



Climate Action Plan

Baseline Report - September 2025

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Overview

Purpose

This baseline report has been developed as an essential step in preparing the school's Climate Action Plan. It provides a clear picture of the **current** environmental impact, covering carbon emissions, energy use, waste, water consumption, and transport habits. This starting point allows us to set realistic, measurable goals and monitor progress over time.

The Climate Action Plan, informed by this report, and found as an appendix, addresses the four key areas identified by the Department of Education: **decarbonisation, adaptation and resilience, environment and biodiversity, and climate education and green careers**. Together, these areas will guide informed decision-making and meaningful action, strengthening the school's commitment to sustainability and shaping a more environmentally conscious future.

Scope

In this first report, we have reviewed:

- Scope 1: Direct emissions owned or controlled by the school
- Scope 2: Indirect emissions from purchased energy

Currently, as no scope 3 calculations have been generated, ***an assumption has been made, based on national averages, that supply chain emissions account for 45% of overall CO₂ emissions.***

In order to compare to other schools, a footprint has been provided in the report for both operational (scopes 1 & 2) emissions and an ***estimated*** full impact.

Executive Summary

The report highlights that George Street Primary School performs well against national sustainability benchmarks. Its energy and water usage are efficient, supported by smart technologies and renewable sources. Waste management is proactive, with initiatives to reduce single-use plastics and food waste.

Travel emissions, particularly from staff, are higher than average and present a key opportunity for improvement. Food-related emissions are moderate, with vegetarian options contributing to carbon savings. The school's overall carbon footprint is below national averages, reflecting strong operational practices.

Existing climate initiatives, including biodiversity projects and energy-saving habits, are well embedded. Community engagement is strong among staff and parents, though pupil involvement could be enhanced. With clear priorities and committed stakeholders, the school is well-placed to advance its sustainability goals.

Mission Statement

George Street Nursery & Primary School is committed to reducing its environmental impact and supporting national and local government sustainability priorities. We recognise the important role that schools play in addressing climate change and promoting environmental stewardship within our communities.

Through this policy, we aim to create a greener, healthier learning environment while fostering environmental awareness and responsibility among pupils, staff, and families. Our commitment includes reducing carbon emissions, minimising waste, conserving resources, and embedding sustainability across all aspects of school life; from teaching and learning to daily operations.

By integrating sustainable practices and environmental education into our curriculum and culture, George Street Nursery & Primary School seeks to contribute meaningfully to government climate targets and to inspire our pupils to become environmentally conscious citizens of the future.

School Profile

Name: George Street Primary School

School Type: Primary

Location: Hemel Hempstead, HP2 5HJ

Number of Pupils on Roll: 228

Number of Staff: 25

Size of Site: 11400m₂

Indoor Space: 1278m₂

School Facilities: The school is 60 years old and is made up of 2 buildings. The Local Authority is responsible for approving funding and any building changes. The school is not in a conservation area.

Key Stakeholders and their role

Role	Name
Headteacher	Angela Hughes
Provides strategic leadership and vision; champions whole-school commitment to climate action; ensures alignment with school values and improvement plans.	
Sustainability Lead	Angela Hughes
Coordinates the Climate Action Plan; monitors progress; engages staff, pupils, and community; integrates sustainability into curriculum and daily school life.	
Assistant Headteacher	Claire Moore
Leads specific action areas (e.g. transport, food); supports implementation across key stages or departments; assists in staff training and resource planning.	
Caretaker / Site Manager	Keith Pearcey
Oversees building maintenance, energy use, waste, and grounds; implements practical sustainability measures (e.g. recycling, energy efficiency, biodiversity projects).	
School Business Manager	Portia Ward
Manages funding, procurement, and building projects to align with sustainability goals; embeds climate priorities in finance, contracts, and resource planning.	
Chair of Governors	Kevin Hallahan
Ensures climate action is part of school governance; holds leadership accountable; advocates for long-term sustainability planning and compliance.	
Teaching staff	
Delivers climate education across the curriculum; supports pupil-led projects; role-models sustainable behaviours in the classroom.	
Other school staff	
Participates in sustainability practices (e.g. reducing waste, energy-saving); supports pupils and leadership in delivering Climate Action Plan actions.	
Pupils	
Participate in green initiatives (e.g. eco-council, litter picks); share ideas and promote behaviour change among peers and families.	
Parents	
Support sustainable travel, lunches, and home behaviours; contribute to consultations or volunteering for Climate Action Plan projects; reinforce messages outside school.	

