Climate Action Plan

Baseline Report - September 2025

School Name:
St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

Prepared By: School Consulting Ltd

Overview

Purpose

This baseline report has been developed as an essential step in preparing the school's Climate Action Plan. It provides a clear picture of the **current** environmental impact, covering carbon emissions, energy use, waste, water consumption, and transport habits. This starting point allows us to set realistic, measurable goals and monitor progress over time.

The Climate Action Plan, informed by this report, and found as an appendix, addresses the four key areas identified by the Department of Education: **decarbonisation, adaptation and resilience, environment and biodiversity, and climate education and green careers**. Together, these areas will guide informed decision-making and meaningful action, strengthening the school's commitment to sustainability and shaping a more environmentally conscious future.

Scope

In this first report, we have reviewed:

- Scope 1: Direct emissions owned or controlled by the school
- Scope 2: Indirect emissions from purchased energy

Currently, as no scope 3 calculations have been generated, ***an assumption has been made, based on national averages, that supply chain emissions account for 45% of overall CO_2 emissions*.**

In order to compare to other schools, a footprint has been provided in the report for both operational (scopes 1 & 2) emissions and an ***estimated*** full impact.

Executive Summary

The report highlights that St Anthony's Catholic Primary School is performing strongly in several key areas when compared to national averages. Energy consumption is notably efficient, with both electricity and gas usage falling below standard benchmarks for primary schools. Water usage is also commendable, with per-pupil consumption much lower than the national average.

Engagement levels within the school community are high, and a high proportion of parents and staff expressed an interest in being actively engaged in sustainability initiatives. Pupils have the opportunity to join the school council or eco-council, which will encourage their participation and feeling of ownership in school activities.

The school does have solar panels although reporting on their capacity and energy generation needs further investigation. Although emissions from pupil commuting is low, there is a very high interest from parents in sustainable travel options. A walking bus or similar would support parents with children who are too young to walk alone and foster a sense of shared responsibility.

Overall, St Anthony's Catholic Primary School is already making significant progress in its sustainability efforts, with strong engagement from the school community and a clear commitment to continuous improvement.

Mission Statement

At St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, we are guided by our Catholic mission to be faithful stewards of God's creation. Inspired by the teachings of the Church and Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*, we are committed to reducing our environmental impact and aligning with national and local sustainability policies as an expression of our moral and spiritual responsibility.

We seek to cultivate a greener, healthier learning environment that reflects our belief in the sacredness of the Earth and the dignity of all life. Through prayer, education, and action, we nurture a deep sense of environmental responsibility among pupils, staff, and the wider community, encouraging everyone to care for our common home.

In striving to meet climate targets, we embrace sustainable practices, reduce carbon emissions, and integrate environmental education into our curriculum—empowering our children to become compassionate guardians of creation, now and for future generations.

School Profile

Name: St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

School Type: Primary

Location: Watford, Hertfordshire

Number of Pupils on Roll: 451

Number of Staff: 21

Size of Site: 5,500m_2

Indoor Space: 2,650m_2

School Facilities: The school is made up of two buildings, one is 50 years old and the other, St Francis Building, is 17 years old. The Diocese is responsible for approving funding and any building changes. The school is not in a conservation area.

Key Stakeholders and their role

Role	Name
Headteacher	**Elaine Harrold**

Provides strategic leadership and vision; champions whole-school commitment to climate action; ensures alignment with school values and improvement plans.

Sustainability Lead **Eva Thomas**

Coordinates the Climate Action Plan; monitors progress; engages staff, pupils, and community; integrates sustainability into curriculum and daily school life.

Assistant Headteachers **Martin McDermott, Melanie Brimicombe**

Leads specific action areas (e.g. transport, food); supports implementation across key stages or departments; assists in staff training and resource planning.

Caretaker / Site Manager **Tony Peacock**

Oversees building maintenance, energy use, waste, and grounds; implements practical sustainability measures (e.g. recycling, energy efficiency, biodiversity projects).

School Business Manager **Denise Stratfull**

Manages funding, procurement, and building projects to align with sustainability goals; embeds climate priorities in finance, contracts, and resource planning.

Chair of Governors **Sunjalee Fernando**

Ensures climate action is part of school governance; holds leadership accountable; advocates for long-term sustainability planning and compliance.

