

KING EDWARD VI FOUNDATION SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

2026-2031



**KING EDWARD VI
FOUNDATION
BIRMINGHAM**

Educational excellence for our City



**KING EDWARD VI
ACADEMY TRUST
BIRMINGHAM**

Educational excellence for our City

Vision, mission & values

Our aspiration

To make Birmingham the best place to be educated in the UK.

Our vision

To be a leader in transforming lives and futures through educational experience and opportunity, serving Birmingham and influencing beyond.

Our mission

To empower our schools in the heart of the UK to deliver educational excellence, enabling our students, staff and partners to thrive.

Our values



We strive for excellence in all parts of the well-rounded and forward-looking education our schools deliver.

We are distinctive in the high quality of education we provide.



Our schools are accessible and inclusive, providing opportunities for our students and staff to thrive regardless of their background.

We are accessible.



The diversity of our schools is a key strength and we work together to make a difference.

We achieve more together.



We have high aspirations and encourage students and staff to take advantage of the opportunities on offer.

We aim high.



People's wellbeing and growth is at the centre of all we do and we take seriously our environmental responsibilities.

We make a positive contribution to individuals and society.



Our actions are driven by doing the right thing at all times and we take responsibility for them.

We are open and honest.



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Our history

The King Edward VI Foundation is a diverse family of schools serving Birmingham and influencing beyond. We strive for excellence and through our forward-thinking and inclusive education, we seek to raise aspirations and transform lives.

Our schools are a rare combination of independent schools and academies, both selective and comprehensive, which have come together over the centuries since the establishment of King Edward's School, Birmingham in 1552. While the diverse nature of our schools is one of our greatest strengths, all parts of the Foundation share a common purpose and work together to realise our aspiration to make Birmingham the best place to be educated in the UK.

The Foundation comprises the King Edward VI Academy Trust, which hosts six grammar and six comprehensive academies serving some of the most disadvantaged areas of Birmingham, and a sponsoring charity (called The Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham), which operates our two high-performing independent schools drawing students from across the West Midlands and the Foundation Office, which hosts our central services. The pupils and staff in our academies benefit greatly from this association, as indeed do those in the independent schools. It is a partnership based on mutual respect and shared values and one which demonstrates real charitable activity on the part of the independent schools and the historical Foundation behind them.

Our Sustainability Vision

We recognise that our schools have a critical role in addressing climate change, protecting the natural environment, and preparing young people to thrive in a changing world. In alignment with the Department for Education's (DfE) Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy, our vision is to create more sustainable and resilient estate, embed environmental responsibility across our operations, and inspire the next generation of climate-literate citizens.

To achieve this, we will seek to mirror the DfE's 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 our 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 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 our educational settings.



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Our Sustainability Strategy

Introduction

We recognise that the climate crisis is one of the most pressing challenges of our time – one that requires urgent, meaningful, and sustained action across all sectors of society, including education.

Schools are not only places of learning but also significant users of energy, water, transport, and materials. They play a vital role in shaping the values, behaviours, and skills of future generations. In this context, the Foundation has a unique opportunity – and responsibility – to lead by example in embedding environmental sustainability into the heart of its operations, estate management, and educational mission.

Our Sustainability Strategy 2026-2031 sets out our commitment to reducing our environmental impact, improving the resilience and efficiency of our estate, and preparing our pupils to thrive in a changing world. It builds on the priorities set out in the Department for Education's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy (2022), and aligns with our own vision to create safe, inspiring, and future-ready learning environments.

Through this strategy, we aim to:

- Reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption across our schools.
- Improve the environmental performance and resilience of our buildings and grounds.
- Embed sustainability in the curriculum and school culture.
- Empower staff and pupils to take ownership of climate action.
- Ensure sustainability is embedded in decision-making at every level of the Foundation.

This is not a standalone initiative, but a core part of how we will deliver long-term value for our pupils, staff, communities, and the planet. We are committed to working collaboratively with our schools, stakeholders, and local communities to build a more sustainable future – and to ensure that the actions we take today protect opportunities for the generations to come.

