Alford Primary School

Sustainability and Climate Action Strategy

Department of Education

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Published: 18th December 2025

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Executive Summary

We have so far experienced 1.1°c of global warming. This may sound insignificant- barely anything at all- but it is already having drastic effects upon natural and human systems in all areas of the world, including the UK. The subsequent impacts are often broader than people expect; it not only alters natural climate and ecosystem activity, but also increases frequency of pandemics and widespread illness, food and water shortages, involuntary migration and displacement, and violent conflict. All of these effects are interconnected, they are not individual, stand-alone incidences, they are part of a web of events being spun by a singular spider: climate change.

With confidence, the IPCC (International Panel for Climate Change) can declare that the following issues are going to be experienced more frequently, by more people, in more areas of the world, and to much more detrimental levels:

- Natural disasters and extreme weather (including hurricanes, flooding, heatwaves, and extreme storms)
- Pandemics and infectious disease (diseases will spread to previously unaffected areas, and environmental conditions will worsen their effects)
- Non-communicable diseases (such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes due to food insecurity, poor nutrition, and mental health)
- Food and water shortages (caused by the effects of changing climates upon farming and water reserves)
- Involuntary migration and displacement (due to unliveable conditions in certain areas due to changing climatic conditions, particularly in coastal and arid regions)
- Conflict and violence (due to desires for territory, amenities, and social security)
- Mental health concerns (increased anxiety and depression linked to worsening environmental and social conditions)
- Poorer living and housing conditions ○ Poverty and social exclusion

These statements are not worse-case scenario projections, they are reality for many people currently, and will become lived experiences for many more if amendments are not made. Decades of scientific research, policy creation, and campaign work have contributed to the evidence and responding measures put forward to us now, and each sector and level of society must respond accordingly. The Department of Education plans to be the front-runner in this movement; it plans to set the standard for how a sustainable industry can run on a national scale, and what better place to start with than where knowledge, passion, and ability are crafted and nurtured?

This strategy is the beginning of that movement; it is a plan for how this school can contribute to the staggering developments the education sector plans to make towards both environmental and social sustainability. It is an opportunity to secure the future for our children, and provide them with the skills and awareness they will need not only to navigate a rapidly changing world, but to thrive in it.

The following strategy will explore Alford Primary School's primary features of focus:

- Biodiversity
- Climate Adaptation
- Decarbonisation
- Education, Knowledge, and Skills
- Social and Personal Wellbeing
- Waste Management

These focal points relate to the seven key Sustainable Development Goals that this plan aligns itself with by attempting to ensure Good Health and Wellbeing, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Climate Action, and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. These focal SDGs guide this plan and are woven in to all of the actions proposed for the future of Alford Primary School. They remain at the core of our beliefs and behaviours, and represent the values we intend to instil upon the children who experience their education with us: happiness, safety, health, kindness, ambition, and creativity.

A Statement from Alford Primary School's Headteacher:

The core of our school's ethos- and the behaviour we practice each day- is safety, happiness, health, ambition, creativity and kindness. This strategy incorporates all aspects of that ethos by not only ensuring that our children are safeguarded and encouraged to thrive in the present whilst in attendance at Alford Primary School, but that their future is protected with the same enthusiasm.

We commit to the targets outlined in this strategy document to inspire our children and to ensure that they can reach their potential in a world that is as safe and happy as it can possibly be. We strive to provide them with skills and knowledge that will encourage them to achieve in all aspects of life in this perpetually changing world.

Involving all of the individuals belonging to the Alford Primary School Community will be a vital step in achieving the goals set out in this strategy. Using this level of cooperation between staff, children, parents, and the wider community, we can set the example for prioritising environmental, social, and economic wellbeing, not as individual entities, but as one.

We will build resilience to the effects climate change will have upon everyday life, not only physically with building and infrastructure developments, but also socially and mentally, by offering workshops and training in green skills and education for all members of the APS community. We will create a better future for current and subsequent generations through this work and the benefits for all aspects of the school's operations will be incredibly positive.

Mrs Laura Mackenzie-Snow

Alford Primary School Headteacher

December 2025

1.0 Introduction

The challenge of sustaining education through a pandemic brought unprecedented concerns and challenges outside of the ordinary remit of conventional teaching and learning. Not only will 'Building Back Greener' contribute towards climate and environmental protection, but it will also encourage innovation, enhance educational attainment, and contribute to the national economy on a broader scale than simply just education. The legislation will work in alignment with:

- The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals
- UNESCO's 'Education for Sustainable Development for 2030'
- The Paris Agreement and Glasgow Climate Pact
- Action for Climate Empowerment
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC)
- UK Climate Change Act 2008
- The Environment Act 2021
- Net Zero by 2050

Our Vision: The United Kingdom is the world-leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030. **-The Department of Education, 2023**

The Department of Education's Climate Action Plan aims to:

- Prepare children emotionally for the impact that climate change is having, and will have in the future, upon their lives through learning and practical experience.
- Engage children in education to make them passionate about the natural world and want to protect it, and to use the enthusiasm of youth to inspire the whole of society to work together for the planet.
- Provide the opportunity for people of all ages to train, retrain, or upskill into Green Careers. Sustainability and climate change will be involved in every career.