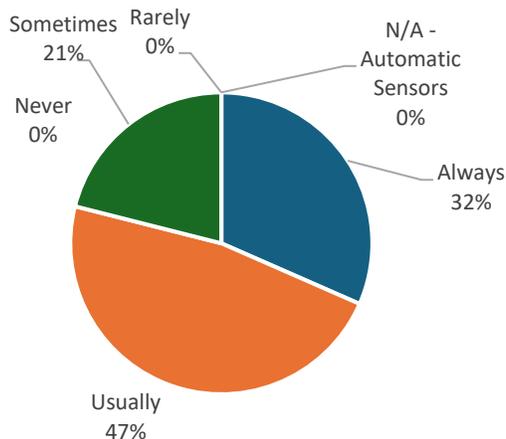
Carbon Footprint Assessment

Energy Use

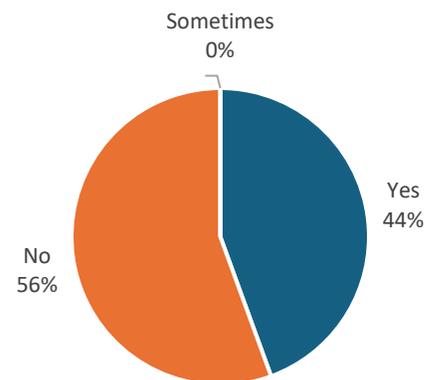
George Street Primary School’s energy is supplied by the **HCC Energy Management Team** for both electricity and gas. The school uses **49,101 kWh of electricity** and **95,787 kWh of gas** annually. It is currently **uncertain whether the school is on a green energy tariff**, which presents an opportunity for further investigation. The energy use per square metre is **38.4 kWh/m² for electricity** and **74.9 kWh/m² for gas**, both of which are **below national benchmarks** for primary schools, indicating efficient energy performance. The school benefits from **smart meters**, which support monitoring.

From the Teacher impact survey, **32% of staff** always turn off classroom lights when not needed, and **47%** usually do. **40%** always switch off electronic devices at the end of the day, with **33%** usually doing so. However, only **33%** always encourage pupils to report unnecessary energy use, and **20%** usually do. These habits reflect strong staff-led energy awareness, though pupil engagement in energy-saving behaviours could be improved.

Do you turn off lights when they are not needed?



Do you encourage pupils to report unnecessary energy use?



Water Usage

The school used **42 m³ of water** during a one-month billing period. When scaled to a full year, this equates to **504 m³ annually**, or approximately **2.2 m³ per pupil per year**. This is **below the national benchmark** of 3–5 m³ per pupil, indicating efficient water use. The school conducts

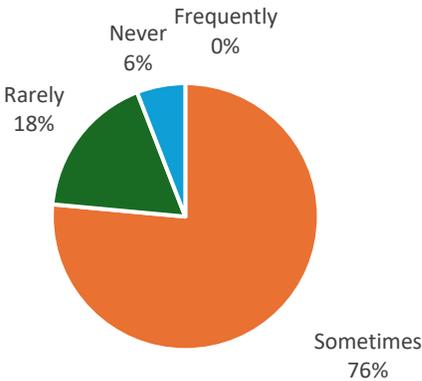
regular leak audits, which supports ongoing efficiency. However, there are **no water conservation measures** currently in place, such as water butts, which could be a simple and effective next step.

Waste Management

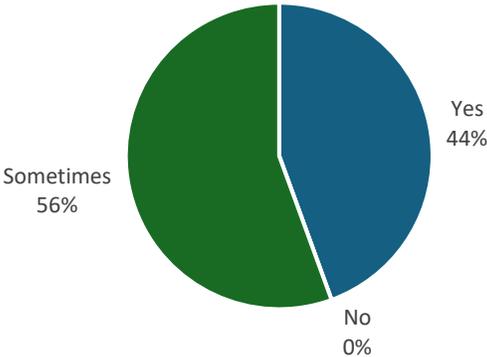
George Street Primary School produced **900 kg of waste** last year, with **50% recycled**. This is **in line with national averages**, though increasing the recycling rate would be beneficial. The school separates food waste via a **general food bin** and has implemented initiatives such as replacing plastic cups with **paper bags for Fruity Friday**, demonstrating a commitment to reducing single-use plastics.

