



Climate Action Plan

Baseline Report - October 2025

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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 CO₂ 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 **Richard Hale School** has an operational footprint dominated by **travel (~62%)**, with **electricity** the next largest source and **heating** relatively low for the building size. Water use is efficient at **~2 m³ per student per year**, reflecting strong operational control. Waste recycling currently stands at **~5%**, leaving clear potential for expansion alongside wider sustainability initiatives. Staff behaviours around lights and IT are highly positive, supported by **fantastic staff participation in the sustainability survey**, which reflects genuine interest and motivation to make a difference. Student car use is high, but **69%** of respondents are open to more sustainable travel, and staff commuting emissions total **~23.8 tCO₂ per year**, with potential for further reduction through shared and active modes.

Richard Hale School therefore starts from a **strong foundation of engagement, practical awareness, and achievable next steps**. Recommended priorities are to: accelerate travel-mode shift (active travel, bus, car-share), tighten electricity management and assess green-tariff options, expand recycling initiatives, and formalise student-led engagement through an Eco Council to support curriculum-based action. With these measures, the school can reduce high-impact categories while reinforcing its already positive sustainability culture and leadership across the community.

Mission Statement

Richard Hale School is committed to reducing its environmental impact and aligning with national and local government sustainability policies. Our goal is to create a greener, healthier learning environment while fostering environmental responsibility among pupils, staff, and the wider community. We strive to meet government climate targets by implementing sustainable practices, reducing carbon emissions, and integrating environmental education into our curriculum.

School Profile

School Name: Richard Hale School

School Type: Secondary

Location: Hertford, SG13 8EN

Number of Pupils on Roll: 1221

Number of Staff: 104

Size of Site: 59,000m₂

Indoor Space: 9,660m₂

School Facilities: The school is **approximately 90** years old (main building) and is made up of **12** buildings. The **Academy Trust Board** is responsible for approving funding and any building changes. The school **is** in a conservation area.

Key Stakeholders and their role

Role	Name
Headteacher	Ian Hawkins
Provides strategic leadership and vision; champions whole-school commitment to climate action; ensures alignment with school values and improvement plans.	
Sustainability Lead	Matt Botheras
Coordinates the Climate Action Plan; monitors progress; engages staff, students, and community; integrates sustainability into curriculum and daily school life.	
Senior Leadership Team	
Deputy Headteacher/s Assistant Headteacher/s	Matthew Greenwood & Lucy Gallagher Louise Morris, Kevin Patterson, Phil Camm & David Sykes
Support curriculum integration and staff engagement; lead on pastoral or behaviour elements linked to sustainability (e.g. eco-rewards, school culture).	
Lead specific action areas (e.g. transport, food); supports implementation across key stages or departments; assists in staff training and resource planning.	
School Business Manager	Matt Botheras
Manages funding, procurement, and building projects to align with sustainability goals; embeds climate priorities in finance, contracts, and resource planning.	
Office Manager	Sue Homan
Supports communication with parents and suppliers; assists with data tracking (e.g. energy use); encourages eco-friendly office practices.	
Site Manager	Andy McKay
Oversees building maintenance, energy use, waste, and grounds; implements practical sustainability measures (e.g. recycling, energy efficiency, biodiversity projects).	
Chair of Governors	Harvey Moore
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 student-led projects; role-models sustainable behaviours in the classroom.	

Other school staff

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

Students

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.