- Build resilience to climate change by adapting education and care buildings to prepare for the effects of climate change.
- Achieve Net Zero emissions by decarbonising the systems involved in the education and care sector through the acceleration of innovation and opportunities of engagement in meeting Net Zero legislation.
- Create a better environment for future generations by enhancing biodiversity, contributing to air quality improvements, increasing access and connection to nature, and holding health and wellbeing at the core of educational values.

At Alford Primary School, we believe that each individual is a steward of the natural world, and therefore every small action can make a big difference in protecting our planet and ensuring a sustainable future for our children. Climate change is already affecting communities worldwide and we must prepare for the effects it will have upon us.

The initial steps of this plan will be to build a Sustainability Team within the school estate; with the appointment of a senior staff member as Sustainability Lead, a Sustainability focused Governor, and Student Eco-Ambassadors. Beyond this core team of sustainability stakeholders, the building of a wholesetting awareness of environmental consciousness will be developed through staff Continued Personal Development, green education workshops, and curriculum developments. The Sustainability Team will lead the developments, but it is the responsibility of each individual involved in Alford Primary School to educate themselves and contribute to the ongoing progress outlined in this strategy. Effective execution of this plan will produce widespread, holistic benefits for not just those involved in the school, but the wider community and beyond. It is often assumed that one person, or one group, or one school cannot make any significant difference- but that is not the value adopted by this school.

Data collection processes were carried out between February and September 2025 in order to advise the outline of the strategy. Data analysis indicated at what point the estate currently resided at in terms of sustainable development, and advised how to move forward from these points. Supporting documents detailing the data collection and analysis processes, as well as more detailed strategy descriptions, sit alongside this report to aid understanding and describe clear plans for improvement. The data exposed constraints of the estate as well as the opportunities available for significant sustainable developments, that not only sit in line with the aforementioned legislation, but exceed them to create an environment that holds all aspects of health, happiness, and well-being at its core for all individuals involved.

2.0 Biodiversity

To nurture the sense of environmental stewardship in our children, as well as providing a safe and healthy environment for local wildlife to exist, increasing the biodiversity index of the estate will be a significant step towards becoming a sustainable school. Through the development of school gardens, outdoor learning spaces, and local conservation projects, we will enable students to develop a deeper understanding and care for the living things we share the world with. By fostering a love for nature through the provision of primary experiences with it, we can inspire the next generation to protect it.

2.1 Alford Primary School Biodiversity Aims

- To increase species diversity presence within the school estate, facilitated through the creation of appropriate habitats and the introduction of new species of flora and fauna.
- To ensure the relative abundance and existing richness of the estate is increased by at least 40% from the starting index in September 2025, to 2026.
- Once the increase in biodiversity is achieved, a standard increase of at least 7% in index per year should be maintained and monitored at least once per annum to update progress figures.
- To use the enhancement of biodiversity on the estate to develop children's connection to nature and to support their learning regarding the natural world and the processes within it.
- To involve children in the expansion and monitoring of biodiversity using scientific data collection techniques, visual recognition, and creativity.

2.2 Alford Primary School Biodiversity Plan

Biodiversity Index Assessment

Based on the biodiversity assessment conducted within the estate in September 2025, the relative abundance and species diversity levels were found to be very low. The promotion of biodiversity within the estate represents a vital commitment to sustainability, ecological literacy, and the personal well-being of the pupils. By focusing upon the cultivation and introduction of resilient, non-invasive plant species, alongside the encouragement of fauna through the creation of diverse habitats, the biodiversity will not only increase, but the children will gain access to a new sector of practical education.

The relative abundance of trees, plants, grasses, insects, and wild animal (including bird) species within the estate are much lower than they should be for the area size and the biodiversity potential. The biodiversity index assessment was conducted using the Simpson's Biodiversity Index, which offers a numerical representation of the relative abundance of individual species within the school grounds. The introduction of a nature garden is set to increase the biodiversity index initially by at least 30%, and subsequent developments should progress this figure by 7% per year. Therefore, in the four-year period between the installation of the Nature Garden and the first subsequent biodiversity audit, there should be a minimum 51% increase in biodiversity within the estate from the current index value in September 2025. By 2030, there should have been an approximate 60% increase in biodiversity (excluding natural seasonal fluctuations throughout the year). The biodiversity index audit will be conducted at the same time of each year to standardise continuity- ideally assessing in summer when biodiversity is most prevalent, but it may be pertinent to note biodiversity fluctuations during the year using partial index assessments.

To ensure tangible and measurable increases in biodiversity, a Conservation and Sensory Garden will be established using the funding grant from the National Nature Park. This will include the planting of native trees and climate-resilient, pollinator-friendly plants that will attract an abundance of invertebrates to the ecosystem, with bird and owl boxes to encourage avian diversity. Insect hotels and deadwood features will support decomposer species and invertebrates, and a small bucket pond will serve as refuge for amphibious life. Not only will this garden provide a sanctuary for wildlife, but also for the children, who will benefit not only from observing nature, but also from the sensory elements, including wind chimes, mirrors, and scented, bright, soft herbs and flowers. This space will create Science, Art, and Geography learning opportunities, as well as providing a soothing, inclusive space that stimulates curiosity and calm.