From the Teacher impact survey, **73% of staff** actively participate in the school’s recycling programme, showing strong engagement. When asked about using reusable materials in the classroom, **44%** of teachers said **yes**, while **56%** responded **sometimes**, indicating that while the practice is common, there’s still room for more consistent adoption. In terms of avoiding unnecessary printing, **76%** of teachers said they **sometimes** use digital alternatives, suggesting that while awareness is present, digital-first practices are not yet embedded. These habits reflect a positive foundation, and with targeted support—such as clearer guidance or improved access to digital tools—there’s potential to strengthen sustainable behaviours further.

How often do you print materials when you could use digital alternatives?



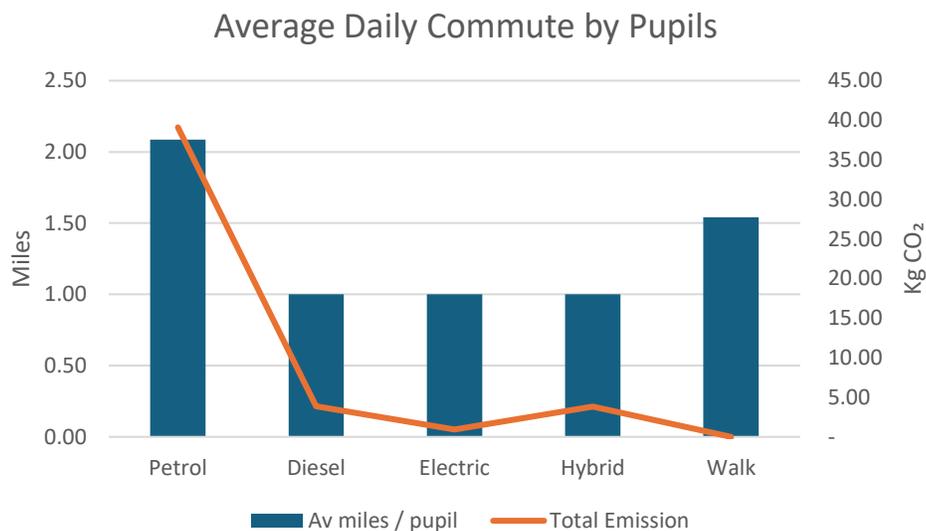
Do you use reusable materials for classroom activities instead of single-use items?



Transport

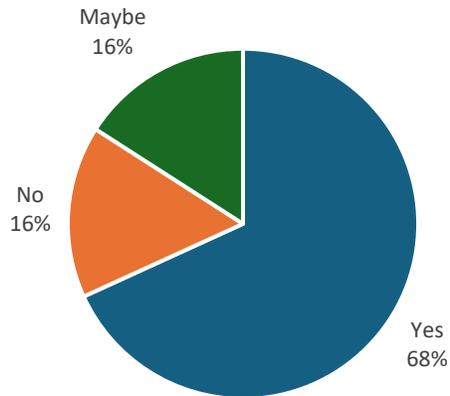
Based on the pupil survey, the estimated annual emissions from pupil commuting are **9.07 t/CO₂**, already scaled to reflect the full school population. The data shows that **82% of pupils walk to school**, which is **significantly higher than the national average** for primary schools. **12% travel by car**, and **6% use other modes** such as cycling, bus, or rail. This strong uptake of active travel is a clear strength and reflects well on the school's location and culture.

Parents gave a range of reasons for using cars, with **convenience and time constraints** being the most common, cited by **42%** of respondents. **28%** mentioned concerns about the safety of walking or cycling routes, while **18%** said the distance to school was too far to walk or cycle. These responses suggest that while active travel is prevalent, there are still practical barriers that could be addressed through infrastructure improvements or targeted engagement.



