

HIAS MOODLE OPEN RESOURCE

Climate Change and Sustainability education in Art

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Overview

This document contains guidance to support further embedding climate education in the art curriculum.

Points to consider when using this resource

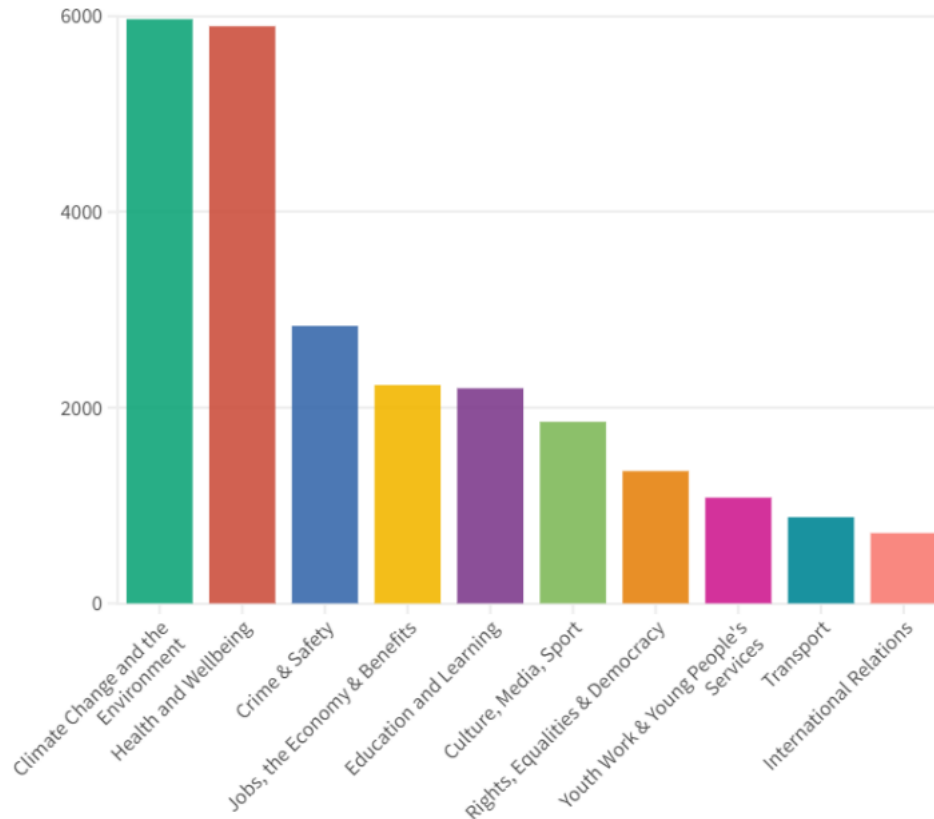
It was created during February 2025 and all website links were active at this time. The organisations signposted are national ones that teachers are likely to be familiar with such as the National Society Educators in Art and Design (NSEAD), but it is always recommended to quality assure any online sources you use in the classroom with your colleagues.

Climate Change and Sustainability education in Art

There has never been a more important time to focus attention on the climate change and sustainability in art education. The biggest ever standalone public opinion survey on climate change, [the Peoples' Climate Vote 2024](#) , shows 80 percent – or four out of five - people globally want their governments to take stronger action to tackle the climate crisis. (Source: [United Nations Development Programme](#)).



This heightened awareness is not just confined to scientists and environmentalists; it has permeated all sectors, including the education sector. School leaders and our students are increasingly alert to the need to support and promote climate education and to mitigate the impact our school buildings and community have on our environment. Earlier this year Hampshire's young people voted climate change and the environment as their top concern. More than 25,000 young people across Hampshire took part in ['Make Your Mark'](#), the UK's biggest youth consultation.



The Make Your Mark 2024 Hampshire Survey Results

Source: <https://hampshireyp.org/make-your-mark/>

DFE Sustainability and Climate Change for Schools Guidance

The [2022 policy paper from the Department for Education \(DfE\)](#) set an ambitious vision of the UK becoming the world's leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030 (DfE, 2022) as outlined below:

“Vision: the United Kingdom is the world-leading education sector in sustainability and climate change by 2030.

