

## **Teach the Future's response to the Department for Education's draft Climate and Sustainability Strategy**

On Friday 05 November 2021 Nadhim Zahawi, Secretary of State for Education, announced a [draft Climate and Sustainability Strategy for the Department for Education](#) that *"puts climate change at the heart of the education"*. The draft strategy sets out this vision: *"The UK is the world-leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030"*.

Since November 2019, Teach the Future has been calling on the Department of Education to repurpose the education system in response to the climate emergency and ecological crisis. We want climate change and sustainability to be woven through every subject like a golden thread, from early years through to higher education. We want all new schools to be built to a net-zero carbon standard and for existing schools to be retrofitted to net zero by 2030. Our campaign asks for England can be read [here](#).

After two years of campaigning and lobbying it is really positive to see that the Department for Education (DfE) is now making some substantive progress on climate education and reducing the carbon footprint of education. The DfE strategy contains several commitments that we have been calling for, including: a new professional teaching qualification; new commitments on vocational skills; a programme to increase connection to nature (the Nature Park); that all new schools will be built to be net zero carbon from 2023. There are also partial commitments to: reskill existing teachers; produce new teaching resources; work with schools on leadership and local coordination.

In addition to our asks, there are commitments to: a new model science curriculum in Primary that has a focus on connection to nature; make schools resilient to climate change; green the DfE; support the Department for Transport on low carbon transport for schools; green supply chains. There is also a commitment to run a Climate Leaders Award to acknowledge student leadership on climate, which we very much support. We also strongly support the plan to appoint a non-executive director to lead on sustainability in the DfE, as we know this approach has worked well on other agendas.

We should take just a moment to celebrate all this progress, and our role in influencing it, and then we should continue pressing the DfE to show greater ambition through their draft strategy.

The draft strategy certainly points the DfE in the right direction, and we really are thrilled with the stated ambition of being world-leading on this agenda.

Despite this, in our view, this draft strategy falls short of what is needed in three key areas from our Teach the Future asks:

### **1. A commitment to integrating climate and ecology into non-STEM subjects at secondary level and plans for doing this in further or higher education.**

Our first Teach the Future ask is that the DfE sets up an independent review to come up with practical ways for integrating sustainability into subjects, and we think that commitment must be included in the draft strategy. Teach the Future is centred around the need for a broad climate education that is woven through all subject areas

in an interdisciplinary way. It is dangerous for young people to think climate change is just the concern of geographers and scientists.

We note that the Secretary of State committed to integrated climate education in the [co-chairs statement at COP26](#). There are various ways to make this happen, including: new duties in the Education Act (as per [Jim Knight's bill](#)); making awareness of, and engagement in, sustainability and climate change issues the third objective for the National Curriculum; amending some of the content of the national curriculum; working with Ofqual and Ofsted to integrate it into assessment and quality processes.

It is essential that educators and teachers are involved in proposing workable solutions for how to make this happen, hence our ask for an independent review that will produce recommendations for the DfE.

**2. A commitment to provide funding for the establishment of, and support for, youth voice climate boards in education providers, and the establishment of a Youth Climate Endowment Fund to fund youth-led climate and environmental social action.**

The draft strategy states that the DfE will work with key stakeholder groups, including young people, in implementing the strategy, which we strongly welcome. We would like to see the DfE go further and support the establishment of youth voice climate boards in education providers, especially in secondary and tertiary education, so young people can shape how their institution responds to the climate emergency and ecological crisis, as well as providing a forum through which they can co-create their climate education. Many of the organisations that are best placed to support young people to do this are charities. Such organisations typically require funding to deliver quality multi-year programmes, hence a requirement for funding to make this happen to a high standard across the country.

Likewise, we welcome the proposed Climate Leaders Award, but we know that funding is a barrier for many young people when taking climate action and running their own climate and sustainability initiatives. As addressing climate change and tackling the ecological crisis are long-term commitments, we think the DfE should look to secure an endowment fund that can be used in perpetuity to financially support young people who want to make a difference and drive local climate and ecological action.

