



What is sustainability?



‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’

For practical ideas, examples of activities and curriculum links please visit the Early Years Sustainable Hub at <https://www.evertonnurseryschoolandfamilycentre.org/earlyyears-sustainable-hub> where you can also find more information on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

Grace Cook Primary School and Nursery – Climate Action Plan (2025 – 26)

Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2024, p 9) to “*foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world*”.

Environmental- Make links to Specific Area “*Understanding the World*” The Natural World. For example, “*Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter*” (EYFS, DfE, 2024, p 15) and UNCRC General Comment no 26 (2023).

<p>What is working well?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are developing a strong understanding of the natural world through daily observation, exploration, and discussion of plants, animals, seasons, and weather. This supports them to notice changes and patterns in their environment. • Hands-on experiences such as composting, gardening, and caring for plants allow children to see natural processes in action, including decomposition, growth, and the changing states of matter, in line with EYFS. • Recycling and reusing materials is embedded in practice, with children learning that resources can be repurposed and waste can be reduced, promoting early environmental responsibility. • Staff model curiosity and care for the environment, asking open-ended questions and encouraging children to explore, predict, and reflect on what they see. • Children are encouraged to make connections between their actions and the wider world, developing awareness of how small choices—like composting food waste or reusing materials—can positively impact the planet,
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What is our focus for this year?	How will we achieve this?	Associated costs/budget code?	Who will lead on this?	What will success look like?	Stakeholders involvement?
<p>Deepen children’s understanding of natural processes (growth, decomposition, seasonal changes) and sustainable actions (composting, recycling, caring for plants).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use compost bins and garden activities to explore decomposition and growth. - Integrate natural materials and recycled resources into creative and small world play. - Plan focused “Understanding the World” activities around seasons, plants, animals, and weather. - Provide opportunities for children to make observations, predictions, and connections between their actions and the environment. - Wormery - Reception children are encouraged to watch worms break down food waste and soil, learning that 	<p>Composting materials, garden tools, plant seeds, recycled resources (within individual room budgets)</p>	<p>Room Leader (Elle Sanders)</p> <p>Reception Class Teacher (Hazel Williams)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children can explain and demonstrate understanding of natural processes through play and observations. - Children regularly use compost bins and recycled materials responsibly. - Staff report increased engagement and curiosity in discussions about nature and sustainability. - Observational notes and photos show children 	<p>Children: hands-on participation in composting, gardening, recycling, and nature observation.</p> <p>Staff: planning, modelling sustainable behaviour, facilitating discussions and observations.</p> <p>Parents / carers: supporting sustainability at home, contributing recycled materials, engaging in outdoor projects.</p> <p>Wider school / community: local</p>





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	decomposition is part of nature’s recycling system.			making connections between actions and environmental outcomes.	gardening initiatives, environmental campaigns, workshops or visits to support learning.
Progress update: Date:					

Social – Make links to the Characteristics of Effective Learning (EYFS, DfE,2024, p 17) giving children agency and empowerment to be active participants within their community and culture and UNCRC (1989) (For example, articles 3, 4, 14, 30 and 31).

Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.
Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.
Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

What is working well?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are given agency and responsibility within the setting, actively participating in sustainable practices such as recycling, composting, and caring for plants. This empowers them to see themselves as contributors to their community and environment. Playing and exploring: Children investigate real-life resources and materials, such as loose parts, natural objects, and recycled items, and ‘have a go’ at reusing and repurposing them in creative ways.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active learning: Children demonstrate perseverance when caring for living things, planting seeds, or observing composting and wormeries. They enjoy seeing the results of their actions, such as plants growing or food scraps turning into compost. Creating and thinking critically: Children are encouraged to develop their own ideas, make connections between their actions and environmental outcomes, and problem-solve when caring for plants, animals, or materials. For example, they may suggest ways to improve composting or recycle resources more effectively. Staff model curiosity, reflection, and collaborative decision-making, ensuring children have a voice in planning activities and contributing to their learning environment. 				
What is our focus for this year?	How will we achieve this?	Associated costs/budget code?	Who will lead on this?	What will success look like?	Stakeholders involvement?
Empower children to take an active role in sustainability and environmental care, developing agency, collaboration,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for children to make decisions about caring for plants, animals, and recycled materials. Encourage children to lead or co-lead activities, such as feeding wormeries, watering plants, or organising recycling collections. Use open-ended questions and reflective discussions to support thinking critically about sustainability choices. 	<p>Materials for child-led projects (watering cans, planters, recycling bins, natural and recycled resources)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within room budgets 	<p>Room Leader (Elle Sanders)</p> <p>Reception Class Teacher (Hazel Williams)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children take initiative in caring for the environment and demonstrate problem-solving skills. Observations show children making decisions, reflecting on outcomes, and adapting strategies. 	<p>Children: Leading or co-leading sustainability actions, making decisions, documenting progress.</p> <p>Staff: Facilitating child-led learning, modelling reflection, supporting problem-solving.</p> <p>Parents / carers: Reinforcing sustainability</p>





