



Vanguard Learning Trust Newsletter

Special edition, March 2023

Environmental sustainability week

Monday 27th February to Friday 3rd March 2023

'Time to remember what the future is worth;

Don't throw it away, protect the earth'

Penny, Year 3, Ryefield Primary School



Lara, Year 7, Ruislip High School

Contents and overview of the week

The contents of this special edition of the newsletter summarises the activities and achievements of Vanguard Learning Trust's first environmental sustainability week, which took place from Monday 27th February 2023 to Friday 3rd March 2023, including our opening ceremony; the activities that happened each day, both Trust-wide ones as well as those organised by the schools; the competition winners of our daily quizzes, and slogan and image competitions, which are showcased in the newsletter; an evaluation of the week based on the overarching objectives; and an acknowledgement of the encouragement we had from a number of individuals as well as the commitment of the staff working party with representatives from all the schools and the Trust's central team.

We are proud of our collective endeavour and are already looking forward to the next one!



How low can we go? challenge

The *how low can we go?* challenge involved students, their families, staff, governors and trustees being encouraged to take part in daily challenges to reduce their carbon footprint ([click here](#)). The challenges were graded low, medium and high with points being awarded at the three different levels. The schools' and central team's points were shared with the community as a 'live' document and the overall scores are shown in Figures 1a and 1b.