In England, we will achieve this through the following strategic aims:

- 1. Excellence in education and skills for a changing world: preparing all young people for a world impacted by climate change through learning and practical experience.*
- 2. Net zero: reducing direct and indirect emissions from education and care buildings, driving innovation to meet legislative targets and providing opportunities for children and young people to engage practically in the transition to net zero.*
- 3. Resilience to climate change: adapting our education and care buildings and system to prepare for the effects of climate change.*
- 4. A better environment for future generations: enhancing biodiversity, improving air quality and increasing access to, and connection with, nature in and around education and care settings.”*

Source: [Sustainability and climate change: a strategy for the education and children's](#)

This guidance is not statutory. Instead, it set out a key initiative for all schools to have a nominated sustainability lead and a climate action plan in place for 2025. The guidance breaks down the vision to provide five areas where schools and educators should focus:

1. Climate education
2. Green skills and careers
3. Educational estate and digital infrastructure
4. Operation and supply chains
5. International

Art and design

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs identify 17 Sustainable Development Goals (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>). Art is integral to the design process and needs to consider the concept of sustainable development. The World Commission on Environment and Development, emphasise the need for creating progress that satisfies current needs without hindering future generations from meeting their own needs. This principle emphasizes the importance of halting the relentless exploitation of Earth's resources and encourages the exploration of alternative designs and production methods for new products. Adopting this mindset is crucial for artists and designers, not only for environmental reasons but also for commercial viability. Consumers are becoming more conscious of the environmental impact of their purchases, prompting manufacturers to rethink their product development and marketing strategies.



You can also download these goal icons here: [Communications materials - United Nations Sustainable Development](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/communications-materials/)

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

Art and design can be pivotal to communicating and expressing thinking and practice about climate change and sustainability. Whether it's the materials used, exploring sustainable design practice, addressing environmental issues and concepts or considering the artwork by artists. To begin with determine where climate change and sustainability and art education is integrated into the curriculum. It is likely that artists can be a central focus for this, the use of materials and cross-curricular links to geography and science will engage students to environmental issues. Preferably this could happen in each year group throughout the school year. Consider progression and ensure that there are opportunities for students to build climate knowledge from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4. Ideally you might consider transition from the primary phase at Key Stage 2 and for continuity to post 16 and Key Stage 5. Seek to understand students' insight about climate change and sustainability. You could use the [Climate questionnaire](#) to support this. With all this be mindful and sensitive to increasing anxiety amongst learners.

Parts of the following curriculum map has been created by using Microsoft Co-pilot. It focusses on climate change and sustainability, ensuring progression in complexity across Years 7, 8, and 9. Opportunities for recording with drawing and painting have been integrated to create extensive schemes of work. Each project includes an artist and a specific skill to develop, adhering to the National Curriculum. Termly opportunities are listed for each year group, this could be adapted to suit your needs:

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
<p align="center">Understanding sustainability – Recycled Collage</p> <p>Drawing: Draw on recycled paper and make a book. Painting: Paint sections of artist’s work on different papers (acrylic/ poster). Collage: Create a collage using recycled materials like old magazines and newspapers of a section of the artist’s work. Objectives: Introduction to Sustainability in Art How to work like an artist using recycling. Understanding the importance of recycling and how to use recycled materials creatively.</p> <p>Artist: Vik Muniz (known for using recycled materials).</p>	<p align="center">Climate Change and Art</p> <p>Drawing Respond to the artist’s ideas about weather, you might approach it by considering shapes/materials etc. Painting Individual designs and collaborative mural (acrylic). Digital media: Photography Objectives: Deepening Understanding of Climate Change To create a collaborative Climate Change Mural. Collaborate on a mural that depicts the impacts of climate change. Developing teamwork skills and understanding the role of art in raising awareness.</p> <p>Artist: Olafur Eliasson (known for addressing climate change in his work).</p>	<p align="center">Personal Sustainability Projects</p> <p>Drawing Using inks – drawing places Painting Watercolour sketches Photography – eco-environmental interests</p> <p>Objectives: Develop a personal Eco-Art Portfolio/journal Portfolio development and personal expression Develop a portfolio of artworks that explore personal interpretations of sustainability and climate change. Enhancing personal artistic voice and understanding complex environmental issues.</p> <p>Artist: Agnes Denes (known for environmental art)</p>
<p align="center">Natural Inspirations</p> <p>Drawing Observational drawings using pencils of natural forms such as leaves, stone fir-cones etc. Painting Mix to match colours – observational painting with water colours/acrylic. Sculpture: individual and collaborative installations (Collect natural materials and create sculptures inspired by nature). Digital media: Photography. Objectives: Recording from and observing nature. Learning to work with natural materials and understanding their environmental impact.</p> <p>Artist: Andy Goldsworthy (known for his natural sculptures)</p>	<p align="center">Sustainable Practices in Art: Upcycling</p> <p>Drawing Pen and ink drawings. Painting Recording collections of upcycling with watercolour washes and pen and ink. Collage / sculpture Upcycled Mixed Media Art Objectives: Create mixed media artworks using upcycled materials like plastic bottles and fabric scraps. Learning to repurpose materials and create meaningful art from waste.</p> <p>Artist: El Anatsui (known for using upcycled materials)</p>	<p align="center">Collaborative Sustainability Projects:</p> <p>Group Eco-Art Installation – SEE CLIMATE UNITY PROJECT</p> <p>Drawing use natural forms to draw with. Painting use rainwater, river water, dew and natural forms to record Sculpture Land art/Installation art and collaboration Objectives: Work in groups to create a large-scale installation that addresses a specific environmental issue. Developing collaboration skills and understanding large-scale project execution.</p> <p>Artist: Nils-Udo (known for environmental installations).</p>
<p align="center">Natural Dye Textiles (Eco-Friendly Techniques)</p> <p>Drawing using natural dyes as inks to draw and stitches to draw. Painting Using dyes as paints Textiles Natural dyeing on fabrics and stitching. Digital media: Recording the process with photography. Objectives: Finding and making natural dyes. Using dyes to record. Experiment with natural dyes to create textile art pieces. Understanding the process of natural dyeing and its environmental benefits.</p> <p>Artist: India Flint (known for eco-dyeing techniques)</p>	<p align="center">Community and Sustainability</p> <p>Drawing Tonal portrait using a grid and scale Painting Black and white sections of portraits, scaled up. Sculpture/photography Project and paint onto walls or enlarge images to hang outside. Take photos of community engagement and large-scale art. Objectives: Plan and execute a community art project focused on sustainability, such as a public mural or garden installation. Understanding the impact of art on the community and developing project management skills.</p> <p>Artist: JR (known for community-based art projects)</p>	<p align="center">Exhibition and Reflection</p> <p>Drawing Quick pencil sketches and draping with fabric Painting Watercolour illustrations of ideas. Sculpture Installation Photography and video (formative and summative) Objectives: Exhibition planning and curation Plan and organize an exhibition showcasing the year’s work on sustainability. Learning the process of curating and exhibiting art and reflecting on the year’s achievements.</p> <p>Artist: Christo and Jeanne-Claude (known for large-scale public art)</p>

This curriculum map ensures a structured and progressive approach to integrating climate change and sustainability into the art classroom, encouraging students to develop their skills and understanding over the three years. You might choose to do one project in each year of Key Stage 3.

Climate Education in Art

Integrating climate change and sustainability into art education is becoming increasingly important. Some ideas on ways to achieve this:

Curriculum Integration: This includes projects that encourage students to explore environmental issues through various art forms, fostering a deeper understanding and personal connection to the project.

Interdisciplinary Approaches: Art education could be combined with science, geography, and social studies to provide a holistic view of climate change. This interdisciplinary approach helps students see the interconnectedness of environmental issues and the role of art in addressing them.

Community Projects: Engaging students in community-based projects that address local environmental issues can raise awareness and empower students to act in their own communities.

Sustainable Practices: Art educators are emphasizing the use of sustainable materials and practices in the creation of art. This includes using recycled materials, natural dyes, and eco-friendly processes.

Art as Advocacy: Students are encouraged to use their art as a form of advocacy, creating works that highlight the impacts of climate change and inspire others to act. This can include public installations, exhibitions, and digital media campaigns.

Sustainability and art materials in the classroom

Integrating sustainability into art classrooms is a fantastic way to teach students about environmental responsibility while fostering creativity. Here are some ideas and materials to consider:

Eco-Friendly Art Materials

Recycled Paper: Use paper made from recycled materials for drawing and painting projects.

Natural Pigments: Opt for paints and dyes made from natural ingredients, such as plant-based pigments.

Biodegradable Supplies: Look for biodegradable options for items like glitter and clay.

Reusable Tools: Encourage the use of reusable palettes, brushes, and containers instead of disposable ones.