**3. A commitment to retrofitting the c27,000 existing schools to net zero much earlier than 2050, which is the legal minimum.**

The draft strategy is reliant on the Salix / BEIS Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) for retrofitting grants, but that scheme is not currently well-suited to the requirements of most state schools. Specifically, it only funds c64% of the measures needed, leading to a c£250m shortfall each year<sup>1</sup>. The sooner we can implement these measures, the greater the carbon savings, and the less we will be fuelling global heating. DfE needs to commit to working with BEIS and the Treasury to make the PSDS scheme work for all the education providers that are covered by the scope of the draft strategy. Given the importance of the subliminal curriculum in learning about low-carbon living, the strategy should position education buildings towards the front of the queue for retrofitting, ideally with them all being retrofitted to net zero by 2030, or as soon as possible thereafter. In our view 2050 is not ambitious enough, given that we are in a climate emergency.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on data from the first Low Carbon Skills Fund, the grants provided only covered c64% of the measures required.

Additionally, we have two further strategy-wide issues that we would like the DfE to address:

- There are almost no measurable targets in the draft strategy, although there is a commitment to set measurable targets for the period 2025-2030. We would like to see draft targets developed during the period of consultation with stakeholder groups so that we, and other stakeholders, can shape them. Setting targets is a crucial part of ensuring the strategy is ambitious, hence we would like to be involved in that!

Furthermore, the data section of the strategy (Action Area 5) states: *"DfE will empower sectors to report in the way most appropriate for them"*. We note there is a contradictory statement in the strategy that says: *"The Department for Education will implement effective data gathering mechanisms to achieve a collective view on how the education system is progressing towards net zero and environmental targets"*. Regarding the first point, we do not think that is the right approach at all, as it leaves the door open for greenwashing. We are already seeing lots of greenwash from universities in relation to their sustainability credentials and carbon reduction plans due to the lack of verifiable and comparable data. We would like the DfE to set a common set of mandatory reporting requirements on climate and sustainability for all education providers covered by the scope of the draft strategy. This will ensure the DfE, and stakeholder groups like us, can accurately track progress with the implementation of the strategy.

We were also unsure why this commitment has been included: *"Evaluate interventions, trials and pilots and appraise the ability to be embedded within our delivery programmes and business as usual"*. We would argue that there is no place or time for business as usual in this strategy.

- Whilst the strategy includes recognition of student leadership, it also states: *"Importantly, whilst schools should support pupil's interest in climate change and tackling both its causes and effects, it would not be appropriate to encourage pupils to join specific campaigning groups or engage in specific political activity, such as protests"*. We understand that this has likely been included to acknowledge the legal requirements of the Education Act, and probably to reassure some sceptical MPs. However, it feels dismissive of the impact of the youth climate movement, of which we are a part, and campaigns like Fridays for the Future, and Teach the Future, which continue to play a vital role in driving meaningful climate action by civic society. It feels out of place in a strategic document, as it is more advice for school leaders. It sends the wrong signal to those working in tertiary education, especially universities, where student participation in environmental and climate justice clubs, societies and charities should be encouraged as part of the student experience. Campaigns also have an important role in developing critical thinking skills, agency and they tend to be interdisciplinary, all of which should be acknowledged rather than dismissed.

There follows a detailed comparison of our asks against what the DfE is proposing in its new strategy, along with our comments on each set of proposals. Our detailed recommendations for the DfE are presented in bold.

Our ask	DfE draft commitment	Our response
<p><b>Ask 1: A government-commissioned review into how the whole of the English formal education system is preparing students for the climate emergency and ecological crisis</b></p>	<p><i>"From November to March, a user group of sector representatives and a group of young people, reflecting a diverse range of voices, backgrounds, and experiences, will bring together feedback on this strategy from those they represent. Youth representation will also be included in the sector group. A representative of this user group will sit on DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Board."</i></p> <p><i>"The Department for Education will work closely with these groups and with delivery partners across government to refine and build on the strategy ahead of publication of a final version in April 2022."</i></p> <p><i>"Share examples of effective, evidence-based climate education already taking place across nurseries, schools, colleges and universities so teachers and leaders can consider how best to adapt to their own settings."</i></p> <p><i>"England will have the best trained, best supported teachers in the world, teaching a broad and balanced, knowledge-rich curriculum to give all pupils the knowledge and skills needed to build a better and fairer world for future generations."</i></p> <p><i>"Develop a Primary Science Model Curriculum, to include an emphasis on nature and the recognition of species – including species native to the United Kingdom – to ensure all children understand the world around them."</i></p>	<p><b>OUR ASK IS NOT YET MET</b></p> <p>We welcome the engagement plan, especially the involvement of young people, the commitment to the Primary Science Model Curriculum, and the sharing of good practice.</p> <p>However, we are disappointed that there isn't a plan for integrating climate education beyond STEM subjects and geography in secondary education.</p> <p>This omission will almost certainly mean that most secondary students continue miss out on the broad climate education we are calling for. A high-quality sustainability and climate education requires an interdisciplinary approach. The current approach reinforces the narrative that the climate crisis is a scientific phenomenon that can be solved with technical solutions, rather than also a social and political phenomenon requiring societal change and public engagement.</p> <p>Although teachers of some secondary subjects could, with support, adequately integrate climate education without changing the curriculum content (such as maths, English language and languages), we still think that content-heavy parts of the national curriculum (such as history and English literature) need to be updated to include relevant and pertinent climate and sustainability content.</p> <p>It might be that this can partially be addressed through adding new duties in the Education Act and making awareness of, and engagement in, sustainability and</p>

