pupil voice and leadership.
- Witham Woods: a substantial wildlife and outdoor-learning area including a pond, bird hide, wildflower areas and habitats.
- Fans purchased for every classroom to support comfort during warmer weather.
- Established business continuity and emergency-planning approaches.
- Partnership with the PTFA to explore additional shade, alongside consideration of further tree planting.

Leadership, governance and review

The Academy will nominate a Sustainability Lead to coordinate implementation and annual review. Sustainability remains a whole-school responsibility, involving senior leaders, premises staff, curriculum leaders, Eco Representatives, pupils, staff, governors, the PTFA, parents and relevant external partners.

Eco Representatives will contribute ideas, support campaigns, take part in environmental monitoring and help communicate progress. The plan will be reviewed annually and may be amended in response to evidence, funding, changing circumstances and new opportunities.

PILLAR 1

Decarbonisation and Net Zero

Aim

To progressively reduce the environmental impact and carbon emissions associated with operating the Academy, while ensuring that decisions remain financially sustainable and support effective education.

What we already do

- Generate renewable electricity through existing solar panels.
- Use LED lighting to reduce electricity consumption.
- Operate updated boilers for more efficient heating.
- Install electric vehicle charging points to support lower-emission transport.
- Benefit from a comparatively modern school estate.

2026–2030 actions

Action	Success measure	Timescale
Establish annual baseline electricity and gas consumption.	Reliable baseline established and used for comparison.	2026/27
Monitor electricity and gas consumption.	Year-on-year data available and significant changes investigated.	Annual
Review heating operating times, settings and controls.	Avoidable energy consumption identified and reduced.	Annual
Promote responsible switching off of lights, screens and equipment.	Good practice embedded across school; Eco Reps support awareness.	Ongoing
Complete periodic energy-efficiency reviews.	Further practical opportunities identified.	2027 onward
Complete EV charging installation.	Charging facilities operational.	2026/27
Consider energy efficiency, carbon impact and whole-life cost in capital decisions.	Sustainability evidenced in estates planning.	Ongoing
Produce an annual energy/carbon summary.	Progress reported to SLT and governors.	Annual

2030 ambition: demonstrate measurable progress in energy efficiency and associated carbon reduction while maximising the benefit of existing renewable-energy infrastructure.

PILLAR 2

Adaptation and Resilience

Aim

To ensure that buildings, grounds and operational arrangements remain resilient to the effects of a changing climate, including periods of extreme heat, heavy rainfall and severe weather.

What we already do

- Established business continuity and emergency-planning arrangements.
- Fans provided in every classroom to improve comfort during warmer periods.

- Significant green space, established trees and natural habitats.
- Work with the PTFA to explore additional shade provision.
- Ongoing consideration of longer-term approaches to comfortable learning environments.

Managing overheating

The Academy will use a proportionate approach based on monitoring, evidence, mitigation and review. Practical and lower-energy measures will be prioritised where effective, including ventilation, classroom fans, management of windows and blinds, external or natural shade, tree planting and appropriate use of learning spaces during hot weather.

Air conditioning and mechanical cooling

The Academy will continue to monitor and assess the feasibility and cost of air conditioning or alternative mechanical cooling. Any future decision will consider evidence of overheating, impact on pupils and staff, capital and running costs, electricity use, carbon impact, maintenance, the effectiveness of existing ventilation, passive cooling and value for money.

Shade and trees

The Academy will continue working with the PTFA on additional shade and will assess opportunities for further tree planting. Planting will be planned carefully, taking account of species, future size, roots, underground services, buildings, maintenance requirements, biodiversity value and suitability for a school environment.

2026–2030 actions

Action	Success measure	Timescale
Review climate-related risks through existing business continuity arrangements.	Relevant risks and responses remain current.	Annual
Monitor classrooms/areas most affected during high temperatures.	Evidence available to inform future decisions.	Summer / hot weather
Maintain and review classroom fans.	Appropriate cooling provision available and effectiveness reviewed.	Ongoing
Continue PTFA work on additional shade.	Appropriate additional shade considered/provided.	2026–28
Assess suitable locations for additional trees.	Tree-planting opportunities identified.	2026/27
Plant appropriate trees where feasible.	Natural shade and biodiversity increased over time.	2027–30
Continue to assess cost and feasibility of air conditioning or alternative cooling.	Evidence-based options appraisal maintained.	Annual
Monitor waterlogging, drainage and heavy-rainfall issues.	Emerging issues identified and addressed.	Ongoing
Consider overheating, water management and resilience in future capital projects.	Climate resilience evidenced in estates planning.	Ongoing

2030 ambition: an increasingly climate-resilient estate with proportionate cooling measures, improved shade and additional tree cover where appropriate.