The Nature Garden will have a significant impact on the increase of biodiversity within the school estate, but this increase must continue subsequently per annum. Each academic year will bring opportunities for the expansion and refinement of biodiversity, guided by seasonal planting schedules and ecological observations. It is also important that abundance is maintained throughout the year, with rotational planting of appropriate flower, herb, vegetable and plant species, and the introduction of new nesting or hibernation features to maintain abundance year-round. The school will conduct a formal biodiversity assessment once every three years to evaluate progress and guide future actions.

Children will play an integral role in the expansion and monitoring of biodiversity through extracurricular clubs such as Gardening and Eco-club, and the development of sustainability and conservation in the curriculum- which will be explored further in *5.0 Green Education and Skills.* They will also contribute to the Biodiversity Audits, developing experience of conducting quadrat sampling, transect walks, wildlife surveys, visual recognition, digital app use, and species cataloguing. There are also creative opportunities, including nature journaling, storytelling, and art projects inspired by nature that will deepen emotional connections and foster a sense of care, responsibility, and wonder.

Biodiversity expansions have benefits beyond the estate, and in a time of escalating environmental degradation, this cultivation will contribute to global sustainability efforts, acting as a carbon sink and supporting pollinators that are critical for maintaining food security. For the pupils, particularly SEND children, time in nature has been proven to reduce stress, support emotional regulation, and improve cognitive functioning. Moreover, the act of nurturing and connecting with life cycle processes contributes to good mental health, promotes mindfulness, nurtures resilience, and offers a sense of purpose.

3.0 Climate Adaptation

With the consequences of global climate change becoming increasingly common and apparent, it is vital that we adapt and prepare for the future we will experience. Extreme weather events- including droughts, storms, wildfires, and flooding- water and food insecurities, and increased risk of disease are all factors needing to be taken into consideration when planning ahead for the future of the school. Ensuring the school estate is as prepared as possible for these experiences will be the key to limiting their negative impact upon the children and adults involved with Alford Primary School to safeguard their ability to learn, grow, and thrive.

3.1 Alford Primary School Climate Adaptation Goals

- To enhance the adaptive capability of the individuals involved with Alford Primary School, including pupils, staff, parents and governors, ensuring they are educated and informed regarding the effects of climate change they will experience, and to how to best cope with and adjust to them.
- To strengthen the resilience of the estate by executing beneficial physical changes to ensure the tangible composition of the buildings and surrounding area are prepared for the effects of climate change so that children can continue to learn and thrive.
- To integrate all four categories of adaptation into the estate's management strategy; infrastructural, institutional, behavioural, and nature-based, and therefore ensuring the threshold capacity, coping capacity, and recovery capacity of the estate are exceptionally operated.

3.2 Alford Primary School Climate Adaptation Plan

Estate Management and Mitigation

The school building must be adapted and maintained to withstand increasingly volatile, unpredictable, and extreme weather conditions. This will mean the physical adaptation of features of the estate to maximise the building's resilience; making it as safe and comfortable as possible in all conditions.

The increased likelihood of more frequent and intense rainfall events will mean flood management measures will be crucial for safeguarding the property and safety of all on site. Flood guards will be installed to lower-level classrooms doors that sit at ground level to reduce risk of water ingress during heavy rainfall. Areas of the estate already susceptible to surface-water collection during rainfall events will be levelled with permeable material and the afforestation of these areas should reduce soil erosion and increase natural interception and absorption.

Afforestation of the estate will also prove dually beneficial during more frequent and intense heatwaves, providing shaded areas and natural cooling through transpiration. Amplifying natural cooling and ventilation techniques within the estate is imperative, and by maximising natural shade and windbreaks, provided by trees and hedges, will reduce wind exposure, limit noise pollution, and promote a more tranquil and engaging outdoor learning environment. Shaded areas, including verandas, will be installed on the south facing walls of the building to shield ground floor windows from sunlight and provide comfortable outdoor spaces for students. Reflective window shields will be kept in upper-level classrooms that receive direct sunlight during the school day, and by keeping windows open at night and closed within the day, cool air should remain within the classrooms. A shaded outdoor classroom area will be established, providing a space for children to learn when traditional classrooms become too hot. This initiative will encourage students to engage with nature, promoting both environmental education, and improving personal wellbeing. Green roofs are to be installed on the flat roof sections of the school building, which will not only reduce water collection and risk of structural damage during large rain events, but will also insulate buildings, keeping them cooler in summer and warmer in winter. This measure will also increase the biodiversity index of the estate and as green roofs retain any excess rainwater not required by the vegetation layer, it will provide a harvested rainwater supply during times of drought.

> “School grounds represent a place at the heart of our communities. A place where children spend significant amounts of time learning and playing daily. They are a place where any improvements and changes are highly visible and deeply beneficial. This project aims to bring pupils and their communities closer to the impacts of climate change and the simple changes that can be made to create cooler, healthier, and happier environments for all.”
>
> - Matt Robinson, Learning Through Landscapes Scotland Director and COO

Addressing Food and Water Insecurity

Food insecurity levels in the United Kingdom in January 2025 sat at approximately 14% of households, equating to 7.3 million adults being affected. People facing undernourishment increased from 541 million in 2017 to 733 million in 2023, and this figure is predicted to continue rising as climate analyses present evidence that rising temperatures and increased volatility of weather are endangering the stability of food production on global and local scales- both of which are relied upon by UK citizens. As climate change threatens food production worldwide, it is increasingly important to promote education regarding sustainable food practices and self-sufficiency. By growing fruit, vegetables, and herbs on school grounds, children will learn valuable skills that will aid them in responding to future increases in food insecurity, reminding them of the importance of local and sustainable agriculture.