		<p>climate change the third objective for the National Curriculum<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>However, we think there also need to be changes to the content of the National curriculum. In our opinion there is no way that the English education system can become genuinely world-leading on climate education without some aspects of curriculum reform.</p> <p>It is also disappointing that, with the exception of sharing good practice, there is no commitment to addressing what is taught in higher education. We know that there are similar concerns in tertiary education, especially in economics, politics and business studies, with students telling us that much of what is taught reinforces unsustainable thinking, and business as usual, which works against keeping global temperature rises below 1.5 degrees Celsius. In general, it seems that the higher up you go into education the more siloed climate and sustainability becomes. We do not think that optional sustainability units are an appropriate solution for higher education, as that approach reinforces that sustainability is an optional consideration, when it should be part of the core purpose of education.</p> <p>Given all these complexities, we would really like to see a commitment to set up <b>an independently chaired practitioner-led review into how the DfE can best integrate climate and sustainability education</b></p>
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<sup>2</sup> Aim 1: "The national curriculum provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said, and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement."

Aim 2: "The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications. The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum."

		<p><b>into all subjects across all forms and levels of education.</b></p> <p>The review should be set up as soon as possible and report by the end of 2022 to reflect that we are in a climate emergency and an ecological crisis. The review should look at both what is taught (the curriculum) and how it is taught (pedagogy). Within the review, there should be scope to engage with the departments for education in the devolved nations as well as internationally.</p>
<p><b>Ask 2: Inclusion of the climate emergency and ecological crisis in teacher training and a new professional teaching qualification</b></p>	<p><i>"Every early-career teacher will have access to free, high-quality training and support. This will be underpinned by the Early Career Framework."</i></p> <p><i>"All teachers and school leaders will have free access to a new National Professional Qualification to prepare them for the next stage of their career."</i></p> <p><i>"Review subject-specific training and support for teachers of all levels, so they are equipped to deliver a knowledge-rich curriculum and improve climate education."</i></p> <p><i>"From December 2021, all Further Education (FE) teachers trained via an apprenticeship will be required to integrate sustainability into their teaching, through modelling sustainable practices and promoting sustainable development principles in relation to their subject specialism. This requirement will be included in future training across all routes in FE Initial Teacher Education."</i></p> <p><i>"Continue to work with the Higher Education sector to identify opportunities to work together to further enhance best practice in teacher training and the</i></p>	<p><b>OUR ASK IS MOSTLY MET</b></p> <p>We are really pleased to see various commitments to integrating climate and sustainability into teacher and educator training, and the new professional teaching qualification.</p> <p>We would like to help shape this work, so the <b>training and support packages sufficiently cover issues like the ecological crisis, climate justice, as well as considerations relating to eco-anxiety</b>. The training should go well beyond delivery of a knowledge-rich curriculum, instilling a combination of educator competences that allow for teachers and educators to explore these issues in a relevant and interdisciplinary way with their students.</p> <p>With regards to the new National Professional Qualification (NPQ), assuming it is categorised as a specialist area of teaching, we would also like to see <b>climate and sustainability woven into the three existing leadership NPQs</b> (Senior Leadership, Headship and Executive Leadership).</p> <p>We would also like to see <b>a commitment to integrating climate and sustainability into the</b></p>

