



# KIND TO THE PLANET

## Thomas's schools sustainability strategy to 2025

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## Foreword

This sustainability strategy continues our work to address climate and sustainability issues through pupil empowerment and climate action.

It sets out a plan not just to become more proactive in tackling the global climate emergency, but also to give pupils a sense of hope and excitement at their ability to respond to the challenges we face. It was developed by Thomas's group at large and informed by consultations with our students, teachers and parents.

As a group of schools, we have a central role to play in educating and empowering our students, teachers, and parents about the extent of the climate crisis. We must also become agents of change in our own right. This strategy is organised around three strategic objectives: lead with ambition, empower students and create the conditions for sustained action. By mobilising our entire community around this strategy, we want our generation - adults and young people alike - to become the creative problem solvers our world so urgently needs.

In addition to our role as educators, we must lead by example by creating the conditions for sustained and ambitious climate action in line with science-based targets. We recognise that we need to first to understand our precise environmental impacts, to then build a clear strategy that addresses them and maximises opportunities for improvement. To that end, we are undertaking a process of audit, review and consultation with carbon, supply chain and water footprint professionals.

This sustainability strategy is a clear statement of our intent to respond to the climate crisis. It shows how our teachers, pupils, and parents, can take the lead in showing that change is possible. It is an ambitious vision, but the scale of the challenge demands nothing less. We hope it will inspire members of our community to consider how they can support us on our journey towards environmental sustainability.<sup>1</sup>

[Insert leadership signatures]

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<sup>1</sup> This strategy was developed with the support and expertise of [Kite Insights](https://kiteinsights.com) of which the Founder and CEO, Sophie Lambin, is a parent at Thomas's Battersea.

## Introduction and ambitions

At Thomas's, we are determined to achieve outstanding levels of environmental sustainability. Our strategy sets out a plan to provide forward-thinking climate education, empowering students to become change agents in their own right, and equipping them with optimism and preparedness for the future.

With the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) providing the framework for our collective action, our strategy identifies seven areas of action and commitment, including for our whole institution to be net zero by 2030 whilst also becoming a centre of academic excellence for applying an environmental sustainability lens to the curricula. These actions and commitments fall under three strategic objectives:

1. Lead with ambition
2. Empower pupils
3. Create the conditions for sustained action

### Lead with ambition

No change will happen without our fantastic community committing to taking steps to do things differently. We will recognise and celebrate their contributions and create an environment where we inspire and challenge each other to consider more sustainable ways of teaching, operating and working together.

We also commit to accountability and transparency in reporting our progress and communicating our sustainability ambitions, achievements, and journey internally and externally. We will collect performance data and disseminate it through diverse formats and be transparent about where we need to do more. This will allow us to measure success and track progress against our goals.

We commit to hosting regular touchpoints with our key sustainability stakeholders to align on strategy, receive ongoing feedback, share major achievements and milestones, and improve on our impact. In this way, we hope to foster a culture of continuous improvement.

### Empower pupils

As educators, we have the privilege of engaging directly with young people who are passionate about the natural world, want to do their best to protect it, and can influence their wider communities. It is our responsibility as educators to provide opportunities for them to enjoy and appreciate the natural world, as well as an understanding of how human behaviour is affecting it.

We will ensure that educators across the wider group of schools have access to the knowledge, tools, and financial resources to embed sustainability into their everyday activities, and by doing so, inspire pupils to think and act in the same manner.

By raising levels of sustainability literacy, we hope that all members of our community will be inspired to take action by adopting more sustainable practices and instil a sense of excitement about the future and its many possibilities.

## Create the conditions for sustained action

As well as raising awareness of environmental issues, we seek to achieve outstanding environmental performance in the way that the school is run and is seen to be run. By limiting the negative impacts of our institutions on the environment - and by taking responsibility for and mitigating the impacts of its operations - we aim to implement effective sustainability practices.

Above all, we recognise the importance of acting along the science-based targets ([SBTis](#)) described by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change - particularly the need to reach net zero greenhouse gases emissions before 2050. Each part of Thomas's has a unique contribution to make to this mission, whether through teaching, running operations, or taking concrete steps towards greenhouse gases emissions reductions. After an initial period of review and analysis, measuring our carbon and water footprint baselines, we will work with carbon management professionals to create a measurable plan for reaching net-zero by 2030.

## Our vision

Based on the objectives above and building on the work already done at Thomas's, below are overall key outcomes expected in two years:

**Thomas's students and broader community are empowered with the knowledge, the mandate and the tools to act.** Our staff and leadership will have access to educational content, time and resources to grow their personal understanding of environmental sustainability. They are in turn able to empower students to drive sustainable action at home and in their school.

**The conditions are in place for sustained climate action.** Thomas's has joined other schools on the road to net-zero. We have set baselines and targets for greenhouse gases emissions and water use and put in place processes to identify and monitor improvements with a concrete plan to reach net-zero.