Teaching staff

Delivers climate education across the curriculum; supports pupil-led projects; role-models sustainable behaviours in the classroom.

Other school staff

Participates in sustainability practices (e.g. reducing waste, energy-saving); supports pupils and leadership in delivering Climate Action Plan actions.

Pupils

Participate in green initiatives (e.g. eco-council, litter picks); share ideas and promote behaviour change among peers and families.

Parents

Support sustainable travel, lunches, and home behaviours; contribute to consultations or volunteering for Climate Action Plan projects; reinforce messages outside school.

Carbon Footprint Assessment

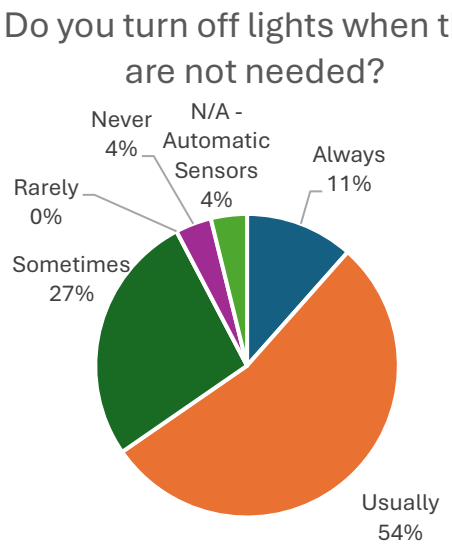
Energy Use

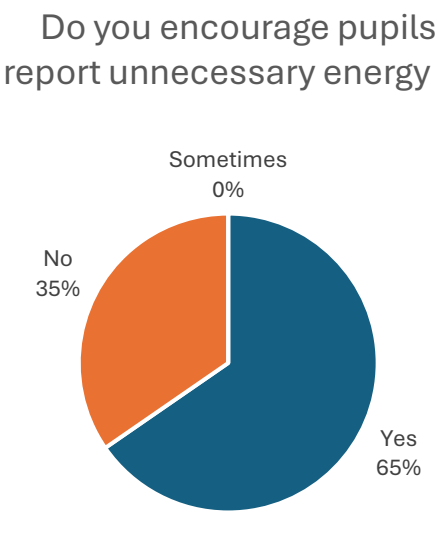
The school's electricity is supplied by EON and gas by Corona Energy, but it does not use a "Green Energy" tariff. Annual electricity consumption is 76,780 kWh, equivalent to **28.97 kWh per m^2**, while gas consumption is 171,778 kWh, or **64.82 kWh per m^2**. Compared to a standard primary school benchmark (around **30–40 kWh per m^2 for electricity** and **120–150 kWh per m^2 for gas**), the school is performing **better than average for both electricity and gas use**, suggesting efficient overall energy performance. **100% of the windows are double-glazed**, which helps reduce heat loss, and the school is primarily **heated by radiators**, though it also has **some air conditioning installed**, which could increase electricity demand in warmer months. However, the **absence of an energy monitoring system** limits the school's ability to track usage trends and identify further savings opportunities.

The teachers show generally positive energy-saving habits, though there is some variation across practices. Around **70% usually or always turn off classroom lights** when not needed, but only about **15% always do so or can rely on automatic light sensors**, reflecting the fact that the school is only partially equipped with LED lighting and sensors. This highlights an area for improvement, both in terms of infrastructure upgrades and encouraging consistent habits.

About **75% of teachers ensure that computers and electronic devices are switched off** at the end of the day, while around **65% regularly close windows and doors** to maintain heating efficiency, with others doing so less consistently. Encouraging pupils to report unnecessary energy use is less embedded, with only about **40% of teachers actively doing this**.

Overall, teachers demonstrate good awareness and habits around saving energy and reducing waste, with opportunities to improve consistency in digital resource use, pupil engagement in monitoring energy consumption, and through further investment in LED lighting and sensors.





