



Whole Primary School Approach to the 12 pathways of Sustainability

**Themes
SDGS & Books
and International Days**



Autumn 1 (Sept–Oct)

Theme: “Our Shared Earth: Learning to Live Sustainably”

Pathways:

Understanding Sustainability

Environmental Awareness

Focus:

Introduce sustainability and the idea of living in balance with nature

Explore learners’ personal connection to nature and the planet

Begin school-wide sustainability goals

Linked International Days:

Sept 16: International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer

Sept 21: International Day of Peace

Oct 4: World Animal Day

Oct 6: World Habitat Day

Oct 13: International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction

 **SDGs: 4.7, 12, 13, 15**

 **Cross-Curricular Ideas: Literacy (Earth poems), Science (seasons, habitats), Art (Earth murals), Geography (local places)**



Autumn 1 – “Our Shared Earth: Learning to Live Sustainably”

Pathways: Understanding Sustainability & Environmental Awareness

Focus: Balance, curiosity, appreciation of nature and systems

📖 Storybooks :

"We Are All Connected" by Gabi Garcia

(Gentle introduction to interconnectedness of people, animals, and planet)

"Circle" by Jeannie Baker

(A migratory bird's journey highlighting ecological connections)

"Big World, Little Me" by Ruth Hearson (Oxfam)

(Simple global citizenship for early years)

"Here We Are" by Oliver Jeffers

(Guide to life on Earth: humorous, poetic and perfect for big questions)

"One World, One Day" by Barbara Kerley

(Photo book of daily life around the world showing common needs)

Autumn 1 – “Our Shared Earth: Learning to Live Sustainably”

Pathways: Understanding Sustainability & Environmental Awareness

Focus: Our planet, nature, balance, and belonging

📖 **Recommended Storybooks:**

"Somebody Swallowed Stanley" by Sarah Roberts

(Ocean plastics, empathy for nature, environmental impact)

"The Great Kapok Tree" by Lynne Cherry

(Rainforest preservation, interdependence of living things)

"I Love Our Earth" by Bill Martin Jr. and Michael Sampson

(Simple celebration of the planet and its diversity)

"Clean Up!" by Nathan Bryon & Dapo Adeola

(Taking action, beach clean-ups, children as eco-heroes)

"10 Things I Can Do to Help My World" by Melanie Walsh

(Accessible, positive sustainability actions for younger learners)



Autumn 2 (Nov–Dec)

Theme: “Taking Responsibility: Waste Less, Care More”

Pathways:

3. Earth Stewardship

4. Waste Management and the Circular Economy

Focus:

Learners as stewards of their environment

Reducing, reusing, and recycling in school and at home

Promote creative solutions to everyday waste

Linked International Days:

Nov 5–11: UK National Recycling Week (dates vary)

Nov 20: World Children’s Day

Dec 5: World Soil Day

Dec 11: International Mountain Day

 **SDGs: 12, 13, 15, 17**

 **Cross-Curricular Ideas: Technologies (recycled designs), Science (materials), Literacy (instructional writing for change), Citizenship (roles and rights)**





Autumn 2 – “Taking Responsibility: Waste Less, Care More”

Pathways: Earth Stewardship & Waste Management

Focus: Action, change-making, empathy through stewardship and circular habits



Storybooks

"The Last Tree" by Emily Haworth-Booth

(A powerful parable about consumption, loss, and renewal)

"A Planet Full of Plastic" by Neal Layton

(Child-friendly facts and hopeful solutions for plastic pollution)

"Not for Me, Please!" by Maria Godsey

(A family's journey to cut waste – told by a child's voice)

"A Handful of Buttons" by Carmen Parets Luque

(Reusing and diversity – a subtle picture book on family types and reusing)

"Jack and the Beanstalk: A Waste of a Tale" by Andy Seed (The Fairytale Truth)

(Funny fractured fairy tale that explores wasteful habits and overconsumption)

Autumn 2 – “Taking Responsibility: Waste Less, Care More”

Pathways: Earth Stewardship & Waste Management

Focus: Recycling, reducing waste, taking responsibility



Recommended Storybooks:

"Michael Recycle" by Ellie Bethel

(A superhero who teaches towns to clean up and recycle)

"Why Should I Recycle?" by Jen Green

(Explains recycling through a school recycling initiative)

"Litterbug Doug" by Ellie Bethel

(Humorous tale about littering and changing behaviours)

"The Mess That We Made" by Michelle Lord

(Cumulative rhyming text about the effects of waste on oceans)