Our Sustainability Strategy will cover a five-year period 2026-2031 with the aim of supporting the overall Foundation Strategic Objective 2 (SO2.6) to provide sustainable, comfortable and inspiring environments that support collaboration with the best possible resources at hand. Our Sustainability Strategy will be reviewed regularly in order to remain flexible to the changing needs of the organisation and the complex environment we operate in.

Purpose

Our Sustainability Strategy is to serve as a dedicated and coordinated framework that sits alongside and compliments our broader Estate Strategy – in which Sustainability and Decarbonisation is identified as a key strategic objective. Together, these strategies ensure our estate is not only safe, compliant, and educationally appropriate, but also environmentally responsible and future-ready.

Our Sustainability Strategy reflects our responsibility to lead by example – not only through the design and operation of our buildings, but also through our role in shaping ecological awareness, behaviour, and skills among staff and pupils.

The purpose of this strategy is to:

- Support and reinforce the Estate Strategy's sustainability and decarbonisation objective.
- Embed carbon reduction across our estate.
- Enhance climate resilience and biodiversity.
- Cultivate sustainability as a core cultural value.
- Enable staff and pupils to act as environmental leaders.
- Drive innovation and partnership.

By aligning with both the DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and the Foundation's internal Estate Strategy, our Sustainability Strategy amplifies our collective commitment to sustainable development and educational excellence. It provides the framework for informed decision-making, transparent monitoring, and continuous improvement – ensuring that our estate, our teaching, and our legacy support a sustainable future for our communities.



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Our Sustainability Strategy

The Foundation Estate

King Edward's School was established on 2nd January 1552. In 1883, the governors made their most important move since 1552, opening six more King Edward VI schools: a sister for King Edward's School (KES) – King Edward VI High School for Girls (KEHS) – and five grammar schools, from which our current schools of King Edward VI Aston School, King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys, King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Girls, King Edward VI Five Ways School and King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls date.

In 2011, King Edward VI Sheldon Heath Academy became the first school in more than 100 years to join our Foundation. King Edward VI Handsworth Grammar School for Boys joined in 2017, followed by King Edward VI Handsworth Wood Girls' Academy in 2018. Two years after that, in 2019, they were followed by King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy, and in 2021 by King Edward VI Northfield School for Girls. In 2022, we welcomed King Edward VI Lordwood School for Girls into the Foundation, taking our total to 13 schools, and most recently, we have welcomed King Edward VI King's Norton School for Boys who joined the Foundation in January 2024.