Water Usage

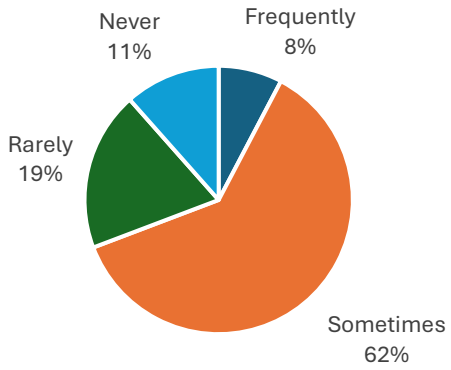
With **451 pupils**, the school's recorded **12-month water use of 318 m^3** equates to roughly **0.71 m^3 per pupil per year**. That is **well below typical UK primary benchmarks (often ~3–5 m^3/pupil/year)**, which suggests either very efficient use or that some consumption (e.g., kitchen, outdoor taps, or caretaking areas) isn't captured on this meter. The school already conducts **regular leak audits**, which helps, but there are **no smart water monitoring tools** or **water-saving measures** (e.g., water butts/low-flow fittings) in place. Given the unusually low per-pupil figure, next steps could include **verifying meter coverage and readings**, considering **smart/sub-metering** to track high-use areas, and introducing **simple conservation measures** to maintain (and evidence) this strong performance.

Waste Management

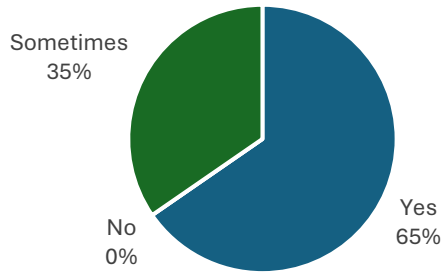
The school's general waste and recycling are collected by **Veolia**. They separate their waste into several streams, including **dry mixed recycling, general waste, food waste, cardboard,** and **plastics**, indicating an effort to manage different types of waste appropriately. Over the past year, approximately **9,000 kg of waste** was removed from the site, with **41% of it being recycled**. However, despite this moderate recycling rate, the school currently has no active initiatives in place to reduce waste, such as banning single-use plastics. This suggests there is room for improvement in waste reduction and sustainability practices. St Anthony's is one of few schools that have **actual waste data** at this stage in the carbon reduction journey, which puts it into **a great position for making real, measurable change**.

The data from the teacher impact survey shows that **most teachers** at the school **are engaged** to some extent with sustainable practices in the classroom. **A large majority (over 90%)** report that they and their pupils actively participate in the **school's recycling programme**, which suggests a **strong culture of environmental awareness**. When it comes to printing, responses vary — many teachers say they "sometimes" print when digital alternatives are available, although a few still "frequently" rely on printed materials. The **use of reusable materials for classroom activities is more consistent**, with most teachers indicating they use them regularly instead of single-use items. Overall, while **participation in recycling is high** and reusable materials are commonly used, there is **room for improvement in reducing paper use** by increasing the **adoption of digital tools**.

How often do you print materials when you could use digital alternatives?



Do you use reusable materials for classroom activities instead of single-use items?

