

SUSTAINABLE LEARNING

IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE AND REDUCING UTILITY COSTS

Around £30,000,000 is lost from schools every year as a result of inefficient energy and water use. These are resources that could be used to support other school activities. BRE's Sustainable Learning programme, launched in 2006, helps schools take control of their energy and water use and provides a national framework for accreditation which is backed by DfES.

ABOUT SUSTAINABLE LEARNING

Using a structured, step by step approach the programme asks participating schools to carry out a number of different tasks, which help them gradually take control of their energy and water use. This in turn leads to further benefits such as:

- Reduced utility costs, which means more funds for other school activities
- Improved internal environments which enhances pupil and staff comfort
- Reduced maintenance and equipment replacement costs
- Real experiences which can bring learning to life
- Behavioural change and increased participation and communication across all school users
- Improved understanding of citizenship and stewardship of finite resources.

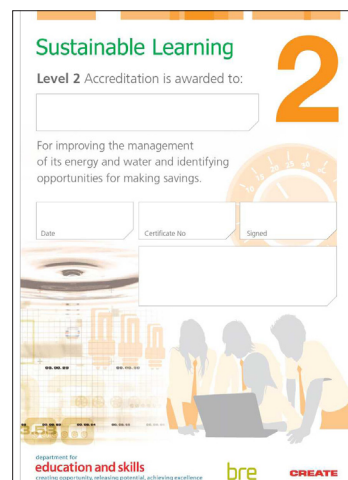
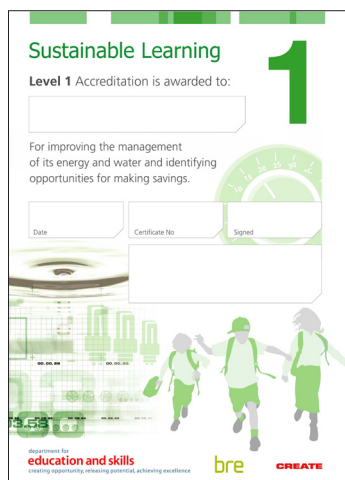
Schools are actively encouraged to use their own buildings and their actual energy and water consumption as learning tools and with a dedicated team, a school can usually meet all the requirements for a Level 1 certificate within a term.

Programme managers from BRE are on hand to provide advice and support to participating schools via a dedicated helpline (0870 1 28 28 20) and email service (schools@bre.co.uk). Schools and Local Authorities can register with the scheme by visiting the website (www.sustainablelearning.info) and completing a simple online registration.

SUSTAINABLE LEARNING AND THE EU ENERGY PERFORMANCE OF BUILDINGS DIRECTIVE

The programme will be the only method available for schools in England to obtain EU compliant Operational Energy Performance Rating. These certificates will sit alongside the existing energy management certificates allowing schools who register and receive their 'Energy Performance Rating' to take part in a programme of activities that can help the school to improve their rating over time.

These certificates are not yet available, but all registered schools will be able to download them as soon as they do become available from their individual homepage on the site.



CASE STUDY – PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL KETTERING

Park Junior in Kettering has recently been awarded Level 3 (the highest level of achievement under the programme) certification. With an established energy policy and monitoring procedure in place the school were surprised to learn that their electricity use in 2003 was much higher than the norm.

This provided a starting point and focus for their activities. They surveyed the energy awareness amongst staff and pupils and checked their electrical equipment. They set up an E-team which included teachers, support and site staff, pupils and a member of the governors. The diversity of the group reflected the valuable contribution that everyone in school could make to the conservation effort.

By early 2004 a revised energy policy was in place which included energy reduction targets of 10% in electricity use and 5% in gas use to be reached by January 2006. Their first action was to start a switch off campaign for the computers, lights and office equipment in the school. New housekeeping rules were quickly established. 7 day timers were installed to the water cooler and all hot water heaters. Within two years the schools energy use was under control and meeting the reduction targets they had set.

The E-Team has run awareness campaigns and regularly keeps the whole school community involved and informed. They registered with the programme so they could receive credit for all their hard work.

The programme has helped them to identify their savings and they have been able to use these to invest in further energy saving measures including installing thermal curtains in all classrooms and lowering the classroom ceilings to improve comfort for pupils.