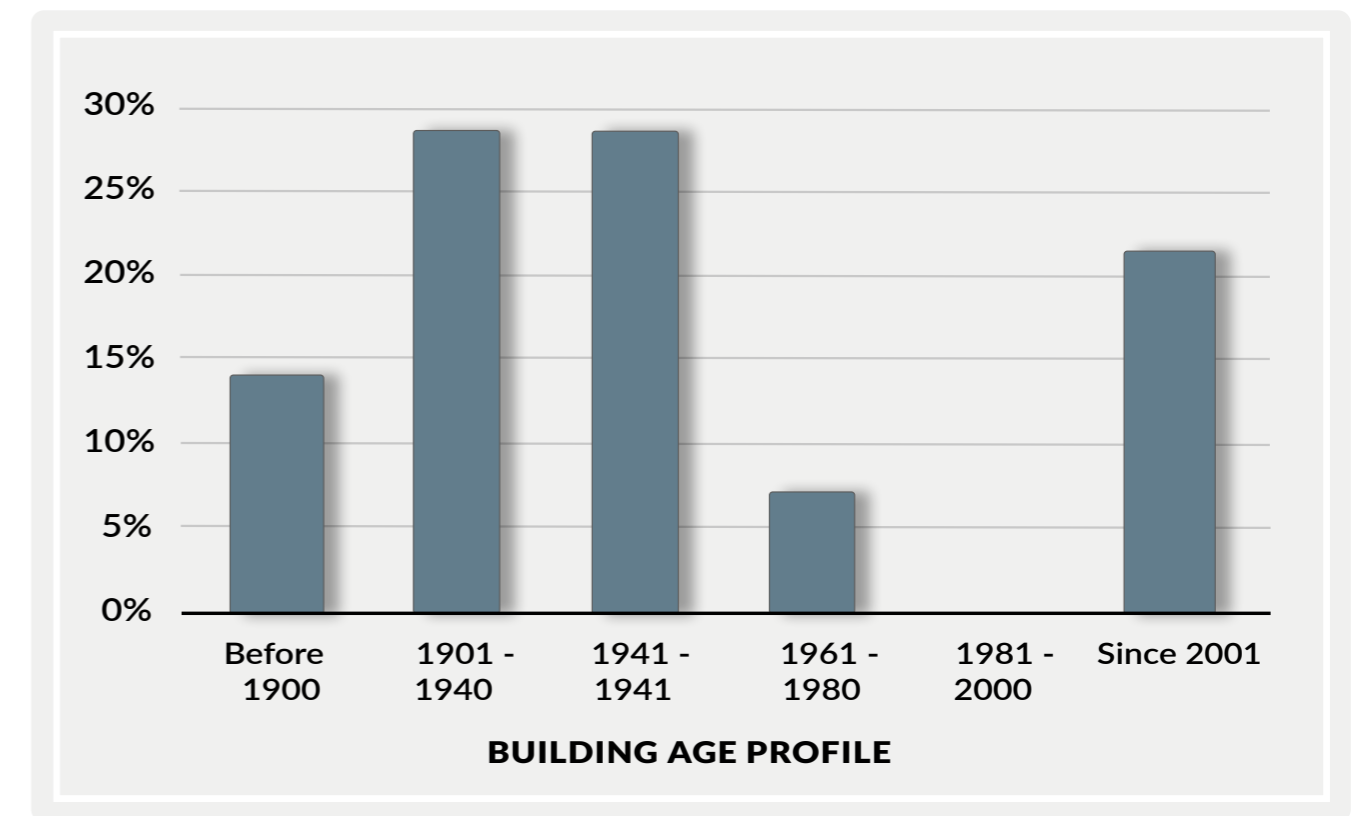
The Foundation Estate now consists of a total of 14 schools spread across Birmingham which consists of two independent schools, six grammar schools, and six comprehensive schools.



Age profile of our buildings

Our estate comprises a diverse portfolio of school buildings reflecting a broad range of architectural styles, construction methods and eras. The age of our buildings span over 160 years, with the oldest constructed in 1862 and the most recent completed in 2024. This varied age profile presents both opportunities and challenges in terms of sustainability, maintenance, energy efficiency, and long-term planning.

Three of our schools were constructed post 2010, one of which is a carbon neutral school whilst the other two schools have been built to meet modern energy efficiency building regulations and should have existing heating infrastructures which are compatible with new carbon neutral heating technologies. A fourth school is part of the Department for Education's School Rebuilding Programme (SRP) with the potential of a brand-new carbon neutral school to be built.



King Edward VI Handsworth Grammar School for Boys and King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls are both listed and with this bring additional challenges when undertaking any retrofitting works to achieve our sustainability objectives. With these schools, there is a greater need for forward planning to obtain the necessary listing consent before any works can be undertaken. In addition to this, there are restrictions which come with the listing status that will impact on what can be done and ultimately, compromises may be needed to balance heritage with sustainability.

The age and construction type of our school buildings are critical factors that will shape the development and delivery of our Sustainability Strategy. By understanding the construction type of each building, this will enable us to target resources efficiently and effectively to achieve the maximum benefit in a tailored and prioritised manner.

Our Sustainability Strategy

Condition of our buildings

The current condition of our school buildings is an important factor to consider in the delivery of the Sustainability Strategy. We have up to date condition surveys for all our schools. These surveys provide an evidence-based understanding of the current state of our buildings and infrastructure, and forms a key element of our strategic planning.