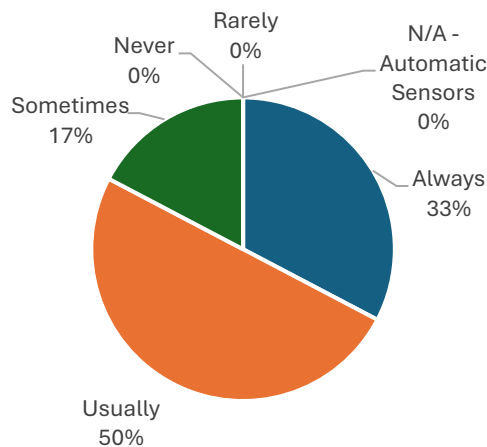
Carbon Footprint Assessment

Energy Use

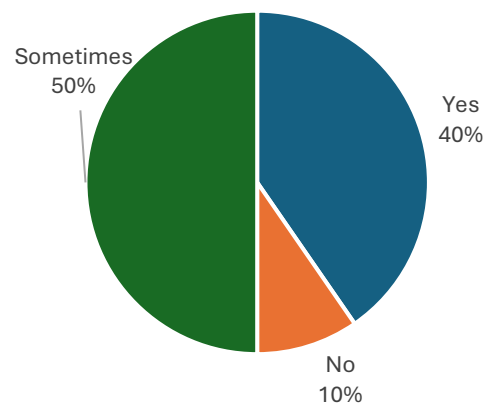
Electricity is supplied by **EDF** and gas by **Crown**. The school is **not** on a green electricity tariff. Annual electricity intensity is **37 kWh/m²**, sitting within the secondary-school benchmark range of **30–40 kWh/m²**. Recorded gas intensity is **5 kWh/m²**, far below the typical **120–150 kWh/m²** benchmark, indicating very low gas demand relative to floor area (likely due to the site’s heating mix, depending mainly on electricity). This is positive from a carbon perspective, though it would be prudent to confirm metering coverage and that all plant serving the estate is captured.

From the Teacher impact survey, classroom behaviours are broadly positive: **33%** report ‘Always’ turning off lights and **50%** ‘Usually’, with only **17%** ‘Sometimes’ and negligible ‘Rarely/Never’. End-of-day device shutdown is robust, with **40%** ‘Yes’ and **50%** ‘Sometimes’. These figures show good habits already in place. Engaging students in these practices would help keep focus on simple activities that will have an impact. 96% of teachers stated that they do not engage with pupils in this way currently.

Do you turn off lights when they are not needed?



Do you turn off computers when they are not in use?



Water Usage

The last full billing period recorded **211 m³** over **1 month**, equivalent to **~2532 m³ per year** when annualised. That is **~2 m³ per student per year**, which is below the broad

benchmark of **3–5 m³ per student**. This is encouraging and suggests existing controls and fixing-leaks practices are effective. Maintaining monthly checks and exception monitoring will help sustain this performance, especially across older buildings where fittings vary.

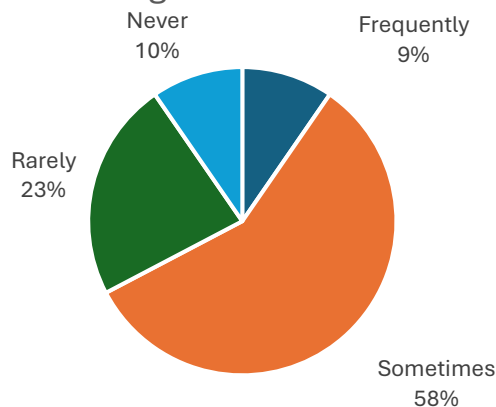
Waste Management

General waste is collected by **East & North Herts Waste**. The reported recycling rate is **5%**, which is low and leaves clear headroom to improve routine segregation of paper/card, mixed recyclables and organics. Establishing food-waste separation in the canteen and staff rooms would reduce residual volumes and support education around resource use. Compost bins onsite would be beneficial in reducing waste and supporting groundwork.

