



School Buildings & Grounds

Sustainability Audit

This guide will help you actively observe your surroundings by zooming in on School Buildings and Grounds. Go out, explore, identify and start your Eco-School actions!



EXPLORE SCHOOL BUILDINGS & GROUNDS WITH ECO-SCHOOLS

Eco-Schools can help you create healthier, greener places to learn. Your school becomes a “living laboratory,” where you can experience sustainability firsthand through energy-saving systems, natural light, and eco-friendly materials. You also get a say in how your school building and outdoor spaces are used, making you an active part of the change.



Your Eco-Committee can choose to focus on the theme School Buildings and Grounds, or explore several themes at once. Forming sub-groups within the committee ensures continuity, with each group taking responsibility for a specific theme and developing expertise over time. Use the Eco-Schools Seven Steps to explore and weave the theme throughout every part of your school.

SOME QUESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED...

Local Practices

- What local and traditional building practices can help us to understand sustainable living and learning spaces?

Sustainability in School Design

- How effectively are our school buildings designed to minimise energy consumption?
- How do our school buildings and grounds support sustainable behaviours?

Green and Blue Spaces in Urban Areas

- What actions are we currently taking to increase greenery or water features in our school for environmental improvement?



Challenge assumptions, slow down, and really observe your surroundings. Your school has its own unique challenges and solutions that only sharp, curious minds will discover. Record what you see - notes, sketches, photos, or simple counts - at different times and seasons.

Ask critical questions: *What's here? What's missing? Why is it like this? What could change?* Use these insights to understand the current situation and move towards high-impact actions for Biodiversity & Nature at your school.



School Buildings & Grounds Eco-Schools Sustainability Audit

Questions	Your Answers	Reflections/Observations
Light		
Which areas of the school receive the most natural light?		
How many lights are switched on during the day? Are they all necessary?		
Are lights turned off when leaving a room?		
Are there solar panels or other renewable energy systems visible on buildings? If so, where are the located and how many are there?		
Materials		
What are the walls, floors, and roofs made of (e.g., concrete, brick, glass, wood, metal)?		
What signs of reused or recycled materials in furniture or building structures can you find in your school?		
Are any building materials worn, cracked, or damaged?		
How does temperature change as you move between areas (e.g. inside/outside, sun/shade)?		
Nature		
How many indoor plants can you count?		
How many plants can you count outside on school grounds?		
How many trees, plants, or green areas can you find within your school?		



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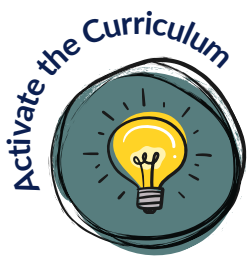
Questions	Your Answers	Reflections/Observations
Does your school have any gardens, vegetable patches, or wildflower areas?		
Which outside areas are used for learning or creative activities?		
On average, how many hours of learning are done outdoors each week?		
Do outdoor areas use permeable materials (gravel, grass, paving blocks) or hard surfaces (tarmac, concrete)?		
Are outdoor areas used to bring people together (e.g. for events, art, or gardening)?		
Water		
When it rains, where does the water flow or collect (e.g. on paths, drains, or grass)?		
How many rainwater collection systems, gutters, or tanks can you count?		
Where does rainwater go when it hits the roof or playground?		
Is water being reused or collected anywhere (barrels, tanks, green roofs)?		
Are there taps or sprinklers left running?		
What might happen in heavy rain, which areas could flood first?		



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Questions	Your Answers	Reflections/Observations
Does your school have any systems for composting?		
Grounds		
Are there accessible paths, ramps, or entrances for everyone?		
How safe are your school grounds? <input type="checkbox"/> Very unsafe <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately safe <input type="checkbox"/> very safe <input type="checkbox"/> unsure		
How many times during the year have the school grounds been used for activities involving the local community?		
Are there students or groups who help monitor or care for the school environment? If yes, how many students participate?		
Your questions		

Choosing *School Buildings & Grounds* as a key theme for action? Follow these next Eco-Schools steps...



What knowledge or skills do you still need to start putting your ideas into action? Take some time to identify what's missing and discuss it within your Eco-Committee. Then, reach out to your teachers and tell them what you'd like to learn more about, whether it's design for resilience, interconnectedness, or practical ways for sustainable living. Together, you can build the knowledge and confidence needed to start real change!



Use what you've learned from your lessons, your Eco-Schools activities, and your own observations, to start taking action! Work together to create an Action Plan for School Buildings & Grounds. Mobilise your Eco-Committee, teachers, school staff, parents, and the wider community to help you reach your goals. You could:



Dedicate soil patches for growing crops



Introduce inside plants

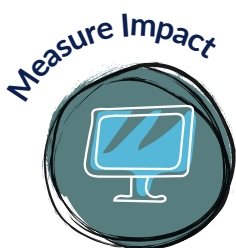


Maximise natural light



Use permeable materials

Whatever actions you choose, make sure they are realistic, measurable, and long-lasting, so your Eco-Committee's work continues to grow year after year.



Monitor your actions to see the difference you have made! Use your Action Plan to check what's changed in your school and community. Have you transformed any areas of your school grounds? Are the classrooms more comfortable and inspiring places to learn? You could compare *before-and-after photos*, or *note how many people joined your activities*. Measuring your impact helps you celebrate success and plan even better actions for the future!



Make sure the whole school and local community are part of your School Buildings and Grounds journey. Share your findings and actions through assemblies, newsletters, posters, or social media. Invite teachers, students, parents, and local experts to join activities or share their knowledge. By including different perspectives and experiences, your Eco-Committee will build stronger, more creative solutions that last.