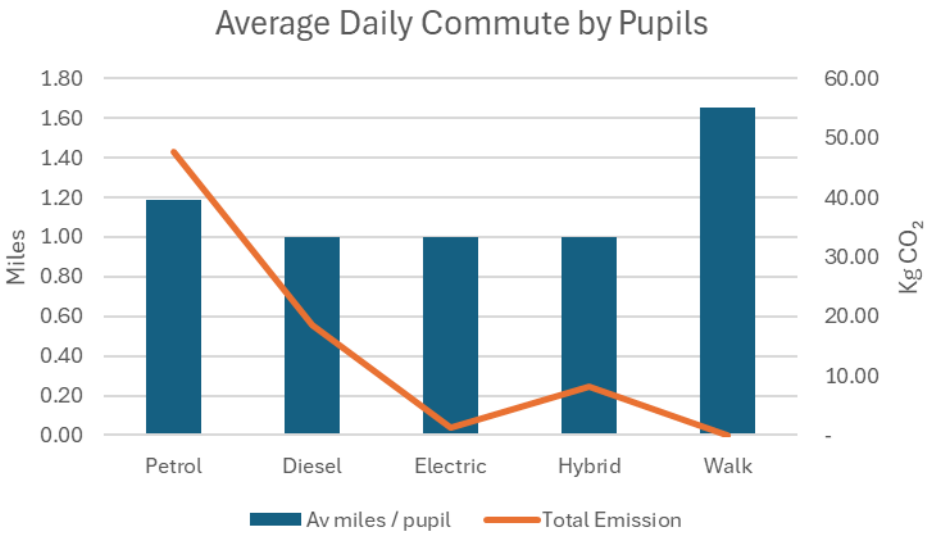


To improve, the school could focus on increasing the **consistent use of reusable materials** across all classrooms by sharing good practices and providing accessible alternatives to single-use items. Additionally, encouraging a **school-wide push toward paperless systems**, for example through digital lesson planning and feedback to parents, could further reduce printing. While recycling is already well embedded, complementing it with more **waste reduction initiatives**, such as staff training or a zero-waste challenge, could elevate the school's overall sustainability efforts.

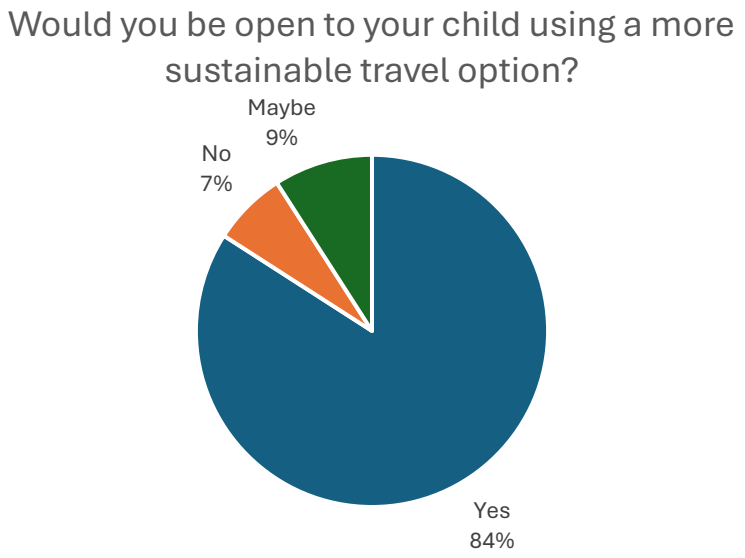
Transport

Results from a survey of parents, completed by 18%, have been scaled up using a factor of 5.57 to reflect the full enrolment of 451 pupils. The findings show that the total estimated emissions from pupil commuting amount to **14.38 tonnes of CO_2 per year,** with daily

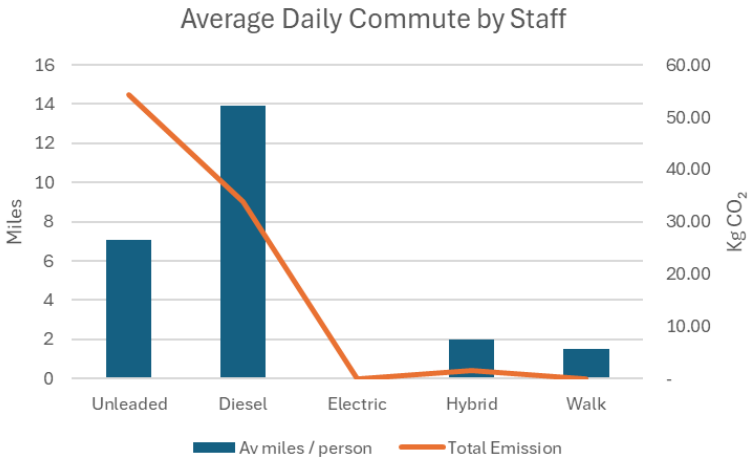
emissions of approximately **75.68 kg CO_2**. The majority of emissions come from petrol and diesel vehicles, while electric and hybrid vehicles contribute significantly less. Walking, though not contributing to CO_2 emissions, is represented by a notable proportion of pupils. Compared to national estimates — which suggest around **0.67 tonnes of CO_2 per pupil per year** — this school's average of roughly **0.032 tonnes per pupil** is substantially lower. This suggests that the school community may already have relatively sustainable travel habits, particularly due to high walking rates and low average travel distances. It could be that those parents who are already environmentally conscious are the ones who completed the survey. Enhanced engagement in future surveys will help to determine this.