Similarly, water scarcity is a growing concern, with some parts of the world already experiencing extreme droughts leaving them with little or no access to clean water. Though the United Kingdom is accustomed to the provision of safe, clean water at the turn of a tap, it is imperative that we do not diminish the possibility of losing this privilege, even in part. Implementing rainwater harvesting systems to capture and store rainwater for use in the school’s gardens and wet play areas will reduce reliance on mains water, particularly in times of extreme drought. Additionally, the school will adopt water-preservation measures such as smaller flushes in toilets and sensor-controlled taps to reduce water wastage. The school’s grounds will additionally be planted with drought-tolerant and drought-resistant species to maintain green spaces and maximise biodiversity even during dry seasons. This will not only conserve water, but will also contribute to a more resilient and diverse ecosystem within the estate.

Supporting Children and Staff in Preparing for Future Changes

In the face of an uncertain future brought about by climate change, it is essential that both children and staff are prepared for potential disruptions. This includes fostering an understanding of climate change through the curriculum, so pupils are made aware of its impacts and are equipped to adapt to them, and therefore climate education will be integrated across subjects, in all year groups. Moreover, providing emotional and psychological support is crucial to addressing growing experiences of climate anxiety amongst young people. The school will implement a range of wellbeing initiatives, including access to counselling services and climate-focused support groups, where both children and staff can share their feelings and concerns regarding these issues.

As the risk of disease transmission and frequency of wide-scale pandemics increases alongside the impacts of climate change, the school will continue to implement robust health protocols. This will include maintaining pandemic response procedures, ensuring that students and staff are well prepared for future outbreaks and that education provision can continue effectively through these times. Specific guidelines for managing sickness, including the 48-hour rule for sickness and diarrhoea, will help to reduce the risk of transmission. The school will continue to monitor public health advice and adjust its policies as necessary to safeguard the health of all members of the school community.

4.0 Decarbonisation

National decarbonisation targets have been delayed and deprioritised repeatedly to ensure any major sacrifices of profit and convenience do not have to be made. In the absence of adequate governmentdriven interventions, individual sectors must take on the responsibility of driving decarbonisation action and behavioural change. The education sector, however, has a more unusual ability to make vast advancements towards net-zero, as profit and convenience are rarely ever a factor in the operations of a school. Though not simple, and still requiring sacrifices and alterations to behaviour, it is entirely possible for the state school system to set the standard in decarbonisation advancements.

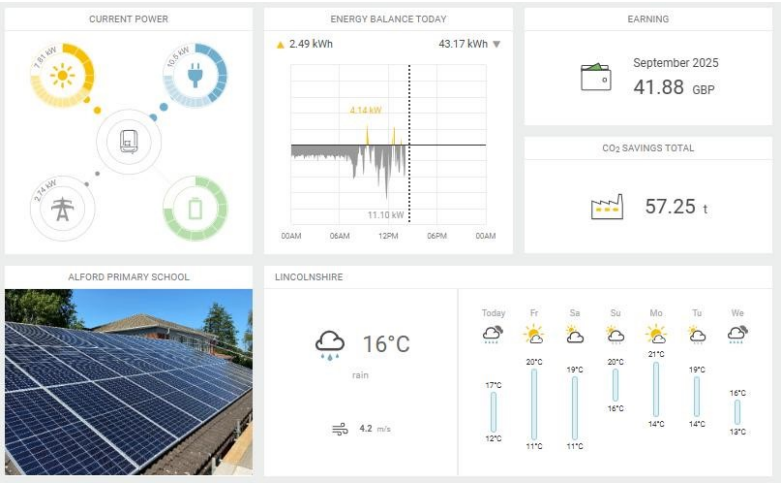
Department of Education Goal: to play our part in reducing public-sector emissions against the 2017 baseline by 50% by the end of Carbon Budget 5 (2032) and 75% by the end of Carbon Budget 6 (2037).

4.1 Alford Primary School Decarbonisation Goals

- To reduce the energy requirements of the estate by cutting power usage, whilst continuing to maximise usage of the internally produced renewable energy, and utilising the provision of renewable energy providers for the remaining requirement excess. The combination of these measures will result in the estate's energy consumption being powered entirely by renewable sources, and therefore being entirely decarbonised.
- Ensure the buildings within the estate are properly insulated and maintained to reduce heat loss and gain and optimise natural heating and ventilation without relying upon powered systems.
- To contribute to carbon off-setting procedures by afforesting and ensuring the maintenance of green biodiversity within the estate.