"Rocket Says Clean Up!" by Nathan Bryon

(Bold child-led action and cultural representation)



Spring 1 (Jan–Feb)

Theme: “Saving Resources: Every Drop and Watt Counts”

Pathways:

5. Energy Conservation

6. Water Conservation and Management

Focus:

Understand natural resource use and scarcity

Explore sustainable choices to conserve energy and water

Begin a school energy or water-saving challenge

Linked International Days:

Jan 26: International Environmental Education Day

Feb 2: World Wetlands Day

Feb 11: International Day of Women and Girls in Science

 **SDGs: 6, 7, 12, 13**

 **Cross-Curricular Ideas: Numeracy (audits and charts), Science (states of matter, water cycles), H&WB (personal hygiene and water)**



Spring 1 – “Saving Resources: Every Drop and Watt Counts”

Pathways: Energy Conservation & Water Conservation

Focus: Invisible resources and tangible actions

 Storybooks

"Energy Makes Things Happen" by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

(Basic STEM-friendly look at types of energy)

"The Drop in My Drink" by Meredith Hooper

(Water's ancient journey told through science and wonder)

"Wangari's Trees of Peace" by Jeanette Winter

(Water, soil, and resource restoration through women-led action in Kenya)

"One Well: The Story of Water on Earth" by Rochelle Strauss

(A more detailed look at how all water is shared – ideal for KS2)*

"Green Energy" by Izzi Howell (Young Citizens Series)

(Engaging non-fiction picture book with illustrations and real-world solutions)

Spring 1 – “Saving Resources: Every Drop and Watt Counts”

Pathways: Energy Conservation & Water Conservation

Focus: Water and energy use, conservation, eco-solutions

 **Recommended Storybooks:**

"Why Should I Save Energy?" by Jen Green

(Simple exploration of energy use and sustainable habits)

"A Cool Drink of Water" by Barbara Kerley

(Global photos and short text about how people access water)

"All the Water in the World" by George Ella Lyon

(Poetic take on the water cycle and why water matters)

"Energy Island" by Allan Drummond

(True story of a Danish island that switched to renewables)

"The Water Princess" by Susan Verde & Georgie Badiel

(Inspired by a true story about access to clean water in Africa)



Spring 2 (Feb–March)

Theme: “Feeding the Future: Growing and Farming Sustainably”

Pathways:

7. Food, Agriculture, and Aquaculture

8. Climate Change and Adaptation

Focus:

Connect food systems to global and local sustainability

Learn about farming methods and climate-smart agriculture

Explore how people and nature adapt to climate challenges

Linked International Days:

March 3: World Wildlife Day

March 21: International Day of Forests

March 22: World Water Day

March 23: World Meteorological Day

 **SDGs: 2, 12, 13, 15**

 **Cross-Curricular Ideas: Science (plant growth), Geography (climate zones), Literacy (food stories), Technologies (garden design)**





🌱 Spring 2 – “Feeding the Future: Growing and Farming Sustainably”
Pathways: Food, Agriculture and Aquaculture & Climate Change and Adaptation
Focus: Equitable food, traditional knowledge, farming impacts

📖 Storybooks

"Right This Very Minute" by Lisl H. Detlefsen
(A farm-to-table journey that celebrates how food is produced)
"Anywhere Farm" by Phyllis Root
(Inclusive story showing you can grow food anywhere—even in a tin can)
"Plant the Tiny Seed" by Christie Matheson
(Interactive picture book for EY/KS1 about planting, patience, and care)
"Our World Out of Balance" by Andrea Minoglio
(Climate-focused, visual non-fiction for older KS2 learners)
"Chidi Only Likes Blue" by Ifeoma Onyefulu
(Nigerian setting; useful for connecting food, culture, and identity)

🌱 Spring 2 – “Feeding the Future: Growing and Farming Sustainably”
Pathways: Food, Agriculture & Climate Change and Adaptation
Focus: Sustainable food, farming, growing, climate care

📖 Recommended Storybooks:

"Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table" by Jacqueline Briggs Martin
(Urban farming and community growing projects)
"Luna Loves Gardening" by Joseph Coelho
(Planting, food, joy of growing with family)
"What's for Lunch?" by Claire Llewellyn
(Where food comes from globally)
"Bee and Me" by Alison Jay
(Pollination, food webs, and urban nature)
"One World" by Michael Foreman
(Climate change and environmental interconnection through rockpool play)