The data reveals several key reasons why parents drive their children to school. The most common reason, cited by **36%** of respondents, is that the distance is too far to walk or cycle, indicating that for many families, walking or cycling is not a practical option. **22%** mentioned a lack of safe walking or cycling routes, highlighting potential infrastructure issues that may discourage more sustainable transport choices. **19%** of parents said their child is too young to **walk alone**. **16%** cited convenience or time constraints. Overall, the data suggests that while some barriers are based on individual family circumstances, others—such as safety and distance—could potentially be addressed through local planning or school-led initiatives to encourage more walking and cycling. A substantial **84% said that they would be open to using a more sustainable travel option**, so initiatives such as a walking bus could be explored.



An additional survey shows that teachers at the school primarily commute by car, with **71%** using petrol vehicles and **24%** using diesel. A small proportion (**10%**) reported using hybrid vehicles, and only **5%** of respondents walk to school. No teachers reported using electric vehicles. After scaling the results to reflect the full staff population, it is estimated that teacher commuting generates approximately **17.05 tonnes of CO_2 annually**. Petrol and diesel vehicles are the main contributors to emissions, accounting for the vast majority of the total. With a response rate of **52%**, the findings give a reasonably reliable insight into staff commuting habits, highlighting a strong reliance on private car use and a lack of low-emission or active transport options.

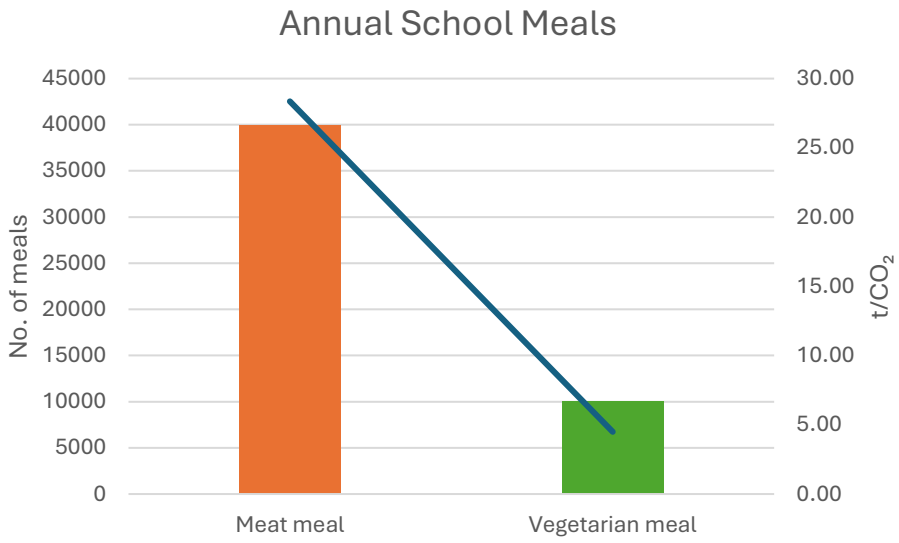


From the total operational emissions, **travel contributes 28%,** which is in line with the benchmarks for primary schools in the UK.

Food

The school serves an average of **1280 meals per week**, with catering provided by **HCL**, a company known for offering nutritionally balanced school meals. With the growing awareness of the environmental impact of food, particularly meat and dairy, encouraging more plant-based meals could support the school's wider sustainability goals while also meeting the dietary needs and preferences of its pupils. HCL does already have a **non-meat menu once a week**. This makes a saving of **20%** of the school's emissions on food.