4.2 Alford Primary School Decarbonisation Plan

Energy Supply



Total energy consumption for the estate in 2024 stood at 51.08MWh, and 17.73MWh of this value was supplied by the solar unit on the school building. Through the consistent monitoring of this system, it can be seen that over £15,000 in savings and more than 55 tonnes of carbon dioxide are not entering the atmosphere due to the estate's solar unit. The remaining amount of energy is supplied by Octopus Energy, who source almost entirely from renewables for their provision, sometimes substituted by gas- although this is offset by carbon capture and storage procedures. During winter months, less energy is produced by the solar unit and therefore the estate relies more heavily upon imported energy, which is subsequently more costly. However, the use of this company in comparison to most other energy suppliers means that almost the entirety of Alford Primary School's energy mix is sourced from renewables throughout the year, making bounds of progress towards decarbonisation targets. In order to maximise usage of primary solar energy production and therefore reduce reliance upon external suppliers, and therefore expenditure on energy, integrating an on-site energy storage system will be integral. This will require a large investment and is therefore something that would need to be supported by government grants, however, this advancement will ensure that the school is maximising its primary renewable energy supply, and reducing reliance upon external sources.

Energy Demand

The consumption of energy, whether that be renewable or otherwise, can and should be reduced further within the estate. The installation of motion-activated lighting systems and automatic shut-off switches will reduce unnecessary energy waste in less frequently occupied spaces, such as storage cupboards, the main hall, stairways, and toilets. Internal members of the estate will be made aware that reducing energy consumption is a priority and that lights and tech must be turned off as much as possible, and charging systems- such as for the iPads- are not left on outside of school opening hours. Furthermore, printing needs to be reduced significantly; both to reduce waste and resource consumption, and to limit the energy usage of printing machinery. All staff will be expected to contribute to this reduction in printing and use of resources, through changes in behaviours and demand.

The estate's buildings will continue to be monitored to ensure insulation and structural features are maintained to effectively manage temperature and climatic features. Ensuring aspects including windows and doors are efficient will reduce heat loss or maintain cooling measures, and therefore will in turn reduce energy demand.

5.0 Green Education and Skills

To build a sustainable future, students must be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to address and adapt to environmental challenges. Our school will teach students about climate adaptation through practical activities, such as rainwater harvesting, sustainable gardening, and the importance of grass-roots approaches to conservation and resilience. Through integrated features of the curriculum, children will be offered lessons and projects incorporating green skills and knowledge on all scales and in all sectors, ensuring their education is not only holistic, but inspiring and accessible for all.

> "The challenge of climate change is formidable. For children and young people to meet it with determination, and not with despair, we must offer them not just the truth, but also hope."
>
> - Nadhim Zahawi, Secretary of State for Education

5.1 Alford Primary School Green Education and Sustainable Skills Goals

- To cultivate a generation of environmentally conscious learners equipped with the knowledge, values, and competencies necessary to contribute meaningfully to a sustainable future.
- To embed ecological awareness and environmental responsibility, not as discrete units of study but as an integral thread woven through the entire curriculum, thereby cultivating a lasting respect for the natural world and an active commitment to its stewardship.
- To provide an inclusive and inspirational framework for learning and practical skill development that nurtures a variety of skill sets and passions for all children; developing their cognitive and practical abilities to build a strong foundation of development that will benefit them throughout their lives.
- To ensure that Green Education and Skills are strongly integrated not only into a vast majority of the curriculum, but also into the everyday behaviours and practices of staff and students with the intention of sustainability becoming a core value of our school.

5.2 Alford Primary School Green Education and Sustainable Skills Plan

Curriculum Expansion and Integration

A central priority of this strategy is the expansion of sustainability education across a broader range of subjects beyond its traditional domains of Science and Geography. While these subjects will continue to provide the foundational scientific and conceptual framework necessary to understand ecosystems, climate, biodiversity, and conservation, other areas of the curriculum will be increasingly harnessed to reinforce and enrich this knowledge. The expansion will incorporate non-traditional subjects, such as art- in

which pupils can be encouraged to explore themes of nature and sustainability through eco-art projects, using natural or recycled mediums whilst observing the living world. In Design and Technology, learners will engage with the principles of sustainable design, investigating the environmental impact of material consumption, exploring upcycling, sustainable construction techniques, and examining how nature can inspire innovative and ecologically responsible product and material design. The English curriculum will provide opportunities for the exploration of environmental themes through persuasive writing, poetry, journaling, and structured debates. Green Education will become a pervasive and interdisciplinary endeavour, and to ensure this holistic approach, staff will be provided with targeted professional development to ensure the successful integration of Green Education into the curriculum and operations of the school.

> "High quality climate education has never been more important. As the stark reality of the impact of climate change is seen we need all children and young people to not only understand the science of climate change but witness real world adaptations in their school grounds and communities. This will inspire them to think critically and creatively about what can be done to tackle and mitigate the climate emergency."
>
> - Carley Sefton, CEO of Learning through Landscapes

The development of practical and transferable skills will be a core aim of this plan. Pupils will acquire a wide range of competencies including observation, data collection, tool use, and teamwork. This skill expansion is inclusive for all children and caters to those who respond well to non-conventional methods of learning, particularly when peaking their interests in non-traditional topics of learning. A clear progression framework will be established to ensure that these skills are developed in a sequential and age-appropriate manner, culminating pupil-led projects that promote agency, leadership, and peer-to-peer learning. The succession of this strategy will be monitored through a combination of measures, including regular audits of the curriculum to assess the depth of sustainability integration. Pupil voice will play a central role in shaping and refining the provision, allowing the children to spearhead the development of their own Green Education based on their passions, interests, and curiosity.