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<p>and problem-solving skills within their community and culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebrate children’s achievements and progress, reinforcing perseverance and active learning. - Plan group and individual challenges linked to environmental care that allow children to experiment, solve problems, and share ideas. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children can explain the impact of their actions on their setting and wider community. - Increased engagement, perseverance, and pride in sustainability activities. 	<p>practices at home, sharing ideas and feedback. Wider community: Possible involvement in local recycling or environmental projects, visits, or sharing expertise.</p>
<p>Progress update: Date:</p>					

Economic – Support children to develop their knowledge and understanding about the economy and traditional trades. EYFS (DfE,2024, p 14) link to Mathematics (Numerical Patterns)- “Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system”.

<p>What is working well?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are beginning to develop awareness of the economy through practical, real-life experiences, such as role play shops, market stalls, or exploring local trades. • Mathematical skills are embedded naturally, for example counting coins, calculating totals, or recognising number patterns while buying, selling, or trading resources (EYFS, DfE, 2024, p.14).
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children explore traditional trades and crafts (e.g., baking, woodworking, gardening, weaving), supporting understanding of how people work and contribute to communities. Staff model curiosity and problem-solving, encouraging children to ask questions about work, money, and value, linking to the concept of sustainability (e.g., reusing resources, bartering materials). Children are encouraged to make connections between their actions and outcomes, fostering critical thinking and an understanding of value and effort. 				
What is our focus for this year?	How will we achieve this?	Associated costs/budget code?	Who will lead on this?	What will success look like?	Stakeholders involvement?
To develop children’s understanding of value, money, and traditional trades through real-life, meaningful experiences, while	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide role play opportunities such as a shop, café, market stall, or repair workshop using real and recycled resources. Introduce counting, sorting, and exchanging items using coins, tokens, or natural materials, supporting children to verbally count beyond 20 and recognise numerical patterns. 	Role play resources, coins/tokens, recycled and natural materials.	Room Leader (Elle Sanders) Reception Class Teacher (Hazel Williams)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children confidently count beyond 20 and recognise number patterns during play. Children demonstrate an understanding of value, exchange, and fairness in role play. Observations show children applying 	<p>Children: Leading role play scenarios, counting, trading, and problem-solving.</p> <p>Staff: Planning purposeful mathematical experiences and modelling economic language.</p> <p>Parents / carers: Sharing knowledge of jobs or trades, donating recycled materials.</p>





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<p>strengthening mathematical skills such as counting beyond 20 and recognising number patterns.</p>	<p>Explore traditional trades (e.g. bakers, gardeners, builders, artists) through stories, visits, visitors, and hands-on activities.</p> <p>Encourage children to reuse, repair, and repurpose materials, linking economic choices to sustainability.</p> <p>Use open-ended questions to support problem-solving and critical thinking (e.g. “How many do we need?” “What could we use instead?”).</p>			<p>mathematical language in real-life contexts.</p> <p>Children show awareness of sustainability through reusing and repairing resources.</p>	<p>Wider community: Local tradespeople or shops sharing experiences through visits or talks.</p>
<p>Progress update: Date:</p>					

