



Create your own allotment or growing space

Growing your own food helps link children to nature and helps them to understand where our food comes from. Cooking what you grow means you have healthy and organic produce with no food miles.

Top tip: Think about natural solutions for pests such as crushed eggshell or garlic sprays. Contact local businesses as they may be able to provide resources to help get you started. Look at school growing schemes as they often have financial rewards for progress (see the RHS Campaign for School Gardening).

No space for an allotment? Have plants growing in your classrooms instead and you can grow things all year round.

Renewable energy

There are lots of school-based schemes for renewable energy that will provide solar panels or wind turbines.

Top tips: If you are part of a wider group such as an academy chain, use their wider influence to get the best deals and energy saving items. Make sure you have your blinds open as this is good for your eyes and your lighting bill. It may mean that you can turn some or all of your lights off.

Not yet possible? Survey your setting. What energy-saving devices do you have already? Can things such as high-energy lightbulbs be changed as part of your long-term setting plan? Switch off everything you can at the end of the day (have a check list that your students are responsible for) and watch the pounds come off your bill.

Create a litter-free environment

Engage children in a project to reduce litter in the school grounds, and potentially, the wider community. This could include conducting a survey to help children to analyse the situation:

- - Are bins emptied regularly enough?
- - Are there enough bins in the right places?
- - What kind of litter have they found?

Empower children to become change-makers by asking them to develop solutions. This could include:

- - Introducing a litter-picking rota.
- - Holding an assembly to share the issue with all pupils.
- - Designing posters to display in heavily littered areas.
- - Contacting the local council if your local area does not have enough bins.



Move your learning outside

Outdoor learning has a huge benefit to mental health as well as helping pupils connect with nature and the environment. It is also a good way to cover British values in your curriculum. There are lots of resources to link every type of learning to the outdoors and it can be lots of fun for adults and children alike.

Top tip: Using natural resources can be a good way to help recycle and reduce the amount of single-use plastics or other non-reusable items that you use in your lessons. Local areas often have free training or CPD opportunities for outdoor learning too (for example, the charity, Learning Through Landscapes).

Can't fit it in your schedule?

Have one day a week/ month or even term where you challenge people to learn outside.

Sustainable food in your setting

Can you make your kitchen and food sustainable and environmentally friendly? Find out where your food comes from (suppliers often can even tell you the farm). Is it possible to change your food to organic? Growing your own produce can help reduce food miles and can provide resources for cooking in school. There are also lots of composters out there that can handle food waste which can also benefit growing projects in settings.

Too big? Hold a food survey and count the waste during lunch times. What food is thrown away the most? Get children involved in choosing their own food or influencing the menu to reduce food waste. Engage parents by encouraging their lunchboxes to be as sustainable, and plastic-free, as possible.

Recycling opportunities

Start a waste reduction project. What consumables do you have in your setting, and can they be recycled? Speak to your waste collection supplier about potential collection bins or collection points for waste such as card or plastic. There are lots of schemes out there that will collect items such as batteries, ink and even crisp packets. These can come with financial rewards for your setting or can be exchanged for things such as playground equipment. Work with local companies to find out if they have any useful waste products or items they can donate. Things like card companies often have waste card that can be used or check with local tree surgeons for wood.

Top tip: If storage is a problem, try coordinating collection dates so that items are only brought in during certain times and these are then collected by the recycling companies.

Not ready for a project? Choose one thing to focus on that can be easily collected, such as crisp packets, and use that as your starting point.



Water saving

Water saving is a big area of need in our current climate, from water pollution to drought. A water saving project both helps the planet and saves money in the long term. Conduct a survey of your setting to check for water saving devices. Do your taps turn off automatically? Do you have automatic flush toilets or water restrictors? Use water butts to help with watering any plants so that no water goes to waste.

No budget or time?

Work with your local water supplier. They often do assemblies to help highlight water waste and may be able to provide water saving devices for the setting or for families in the local community.

Other ideas you may like

- Plant bulbs and flowers around your setting to make it insect friendly.
- Start an eco after school club.
- Use things like bottles and boxes for junk modelling or crafts and they can be recycled again when you have finished.
- Have a cooking club or cooking event to promote healthy eating.
- Collect seeds from any produce you grow and sell or donate these to the local community.
- Having a school trip? Is there a nearby venue or business you can use so you can walk? Or use public transport such as trains or local buses to have sustainable and cheap travel for trips.
- Start a walking bus.
- Take part in 'walk to school' competitions and encourage pupils to park and stride if they travel by car. This reduces pollution, gets families walking and creates a cleaner and safer environment around your setting. You may find local businesses may be able to provide space for you to park.
- Invite local independent businesses to take part in a sustainable produce sale in your setting.
- Swap glitter (single-use plastic) for natural resources such as hole-punched leaves or dried flowers.