Outdoor Learning

A pivotal component of the integration of Green Education is the enhancement of outdoor learning, which will serve not merely as a supplementary activity but as a central strategy in developing both environmental knowledge and physical skill. To this end, the school will establish a 'Living Laboratory', which will serve as a dedicated, biodiverse learning space in which pupils can engage in sustainable, practical inquiry using ecologically grounded activities such as the propagation of plants, the cultivation of vegetable gardens, and the use of wildlife cameras to observe and record local fauna in their natural

behaviours. They will be able to monitor weather conditions using rain gauges and barometers, and analyse microclimatic data over time, thereby developing scientific inquiry skills and a nuanced understanding of their local environment. Children will also be able to investigate species resilience, observing how various native and non-native plant species respond to changing temperatures, moisture and soil conditions, subsequently deepening their appreciation for climate change adaptation and ecosystem dynamics. These activities will not only support their development of manual dexterity and physical coordination, but also encourage the cultivation of patience, responsibility, curiosity, and wonder. The *LTL Outdoor Learning and Play Training*, in alliance with *Learning Through Landscapes* framework will be exercised to incorporate this learning for students throughout all levels of the school.

To support the expansion of outdoor education, the school proposes the construction of a purpose-built outdoor learning area. This outdoor classroom will provide shelter and functionality for year-round use and will serve as a versatile environment in which lessons across the curriculum can take place.

National Initiatives

In order to consolidate the integration of Green Education whilst minimising the impact upon staff workloads, the use of established external resources and national initiatives will be actively utilised. Primarily, the National Education Nature Park will be employed as a platform for citizen science that is accessible to children of all levels. Pupils can use this scheme to map and monitor biodiversity, contribute data to national databases, and engage in longitudinal projects that reinforce concepts of change, conservation, and responsibility. Similarly, the Royal Horticultural Society's Campaign for School Gardening, the Eco-Schools programme for accreditation, and educational opportunities offered by local Wildlife Trusts will also be exercised.

Continuing Professional Development

Outstanding Climate Education and the development of Green Skills is dependent upon the delivery of this teaching by staff. The Department of Education have pledged to provide access to world class training and development opportunities which recognises the importance of building confidence as well as capability. Climate change and sustainability will be embedded into teachers' CPD and there will always be a designated senior member of staff to lead on Climate Education and Training for both children and staff, as well as to provide support and funding.

6.0 Social Sustainability

Social sustainability refers to the creation and maintenance of healthy, equitable, and resilient communities, in which individuals can thrive both now and in the future. We aim to ensure that our students feel empowered, supported, and connected to the world around them through the increased focus upon social sustainability. Prioritising social sustainability is essential not only for supporting human health and mental wellbeing, particularly in areas of deprivation, but also for fostering the social cohesion and

shared responsibility that underpins long-term environmental sustainability. A school that supports its community socially creates the foundation for lifelong learning, environmental stewardship, and inclusive development, ensuring that no one is left behind in the transition to a more sustainable future.

Children's People and Nature Survey for England (2021) found that 85% of children and young people agreed that being in nature made them very happy.

6.1 Alford Primary School Personal and Social Wellbeing Aims

- To create an environment that is safe, supportive and nurturing for pupil's emotional development and personal wellbeing.
- To ensure that all members of our community are working together to support and maintain the wellbeing of their peers.
- For all members of our community to have a holistic and well-rounded appreciation and understanding of wellbeing, mindfulness and self-esteem and the measures needed to create and maintain those factors.
- To ensure that staff and pupils are treated mindfully, with their individual needs and emotions being acknowledged and respected.
- To work effectively with parents to develop their understanding and use of wellbeing and mindfulness techniques.
- To ensure that there is early identification of children who have mental health needs and that support is available for them, both within our community and, when appropriate, with specialist services.

6.2 Alford Primary School Personal and Social Wellbeing Plan

Promoting Emotional Literacy and Mindfulness in School Culture

The deliberate cultivation of emotional literacy, self-awareness, and mindfulness as foundational competencies for both staff and pupils will be integrated into all aspects of the school system. All internal members of staff will undergo training in classroom-based mindfulness practices, equipping them with the tools to embed these strategies into daily interactions with children and one another. Staff will be encouraged to pursue personal development and wellness support, fostering a culture in which mental health and physical wellbeing is prioritised above all other aspects of the job. Staff, children and parents will all be made aware of support services available, and will be provided with the tools that they can utilise to maximise their own health and wellbeing.

At the heart of the school's emotional development framework is the introduction of the *Thrive* approach, which provides a structured, evidence-based system for supporting the social and emotional development of children. This is complemented by a range of positive reinforcement strategies, with staff encouraged to

remain mindfully attuned to the unique emotional and psychological needs of individual children. Daily mindfulness and gratitude practices will be incorporated into classroom routines, alongside targeted selfesteem groups for children identified through regular emotional wellbeing assessments.