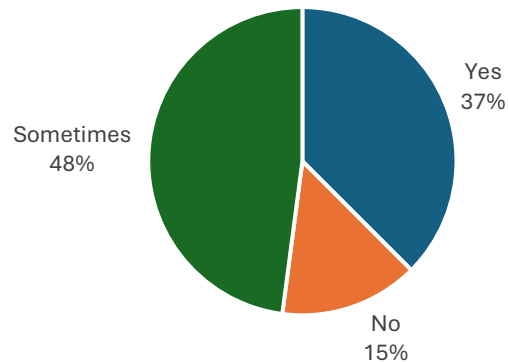
Teacher practices indicate a mixed picture that can be quickly improved. For participation in the school's recycling programme, responses **25%** said **Yes**, they participated, **27% Sometimes**, **12% No**, and **37%** stated they were **unaware** of schemes.

Printing behaviour shows **23% Rarely** print when they could use digital alternatives, **58% Sometimes**, **10% Frequently**, **10% Never**. When asked about using reusable materials in lessons **37%** said they did use with **48% Sometimes** and **15% No**.

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?



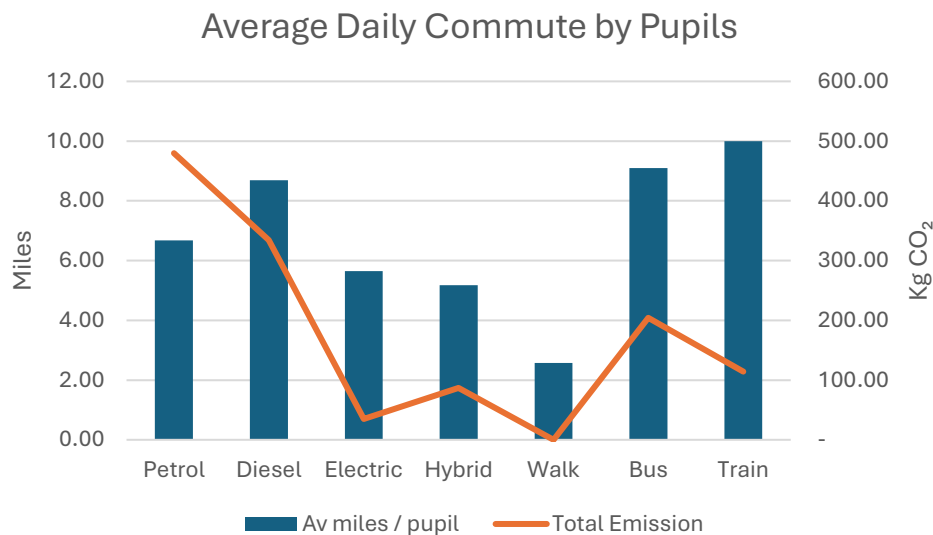
Transport

Travel is the largest contributor to the school's operational carbon footprint. Based on the school's travel profile, **47.4% of students travel by car**, **25.4% walk**, **16.1% travel by train**, and **11.1% travel by bus**. Applying average return-trip distances drawn from the

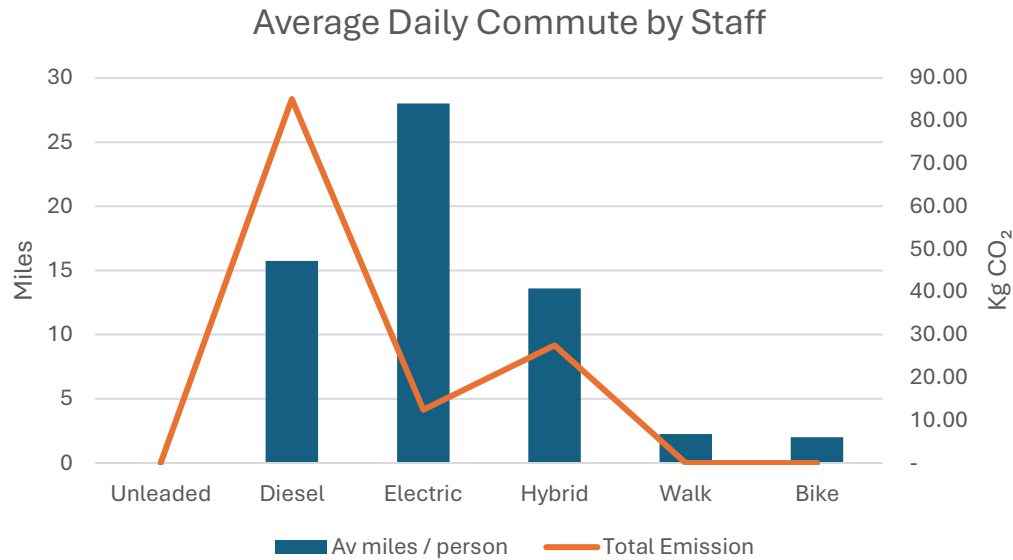
travel survey to these proportions gives a total annual footprint of **238.34 tCO₂**, highlighting the significant impact of student travel patterns.