	<i>teaching of sustainability within university courses."</i>	<p><b>Core Content Framework</b> (the curriculum for initial teacher education) <b>and the Early Career Framework</b> (the training provided in a teacher's first two years of employment).</p> <p><b>For FE educators, we would like to see the commitment widened out beyond those that take the apprenticeship route.</b> We think that the plans to integrate sustainability in relation to subject specialisms is an excellent first step. We hope this will be applied to all teacher / educator training pathways as the strategy is developed and delivered.</p> <p>This package of work needs to be <b>properly resourced with a substantive budget commitment</b> to ensure it is delivered to a high standard nationally.</p>
<p><b>Ask 3: An English Climate Emergency Education Act:</b></p> <p><b>i) A comprehensive learning programme for existing teachers and lecturers, and other key educational institution staff, on the science of the climate emergency and ecological crisis, the systems changes required to abate them, including</b></p>	<p><i>"Review subject-specific training and support for teachers of all levels, so they are equipped to deliver a knowledge-rich curriculum and improve climate education."</i></p> <p><i>"Science continuing professional development for school teachers will include climate change and sustainability."</i></p>	<p><b>OUR ASK IS PARTIALLY MET</b></p> <p>We know that many teachers are apprehensive about talking about climate and sustainability, because they don't know the facts, and because some perceive it as a political issue because it is linked to how society is run. We know that some teaching on climate is inaccurate and misleading<sup>3</sup>.</p> <p>Despite this, our <a href="#">teacher survey</a> highlighted how the majority of teachers (69%) would like to see more sustainability and climate being taught in schools.</p>

<sup>3</sup> We have these recent examples from secondary education in England: 2007 greenhouse gas graphs being used in a science lesson; a geography teacher encouraging students to look at the pros and cons of climate change; a geography teacher telling students to refer to it as the greenhouse effect and not the climate emergency, or else they would lose marks in an exam; a science teacher prefacing a lesson on climate change with his own view that climate change is a myth, but that he had to teach it anyway.

<p><b>provision of teaching resources at all levels</b></p>		<p>However, we also know that teachers and educators are often stretched and under-resourced.</p> <p>Therefore, <b>any continuing professional development (CPD) on this issue for teachers and educators needs to be centrally funded</b> to ensure that there is a good uptake.</p> <p>Our preferred option would be for the DfE to make <b>the reskilling of teachers and educators on climate and sustainability mandatory</b>. This should be explored and shaped with the teaching unions.</p> <p>Mandatory training, combined with the proposed initiatives for trainee teachers, would ensure that all educators in secondary education have the knowledge and confidence to integrate climate and sustainability into their teaching, to understand how it relates to other subject areas, as well as understanding the issues relating to eco-anxiety. We think this would give teachers and educators the confidence to explore these issues with their students, rather than just teaching it to meet testing requirements.</p> <p>Within the strategy there is only a brief mention of the role of Higher Education in relation to climate education. Whilst we appreciate that academic freedom prevents Government from mandating what should be taught in universities, we would like to see the strategy <b>commit to working with the professional accrediting bodies on climate education, as well as the Office for Students, on funding innovation in teaching and learning for climate action</b>. This might include making it a make this a mandatory element of CPD or supporting the development and uptake of Postgraduate Certificates in Higher Education relating to climate and sustainability.</p>
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<p><b>ii) A national Climate Education Information Institute to disseminate scientific information to educators about climate change, its effects and measures of prevention. This will include teaching resources as well as continuous professional development (CPD) materials so schools can maintain up-to-date knowledge on the issues</b></p>	<p><i>"Give free access to high-quality curriculum resources, so that teachers in all phases and subjects can confidently choose those that will support the teaching of sustainability and climate change. We will deliver this through clearly signposted and approved platforms."</i></p>	<p><b>OUR ASK IS PARTIALLY MET</b></p> <p>We welcome the commitment to produce high quality curriculum resources for all subjects across all forms of formal education.</p> <p>We would still like to see <b>the Office for Students commit to funding a Climate Education Information Institute</b> as a means of delivering the curriculum resources. This will ensure that curriculum and CPD resources are plugged-in to the live climate and sustainability scientific research, so they are bang up to date with what the science is saying, as well as adding academic rigor and kudos. It will also, hopefully, get some of our renowned IPCC scientists involved in education, which could make climate science a bit more accessible and glamorous.</p>
<p><b>iii) A national programme of vocational training through the development of</b></p>	<p><i>"The continuing development of new and revised apprenticeships to create and strengthen opportunities in new 'green' sectors of the labour market, and support workers to transition from carbon intensive roles into jobs aligned with the</i></p>	<p><b>OUR ASK IS PARTIALLY MET</b></p> <p>We are pleased to see a good number of new commitments to vocational learning relating to the green transition. According to several reports<sup>4</sup>, the low</p>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.local.gov.uk/local-green-jobs-accelerating-sustainable-economic-recovery>  
<http://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/reducing-uk-emissions-2020-progress-report-to-parliament/>