PILLAR 3

Biodiversity and Nature

Aim

To protect and enhance the Academy's extensive natural environment and ensure pupils have meaningful opportunities to experience, understand and care for nature.

A particular strength of our Academy

Witham Woods is a distinctive wildlife and outdoor-learning resource. It includes a pond, bird hide, wildflower areas, insect habitats, established trees and vegetation, and opportunities for pupils to observe wildlife and habitats first-hand.

2026–2030 actions

Action	Success measure	Timescale
Protect and maintain Witham Woods.	Wildlife area remains a high-quality school resource.	Ongoing
Establish a simple biodiversity baseline.	Habitats and selected species recorded.	2026/27
Undertake seasonal pupil observations.	Changes and discoveries recorded over time.	Annual
Maintain the pond and surrounding habitat.	Healthy habitat retained and accessible for learning.	Ongoing
Maintain/enhance wildflower and pollinator areas.	Pollinator habitat protected or increased.	Ongoing
Consider additional native and climate-resilient planting.	Biodiversity increased where appropriate.	2027–30
Assess additional tree planting.	Suitable opportunities identified and progressed.	2026/27 onward
Involve Eco Representatives in biodiversity projects.	At least one meaningful pupil-led activity each year.	Annual
Continue using the bird hide and wildlife area for learning.	Evidence of regular curriculum/outdoor-learning use.	Ongoing
Explore suitable local or national biodiversity initiatives.	Useful opportunities considered and adopted where appropriate.	2026–30

2030 ambition: Witham Woods and the wider grounds continue to provide rich habitats, exceptional outdoor learning and meaningful pupil stewardship.

PILLAR 4

Climate Education and Green Skills

Aim

To ensure pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of climate change, sustainability and the natural world, and recognise that they can make a positive contribution.

What we already do

- Climate change and environmental issues are incorporated into the curriculum.
- Science and geography support environmental understanding.
- Outdoor learning provides first-hand experience of habitats and ecosystems.
- Eco Representatives provide opportunities for pupil leadership and citizenship.

2026–2030 actions

Action	Success measure	Timescale
Map climate and sustainability education across EYFS–Year 6.	Clear progression and existing strengths identified.	2026/27
Climate awareness assemblies mapped in	Regularly modernized to reflect changes and new information	Ongoing
Identify meaningful links across relevant subjects.	Curriculum opportunities clearly mapped without unnecessary duplication.	2026/27
Continue use of Witham Woods and outdoor learning.	Regular, purposeful curriculum use.	Ongoing
Explore use of the Academy's solar panels as a learning resource.	Pupils connect renewable-energy concepts with their own school.	2027 onward
Use appropriate real environmental data with pupils.	Older pupils engage with authentic energy, weather or biodiversity data.	2027–30
Continue the Eco Representative programme.	Pupil leadership maintained and visible.	Annual
Enable Eco Reps to communicate with the wider school.	Assemblies, displays or communications produced.	Termly
Develop age-appropriate awareness of green careers.	Relevant curriculum/enrichment opportunities provided.	Annual
Celebrate environmental achievements.	School community understands progress and impact.	Annual

2030 ambition: pupils leave Witham St Hughs with strong environmental knowledge, respect for biodiversity and confidence that their choices can make a positive difference.

Sustainable and Active Travel

The Academy already encourages pupils and families to walk to school where practical, with bike racks and scooter storage supporting cycling and scooting. EV charging points will further support lower-emission travel.

- Continue promoting walking, cycling and scooting where safe and appropriate.
- Maintain suitable bike and scooter storage and promote road safety.
- Consider an annual pupil travel survey to establish a baseline and identify trends.
- Encourage car sharing where appropriate for families unable to use active travel.
- Complete EV charging infrastructure.

Suggested KPI: percentage of pupils travelling actively or sustainably to school.

Waste, Resources and Procurement

The Academy will prioritise reduce, reuse and recycle. It will minimise unnecessary printing, encourage responsible paper and resource use, maximise appropriate recycling, reduce avoidable single-use items, consider food-waste opportunities, and consider environmental sustainability alongside value for money when purchasing.

Water

- Monitor water consumption where data is available.
- Investigate unexpected increases and repair leaks promptly.
- Encourage responsible water use.
- Consider water efficiency when fixtures require replacement.
- Consider appropriate rainwater use or sustainable drainage within future site projects where feasible.

Working With Our Community

Climate action will involve the whole school community: pupils through learning and Eco Representatives; staff through daily practice and curriculum delivery; governors through oversight and challenge; parents and carers through communication and participation; the PTFA through projects such as additional shade; and external partners where they can provide expertise, resources or opportunities.