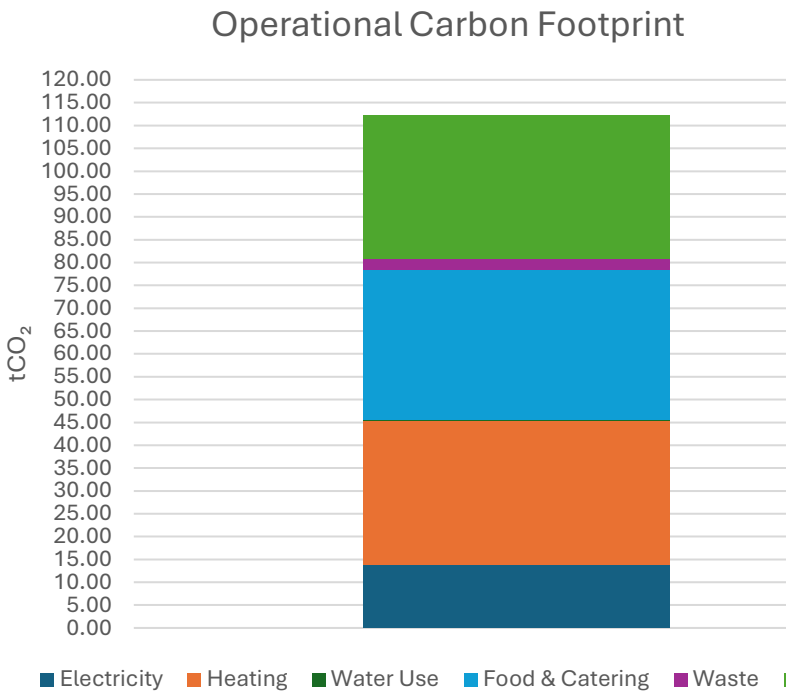
An assumption has been made that "non-vegetarian pupils" chose a meat option four days a week, therefore showing a worst-case scenario.

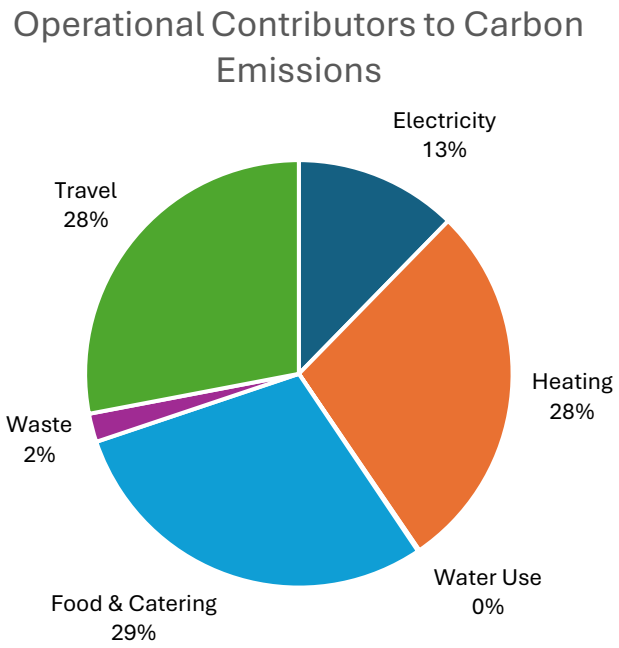


Carbon Footprint

As of July 2025, the carbon footprint for St Anthony's Catholic Primary School is estimated to be:

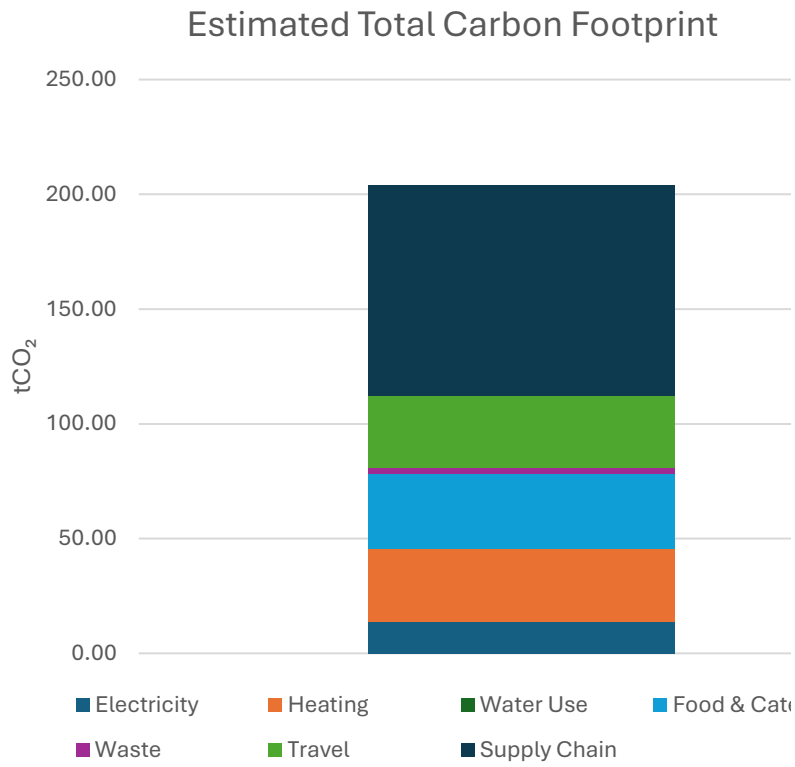
Scope 1 & 2 Only (Operational)