<p><b>national centres of excellence to promote the reskilling of the workforce in line with the green skills requirements of industrial strategy</b></p>	<p><i>Government's net zero ambitions.... Work is underway to map existing apprenticeship standards against green occupations and identify opportunities to create new standards which support green career pathways."</i></p> <p><i>"The growing network of Institutes of Technology (IoTs) across England is delivering higher-level technical provision in STEM sectors, including areas such as green energy production and sustainable engineering."</i></p> <p><i>"The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE)-approved Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) at Levels 4 and 5 to be rolled out for teaching from September 2022, with different occupational routes - including qualifications in digital, construction and engineering – coming on stream. Future roll-out will continue supporting the development of skills for the transition to net zero as a key government priority."</i></p> <p><i>"The expansion of Skills Bootcamps which are providing short courses to upskill adults, including in key green industries such as housing retrofit, solar, nuclear energy and vehicle electrification."</i></p> <p><i>"Free Courses for Jobs, supporting adults that do not have a qualification at Level 3 or higher to access over 400 Level 3 courses for free. The offer currently includes qualifications linked to green sectors such as Agriculture, Building and Construction, Engineering, Environmental Conservation, Horticulture and Forestry, and Science."</i></p>	<p>carbon skills gap continues to widen, so it is essential that this work is actioned as a priority, so the green transition is not further delayed.</p> <p>There seems to be a focus on 'green jobs' in the across strategy, but these are not the only jobs that will be impacted by the climate emergency and ecological crisis. We need tackling the climate emergency and ecological crisis to be <i>the</i> top priority in actions by individuals, businesses, institutions and local and national governments, and we need a change in mind-set in lifestyle to get us to that position. Education has a vital role in inspiring a positive understanding and desire for these changes.</p> <p>As such, we would like to see <b>the strategy acknowledge that every job has the potential to be a green job</b>, so that means every student must be a sustainability student. A practical example of this is the role that literacy and the creative arts play in changing opinions and mainstreaming climate action, or the role of hairdressers or vets in starting conversations about climate action with their clients. Another example is the important role that project management and business management students will play in ensuring that operational decisions they will make take into account the true cost on our climate and ecology.</p> <p>We would like to see the <b>commitments widened out from the current STEM focus to include other subject areas</b>. As there are over 6,000 qualifications in further education, we propose that those with the highest number of learners are initially prioritised.</p> <p>We would also like to see <b>commitments to increasing the racial and gender diversity in</b></p>
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<b>iv) A national programme for</b>	<i>"We will monitor progress towards legislative targets, design evidence-led policies and target</i>	<b>OUR ASK IS NOT YET MET</b>

<p><b>research into the impact and outcomes of sustainability learning in terms of learning outcomes, attainment, resilience and wellbeing</b></p>	<p><i>funding where it will have greatest impact. We will work with young people, experts, analysts, partners and across the sector to research, test and pilot, ensuring we learn before we leap."</i></p>	<p>The commitments to research, monitoring and evaluation are very generic. We are therefore still calling on the DfE to <b>work with an independent evaluator to externally assess the positive outcomes of this programme of work in terms of learning outcomes, attainment in qualifications, resilience, and wellbeing</b>. This should demonstrate considerable benefit to Government, especially when compared against the cost of doing nothing. It will help other nations follow the UK's leadership on climate education and connection to nature and help make the UK world leading. It will also allow the DfE to react to learnings and evolve plans based on the impact of the work. This evaluative work should be properly resourced and ideally set baselines before the various interventions start.</p>
<p><b>v) A national programme of outdoor education and connection to nature linked to learning about the climate emergency and ecological crisis</b></p>	<p><i>"Through the roll out of the National Education Nature Park, drive a greater knowledge and understanding of the importance of biodiversity, the recognition of native species and develop data and analytical skills."</i></p> <p><i>"Encourage partnerships which support the knowledge and understanding of children and young people about the environment, for example universities linking with schools to share their green spaces and climate expertise."</i></p> <p><i>"Minimising barriers to nature in school building design programmes and education building standards, increasing opportunities to connect their users to nature."</i></p> <p><i>"Through the National Education Nature Park and cross-government collaboration, we will have significantly increased the biodiversity on the education estate and identified and implemented</i></p>	<p><b>OUR ASK IS MOSTLY MET</b></p> <p>It is good to see nature taking a prominent role in the strategy and the DfE getting creative in their plans for enhancing biodiversity whilst also progressing outdoor education and connection with nature. It is also good to see DfE planning to engage across government on this, joining-up connection with nature and outcomes relating to young people's physical and mental health.</p> <p>However, we are worried that because the Nature Park is an optional programme for schools, it will mean that many or most of the schools taking part will be from better-off communities that are less racially diverse. This will compound the problem of sustainability and nature conservation being seen as a white and middle-class pursuit, making climate justice even harder to deliver. <b>We would like to see an aspect of grant-funding available to enable less well-off schools to properly engage in the programme.</b></p>