Summer 1 (April–May)

Theme: “Designing Greener Places to Live”

Pathways:

9. Urban Transport and Urban Development

10. Global Citizenship and Responsibility

Focus:

Reimagine cities and towns for sustainability

Promote inclusion, fairness, and responsibility at local and global levels

Use learner voice to suggest positive change

Linked International Days:

April 22: Earth Day

May 15: International Day of Families

May 22: International Day for Biological Diversity

🔗 SDGs: 10, 11, 13, 16, 17

📚 Cross-Curricular Ideas: Geography (urban/rural differences), Art/DT (design a green city), Citizenship (rights and responsibilities), Literacy (letters to local council)



Summer 1 – “Designing Greener Places to Live”

Pathways: Urban Transport and Development & Global Citizenship and Responsibility

Focus: Inclusion, reimagining spaces, sustainable design



Storybooks

"Old Enough to Save the Planet" by Loll Kirby

(Profiles of real children making change around the world)"Tidy" by Emily Gravett

(Humorous tale of a badger who over-cleans the forest – prompts great discussion on balance in design)

"On the Way to School" by Rosemary McCarney

(Real-life journeys from across the globe to highlight transport inequity)

"This Is Our House" by Michael Rosen

(Explores inclusion and access – linked to who has green space and shelter)

"Look Where We Live!" by Scot Ritchie

(A community-focused book introducing local actions for better urban living)

~~🚲~~ Summer 1 – “Designing Greener Places to Live”

Pathways: Urban Transport & Global Citizenship

Focus: Sustainable cities, transport, fairness, equity, inclusion



Recommended Storybooks:

"Greta and the Giants" by Zoë Tucker

(Inspired by Greta Thunberg – standing up for the planet)

"Our Planet: The One Place We All Call Home" by Matt Whyman (BBC Earth)

(Child-friendly intro to global challenges and ecosystems)

"What If We Were All the Same?" by C.M. Harris

(Equality, diversity, and empathy for global citizenship)

"If You Come to Earth" by Sophie Blackall

(A letter from a child to visitors, showing Earth's diversity)

"Ada's Violin" by Susan Hood

(True story of an orchestra made from recycled instruments in Paraguay)



Summer 2 (June–July)

Theme: “Rooted in Nature: Learning, Playing, and Protecting”

Pathways:

11. Outdoor Learning and Connectedness to Nature

12. (Review) Whole-School Sustainability Reflection

Focus:

Deepen learners’ emotional and sensory connection to nature

Celebrate progress across all pathways

Share learning with community through events, art or storytelling

Linked International Days:

June 5: World Environment Day

June 8: World Oceans Day

June 17: World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

Late June: National School Grounds Week

 **SDGs: 3, 4.7, 13, 15**

 **Cross-Curricular Ideas: Outdoor poetry, nature trails, mindfulness, eco art installations, pupil-led conferences**



🌳 Summer 2 – “Rooted in Nature: Learning, Playing, and Protecting”

Pathways: Outdoor Learning & Whole-School Reflection

Focus: Connection to place, celebration, nature’s rhythms



Storybooks

"My Friend Earth" by Patricia MacLachlan

(Celebration of Earth’s cycles and seasons with poetic text and cut-outs)

"The Listening Walk" by Paul Showers

(Simple mindfulness in nature – perfect for younger pupils)

"Wild Child" by Dara McNulty

(Beautifully illustrated nature journal for older KS2 pupils – Irish setting)

"Outside In" by Deborah Underwood

(Explores the ways we are connected to the outdoors—even when indoors)

"The Big Book of the Blue" by Yuval Zommer

(Dive into ocean species with artful pages and factual nuggets)

Summer 2 – “Rooted in Nature: Learning, Playing, and Protecting”

Pathways: Outdoor Learning & Whole-School Sustainability Reflection

Focus: Connection with nature, joy of learning outdoors, celebration



Recommended Storybooks:

"The Lost Words" by Robert Macfarlane & Jackie Morris

(Celebration of nature words and wildlife disappearing from childhood)

"The Rhythm of the Rain" by Grahame Baker-Smith

(Global journey of a single drop of rain – water, connection, beauty)

"The Hike" by Alison Farrell

(Outdoor adventure with friendship, discovery, and nature observation)

"We Are Water Protectors" by Carole Lindstrom

(Inspired by Indigenous water defenders, emotional and lyrical)

"The Curious Garden" by Peter Brown

(Urban rewilding, one child planting a garden that spreads through the city)