Car travel is the dominant factor, generating around **75%** of total travel emissions. Bus accounts for **16%**, train for **9%**, and walking contributes **0%**. The relatively high reliance on cars indicates clear opportunities for reduction through safer active-travel routes, enhanced bus usage, and facilitation of informal or structured car-share arrangements.

Feedback from families indicates common barriers such as distance, convenience, and route safety. However, there remains meaningful scope to encourage gradual behaviour shifts, supported by communication, targeted initiatives, and improved information about local travel options.



The Staff commuting survey had a very high response rate at **50%** of staff. Daily emissions sum to **~125 kgCO₂/day**, equating to **~23.8 tCO₂ per year**, with car fuel types the main contributors and walking/cycling emitting zero. Reported average commute distances align with the local catchment, and most staff use the same mode throughout the week, so interventions should focus on enabling periodic swaps (e.g. one or two Walk-to-Work days). A couple of staff car share, which is positive and it would be beneficial to investigate if this could work for others.



Travel contributes **~62%** of the **operational carbon footprint**. That share is high for a school and indicates travel should be a headline focus alongside electricity efficiency.

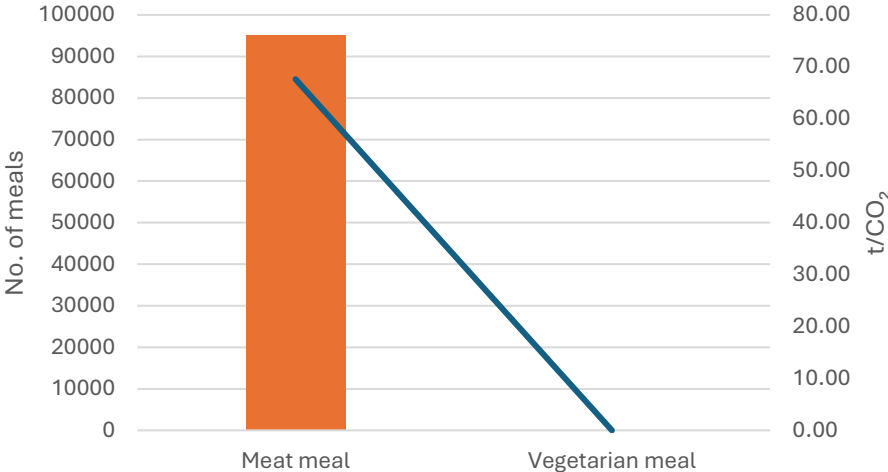
Food

Catering is provided by **Hertfordshire Catering (HCL)**, serving approximately **2,442 meals per week**, which equates to around **95,000 meals per year** during term time. The estimated carbon footprint from food provision is **67.6 tCO₂ per year**, based on current menus where no designated meat-free day is offered. This figure represents the upper end of the expected range for a secondary school of this size.

Introducing even a small menu change would have a meaningful impact. HCL already offers a weekly meat-free day in several of its other schools, and adopting this approach here could reduce food-related emissions by around **7%**, lowering the footprint to approximately **62.7 tCO₂ per year** without affecting menu quality or pupil satisfaction. The change would also provide a valuable opportunity to promote awareness of sustainable food choices among students and link classroom learning with practical environmental action.