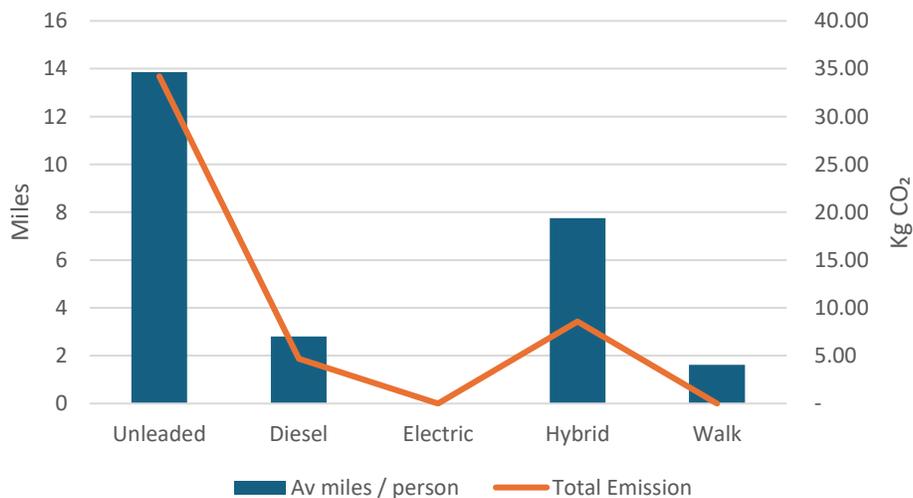
Encouragingly, **68% of parents** said they would be open to their child using a more sustainable travel option if it were safe and practical. Suggested options included walking buses, improved bike lanes, and better public transport links. This **positive attitude** reflects strong engagement and a willingness to support change, which could be harnessed to develop community-led initiatives.

Would you be open to your child using a more sustainable travel option?



Staff commuting data shows a **76% response rate**, with an average of **7.2 miles per day** travelled per teacher. The total annual emissions from staff commuting are **9.8 t/CO₂**, calculated using standard emissions factors and scaled to reflect the full working year. Most teachers commute by car, though **18% walk or cycle**, and **22%** vary their travel mode during the week. This variability suggests potential for further modal shift, especially if supported by incentives or infrastructure.

Average Daily Commute by Staff



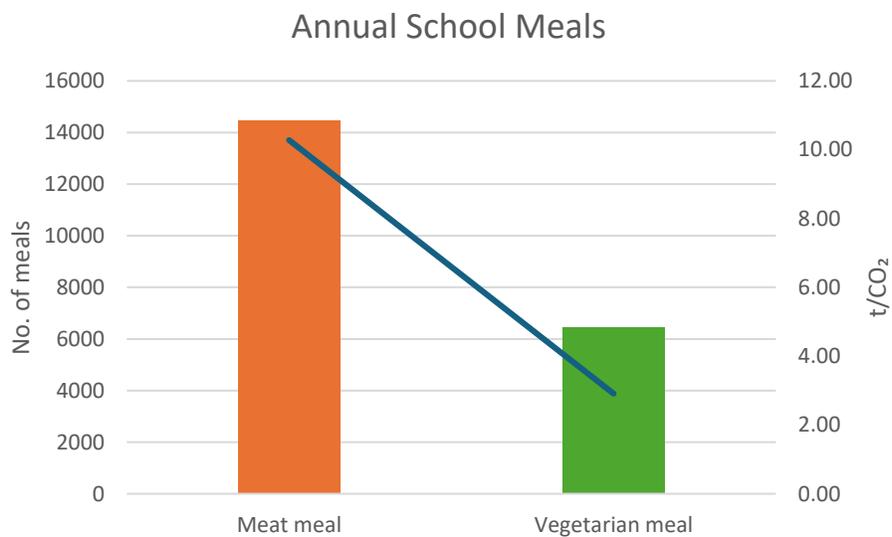
Travel contributes **31%** to the **operational carbon footprint**, which is **slightly above benchmark levels** for UK primary schools. This highlights staff commuting as a key area for targeted improvement, particularly given the strong foundation of pupil active travel and parent interest in sustainable alternatives.

Food

The school's catering is provided by **Radish**, serving around **537 meals per week**. Of these, **31 meals are vegetarian**, equating to **5.8%**. Annually, this results in **20,406 meals**, generating **13.19 t/CO₂** from food consumption.

Vegetarian meals save approximately **37% in carbon emissions** compared to meat-based meals. The caterer serves **meat-free meals once a week**, contributing to a further **7% reduction** in food-related emissions.

An assumption has been made that "non-vegetarian pupils" chose a meat option four days a week, therefore showing a worst-case scenario.