Addressing Social Inequality and Preventative Safeguarding

Recognising the broader social and psychological challenges faced by children in communities affected by deprivation, the school is committed to equipping staff with a deep understanding of the complex interplay between poverty, self-esteem, and academic attainment. Professional development in this area will include targeted training on the sociological roots of inequality, as well as the impact of stigma and exclusion on a child's capacity to succeed and thrive in the school environment.

In parallel, safeguarding training will be expanded to include the identification of early signs of radicalisation and rising incidences of misogynistic attitudes, both of which are increasingly prevalent within school-aged populations. Staff will be trained to respond proactively and sensitively, ensuring that the school remains a safe, inclusive, and equitable space for all pupils regardless of gender, background, or belief system. Similarly, parents will be equipped with tools to identify early signs of low self-esteem, poor wellbeing, and radical ideas, as well as the ability to manage and counteract them for themselves, and their children.

Fostering Positive Identity, Wellbeing and Sense of Belonging

Alford Primary School places strong emphasis on fostering a deep sense of belonging, self-worth, and emotional resilience among all pupils. Children will be supported in the development of positive selfidentity through regular engagement in mindfulness exercises, including journaling, meditation, and the use of affirmations. These practices are designed not only to enhance emotional regulation and attention but also to cultivate a stable sense of inner confidence and security.

Self-esteem support will be responsive and individualised, informed by regular assessments that identify those in need of targeted interventions. Group work and one-to-one support will be provided as appropriate, with the aim of ensuring that every child feels seen, valued, and capable of achieving their full potential within a supportive and nurturing environment.

Embedding Physical and Outdoor Activity into the School Day

Physical wellbeing is recognised as being intrinsically linked to emotional and cognitive health, however, Children's People and Nature Survey for England (2021) found that children spend less time outside as they get older and feelings of connection with nature diminish with age. To counteract this pattern, to improve connections with nature and increase physical activity for sustainability and mental-health purposes, the school will embed regular movement and physical activity into the rhythm of the school day, including classroom-based yoga and movement breaks designed to improve focus, calmness, and readiness to learn. All children will participate in the 'Daily Mile' walking initiative and will be encouraged to engage in outdoor play in all weather conditions, fostering both physical resilience and a connection to the natural world.

Engaging Families in Emotional and Behavioural Development

A holistic and sustainable approach to emotional development necessitates the engagement of families as active partners. Mindfulness practices introduced in school will be shared with parents, enabling consistency between home and school environments. Parents will also be provided with training and resources related to the *Thrive* approach, empowering them to adopt positive behavioural strategies and enhance emotional support at home. This inclusive and collaborative approach ensures that emotional literacy, wellbeing, and resilience are embedded within the wider community, not solely within the confines of the classroom.

7.0 Waste Management

The rapid consumption of the world's natural capital requires limitation. The movement towards a circular economy must occur on each level, with all entities and estates contributing to the preservation of natural resources by eliminating avoidable waste, maximising re-use and recycling, and holding sustainability at the core of all decisions and actions. Through efficient recycling programs, composting initiatives, and waste reduction campaigns, we will teach our students the importance of waste minimisation, hoping to instil sustainable habits that last a lifetime.

7.1 Alford Primary School Waste and Recycling Aims

- To reduce overall waste production by encouraging restrictions in printing, food waste, and packaging within the estate.
- To ensure effective and correct disposal of waste in all aspects, as well as maximising the potential to influence effect and correct management of waste within the supply chain to control waste flow in and out of the estate.
- To ensure students and staff are educated on and engaging with the correct management of waste, particularly within the school premises.
- To provide waste education across the entire school network in order to foster a holistic approach to waste production and disposal.
- To ensure monitoring and auditing processes are carried out frequently to monitor and maintain understanding of waste production and correct disposal.

7.2 Alford Primary School Waste and Recycling Strategy

Altering and Reducing Consumption

The primary and most influential step in effective waste management is reducing consumption. The school will adopt a culture that prioritises thoughtful use of resources, ensuring that consumption of resources is necessary, rather than just desired. Efforts will be made to purchase goods with longer life cycles and reduced environmental impact. In every purchasing decision- from stationary to food packaging- consideration must be given to sustainability, recyclability and necessity. The school will review and cooperate with suppliers and sources to ensure that, where possible, products purchased are recyclable, reusable, and ethically manufactured. For instance, Alford Primary School will work with the John Spendluffe Technology College canteen to remove cling film from food products and have it replaced with a recyclable material as well as encouraging parents to use alternatives to single-use, non-recyclable plastics

in lunch boxes. Staff will be encouraged to critically evaluate whether a purchase is essential, thereby fostering a minimalist, need-based consumption ethos. Through the promotion of '*Circular Economy*' ethos within the school, reduce and re-use will be focused upon in order to lengthen product life-cycles and reduce overall waste production.

To reduce paper consumption and eliminate the huge quantities of unnecessary printing that become waste, printing quotas will be implemented. The quota is there to reinforce mindfulness regarding printing, and any paper items that are printed then immediately discarded (rather than used and kept) will contribute to a deduction in printing credits for the following term. Staff will be encouraged through sustainable continued professional development to consider the necessity of printing, and instead attempt to utilise technology and digital means of work.