The results of the surveys classify each school into one of four national condition grades, as defined by the Department for Education:

- Grade A – Good: Performing as intended and operating efficiently.
- Grade B – Satisfactory: Performing as intended but showing minor deterioration.
- Grade C – Poor: Exhibiting major defects and/or not operating as intended.
- Grade D – Bad: Life expired and/or at serious risk of imminent failure

Six of our schools have an overall condition grading of 'C' which is defined as 'Poor: Exhibiting major defects and/or not operating as intended'. The poor condition grading often correlates with inefficiencies in energy consumption and will need to be prioritised in order to deliver the Sustainability Strategy.

*Denotes the construction date of the original school building.

**King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy – included on the Department for Education's School Rebuilding Programme (SRP). Scope of the project to be confirmed circa end of 2025.

***King Edward VI Handsworth Wood Girls' Academy – this is newly built school with all-weather pitches and landscaping completed in August 2025 as part of the Department for Education's School Rebuilding Programme (SRP). This school is net zero in operation which means it has been designed to produce as much energy as it consumes over the course of a year.

School	Age of Buildings	Overall Condition
King Edwards School	1936	B
King Edward VI High School for Girls	1940	B
King Edward VI Aston School	1883	C
King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy	1980	C**
King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys	1952	C
King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Girls	1954	C
King Edward VI Five Ways School	1958	B
King Edward VI Handsworth Grammar School for Boys	1862	B
King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls	1911	C
King Edward VI Handsworth Wood Girls' Academy	2024	A***
King Edward VI King's Norton School for Boys	1910	C
King Edward VI Lordswood School for Girls	1958	C
King Edward VI Northfield School for Girls	2020	A
King Edward VI Sheldon Heath Academy	2013	B

Our Sustainability Strategy

SECR reporting data

The following table summarises the consumption and emissions for the last two academic years for the Academy Trust schools.

	2023-24		2024-25*		Increase/ decrease in kWh
	Consumption (kWh)	Emissions (tonnes CO2e)	Consumption (kWh)	Emissions (tonnes CO2e)	
Gas purchased	7,543,568	1,379	6,704,491	1,226	(839,077)
Electricity purchased	4,580,405	948	3,773,224	667	(807,181)
Solar self - consumption	113,426	0	460,486	0	-
Solar export	(39,529)	(8)	(76,598)	(13)	-
Net total	12,197,870	2,319	10,861,603	1,880	(1,646,258)



***For the period 01/09/2024 - 04/08/2025**

It is pleasing to note that across the Academy Trust schools, both gas and electricity consumption have decreased when comparing the 2024-25 academic year to the 2023-24 academic year, demonstrating early progress in our sustainability and energy efficiency efforts.

- Gas consumption has reduced by 11.1%
- Electricity consumption has reduced by 17.6%
- CO2 emissions have reduced by 18.7%
- Self-generated electricity consumption has increased by 405%

Our Sustainability Strategy

What has been done to date

To support the delivery of our Sustainability Strategy, a number of capital investment projects have been undertaken over recent years to contribute to energy efficiency, carbon reduction, and improved building performance across the Foundation.

Re-roofing Projects

We have undertaken a number of re-roofing projects at several schools prioritising those approaching end of life. As part of the projects, the thermal efficiency of the buildings has been improved to meet current UK Building Regulations on roof insulation thereby reducing heat loss.

Window Replacement Projects

As part of the fabric first approach, we have and are investing in replacing inefficient or failing windows at all our schools. Replacement windows have to meet certain performance standards to meet UK Building Regulations Part L thereby providing better insulation and energy efficiency.

LED Lighting Projects

We have invested in LED lighting systems across all our schools with a capital outlay of approx. £1.2m that provides a payback period of approx. 33 months, saving an estimated 255 tCO2 emissions each year (these figures do not include the Independent Schools).