Figure 1a: Total points per school and the central team

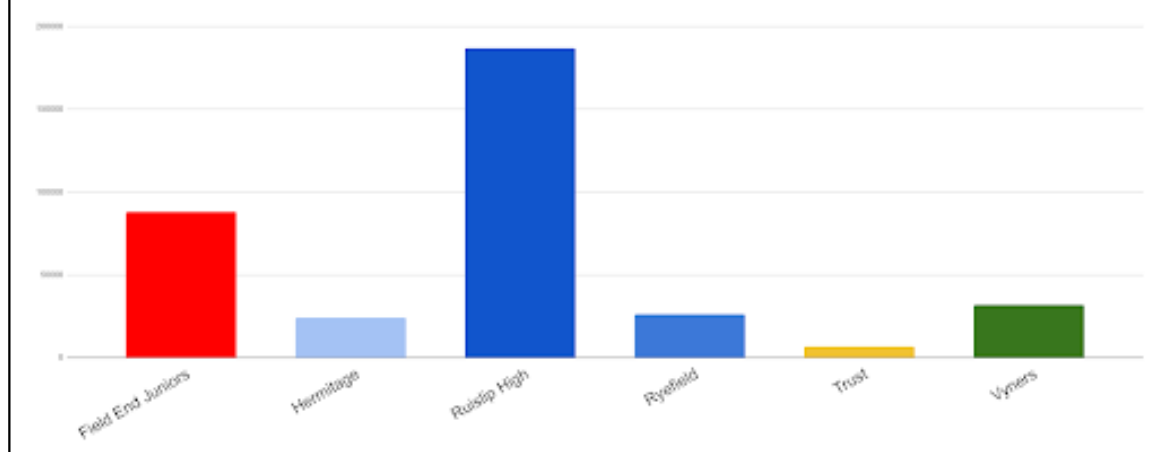


Figure 1b: School and central team averages per person

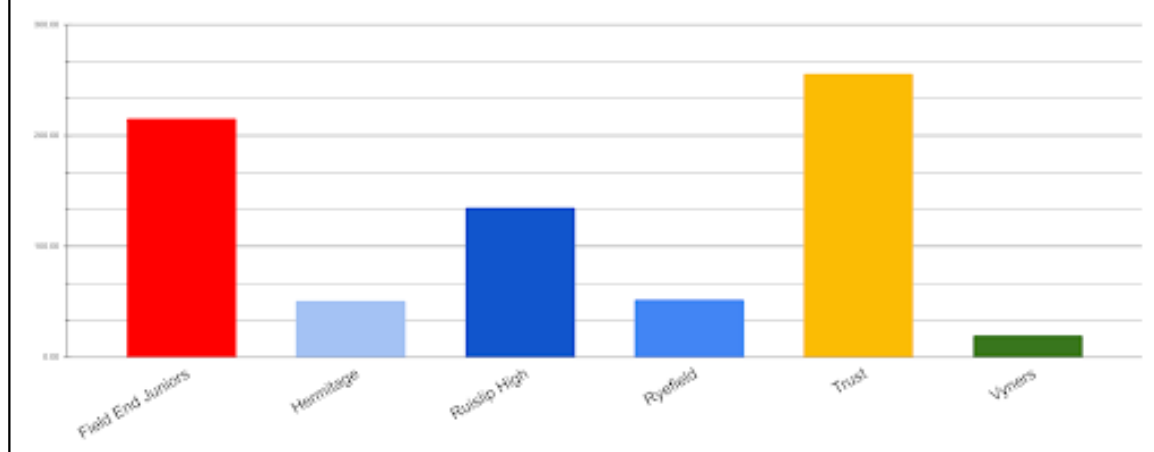


Figure 1a shows the total points awarded over the week with Ruislip High School having the highest score with over 180,000 points followed by Field End Junior School with circa 133,000 points. Figure 1b shows the school and Trust averages per person with the Trust's small central team, together with the contributions of some of the trustees, having the highest mean with circa 250 points per person. In terms of the schools' averages, the highest was Field End Junior School with just over 200 points per person followed by Ruislip High School with circa 130 points per person.

The total overall points were converted into an estimated reduction in the community's carbon footprint. The estimation reflects that over the week the Trust-wide community saved approximately **14,500 kg of CO₂**! This is the equivalent of **667 trees**; these savings are phenomenal and would, if we were able to continue them over the whole year, be equivalent to **34,700 trees** - no mean feat!

Competitions

Three Trust-wide competitions were held:

- daily quizzes
- slogan competition
- image competition

Daily quizzes

These involved participants watching a video, including the one by our keynote speaker, Alex Green, Programme Manager, Ashden Climate Solutions in Action, and answering a quiz with ten multiple choice questions. There were a number of students who got full marks on one or more of the quizzes; they are being awarded a certificate and an environmentally sustainable prize. They are as follows:

- Rachel, Year 8, Vyners School
- Aidan, Year 11, Ruislip High School
- Dexter, Year 7, Ruislip High School
- Hugo, Year 3, Field End Junior School

- James, Year 8, Ruislip High School
- Patrick, Year 6, Field End Junior School
- Yohaán, Year 6, Field End Junior School

Slogan competition

Students were encouraged to enter the slogan competition to capture in words our Trust's commitment to environmental sustainability. The winning slogan is on the front page by Penny in Year 3 at Ryefield Primary School. The runners up were as follows:

Let's make green the new normal

Lara, Year 7, Ruislip High School (winner of image competition)

Go green, breathe clean

Salman, Year 7, Ruislip High School



Competitions

Image competition

Students were encouraged to enter the image competition to capture visually our Trust's commitment to environmental sustainability. The winning image is on the front page by Lara in Year 7 at Ruislip High School. The runner-up entry was by Anastasia, Year 11 at Ruislip High School, and is shown opposite. There were a number of images that were commended which are shown below, as follows:

Image A: Penny, Year 3, Ryefield Primary School

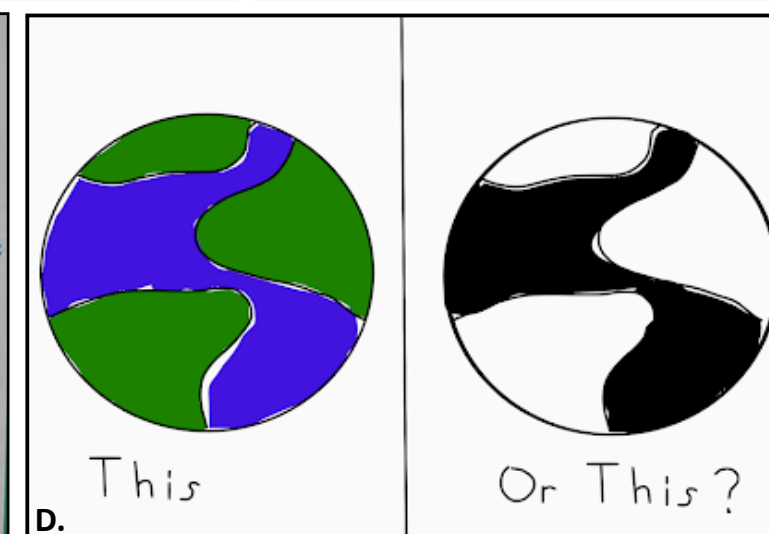
Image B: Benji, Year 8, Vyners School

Image C: Milena, Year 4, Field End Junior School

Image D: Eleftheria, Year 7, Ruislip High School



Runner up, Anastasia, Year 11, Ruislip High School



Opening ceremony

The opening ceremony was held on Monday 27th February 2023 to launch the week. It involved a torch relay between schools with specific students and staff jogging from one school to the next ([click here](#) for route). Each group was warmly welcomed by a reception committee at the next school with the headteacher and the school's group of torch bearers accepting the torch ready for the next leg.

