

What is the Climate Action Route Map (CARM)?

This Route map is produced to support senior leaders to provide high quality Climate action education. It identifies and describes 10 steps based on established good practice and evidence of what works. In making significant and timely progress against a backdrop of the current declared climate emergency school/settings are advised to adopt a strategic approach to provide an underpinning infrastructure supporting a journey to sustainability. Schools/settings will invariably be at different stages and should view this Route map within that context. It is anticipated that even the most advanced schools/settings may have something to gain from this Route map as it provides the latest advice, guidance and support on everything from policy and resources to effectively engaging pupil voice and participation in developing Climate action provision.

1. Communicate the facts

The debate over the causes of climate change has a long and turbulent history which, continues to this day in some quarters. Overwhelmingly, however, the scientific community acknowledges the impact of human activity on the environment and the evidence is clear that, unless the world takes urgent action to limit carbon emissions within the next decade, average global temperatures will rise above 1.5°C with catastrophic consequences. Recent, increasing instances of direct action across the world provide both a spotlight on, and reflection of, a heightened sense of anxiety, particularly amongst our children and young people which is, in some cases, negatively impacting their mental wellbeing. Increasingly professionals report a surge of 'eco-anxiety'; a *concern or worry about ecological disasters and the advertised risk to the natural environment*. Arguably this puts even greater emphasis on clarifying a school/settings position alongside an awareness of the impact of the language used when communicating with pupils i.e. key vocabulary needs to communicate in a positive way empowering pupils to take action and seeking to galvanise their passion rather than leaving them feeling powerless, uninvolved and potentially even more anxious - a solutions focussed approach (see 4 below).

In response to the landmark **United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C** warning that, unless urgent action is taken, the opportunity to avoid the worst effects of climate change will be missed, Leeds City Council declared a climate emergency at full Council (March 2019). This marked an important turning point for the Council and the city to put sustainability, biodiversity and the reduction of carbon emissions firmly centre-stage. Importantly, there was complete political consensus on the issue and though parties, and individuals within them, may argue over the solutions, no-one disagrees that we are in an emergency situation - the climate is changing and the impact of the increased regularity of extreme weather events is being keenly felt. The UK government has set a target for carbon neutrality by 2050, the vast bulk of the reduction will need to be achieved this decade - a 50% reduction by 2025 and 85% by 2030. Leeds City Council is focussed on 2030 and working towards achieving carbon neutrality by that date. To meet this a significant reduction in energy consumption is required. In working to make Leeds carbon neutral by 2030 tackling climate change is now one of Leeds City Council's 3 key strategic plans, sitting equally alongside inclusive growth and improving the health and wellbeing of residents.

2. Leadership

Overseeing effective, sustainable change means schools/settings designating a member of Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with a remit for Climate action together with a Governor with specific responsibility for Climate action. The school/setting should agree and publish its position on the Climate emergency - see 5 below.

What this looks like in practice:

- Climate action is clearly referenced in the School/setting Improvement/Development Plan (SIP/SDP) and reported in the Self Evaluation Summary (SES)
- Strategic school/setting senior leader for Climate action is designated
- A Climate action working group is established
- A role of Governor with specific responsibility for Climate action is created

3. Assessing your current provision

To action plan and implement your school/setting Climate action priorities you will need to know your current provision, both in terms of teaching and learning through the curriculum as well as in your values and ways of working (school estate/campus). These should not be seen as mutually exclusive rather the broadest perspective should be adopted whereby the school estate/campus and the local community are viewed as practice grounds for pupils to apply their learning to 'real world' situations and challenges e.g. improving energy efficiency in school buildings, emergency planning response in preparation for extreme weather events such as heatwaves and/or flooding, etc. and embracing circular economy principles to reduce waste and single-use plastic products in school.

4. Pupil voice and participation

Given the 'futures' focus of Climate action it is critical to engage pupils in the change process as early as possible not least because this can help to counter feelings of helplessness and associated anxiety through a solutions focussed approach but local consultative activities ensure provision can be tailored to meet the concerns of pupils as well as opening up discussions around priority actions.

What this looks like in practice:

- Establish a Pupil Voice forum (Climate Action Group/Eco-Committee/Green Team) whose role it is to seek the views of peers and propose, discuss, agree and plan appropriate actions
- Undertake pupil audits of current provision and pupil perceptions

5. Develop/Refresh your Climate Action Policy

A Climate action policy will be required in all schools/settings. The policy sets out your whole school/setting approach to Climate action including adaptation and reference to emergency planning in preparation for extreme weather events such as heatwaves and/or flooding, etc. Your climate action policy should also link in to your school ethos, safeguarding policies and equal opportunities. Your Climate action policy should reflect your aspirations, aims and school/setting values and summarise how you intend to achieve your objectives.

What this looks like in practice:

- Published Climate Action Policy countersigned by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors

6. Curriculum review and development

An effective curriculum for Climate action needs to be comprehensive, spiral and responsive to pupil need. You will need to identify any gaps in current provision and regular updates will ensure your programme is inclusive with engaging lessons that reflect real life issues and develop a balance of skills, knowledge and attitudes. The education Inspection framework from September 2019 with its' renewed focus on a '*broad and balanced curriculum*' provides opportunities for greater integration of climate action education. Currently there are calls for reviewing how the whole of the English formal education system is preparing students for the climate emergency.

What this looks like in practice:

- Review the curriculum to identify current provision (curriculum requirements) and identify opportunities to teach more broadly about climate action

7. Supporting your staff

Addressing Climate action and identifying solutions is not easy. The schools/settings leadership should consider and encourage all staff to think about how to; work differently; review policy changes and investments needed to transition from where we are now to where we have to be e.g. how can individual car use be reduced? how can energy use in school buildings be minimised? how can less waste be produced? Clearly this will affect everyone who works in a school/setting, it's everyone's business with all staff having a role to play - some staff may need further specialist training. Teachers "*need the confidence, knowledge and skills to be able to help their pupils understand the causes, drivers and consequences of climate change in order to shape their environmentally conscious mindsets*" (UN Secretary general 2018 Antonio Guterres). Are you aware of the current CPD needs of your staff and have you considered how these will be met?

What this looks like in practice:

- Determine staff CPD needs through undertaking a whole school/setting staff survey on Climate action
- Have at least one teacher specifically trained in teaching Climate Change Education

8. Action Planning and implementation

Having established, at Step 3, your current school/settings' Climate action provision you will now be in a stronger position to be able to identify key priorities for action.

What this looks like in practice:

- A School/setting Climate Action - Action Plan has been drafted

9. Review and evaluation

As with all subjects effective monitoring and evaluation is crucial to indicating if your planned outcomes are being met and, where not, to identifying what needs to change.

What this looks like in practice:

- Systems for monitoring and evaluating Climate action have been incorporated into your routine monitoring and evaluation cycle.

10. Communication is key

Bring the whole school/setting community along with you, through continuous dialogue with parents, staff, governors and pupils.

What this looks like in practice:

- School/setting plans for Climate action and updates are shared through your regular channels of communication
- Pupils and staff are encouraged to apply their learning to their lives outside school/setting supporting them to share their learning at home and in/with the community