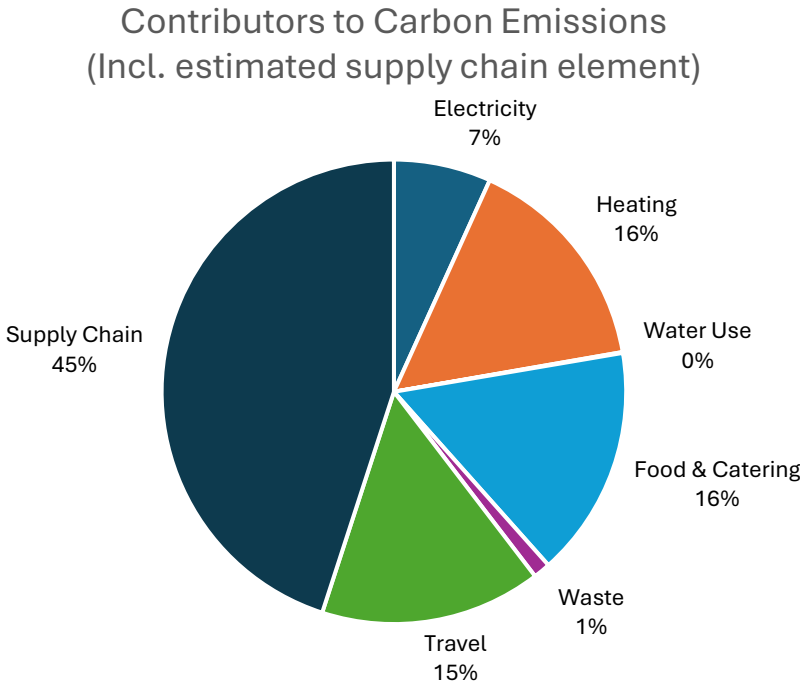


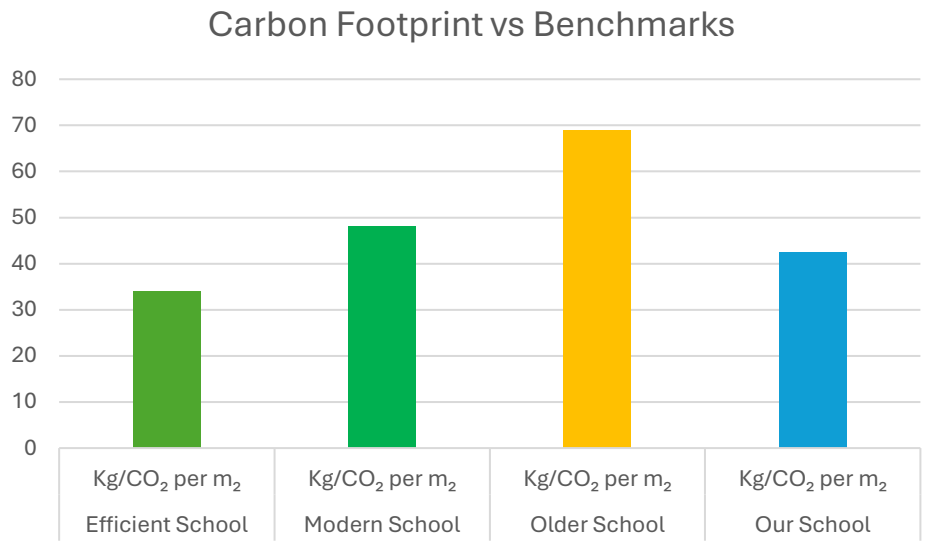


Estimate Total Carbon Footprint

(including average of 45% supply chain contribution)







When comparing St Anthony's to benchmarked schools it is evident that, although the school's carbon footprint is large, using the metric Kg/CO_2 per m_2, it is performing well. The school has a high number of pupils and a large site.

