

Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School

aided by its passionate pupils in tackling climate change.



Project overview

Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School in Swindon, which is part of the Clifton Diocesan Education Consortium, has received £15,850 in funding as part of the Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF) to install several energy efficient technologies at its premises. The school, which supports approximately 400 students, is committed to the reduction of carbon across its estates and is determined to become an exemplar in sustainability for schools in South West England.

The school building was built in the mid-1950s and had been using gas boilers as its main source of heat generation. The school sought to invest in modern technologies to help it reduce its annual

carbon emissions, as its fluorescent lights and two large gas fired boilers were resulting in high consumption of fossil fuels and expensive energy bills.

Initial plans laid out that the lighting would be replaced and upgraded to LED lighting. Following a feasibility study, it was decided that the aged gas fired boilers and gas fired Domestic Hot Water (DHW) system would be replaced with a Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP) and Solar PV arrays installed on the roof of the two-story block. This project is expected to help the school reduce its annual carbon emissions by over 30 tonnes, helping it become significantly more sustainable whilst also reducing its energy bills.

Estimated savings for Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School

Annual energy savings:



30,067 kWh

Total Grant Value:



£15,850

Annual carbon savings:



30.7 tCO₂e*

*Calculated using Green Book emissions factors for electricity published by the government.

For more information...

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Sustainable initiatives

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is also driving its environmental awareness campaign internally, particularly with its school children, who are involved in numerous environmental activities such as tree planting and recycling. The young volunteers who are passionate about climate change and sustainability, have recently been involved in planting 53 tree orchards on nearby land, including an oak tree.

The children are led by one of the teachers who is championing sustainability, with the children supporting each other in helping to create a more sustainable and environmentally aware culture at the school. Other prospective plans include looking at altering the school dinner menu by using locally sourced ingredients, using an eco-friendly cleaning supplier, and replacing paper towels with low energy hand driers.

The children are also educated about the importance of climate change, and although it is not part of the national curriculum, they are



given lessons and talks on matters involving the environment for an hour every week. The school has submitted a Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bid to the Department for Education which, if successful, will allow it to have an insulated roof installed across the entire premises. This would also provide a sound base for the Solar PV array panels to be installed on the main building.

"I think we all realise we are in the middle of a climate crisis. Here at St Mary's, we are all focused on what we can do to reduce our carbon footprint and do our bit in the fight against rising temperatures. The grant from Salix is amazing and will help us identify the areas where we can improve and reduce our carbon output. We have lots of initiatives running at school including a huge drive on recycling, changing our school menu, cycle/walk to school, LED lighting installation and to top it all, the children and their families have just finished planting a 50-tree orchard."

Danny Hanrahan, Facilities Manager at Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School

The Low Carbon Skills Fund

Up to £3.5million of grant funding was made available for maintained schools and academies to develop heat decarbonisation plans. It was provided under the second phase of the £15million Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund. It was intended to support eligible public bodies by helping to cover the costs for the resources needed to create a "robust and effective" project application.

All successful applications were required to complete their heat decarbonisation plans before 31st March 2022.

Salix Finance is the delivery body managing the fund on behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

For more information about Phase 2 of the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund, including the application window and process, and the funding available, please visit the [Salix Finance website](#).

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