Creative Reuse and Recycling

Scrap Paper: Collect and use scrap paper for sketching and planning projects.

Old Crayons: Melt down old crayons to create new, multi-coloured ones.

Found Objects: Incorporate found objects and materials from nature into art projects, such as leaves, twigs, and stones.

Sustainable Practices

Reduce Waste: Implement strategies to reduce waste, such as using cloth towels instead of paper towels.

Digital Alternatives: Use digital tools for planning and communication to reduce paper usage.

Energy Conservation: Turn off lights and unplug electronic devices when not in use to save energy.

By incorporating these sustainable practices and materials, you can create an environmentally conscious art classroom that inspires students to think creatively about sustainability.

Successful art projects that have made a significant impact and share how art can be a powerful tool for social change, community building, and environmental awareness:

The Umbrella Sky Project: This project involves hanging colourful umbrellas over streets in cities around the world. It started in Águeda, Portugal, and has since spread to many other locations. The vibrant display not only beautifies urban spaces but also provides shade and encourages community engagement.

The Inside Out Project: Created by the artist JR, this global participatory art project allows people to share their portraits and make a statement about their communities. Large-scale black-and-white portraits are pasted in public spaces, transforming the way we see and interact with our surroundings.

The AIDS Memorial Quilt: This ongoing project began in 1987 to commemorate the lives of people who have died of AIDS. Each panel of the quilt is created by friends, family, and loved ones, making it a powerful and personal tribute. It has grown to become one of the largest community art projects in the world.

The Heidelberg Project: An outdoor art environment in Detroit, Michigan, created by artist Tyree Guyton. The project uses discarded objects to transform a neighbourhood into a vibrant, colourful space, addressing issues of urban decay and community revitalization.

The Trash People: German artist HA Schult created life-sized sculptures made entirely of trash. These sculptures have been displayed in various locations around the world, highlighting the issue of waste and environmental sustainability.

The Climate Unity Project: An activism project offered by HIAS since 2020. Each year provides another opportunity for children, young people, communities and artists in Hampshire to communicate their thinking and raise awareness about climate change and sustainability.

Wealth of information about climate change and sustainability in art:

- 1) HIAS resources: Don't forget to look on the HIAS Moodle pages for further guidance and lesson inspiration. There is a dedicated page called Climate Unity where you can find further links to resources as well as access all the previous Hampshire wide climate themed events for students such as various activism projects and conferences: [Climate unity](#)



"Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing."

Arundhati Roy (Indian Author and Man Booker Prize winner)

In this area you can find resources to support your teaching about the Climate Crisis. Materials will be added to over time here and are especially suitable for KS2 and KS3, but many will also be adaptable for younger children as well as for older young people.

2) The role of subjects and subject associations in climate change and sustainability education in England – January 2025.
www.nsead.org/news/newsroom/subject-associations-and-climate-change-and-sustainability-education/

This report contains recommendations for embedding climate change and sustainability education across the whole curriculum and provides tailored support to teachers. It is published by UCL, Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability Education. It is the outcome of an event held in summer 2024 which brought subject associations – including the National Society for Educators in Art and Design (NSEAD) – together.

The report's recommendations are:

- “1. The revised school curriculum should build on the existing subject requirements in geography, science and citizenship that support climate change and sustainability education.*
- 2. The revised school curriculum should identify new opportunities for teaching about climate change and sustainability across the curriculum by including clearly defined and specific teaching requirements in every subject.*
- 3. High quality professional development about climate change and sustainability education is urgently needed for all teachers, tailored by subject and age phase and focused on subject knowledge and appropriate pedagogies.*
- 4. Subject associations should continue to make climate change and sustainability education one of their priorities and be supported to help develop subject specific exemplification and guidance for teachers.”*

The report includes quotes from subject associations and the role each subject can provide. Michele Gregson, General Secretary of NSEAD, said:

“Art and Design is naturally attuned to emphasising learner autonomy and innovation and solving problems through the application of learners’ own imagination and agency. Not just problem solvers, but problem identifiers. In addition, the freedom of a curriculum that is concept- rather than content-driven provides the opportunity to explore socially engaged practice, the meaning of citizenship, and empathy as a design skill. These are all things that create a sound base for the green skills framework.”