Existing Climate Action Initiatives

The school has **solar panels** installed although the benefit of these is yet to be established as monitoring data is not currently available. Some progress has been made through the **partial installation of LED lighting and light sensors**, which help improve energy efficiency and reduce electricity consumption. These upgrades represent a positive step forward, but there remains significant scope for further improvement. Air conditioning services some areas of the school and further investigation would help identify its efficiency. Future investment in **renewable energy infrastructure**, particularly modern heating solutions, could deliver substantial environmental and financial benefits by reducing the gas consumption. Exploring these options in collaboration with the Diocese would support the school's long-term sustainability goals.

Pupil & Community Engagement

The school actively engages pupils in **biodiversity and sustainability education** through a range of outdoor learning opportunities. It benefits from having a **field**, **a garden area** for planting, and **dedicated outdoor teaching spaces**, which support hands-on experiences with nature. Pupils take part in biodiversity activities such as maintaining a **vegetable patch**, exploring a **bug hotel**, and participating in **forest school sessions**, which include habitats for minibeasts and bees. These initiatives encourage **practical learning, environmental awareness, and a strong connection to the natural world**.

St Anthony's has a **school council** and **eco-council** which positively enforces the pupil's impact on school activities, demonstrating to them that they can make change happen. A **Parent's Association** is also active, providing a great support to the school and will enable many initiatives to take place.

Through the surveys to staff and parents a variety of practical ideas to help reduce the school's carbon footprint. Teachers suggested practical ways to further reduce the school's carbon footprint, including **cutting down on printing and photocopying**, **avoiding unnecessary laminating**, **encouraging pupils to write directly into their books, switching off lights, and appointing monitors** to support these efforts.

Suggestions from parents focused on promoting active and sustainable lifestyles, including introducing more cycling routes, walking buses, and a school bus. Other ideas included daily morning exercise, new sports opportunities, and music lessons to support pupils' health and wellbeing.

When asked if they have an interest in playing a key role in the school's sustainability initiatives, **one staff member indicated they are already involved**, whilst just about everyone else **expressed openness to participating**, responding with "yes" or "maybe". Importantly, **all staff surveyed said that protecting the environment is personally important to them**, with the majority rating it as **"very important"** and the remainder as **"relatively important."** This strong personal commitment provides a solid foundation for expanding sustainability efforts across the school community. Twelve parents indicated that they would be happy to support the school with sustainable initiatives.

Target Areas

A key sustainability priority identified by the school is **promoting sustainability within the curriculum**, which is seen as a significant opportunity to engage the staff and pupils and changing the mindset of the school population. This leads to significant change in multiple areas.

Climate Action Plan

The Climate Action Plan issued alongside this baseline report has been developed as a five-year plan, focusing on immediate priorities and achievable quick wins, while also embedding climate education across the school community in the earlier years. It sets out clear actions to raise awareness, reduce environmental impact, and engage pupils, staff, and families in meaningful change. The plan will be regularly monitored to track progress, with a commitment to continuous improvement. Formal annual reviews will be conducted to assess outcomes, update data, and establish objectives for the following rolling year, ensuring the plan remains responsive and effective over time.

Note that additional actions have been provided in Pupil and Site Manager audit checklists to enable them to initiate activities and therefore take some ownership.

See Separate Climate Action Plan Document.

Conclusion

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School demonstrates a strong commitment to sustainability, with efficient energy use, particularly in electricity and gas consumption, and a commendable approach to water usage. The school's waste management practices show room for improvement, particularly in reducing single-use plastics and increasing recycling rates. Transport emissions are relatively low, thanks to high walking rates among pupils, though there is potential to further encourage sustainable travel options.

The school actively engages pupils and the community in sustainability initiatives, fostering a culture of environmental responsibility. Moving forward, the school will aim to enhance its energy monitoring capabilities, review possible additional investment in renewable energy infrastructure, and integrate sustainability more deeply into the curriculum. The Climate Action Plan will guide these efforts, ensuring continuous improvement and meaningful progress towards a greener future.

Overall, St Anthony's Catholic Primary School is well-positioned to make significant strides in its sustainability journey, with a clear vision and actionable goals to achieve a more sustainable and environmentally friendly future.