**Thomas's group is recognised for leading climate action and taking a public stance on sustainability.** Thomas's has a public stance on sustainability and is recognised for its leadership on sustainability issues.

Sustainability objectives				
Lead with ambition		Empower pupils		Create the conditions for sustained action
Develop effective leadership structures with a mandate to lead		Set sustainability goals for curriculum	Empower staff and leadership to empower pupils	Set carbon emissions & water use baseline
Take a public stance on sustainability				Set science-based targets to reach net zero by 2030
Promote diversity and inclusion in all parts of our sustainability strategy		Embed sustainability in curriculum		Identify and monitor improvement
Identify quick wins & communicate success externally		Initiate pupil-led projects		Adopt sustainable approaches to transport and consumption

## From commitment to action

Our three strategic objectives break down into seven broad areas of action:

1. **Leadership structure and public stance** (lead with ambition)
2. **Diversity, equity and inclusion** (lead with ambition)
3. **Environmental education and pupil voices** (empower pupils)
4. **Energy and carbon management** (create the conditions for sustained action)
5. **Food, water and catering** (create the conditions for sustained action)
6. **Circularity, waste and procurement** (create the conditions for sustained action)
7. **Travel and transports** (create the conditions for sustained action)

The next few sections provide a deeper dive into each action area.

### *Lead with ambition: leadership structure and public stance*

Thomas's will develop effective leadership structures with a mandate to lead and take a public stance on sustainability.

#### **Key actions:**

- Develop job descriptions for the Cultural Integrity Leadership Team
- Further develop the cross-schools sustainability team
- Ensure effective communication of the sustainability strategy to ensure buy-in from throughout the schools' communities and make sure our community is given the opportunity to contribute to the strategy
- Raise the profile of sustainability and engage leaders in active contribution towards Thomas's sustainability strategy
- Make climate and sustainability risks and opportunities a central part of the leadership board agenda
- Commission an annual climate risk assessment
- Set SMART targets in line with the sustainability strategy
- Develop effective measures and approaches to track progress across the schools and wider departments towards sustainability goals
- Begin voluntary reporting on sustainability, disclose annual performance results, and communicate on progress achieved
- Identify steps to increase stakeholder representation at the leadership board to celebrate successes, and drive continued improvement in sustainable practice

### *Lead with ambition: diversity, equity and inclusion*

Thomas's will promote diversity and inclusion in all parts of our sustainability strategy. We will engage with our pupils, staff, parents and the wider community by effectively communicating our plans.

### Key actions:

- Finalise the launch of the three year diversity and inclusion strategy for Thomas's group and link it to action for environmental sustainability
- Acknowledge that advancing areas of sustainability and diversity simultaneously will achieve greater progress, as one area simulates the other. Move towards formalising expectations in this area:
  - Undertake annual and ideally independent evaluations for diversity, equity and inclusion at each school
  - Increase the diversity of the supply chain to increase the sustainability of the supply chain - e.g. hire women and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour + Asian) owned business/ suppliers as well as teachers and staff
  - Invest time and effort to make all employees part of one team driving the sustainability strategy. Celebrate diverse perspectives and innovative ideas
  - Support and promote the leadership and innovation of women and BIPOC employees driving sustainability efforts.
  - Recognise that educating students with principles of diversity and inclusion will have cascading benefits and stimulate progress in their community and society, also for sustainability
- Ensure all pupils understand and can act on the links between climate, gender and justice
- Integrate climate-anxiety in the cross-school definition for pupil well-being and measurement
- Conduct a lower school wellbeing survey which integrates worries related to planetary issues
- Create a healthy, sustainable and positive environment when discussing issues related to environmental sustainability
- Connect community engagement with environmental priorities, e.g. partner with [RHS partners for food gardening](#) or other local partners to establish a community food garden
- Empower local communities to take part in decisions Thomas's group makes on where to invest in the community
- Bring local community members and their lived experiences of climate and sustainability challenges into the curriculum - e.g. host a talk about air pollution in London borough and its impact on Children's health, like asthma

## *Empower pupils: environmental education and pupil voice*

Thomas's will become a centre of excellence in applying a sustainability lens to the curriculum, students will be empowered to take direct action to make the school more sustainable.

### Key actions

- Develop environmental sustainability knowledge and skills. This will be developed across year-groups, integrated into the Curriculum Hives, and consistently applied across all schools



- Monitor the application of a holistic 'climate lens' at Thomas's Battersea. This will apply to all subjects and year groups. We will share learnings and best practices resulting from the pilot with other schools in an effort to implement the 'climate lens' across the whole school group
- Consider the environmental impact, both positive and negative, of the Thomas's outdoors department and agree integrated targets to support the most environmentally positive practices
- Further develop opportunities for cross-schools pupil empowerment via Sustainability Committees, Green Unicorns, and other pupil led initiatives
- Promote practical pupil action in the community to support environmental awareness and impact such as litter picks, wildflower planting, water recycling, etc.
- Develop the use of all school grounds to host environmental projects and initiatives - e.g. composting or renewable energy
- Collect and share relevant data on energy and utilities usage with pupils to inform curriculum projects and action

## *Create the conditions for sustained action:* **energy and carbon management**

Thomas's will audit and review our current practices, processes, and procurement procedures to establish clear baseline data, consult and engage with experts from the field. We will reduce our carbon footprint and ultimately move towards net zero emissions by 2030.