An assumption has been made that ‘non-vegetarian students’ chose a meat option five days a week, therefore showing a worst-case scenario.

Annual School Meals



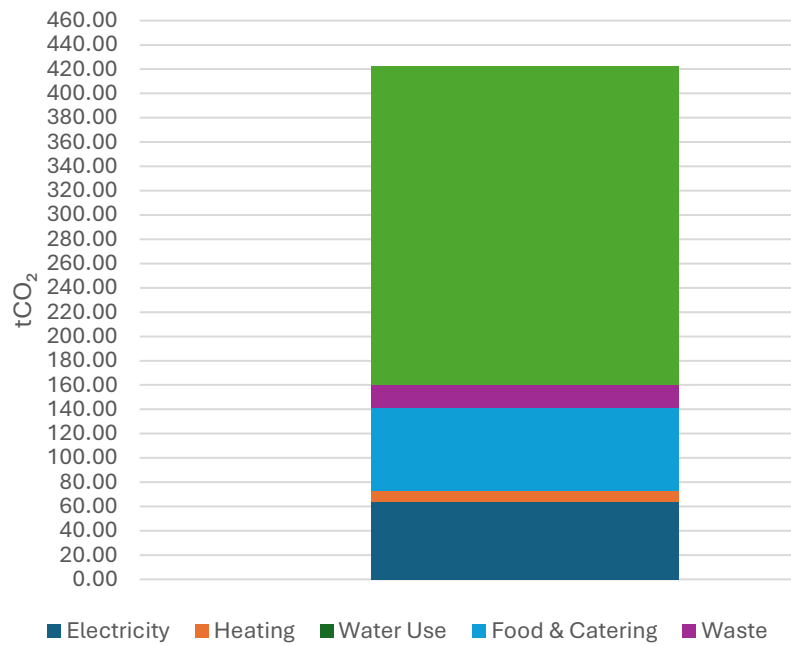
Carbon Footprint

As of July 2025, the carbon footprint for Richard Hale School is estimated to be:

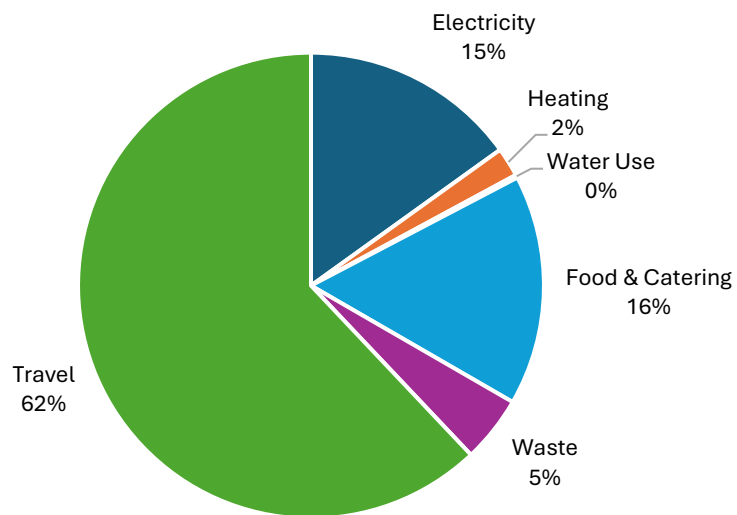
Scope 1 & 2 Only (Operational)