> The Circular Economy is a model of production and consumption that advocates for sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, and recycling existing materials and goods for as long as possible to extend the product life cycle and reduce waste. This is a departure from the existing Linear Economy model in which a product is made, used and then thrown away for good.
>
> - European Parliament, 2023

Education of Children, Staff, and Parents

Education lies at the core of behavioural change. All members of the school community- including children, staff, and parents- will be equipped with the knowledge to guide informed purchasing decisions. A comprehensive sustainability education programme will be embedded within the curriculum, and extended to workshops and educational leaflets for parents, and training for staff. This will not only impact waste management within the estate, but on a broader external scale, promoting a collective sense of accountability and stewardship of the environment. The education and training will incorporate switching mindsets from 'dispose' to 'repurpose', to culture an understanding of the sources and consequences of waste, as well as the properties of differing materials and the implications of this. These teachings for the children can be incorporated across the curriculum, in subjects such as DT, Art, Science, and Geography, and paired with school-wide initiatives- such as 'Waste-Free Week' or a 'Reuse Innovation Competition'- will broaden the pupils' concept of this environmental issue.

This will be introduced in duality with the new disposal system within school; children and staff will be expected to dispose of waste correctly, according to the 'Simpler Recycling' strategy introduced by Veolia. To guide correct disposal, new bins will be standardised in all rooms with clear colours and labels to ensure continuity throughout the school and avoid confusion. The updated system will incorporate the recycling of plastics, metals, and glass, and a separate bin for food waste in classrooms will also exist. To ensure the new system is effective, a waste audit will be conducted within six months of the introduction, and then once a year beyond this point. To involve the children in this process, they help with the conduction of

waste audits as well as having nominated Waste and Recycling Ambassadors from the group of ecoambassadors chosen each year. These ambassadors can help with the sharing of information, both with their peers and with parents, to bring about a culture of responsibility, accountability, and sustainability regarding waste.

GLOSSARY

Biodiversity: The variety, variability and abundance of plant (flora) and animal (fauna) species in a particular habitat. Biodiversity is the variability among living organisms, including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and ecological complexes of which they are a part, including diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

Carbon Capture and Storage: Often referred to as CCS. A process that takes CO2 emissions produced during industrial processes, such as steel production or from the burning of fossil fuels for energy generation, and transported and stored in deep underground geological formations (known as carbon sinks).

Circular Economy: An economic system based on the reuse and regeneration of materials or products, especially as a means of continuing production in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way and preventing materials and goods from permanent disposal.

Climate Anxiety: The psychological distress experienced by individuals in response to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. It encompasses feelings of fear, worry, sadness, and even hopelessness about the future of the planet and its inhabitants.

Coping Capacity: The ability of people, organisations, and systems to utilise their available skills and resources, to manage adverse conditions, risks or disasters.

Decarbonisation: The reduction or elimination of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions from human activities by altering behaviours and procedures.

Drought: A prolonged period of abnormally low rainfall, often accompanied by high temperatures, leading to a shortage of water.

Food Insecurity: The condition of not having access to sufficient quantities of food, or food of an adequate quality, to meet one's basic needs. The lack of consistent access to an adequate amount of affordable, nutritious food for an active and healthy life within a specific area or region. Measured by FIES (Food Insecurity Experience Scale).

Non-Communicable Disease (NCDs): A long-term illness that cannot be directly transmitted from person to person but is instead caused by a combination of genetic, environmental, and behavioural factors.

Rainwater Harvesting: The process of collecting and storing rainwater for later use, typically from surfaces such as rooftops.

Recovery Capacity: An institution's overall ability to restore its position after a significant deterioration or crisis.

Relative Abundance: The proportion of a specific species within a community or habitat in comparison to the total number of all species (eg there are 3 oak trees out of a total of 57 trees of all species, making the oak tree's relative abundance low).

School Estate: The term estate, used in the concept of this document, refers to the buildings, land, people, and physical items owned by the school. This therefore includes the entirety of the school grounds, including car parks, and includes all individuals who attend, work for, volunteer for, or are involved in Alford Primary School.

Sense of Belonging: The feeling of being connected, accepted, and included within a group or community.

Social and Personal Wellbeing: The state of being comfortable, healthy, and happy, both personally and socially, influenced by good mental and physical health and encompassing social relationships with others, having a sense of belonging and purpose, and a good quality of life.

Species Evenness: How the individuals of each species are distributed across a certain area. A community with a high species evenness has a more uniform distribution of individuals across different species, while low evenness indicates that a few species dominate in terms of quantity, but are less abundant in frequency.

Species Richness: The total number of different species present in a specific area or community.

Threshold Capacity: The fundamental limit that, when exceeded, lead to significant disruptions in natural and social systems. For example, there is a certain quantity of fishing that would go beyond the point that the population can recover from.

Transpiration: The exhalation of water vapour through the stomata of a plant's leaf to allow the mass flow of mineral nutrients and temperature control.

Water Insecurity: The lack of a reliable source of water, of appropriate quality and quantity, to meet the needs of the local population.

Undernourishment: Having insufficient food or other substances for good health and condition. Food consumption is insufficient in meeting minimum levels of dietary energy requirements.

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