The torch bearers were provided with Vanguard Learning Trust water bottles for the journey and presented with certificates of achievement when they arrived at their destination school. The reception at each school involved the headteacher reading a pledge ([click here](#)) on behalf of the school to commit to the community's participation in the environmental sustainability week. The pledge is to reduce the community's carbon footprint and promote changes in individuals' behaviour in relation to environmentally sustainable practice.

Field End Junior School was a wonderful host in terms of beginning the torch relay and welcoming the Vyners' group of runners as they completed the last leg; the runners were overwhelmed with the support shown to them. Ruislip High School's reception involved the school's local MP, Boris Johnson, who joined the group for a short jog as they left the school.

Jacque Phelan, Headteacher of Field End Junior School, commented: *'Field End Junior School had the honour of opening environmental sustainability week with the first and final leg of the torch relay. It was a wonderful sight to see the playground lined with cheering children as the torch was carried around the cycle track and onto its first stop at Ruislip High School. It took just under three hours for all five legs to be completed and the children were only too delighted to welcome the runners from Vyners School back with the torch. We were really proud to be a part of such an amazing event.'*



Field End's running team



Hermitage's running team



Ruislip High's running team



Ryefield's running team



Vyners' running team

Monday 27th February 2023

As well as the opening ceremony, Monday launched a number of other activities and initiatives. Field End turned their logo green for the week to show support and launched its poster competition for Year 3 students; Ryefield introduced their meat free menu; and Vyners launched its 'How high can you grow?' competition, where students were given seeds and challenged to grow the tallest sunflowers whilst the key stage 3 geography club continued its work on building bird boxes.

In terms of Trust-wide activities, the daily quiz was launched online and the Year 5 and 8 challenge involved Year 8 students in form classes from Ruislip High School attending the session in the EcoHub in the morning and, in the afternoon, Stephanie Stone-Weyl, EcoHub co-ordinator, attended Ryefield for the Year 5 students' session.

Ollie, a Year 5 student at Ryefield, commented: *'The challenge was really fun! We learned a lot about what sustainability is through team and individual games such as deciding which materials were renewable and which were not. We also learned what it means to be eco-friendly by deciding what is good and bad for the environment. I came out of the session really feeling like I learned something new that I will remember forever.'*



Field End's green logo



Vanguard Learning Trust water bottles given to torch relay runners



Field End's students waiting for the final relay team to arrive



Field End's students working on their posters



Vyners' 'How high can you grow?' competition flyer



Ryefield's students taking part in Year 5 challenge

Tuesday 28th February 2023

Tuesday was a very busy day with Field End's Year 3 and 4 students planting sunflower seeds; Hermitage's litter picking with students throughout the school embracing the activity during their free time; and Ruislip High's Year 7 students taking part in the Watford Recycling Arts Project (WRAP), a registered charity specialising in the recycling and repurposing of ethically sourced commercial waste for creative enterprise.

Miss Hill, Curriculum Leader of Art, Craft and Design at Ruislip High School, commented: *'It was lovely to see students understand the potential that WRAP has to offer our community as well as working together to develop their understanding about texture in art.'*

Charna-Jo, Year 7 student at Ruislip High School, commented: *'I really liked that lesson because it was really fun to explore different materials and find new ways to make art.'*

Regarding Trust-wide activities, the second daily quiz was launched online and further Ruislip High and Ryefield sessions happened for the Year 5 and 8 challenge. In addition, the Trust's central team held a book swap and shared items for the staff R&R (reuse and repurpose) platform.

Our EcoHub co-ordinator Stephanie continued facilitating sessions for Year 5 and 8 students to enter the British International Education Association STEM 2023 Rebuild Challenge ([click here](#)). Students learned about what sustainability is and how it is relevant to them; this included looking at different kinds of energy resources that they could consider for their sustainable building designs.

'It was lovely to see the excitement and engagement of the students in the environmental sustainability sessions. They were keen to get involved with all the activities and asked lots of inquisitive questions. The students had a wealth of knowledge to share already; I hope the sessions gave them a chance to expand, apply and use their voices.'