	<p><i>'Green Corridors' for access to education settings and reduce air pollution."</i></p> <p><i>"...we will work closely with the Cabinet Office cross-government 'Access to the Outdoors' commission to ensure we join up and deliver against wider strategic outcomes including children and young people's physical and mental health."</i></p>	<p>We also think <b>it is important that this work is integrated into a wide range of subject areas, rather than it being entirely done outside of formal learning.</b> This would help the DfE with the tricky issue of integrating climate and ecological education into subject silos, as well as creating opportunities to apply theories in practice and develop real-life problem-solving skills. It would support other government commitments such as the Eat and Learn recommendation of the National Food strategy.</p> <p>It seems that the main Nature Park deadlines are by 2030. We would like to see targets in place for milestones between now and 2030 so that action happens at pace.</p> <p>We are interested to know how the Nature GCSE fits into the DfE's plans, as there is no mention in the draft strategy.</p> <p>When the measurable targets are developed, we would like to see <b>a commitment to net biodiversity-gain by the end of this decade by all educational organisations that are covered by the strategy.</b></p> <p>We would also like to support the DfE with the development and delivery of this work, with <b>a focus on the recovery of flagship species</b> that are in decline in urban areas, such as the small heath butterfly, swifts and hedgehogs.</p>
<p><b>vi) An English climate emergency youth voice grant fund, so that youth voice climate boards can be established in all education providers,</b></p>	<p><i>"Work with education settings to put in place Climate Action Plans to increase sustainability literacy and inform government on the implementation of nature-based solutions to alleviate flood risk, provide solar energy and improve air quality."</i></p>	<p><b>OUR ASK IS NOT YET MET</b></p> <p>We would like to see the DfE creating <b>an expectation that all Climate Action Plans developed by educational institutions are created in partnership with young people and students.</b></p>

<p><b>local authorities and NHS trusts</b></p>		<p>We would also like to see the <b>DfE supporting the establishment of youth voice climate boards in education providers</b>, especially in secondary and tertiary education.</p> <p>In our experience, young people and students need training and support to help them make the most of their roles on advisory groups and boards. Many of the organisations that are best placed to support young people to do this are charities, and they typically require funding to deliver quality multi-year programmes, hence our suggestion of <b>a grant fund to train and support young people</b> to make the climate boards truly impactful.</p> <p>We would like to see a youth voice group set up within the DfE beyond the strategy consultation period.</p> <p>We would also like to see the DfE embracing the concept of reverse mentoring, where young climate activists and sustainability campaigners spend structured time with leaders in the DfE to help them understand with the priorities of young people. We are happy to help facilitate this.</p>
<p><b>vii) Establishment of a Youth Climate Endowment Fund to fund youth-led climate and environmental social action enabling students in every educational institution to engage their peers, teachers and parents in practical, local action to abate the</b></p>	<p><i>"Provide framework for young people to drive positive action through the Climate Leaders Award."</i></p>	<p><b>OUR ASK IS NOT YET MET</b></p> <p>Many young people are leading on climate action, so we are really pleased to see the DfE creating the Climate Leaders Award to encourage and recognise it. Our aspirations for the award are to see young people from all backgrounds engaging with it and being encouraged to take action in their local communities and beyond.</p> <p>Whilst we are very supportive of the Award, we also know that funding is a barrier for many young people when organising and running their own climate and sustainability initiatives.</p>