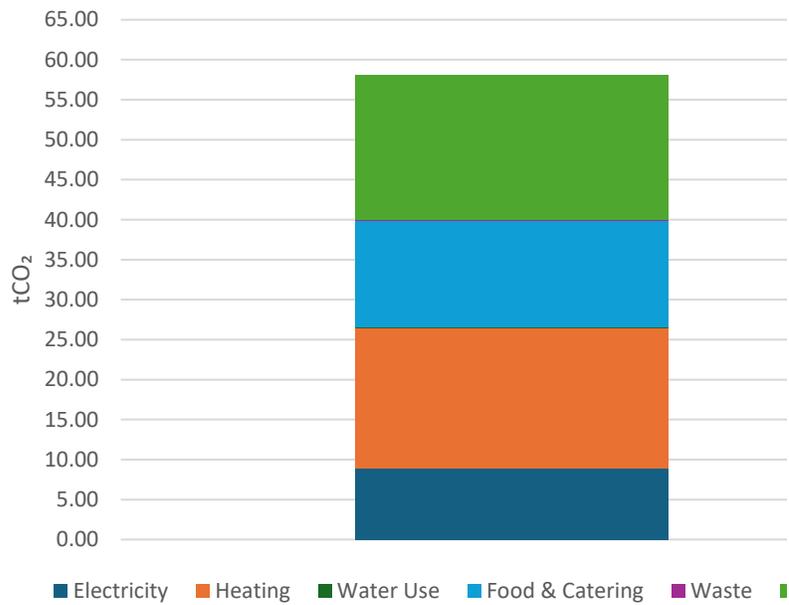
Carbon Footprint

As of July 2025, the carbon footprint for George Street Primary School is estimated to be:

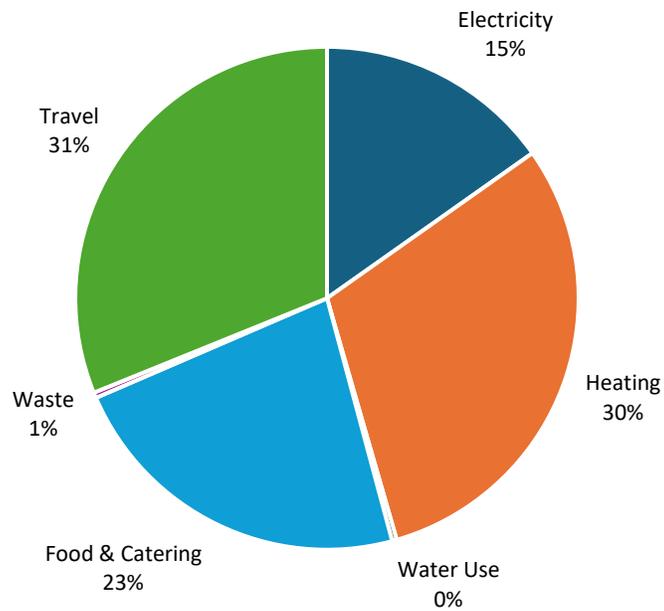
Scope 1 & 2 Only (Operational)