Solar PV Installation Projects

The Foundation is committed to expanding its on-site renewable energy generation, with investment in solar PV systems across eight schools. This is a capital outlay of approx. £1.1m which provides a payback period of approx. 5.3 years and saving an estimated 289tCO2 emissions each year (these figures do not include the Independent Schools).

Boiler Replacement Projects

We have undertaken two boiler replacement and plant room upgrade projects in the past two academic years. Whilst we are committed to long-term heat decarbonisation of our estates, we were unable to secure grant funding to support us with delivering the transition from fossil fuelled based heating to low carbon heating solutions such as air source heat pumps. At present, without external funding to support heat decarbonisation, the capital investment required is cost prohibitive. However, the new gas-fired boilers are modern, high-efficiency systems which reduce gas consumption and emissions.



Our Strategic Objectives

Improve the energy efficiency of our buildings

To adopt a fabric first approach to ensure energy savings are embedded before moving onto more capital and time intensive solutions. Energy efficiency is the foundation of any sustainability strategy therefore it is important to upgrade the building fabric across all our schools first to reduce energy waste, improve long term performance, and set the infrastructure required for the adoption of low carbon technologies in the future.

- Aim to achieve an energy performance operational rating of Grade C or above for all our buildings.

Reduce our reliance on grid supplied electricity

To increase the generation and use of on-site renewable electricity through solar PV installations. Generating our own electricity is key to reducing grid dependence, cutting emissions, and improving energy resilience.

- Aim for self-generated electricity to account for 20% of all consumption across our schools (currently 12.2% of electricity consumed is self-generated).



Reduce our consumption of fossil fuels for heating

Heating is the single largest contributor to our direct (scope 1) emissions. Where feasible and budgets are available, when gas-fired plant and equipment are due for replacement, electrified solutions will be the primary choice.

- Aim for 10% of all our heating and hot water needs to be provided by an electrified solution (currently all our boilers and calorifiers are gas-fired).

Reduce waste and increase recycling

Schools generate a lot of waste with 70% of all education waste made up of food, paper and card. However, while 80% of that waste is recyclable, only 20% of it is recycled. We must lead by example by reducing unnecessary waste, increasing our recycling rates, and providing the next generation with the tools, ideas and logic to make sound decisions with regards to environmental best practices.

Our Sustainability Strategy

Barriers and challenges

While our Sustainability Strategy sets out a clear and ambitious vision, and the Foundation is committed to delivering its sustainability ambitions, the journey towards net zero and greater environmental responsibility is not without obstacles. These must be acknowledged and addressed to ensure the strategy remains realistic, adaptable, and achievable.

1

Age and condition of the estates

- Many buildings are historically constructed with poor insulation, single glazing, or outdated heating systems.
- Buildings with a Grade C condition grading may need essential maintenance before energy efficiency or decarbonisation work can begin.
- Listed buildings present significant restrictions on the types of interventions allowed (e.g. solar panels, external wall insulation, window replacements).

2

Financial constraints and competing priorities

- Sustainability projects, particularly those involving renewable energy or low-carbon heating, require significant capital investment.
- Pressures on budgets from rising operational costs can limit the availability of funding for sustainability initiatives.

3

Technical feasibility and infrastructure limitations

- Some school sites lack the electrical capacity or scale to support electrified solutions.
- Older buildings may be incompatible with low temperature heating systems unless significant upgrades are made to the building fabric and infrastructure first.

4

Organisation capacity and expertise

- Lack of dedicated in-house sustainability expertise.
- Competing priorities at school level can result in a lack of focus or time to embed sustainable practices in daily operations.

5

Behavioural and cultural change

- Adopting sustainable practices requires buy-in from governors, senior leaders, staff, and pupils for it to be successfully embedded.
- Without sustained engagement, behaviour based savings may be temporary or inconsistent.

6

Monitoring and data collection gaps

- There may be a lack of consistent and accurate data on energy use, waste generation and water consumption.
- Without baseline data, it is harder to set realistic targets, track improvements, and demonstrate impact.





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