<p><b>climate emergency and ecological crisis</b></p>		<p>As addressing climate change and tackling the ecological crisis are long-term commitments, we think the DfE should <b>look to secure an endowment fund that can be used in perpetuity to financially support young people who want to make a difference</b>. There are several other endowment funds that the Government has established from cash windfalls, such as the Libor fines, or dormant bank accounts<sup>5</sup>. We are asking that the DfE works with the Treasury to secure an endowment for youth-led social action on the climate emergency and ecological crisis.</p> <p>The new endowment should be steered by a panel of young people and managed by a coalition of youth-led charities. Educational organisations should be eligible to apply for funding in order to distribute it to young people and students at the local level for local youth-led social action on the climate emergency and ecological crisis.</p> <p>The endowment should be invested in new renewable energy assets, in keeping with the purpose of the scheme. It might be that leading businesses and philanthropists decide to contribute to the fund so that it grows over time. It is important to allocate a substantial amount to any new climate endowment so as to demonstrate the Government's recognition of the size of the challenge we face, and commitment to catalysing immediate action from as many people as possible as soon as possible, which is exactly what the science says we need right now.</p>
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<sup>5</sup> The Educational Endowment Fund (2011, £125m) seeks to improve schools in low-income areas; the Youth Endowment Fund (2018, £200m) seeks to prevent young people getting into violent crime; the Uniformed Youth Fund (£5m, 2018) seeks to get more young people involved in uniformed youth groups.

<p><b>viii) A new duty on schools to ensure they designate a senior member of staff as a climate coordinator, responsible for implementing their new duties, and create a general duty on the Office for Students with regard to teaching and learning about the climate emergency and ecological crisis</b></p>	<p><i>"Explore with schools the best way to identify champions to provide leadership and co-ordination of climate change and sustainability activity."</i></p>	<p><b>OUR ASK IS NOT YET MET</b></p> <p>We welcome reference to this issue in the strategy and appreciate that it is something that needs discussing with organisations that represent school and college leaders.</p> <p>We would like to see the strategy commit to <b>creating a new duty on schools to ensure they designate a senior member of staff as a climate coordinator</b>, as well as a designated lead governor / trustee / board member / member of council.</p> <p><b>We would also like to see a general duty on the Office for Students with regard to teaching and learning about the climate emergency and ecological crisis.</b></p> <p>We suggest that these commitments might be included as Government amendments in the third reading of the Jim Knight Bill (<a href="#">Education (Environment and Sustainable Citizenship) Bill</a>), which is due back in the Lords in early 2022. We would like to see the <b>DfE secure Government support for the Jim Knight bill</b>, which is centred on including sustainability in the Education Act.</p>
<p><b>ix) All new state-funded educational buildings are net-zero from 2022</b></p>	<p><i>"All new school buildings delivered by DfE (not already contracted) will be net zero in operation."</i></p> <p><i>"Sustainably designed, new-build net zero schools will provide learning opportunities, in terms of their structure and environment. They will foster environmental knowledge that can be applied outside of the school setting."</i></p>	<p><b>OUR ASK IS PARTIALLY MET</b></p> <p>We are really delighted to see one of our main asks committed to on the new strategy, and only one-year later than we were asking for. Thank you DfE! This is a great move that we 100% support.</p> <p>Our ask also covers further and higher education, and the commitment made in the strategy covers just new-build schools. <b>We would like to see the DfE commit to a target date by which all new colleges will be</b></p>



		<b>net-zero, and to work with the Office for Students to develop a similar target date for higher education.</b>
<b>x) All existing state-funded educational buildings retrofitted to net-zero by 2030</b>	<p><i>[By 2025] "in conjunction with BEIS, evaluate the best value for money approaches for retrofitting education buildings and develop standards for retrofit and repair to empower the education estate to make change".</i></p> <p><i>"Lead research across government, by developing an innovative solution to decarbonise heat in existing buildings via an 'energy pod'. The Energy Pod Project which will be tested in schools, provides an opportunity to drive innovation in the retrofit market and replace the worst polluting heating systems, such as coal and oil burners."</i></p> <p><i>"Continue to develop and test the GenZero prototype for the future new build of schools, designed to be ultra-low in construction carbon and net zero in operation."</i></p> <p><i>"Prioritise working with members of the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) self-insurance product to identify schools with boilers that are approaching end of life. We will support the school through funding feasibility studies to identify opportunities for new low-carbon heating systems and in accessing funding from the BEIS decarbonisation fund to deliver them."</i></p> <p><i>"Begin the evaluation of the UK's first 'Biophilic' primary school, including long term research on the effects of green infrastructure on the health and wellbeing of young people."</i></p>	<p><b>OUR ASK IS PARTIALLY MET</b></p> <p>In relation to the first point, on evaluating approached to retrofitting schools, we are not convinced this is necessary, especially not taking up to four years to do it. All of the technologies to retrofit schools are commercially available and now quite mainstream, and there is plenty of good practice examples from the sector already, so we think now is the time for rapid deployment rather than further evaluation. We support the development of standards for retrofits, but this should be done by the end of 2022 and reviewed annually, not by 2025.</p> <p>There are problems with the DfE relying on the Salix / BEIS Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) to provide all the funding to retrofit the educational estate.</p> <p>Based on data from the first Low Carbon Skills Fund, the grants available only cover c64% of the measures required. Additionally, the Carbon Cost Threshold (CCT) of £325 / tonne of carbon is relatively hard for schools to achieve due to downtime of buildings at the end of term, and during half-terms, meaning schools are required to invest some of their own money, which acts as a deterrent. Also, PSDS only funds the uplift of a standard like-for-like boiler replacement to a heat pump. Most schools do not have their own funds available to pay for the boiler replacement in the first place, so they have to first apply for Condition Improvement Funding (CIF). CIF is a competitive process that only funds like-for-like replacements.</p>