Measuring Our Impact

The Academy will increasingly move from recording what has been done to evaluating what difference it has made. The dashboard below is intentionally simple and should use readily available, decision-useful data.

Measure	2026/27 baseline	Review
Electricity consumption (kWh)	Establish	Annual
Gas consumption (kWh)	Establish	Annual
Solar electricity generated (kWh)	Establish	Annual
Water consumption	Establish	Annual
Carbon emissions where measurable	Establish	Annual
% active/sustainable pupil journeys	Establish	Annual
Waste/recycling indicators where available	Establish	Annual
Trees planted / shade improvements	Establish	Annual
Biodiversity indicators	Establish	Annual
Eco Rep projects/actions	Establish	Annual
Curriculum coverage	Establish	Annual
Classroom overheating evidence	Establish	Summer / annual

Our 2030 Outcomes

- Decarbonisation: we understand our energy use and can evidence practical improvements.

- Renewable energy: we maximise the benefit of our solar-panel installation.
- Climate resilience: we understand and manage the risks of hotter weather and extreme events.
- Comfortable classrooms: cooling decisions are informed by evidence, cost, educational need and environmental impact.
- Biodiversity: Witham Woods and the wider site continue to support wildlife and high-quality outdoor learning.
- Trees and shade: natural shade and tree cover have increased where site conditions allow.
- Climate education: pupils experience coherent, age-appropriate climate and sustainability learning.
- Pupil leadership: Eco Representatives have a genuine voice and can demonstrate their contribution.
- Sustainable travel: walking, cycling and scooting remain actively encouraged and supported.
- Community: parents, the PTFA, governors and partners have meaningful opportunities to contribute.

Annual Review Cycle

Each year, the Sustainability Lead and relevant colleagues will review delivery and evidence of impact. Actions may be rated GREEN (completed/embedded), AMBER (in progress/further action required) or RED (not yet achieved/significant action required).

- What did we say we would do, and what have we completed?
- What evidence demonstrates impact?
- What have pupils contributed?
- What does energy, water and environmental data tell us?
- Have new climate-related risks emerged?
- Which actions remain outstanding and why?
- What should our priorities be for the following academic year?

Annual Priority Action Plan 2026/27

Priority / action	Lead	Target date	Evidence	RAG
Confirm Sustainability Lead and supporting team	Headteacher	Autumn 2026	Lead confirmed	
Establish electricity and gas baseline	Sustainability / Premises	Spring 2027	Consumption data	
Establish annual solar-generation figure where available	Premises	Summer 2027	Generation data	
Review climate risks alongside business continuity arrangements	SLT	Spring 2027	Review completed	
Monitor classroom temperatures / areas of concern	Premises / SLT	Summer 2027	Monitoring evidence	
Review effectiveness of fans and existing cooling measures	SLT / Premises	Summer 2027	Review	
Review cost, feasibility and environmental impact of further cooling if evidence shows need	SLT / Premises	Annual	Options appraisal	

Priority / action	Lead	Target date	Evidence	RAG
Progress PTFA partnership for additional shade	School / PTFA	2026/27	Project progress	
Identify suitable locations for additional tree planting	Sustainability / Premises	2026/27	Site assessment	
Establish simple biodiversity baseline	Eco Reps / Staff	Summer 2027	Baseline completed	
Map climate and sustainability education EYFS–Y6	Curriculum Lead	Summer 2027	Curriculum map	
Complete pupil travel baseline survey	Eco Reps / School	2026/27	Survey results	
Eco Representatives contribute to Climate Action Plan	Eco Lead	Termly	Meeting/activity evidence	
Present annual Climate Action update	Sustainability Lead	Summer 2027	Governor report	

Review and Approval

Sustainability Lead	Jo Hartley
Headteacher	Sam Coy
Chair of Governors	Daniel Thompson
Director of Education	Helen Tunney
Date approved	11/09/26
Next formal review	September 2027

Our Commitment

Witham St Hughs Academy recognises that sustainability is a long-term commitment. We are proud of the strong foundations already in place—from renewable energy and efficient lighting to active travel, outdoor learning and our extensive wildlife environment.

We will make decisions based on evidence, educational benefit, environmental impact, affordability and long-term sustainability, while ensuring pupils have opportunities not simply to learn about environmental responsibility, but to experience and contribute to it.

Our ambition is for children to leave Witham St Hughs Academy as knowledgeable, confident and responsible young people who understand the world around them and recognise their ability to make a positive contribution to its future.

This is in line with our vision- Making a difference.....

Reference Framework

This plan is structured around the Department for Education's four climate action areas: decarbonisation and net zero; adaptation and resilience; biodiversity and nature; and climate education and green skills. It is intended to remain a practical, editable working document for annual school review.