Stephanie Stone-Weyl, EcoHub Co-ordinator,
Ruislip High School



Field End's students planting sunflower seeds



Hermitage's litter picking team



Ruislip High student working on recycling project

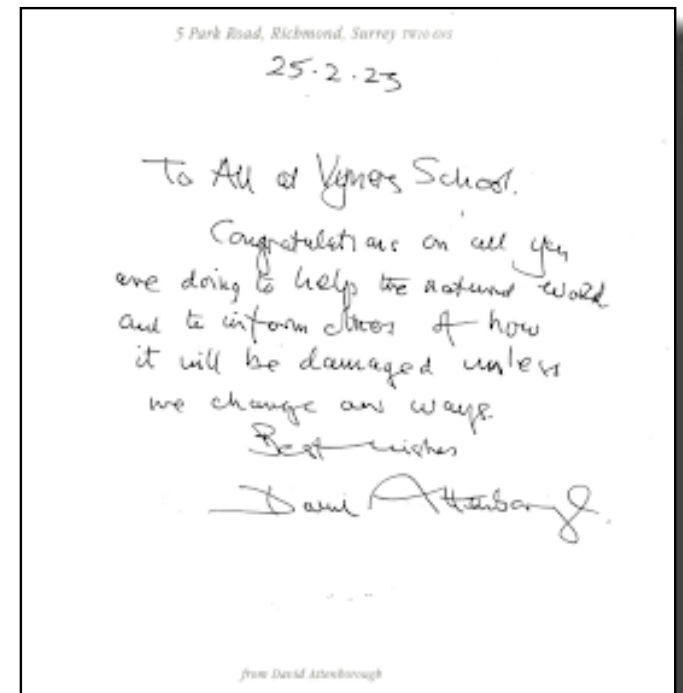
Wednesday 1st March 2023

Wednesday was another action packed day with Field End's pre-loved uniform sale which raised £43; Hermitage's book swap for the whole school with children being encouraged to bring in a book from home that they had read so that they could swap it with a new one, providing a great opportunity to share stories with each other and embed the message that we need to reduce, re-use, recycle; Ryefield's student book swap day with students bringing in a book to swap for two other books with a number of children not only choosing books from themselves but also ones for their siblings to share the joy of reading; and Vyners receiving a very special letter from Sir David Attenborough.

'Prior to the VLT Sustainability Week I wrote a letter to Sir David Attenborough outlining the work the Trust, specifically Vyners School, was doing towards our shared sustainability goals. I asked him to send some words of encouragement to our students regarding our natural world and the importance of individual actions making a big difference. Not expecting him to read, let alone reply to the letter, I was astounded when a handwritten letter, addressed to all at Vyners School, was delivered during the sustainability week. This extra layer of encouragement from a national treasure really boosted the students towards the end of the week, cementing the importance of the work we were doing and how they as individuals really can help save our planet.'

Sally Brown, Associate Assistant Headteacher,
Vyners School

The main Trust-wide activity was students from Field End Junior School visiting the EcoHub at Ruislip High School for their Year 5 and 8 challenge session.



Vyners' letter from Sir David Attenborough



Field End's pre-loved uniform sale



Ryefield's book swap

Thursday 2nd March 2023

On our penultimate day, Field End held a community litter pick collecting eight bags of rubbish; Hermitage organised class pledges involving each class agreeing an individual pledge of a sustainable act that they can commit to which involved all the children signing the pledge; Ruislip High held its book swap for all staff and students bringing in books they have read to share with everyone else; Ryefield had its World Book Day costume swap to promote reuse of clothing; and Vyners held its community, staff and student, litter pick.

'Each class in our school focused on a green initiative. Having the green pledges has helped our classes to stick to our green targets and spread the word amongst their families.'

Ms Varaitch, Head of School, Hermitage Primary School

'We pledged to use less electricity and turn the lights off when necessary. We make sure to turn the lights off when we go to breaktime and we try to get our family to turn off lights when they leave a room.'