### **Key actions**

- Measure our group level direct and indirect carbon footprint in 2022
- Join the 1000+ UK schools that are part of the [Let's Go Zero Schools](#) campaign and ultimately reach net zero by 2030
- Work with carbon footprint professionals to set our baseline, measure science-based targets and a formulate a measurable, actionable plan to gradually reach net-zero by 2030
- Plan and gradually implement a switch to 100% renewable energy on school grounds
- Develop a plan for the installation of insulation, thermostatic radiators and double glazing across all school sites
- Ensure that all future building redevelopments engage with a sustainability agenda in decisions around material, designs, heating, ventilation, etc. Any future development projects should be voluntary, rigorous, and go beyond the standards required by regulation
- Build energy efficiency and decarbonisation into all aspects of data and information technology management
- Identify and apply sustainability criteria for all future IT procurement

## *Create the conditions for sustained action:* **food, water and catering**

Thomas's will cater delicious food, healthy for pupils and the planet, while reducing our water footprint.

### Key actions

- Develop a well publicised sustainable catering charter which considers elements such as food sourcing, transportation, kitchen chemicals, food waste, single-use plastics, recycling, etc.
- Run a sustainability audit of current catering practices at each school, including an audit of food waste
- In the short term we will adopt all 'quick wins' and over time, we will develop a plan to increase the proportion of plant-based options
- Set a baseline for each school's water footprint, and adopt major reduction targets
- Launch water efficiency projects
- Empower pupils to use water sustainably at school and beyond

## *Create the conditions for sustained action: circularity, waste & procurement*

Thomas's will embrace principles of minimum consumption and waste and adhere to the core principles of sustainability: refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, and recycle. We will develop a sustainable school uniform policy in collaboration with our suppliers.

### Key actions

- Explore how to apply principles of the circular economy to all schools
- Pick a pilot school to experiment with circular processes that design out waste
- Promote a culture which encourages the purchase of items which can be reused and recycled and avoids purchasing items for one off uses, and which discourages purchase of emergency items at the last minute. Move towards formalising expectations in this area
- Review approaches to case and recycling across the schools
- Improve bin sorting so that a growing proportion of waste is recycled, reused, repurposed, or composted, etc.
- Develop a sustainable school uniform policy which considers the number of different uniforms required throughout the year and for different subjects, the ethical manufacture and transportation of these items, and their reusability
- Avoid introducing changes to the uniform that would require buying new at short intervals
- Work with suppliers to ensure sustainable (organic cotton, natural materials, reduce plastics, responsibly made) uniforms
- Build on the web-based system in place at Thomas's Kensington to promote the collection and recycling of used uniforms at each school
- Review purchasing and consumables policy across the schools to ensure sustainability and efficiency

## *Create the conditions for sustained action:* **travel and transport**

Thomas's will adopt sustainable approaches to transport and travel for pupils, parents and staff

### **Key actions**

- Measure Thomas's cross schools transport-related emissions
- Develop and implement a 'sustainable travel to school plan' which includes Cycle to Work schemes for teachers and members of staff, [Dr. Bike](#) and other incentives to promote cycling, scooter and walk to school initiatives, walking bus schemes, etc.
- Reconsider options for international air travel and consider carbon offsetting schemes which will allow children to take responsibility for the environmental impacts of flights
- Consider efficiency of minibus fleet and install tracking devices in order to reduce emissions further
- Switch to sustainable fuels for the existing fleet

## Conclusion

Schools have a crucial role to play in creating a sustainable future for our planet and pupils. Thomas's is joining the 1000+ UK schools that have already pledged to get to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. This environmental sustainability strategy is our starting point.

To be successful, we need engagement and action from across our community; both at group level, but also as individuals, in the way we educate our students, lead our operations, and work together as a school community. This environmental sustainability strategy is for everyone at Thomas's - students, teachers and parents alike - and everyone has a role to play. We encourage our school community to each become sustainability leaders in a way that chimes with their knowledge, skills and interest and join us in our collective effort to drive impactful change.

Delivering on our level of environmental sustainability ambition will be challenging and will require governance processes to keep us relevant, rigorous and ultimately accountable. This initial strategy plan highlights our genuine commitment to environmental sustainability. Over the next two years, during our period of consultation with footprinting professionals, we look forward to developing a more data specific sustainability strategy.

We have the chance now to re-imagine our future and make a transformative difference to live on Earth. We look forward to starting this journey together with our teachers, pupils, parents, suppliers and other key stakeholders.