3) Climate literacy amongst school leavers. Research report, December 2024. Department for education. [Climate Literacy amongst school leavers 2024](#) This research report presents the findings of the 2024 Climate Literacy Survey; it was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) to assess the level of climate literacy amongst school leavers leaving secondary education in England.

It might suggest to you some content for your art curriculum. The survey was conducted with a sample of 522 Year 11 school leavers, and it will be repeated over time, to measure trends in knowledge amongst school leavers. The survey comprised 55 questions, covering a broad range of climate literacy, including:

- *Causes of climate change: Understanding weather versus climate, drivers of global climate variance, identifying greenhouse gases and fossil fuels.*
- *Evidence for and impacts of climate change: Recognising indicators of a warming climate, understanding future temperature projections and country vulnerability.*
- *Mitigation and Adaptation Solutions: Differentiating between the two concepts and identifying relevant strategies.*
- *Climate change in the UK: awareness of the projected impacts of climate change in the UK and adaptation and mitigation solutions.*
- *Communication: Evaluating scientific consensus, knowledge of key international organizations, and trust in different information sources.*

The questions are intentionally not linked to any specific curriculum; they measure trends in knowledge across time and provide a holistic picture of climate literacy amongst school leavers. The questions offer focus points for us to use in the art curriculum.

- 4) **TATE: Tackling climate emergency:** <https://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/tate-and-climate-change> The Tate is committed to continue working towards increasing sustainability, protecting the environment and becoming one of the world's most sustainable art institutions. In July 2019, they declared a climate and ecological emergency recognising the unique role art and art museums can play in creating fundamental societal change. They exceeded their target to reduce carbon emissions by 50 per cent by 2023 from the baseline year of 2007/8 and they are working towards reducing emissions to net zero by 2030. In 2023, Tate hosted the first ever museums COP sustainability summit, where representatives of UK museums, sector bodies and funders agreed actions to address the climate crisis. Tate worked with the Bizot Group of international museums to develop and agree a refreshed Green Protocol, providing key principles, guidelines on climate controls, and a series of handbooks.
- 5) The Tate have created a resource about art and artists who spotlight the environment in their projects and photos: www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/simryn-gill-9404/4-artworks-capture-climate-emergency.
- 6) [Can art save the world from environmental catastrophe? | Tate](#) What role can art play in tackling the climate emergency? In this film, we look at artworks by L.S. Lowry, Simryn Gill, Abbas Akhavan, Otobong Nkanga and Nicolás García Urriburu. We explore how these artists raise issues connected to the environment and inspire us to act.
- 7) NSEAD: Invited Dr Emese Hall, Chair of NSEAD Art Education for the Environment and Climate Emergency Research Group to create a list of books that explore art and the climate emergency. Recommended reading for Art and the Climate emergency from NSEAD to inform your knowledge, understanding and practice regarding art education for the environment and climate emergency. [Recommended Reading: Art and the Climate Emergency - NSEAD- Five books.](#)

Some Eco-friendly Art suppliers

There are many eco-friendly art supplies available that help reduce environmental impact while still allowing for creative expression:

Conscious Craft: They offer a wide range of eco-friendly art supplies, including natural earth paints, eco modelling clay, and sustainable brushes. Their products are made from 100% natural, earth-friendly ingredients.

Cowling and Willcox: Ethically produced art suppliers.

Dryad education: They have various bio and eco products available.

Faber-Castell Eco Pencils: These pencils are made from sustainably sourced wood and are designed to offset the carbon footprint of their production.

GreatArt: Known for their extensive range of art supplies, GreatArt is committed to sustainable development and offers many eco-friendly options for artists who prefer a 'Green' approach.

Natural Earth Paint: This company provides natural earth pigments and milk paints that are non-toxic and eco-friendly. They also offer natural dye kits and biodegradable supply kits.

P9 Art Boutique: This supplier focuses on providing premium, eco-friendly art supplies that are non-toxic, vegan, and professional quality. They offer a variety of products, including natural oil paints and unique painting tools.

Seawhite of Brighton: Have a range of ECO Starter Sketchbooks – Seawhite Eco CupCycling™ Starter Sketchbooks **and papers.**

Winsor & Newton: They offer a wide range of watercolour, acrylic, and oil paints. Some are traditional paints, but their professional watercolour range is made using quality pigments and environmentally friendly production methods. Free from harmful chemicals such as cadmium and lead, these eco painting supplies are safe for both artists and the environment.

Art

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