Operational Carbon Footprint

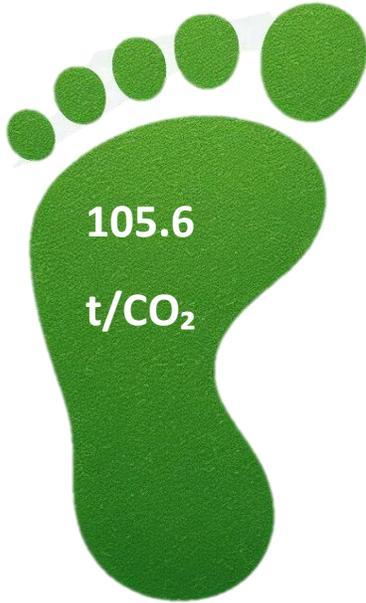


Operational Contributors to Carbon Emissions

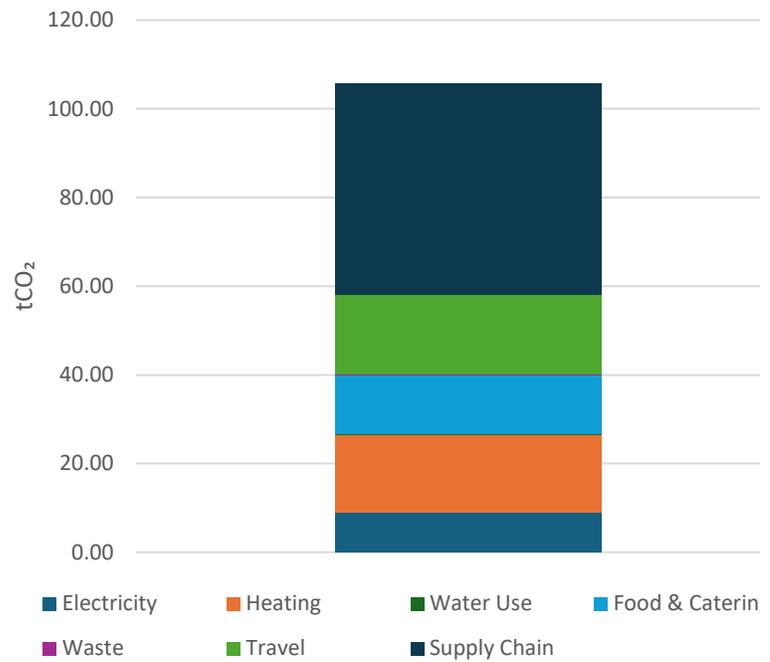


Estimate Total Carbon Footprint

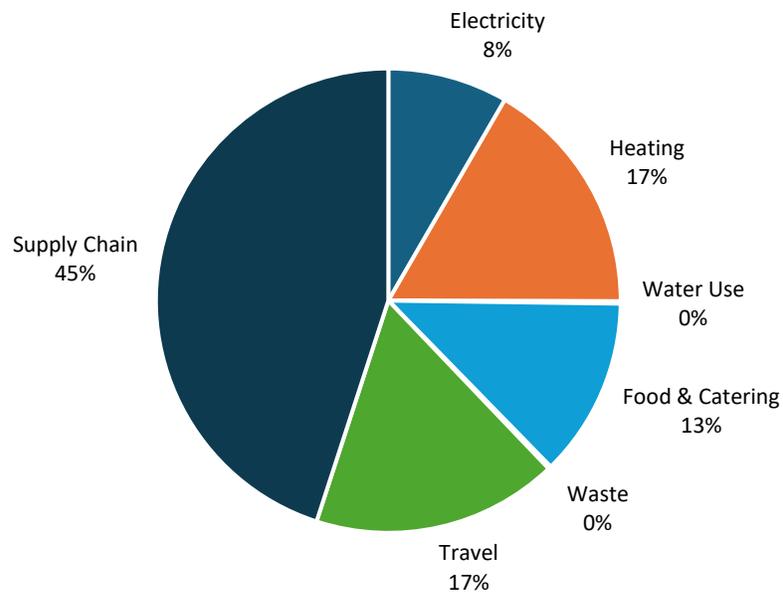
(including average of 45% supply chain contribution)



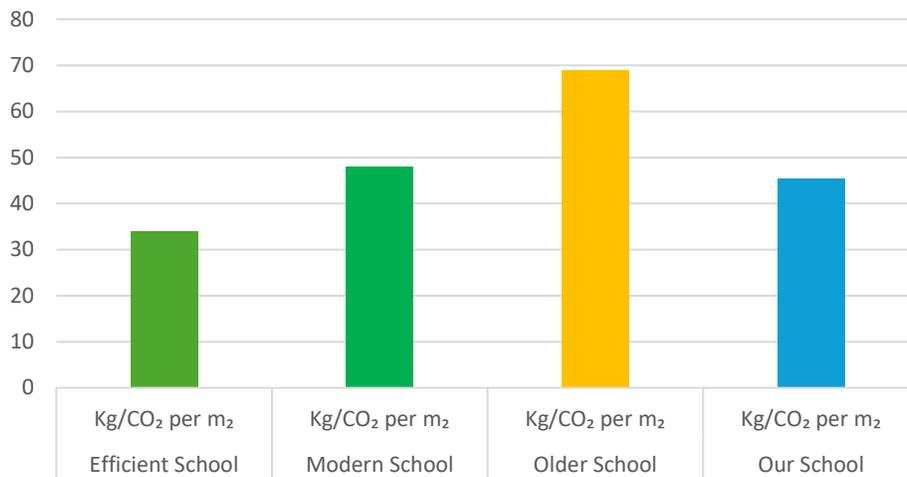
Estimated Total Carbon Footprint



Contributors to Carbon Emissions (Incl. estimated supply chain element)



