

Climate Action Team

We recently had the opportunity to go to Colchester Zoo to find out about climate education and sustainability in schools. As educators who are passionate about the natural world and how we, as humans, can live more sustainably, this was a really exciting opportunity to find out how we can do more as a school to promote positive changes and incorporate this into our curriculum and school culture.

As a society, we are all aware of the climate crisis facing our planet and most of us appreciate the need to make changes to how we live. Some of the messages we heard at our training were that young people understand the severity of this climate crisis and know that urgent action is needed but there is growing concern around the rise of 'climate' anxiety in young people and their frustration that the adults around them seem to be doing little to address the problems facing our planet. However, the exciting truth is that our young people are well placed to be the champions that we need for sustainability and many already have the desire to take meaningful action now.

That is why we have created a Climate Action Team here at Honywood, consisting of a range of staff members and learners. Having the support of Essex County Council apparently makes us the envy of many schools in other counties, as the expertise and resources that they offer schools in this topic is very highly thought of. We made some brilliant links with educators and leaders from a range of locations and are really excited to find out how we can use their knowledge to improve sustainability at Honywood and beyond. Already, our Climate Action Team has met and discussed some key actions that we'd like to take and planned some initiatives that we would like to begin immediately. One of these is a challenge for you as families each week that we will set on the Headlines. Some will be competitions, with winners announced, whereas others will, we hope, be fun and interesting little challenges that you can do together.

A recent publication from Climate & Nature Action in Education East reports that, "According to the Department for Education, the national curriculum should ensure that 'young people leave compulsory education ready for life and work'. To achieve this aim in the context of the climate crisis, climate change education should go beyond abstract, scientific content and relate to young people's everyday lives. It should give young people the confidence to take meaningful action now, engage them with what climate change means for their future careers, and imbue them with the knowledge and skills they need to engage with climate change as citizens." We believe that our Climate Action Group at Honywood will make positive steps forward in enabling this to happen.

We will be organising our actions around 4 key themes:

- Adaptation and resilience: *Taking actions to reduce the risk of flooding and overheating and to future-proof scarce resources for potential shortages.*
- Biodiversity: *Creating habitats and adopting practices that will enhance species diversity on the education setting estate and beyond*
- Climate education and green careers: *Ensuring the education we provide gives knowledge-rich and comprehensive teaching about climate change*
- Decarbonisation: *Calculating and taking actions to reduce carbon emissions and becoming more energy efficient*

“Climate education in secondary schools can not only support the development of young people’s environmental knowledge and skills but also protect their resilience and mental health by providing a sense of agency and empowerment. This is important as evidence shows young people are susceptible to negative climate-related emotions.” Climate & Nature Action in Education East.

All of us who are involved in the lives of young people, whether that be as parents, grandparents, carers or educators (or all of the above!) know that when they are passionate about something, they are a force to be reckoned with. Our hope is that by inspiring our learners and the wider community to care about the world we all live in, we may ignite a spark that can change the world for the better. No one is too young (or old) to make a difference. As the late Dr. Jane Goodall said, “The greatest danger to our future is apathy...you cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”

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