	<p><i>"Support schools make the transition to low carbon technologies including infrastructure to support electric vehicles (EV)."</i></p> <p><i>"Support the Department for Transport in delivering initiatives to increase active and safe travel to school such as Bikeability, Walk to School Outreach and School Streets, to improve wellbeing, reduce carbon emissions from the school commute and improve air quality."</i></p> <p><i>"Support schools and colleges to access the funds they need to reduce their emissions (for example, the BEIS Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, which provides capital grants to reduce direct emissions from public sector buildings, and the associated BEIS Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund, which provides funding to enable public sector organisations to acquire expert skills in order to unlock decarbonisation projects)."</i></p> <p><i>"Work with BEIS to trial the delivery of smart meters in schools to reduce energy bills and emissions while provide learning opportunities for data analysis and understanding the impact of human behaviour. Evidence will be used from the pilots to inform future action."</i></p> <p><i>"Further education colleges applying for capital funding from DfE will be required to consider environmental sustainability, carbon reduction and adaption measures, and align with the Government's targets and objectives."</i></p> <p><i>"In conjunction with BEIS, evaluate the best value for money approaches for retrofitting education buildings and develop standards for retrofit and</i></p>	<p>Having a double application process that is quite technical could also be a deterrent for many schools.</p> <p><b>We would like to see DfE working with BEIS and the Treasury to secure the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>c£670m per year PSDS from 2022 through to 2030 should be ringfenced for schools and colleges</b> so they don't have to compete against local authorities and other parts of the public estate.</li> <li>• <b>A new zero-interest loan scheme for schools to fund measures which are not eligible under PSDS. The loan scheme needs to offer £250m of zero interest energy efficiency loans to school each year between now and 2030.</b></li> <li>• <b>A revised CCT for schools of £450 / tonne</b> for PSDS measures.</li> <li>• <b>All other school conditioning funding (CIF / SCA / VASCA, etc.) should be prohibited from being used to fund new fossil fuel installations and must be adequate to fund decarbonised heating solutions.</b></li> <li>• <b>All schools, including Voluntary Aided schools, must be able to reclaim the VAT on all energy efficiency and decarbonisation projects.</b></li> <li>• <b>The carbon factors used in Display Energy Certificates (DEC) must be updated annually to reflect the DEFRA carbon emissions factors.</b></li> <li>• <b>The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) criteria should be extended so that it can fund insulation measures within schools.</b></li> <li>• <b>Permitted Development under planning rules should be extended to allow the installation of heat pumps to non-listed schools.</b></li> <li>• <b>The DfE schools design guidance should be updated to promote electric hot water heating, ideally in localised units where practical.</b></li> </ul>
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	<p><i>repair to empower the education estate to make change."</i></p> <p><i>"Our capital and commercial programmes will be delivered with supporting and integrated educational activities so that leaders, teachers, children and young people will be engaged in opportunities to learn about energy efficiency and climate resilience."</i></p> <p><i>"Engage with the sector to explore the expansion of targets and mandatory reporting for carbon emissions across higher education providers in England."</i></p> <p><i>"DfE and its arms-length bodies will mandate that all suppliers bidding for contracts over £5m per year, commit to achieving Net Zero by 2050. Additionally, they must publish a Carbon Reduction Plan, which will clearly show how they will meet this target."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The embodied carbon used within all new schools and major refurbishments should be measured and percentage reduction targets set.</b></li> <li>• <b>All new-build schools should be built to achieve a DEC level A, and all major refurbished schools should get a DEC level B.</b></li> </ul>
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The DfE strategy is a draft, which is open to review until March 2022. We will continue to engage with the DfE through our links with staff in the Climate Change and Sustainability Unit and through participation in the youth panel that the DfE are setting up. We welcome your thoughts on our response to the DfE draft strategy.

**Teach the Future  
23 November 2021**