Operational Carbon Footprint



Operational Contributors to Carbon Emissions

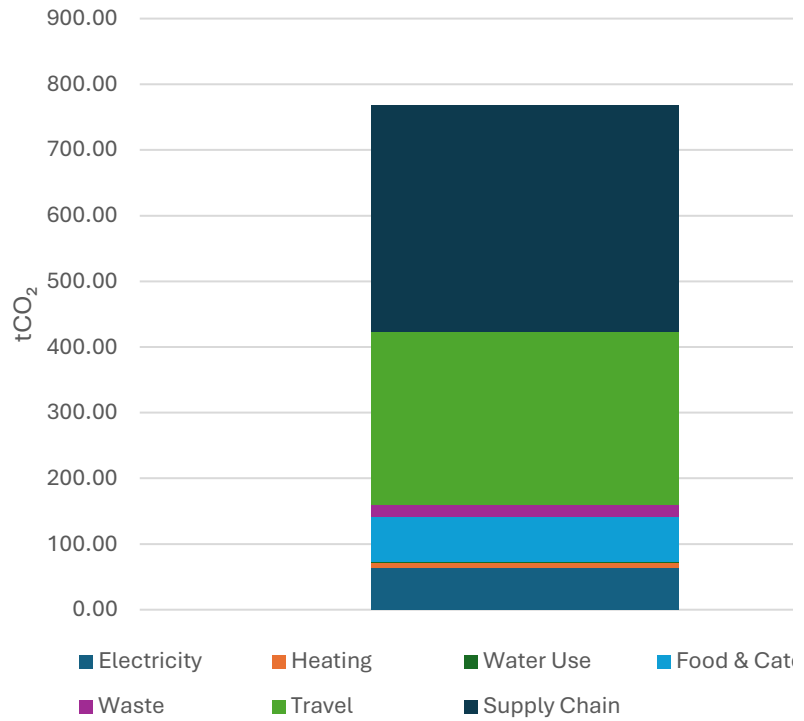


Estimate Total Carbon Footprint

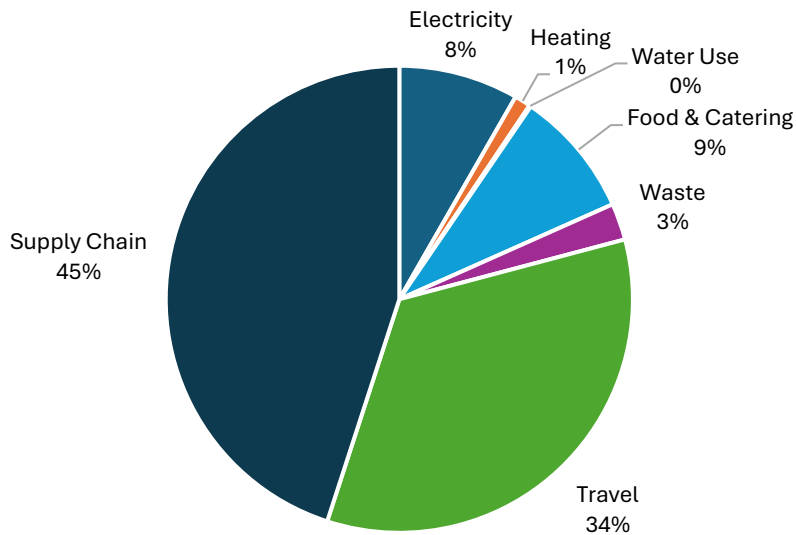
(including average of 45% supply chain contribution)