Carbon Footprint vs Benchmarks



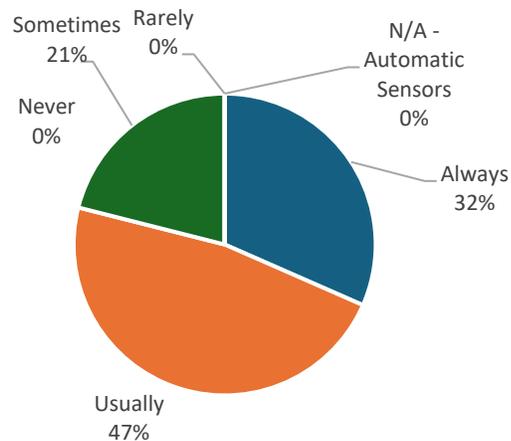
George Street Primary School’s total carbon footprint is **below the benchmark** in several categories, including **electricity, heating, and water use**. However, **travel emissions** are **slightly above average**, and **food-related emissions** are **moderate**. Overall, the school performs well compared to national benchmarks, with clear opportunities for targeted reductions.

Existing Climate Action Initiatives

George Street Primary School has implemented several climate action initiatives. These include the use of **LED lighting** and the presence of **smart meters** to monitor energy consumption. The school also runs a **waste reduction programme**, and has introduced biodiversity features such as a **bug hotel**, a **wormery**, and a **wild flower meadow**, all confirmed through the data provided.

From the Teacher impact survey, **32% of staff** state they always turn off classroom lights when not needed, and **89%** “always” switch off electronic devices at the end of the day. These habits support the school’s operational efficiency and align well with its existing initiatives.

Do you turn off lights when they are not needed?



Pupil & Community Engagement

The school has active groups including a **School Council**, **Eco Council**, and **Parents' Association**, which can support sustainability initiatives. Engagement levels are perceived to be **high among staff and governors, moderate among parents, and low among pupils**.

Parents and teachers offered **numerous practical suggestions**, including **walking buses, bike lanes, gardening clubs, and eco-awareness days**. **13 parents** expressed interest in supporting sustainability efforts. Teacher responses also reflected strong interest, with **78%** willing to play a key role.

92% of staff stated that protecting the environment is **personally very important**, highlighting a strong cultural foundation for future initiatives.

Target Areas

The school has identified **single-use plastics and food waste** as key sustainability priorities. These are well-aligned with current initiatives and community concerns. It is noted that any significant changes **may need active support and engagement from the local authority**.

Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Plan issued alongside this baseline report has been developed as a five-year plan, focusing on immediate priorities and achievable quick wins, while also embedding climate education across the school community in the earlier years. It sets out clear actions to raise awareness, reduce environmental impact, and engage pupils, staff, and families in meaningful change. The plan will be regularly monitored to track progress, with a commitment to continuous improvement. Formal annual reviews will be conducted to assess outcomes, update data, and establish objectives for the following rolling year, ensuring the plan remains responsive and effective over time.

Note that additional actions have been provided in Pupil and Site Manager audit checklists to enable them to initiate activities and therefore take some ownership.

[See Separate Climate Action Plan Document.](#)

Conclusion

George Street Primary School has demonstrated a commendable commitment to sustainability across multiple domains. Its **energy use is efficient**, supported by **smart monitoring**. **Water consumption is low**, though conservation measures could be expanded. **Waste management practices are solid**, with room to improve recycling rates and reduce printing.

Travel emissions, particularly from staff, represent a notable portion of the **operational carbon footprint**, and targeted interventions could yield meaningful reductions. The school's **food-related emissions** are moderate, with vegetarian options contributing positively. The presence of **meat-free days** and a proactive caterer are encouraging signs.

The school's **carbon footprint is below national benchmarks** in most categories, reflecting strong operational performance. Existing initiatives, such as biodiversity projects and energy-saving measures, are well-established. **Community engagement is promising**, with active councils and strong staff support. However, **pupil engagement remains low**, and increasing their involvement will be key to long-term success.

With clear priorities identified and a motivated team, George Street Primary School is well-positioned to build on its strengths. Continued collaboration with the **local authority**, and deeper engagement with pupils and parents, will be essential in driving future improvements.