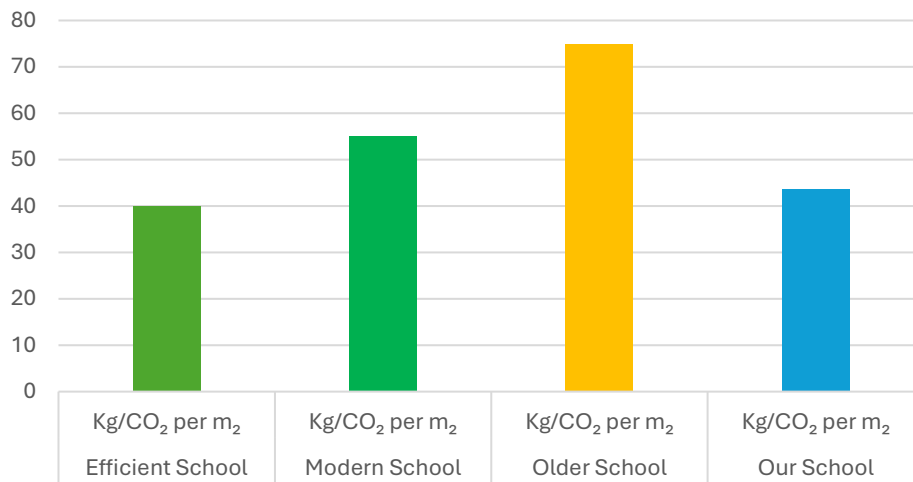
Estimated Total Carbon Footprint



Contributors to Carbon Emissions (Incl. estimated supply chain element)



Carbon Footprint vs Benchmarks



Richard Hale School's profile is dominated by **Travel (~238 tCO₂)** within operations, with **Electricity (~63.7 tCO₂)** the next largest source. **Heating (~8.6 tCO₂)** and **Water (~0.9 tCO₂)** are comparatively small. **Food & Catering (~62.7 tCO₂)** and **Waste (~19.5 tCO₂)** are mid-range operational contributors. Overall, travel and electricity sit above the levels typically targeted by benchmarks, while gas-related emissions are notably low for the building size.

Existing Climate Action Initiatives

The school reports **LED lighting installed** and **no dedicated water-conservation measures** or **energy monitoring tools** at present. Waste-related initiatives exist, but food waste could be improved. From the Teacher impact survey, light-switching and end-of-day IT shutdown behaviours are strong, which supports electricity reduction.

Pupil & Community Engagement

Outdoor learning space is available and the site includes a **field**, both useful assets for sustainability engagement. Groups currently in place include a **School Council** and a **Parents' Association**; an **Eco/Green Council** is not recorded, suggesting a near-term opportunity to create a student-led forum. Perceptions indicate **student engagement is relatively low**, while **parent and governor engagement are stronger**, and **staff**

engagement is moderate. From the Student and Teacher surveys, practical ideas include safer cycle routes, car-share options, clearer recycling systems, and reducing single-use items in classrooms. Many students volunteered ideas and contact details, and the Teacher impact survey shows high personal motivation: **~72%** selected 'Very important' and **~28%** 'Relatively important' when asked how important protecting the environment is. This is a very positive base for co-designing actions with staff and students.

Target Areas

The stated priorities are **Recycling** and **sustainability in the curriculum**. These align with clear opportunities identified in this baseline report. It is noted that any significant changes will need active support and engagement from **the Academy Trust Board**.

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 students, 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 Student and Site Manager audit checklists to enable them to initiate activities and therefore take some ownership.

See Separate Climate Action Plan Document.

Conclusion

Richard Hale School has a clear emissions profile: **travel** is the primary driver of the **operational carbon footprint**, followed by **electricity**. Gas use – and therefore heating emissions – is unusually low for the size of estate, which is positive but merits routine metering checks to ensure completeness.

Water use is efficient at roughly **2 m³ per student per year**, below the **3–5 m³** benchmark, and should be maintained through monthly reviews.

Waste offers quick wins: the current **~5%** recycling rate and enhanced food-waste separation point to straightforward improvements by expanding segregation and improving signage. Staff habits on lighting and IT shutdown are strong, offering a culture to leverage as lighting controls and monitoring are extended.

On travel, the student results show high car use but also **strong willingness (69%)** to consider more sustainable options; staff emissions are modest in absolute terms but amenable to targeted initiatives.

Catering already secures a **~7%** saving through a weekly meat-free day; expanding vegetarian uptake and menu design can deepen that reduction without compromising meal quality. Priority areas therefore are: travel-mode shift (walk/bike/bus and car-share), electricity efficiency and procurement (green tariff exploration), recycling, and curriculum-linked engagement via a student Eco Council. With these steps, the school can reduce high-impact categories while strengthening the culture and visibility of sustainability across the community.