Wadan, Year 5 student, Hermitage Primary School



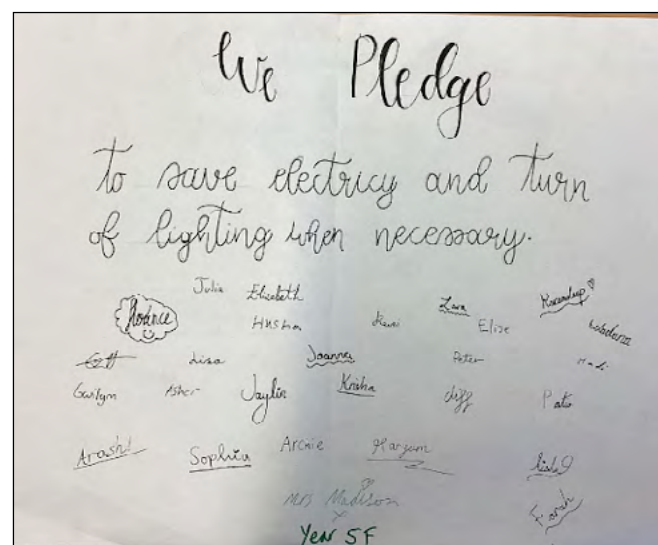
Ruislip High's book swap



Ryefield's costume swap



Field End's students litter picking



Hermitage's class pledge



Vyners' student litter picking

Friday 3rd March 2023

On our last day of the week, Field End students took part in the sustainable book swap as well as wearing sustainable World Book Day costumes; in addition, the sustainability poster competition winners were presented with their certificates in assembly; Ruislip High held a Year 9 community litter pick with the support of the parents' association, leading to lots of bags of litter being collected; in addition, students seeded the wild meadow planting which is being established by the pond area in the EcoHub; Ryefield's early years students collected leftover fruit and vegetables from the morning break to put on their compost heap in the Forest School area; and Vyners had sustainable costumes for World Book Day as well as a book swap and students taking part in wild flowering.

The Trust-wide activities included more of Field End's Year 5 students visiting the EcoHub at Ruislip High School for their Year 5 and 8 challenge session and the Emission Control game, which was hosted at Ryefield, proved to be very popular with students and staff. The game was devised by Ryefield and each school was gifted a board game to take back to their school.

'What a joy to see children from across the Trust joining together to launch our environmental sustainability game. It started in 2021 when the game was devised and it was wonderful having children from across all Trust primary schools playing the game today learning about how to reduce their carbon footprint.'

Ms Mander, Class Teacher, Ryefield Primary School

'I played the game whilst learning about 'dos and don'ts' for reducing our carbon footprint. I learned that vehicles produce an immense amount of CO₂ and we should (most of the time) walk, if it is walking to school (which I always do), walking to the shops, or walking to anywhere.'

Advik, Year 4 student, Hermitage Primary School



Vyners' students taking part in wild flowering



Field End's students in the EcoHub lesson



Hermitage's Emission Control game team



Ruislip High's community litter picking students



Students playing the Emission Control game at Ryefield

Evaluation

The three objectives for the week were as follows:

- to understand how an individual's or an organisation's carbon footprint is measured;
- to consider the importance of reusing items as part of reducing our carbon footprint; and
- to challenge ourselves to reduce our carbon footprint.

As part of our evaluation for the week, we have considered the three objectives with the following initial evaluation:

- In terms of promoting and developing our community's understanding of how a carbon footprint is measured, this was done through the daily quizzes linked to specific videos, including our keynote speakers, as well as the 'Emission Control' game and the 'how low can we go?' challenge. The participation rates were high, particularly for the Trust-wide challenge.
- The importance of reusing items was a strong aspect of the week, in particular the book swap, costume swap and staff reuse and repurpose platform. Whilst the latter encountered some technical issues, it will be revisited and piloted before another launch.
- The challenge to reduce our carbon footprint was a strong feature of the week with high participation rates and an estimated reduction of approximately 14500 kg of CO₂, the equivalent of 667 trees. The intention for future weeks is to have specific daily challenges rather than a list for the whole week.

'The evidence collected reflects how successful the week was in terms of the three main objectives, especially the importance of changing our habits in order to reduce our carbon footprint. Whilst these changes can be challenging, it shows what we can achieve as a Trust-wide community when we are united in a collective endeavour.'

Dr Martina Lecky, Chief Executive Officer, Vanguard Learning Trust

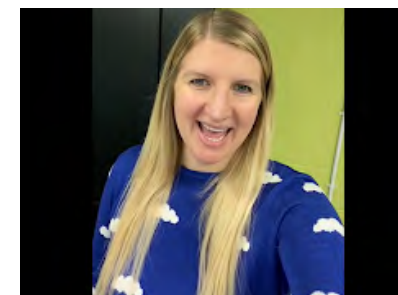


Messages of encouragement

The Trust received a number of messages of encouragement, including the aforementioned letter to Vyners from Sir David Attenborough, which helped to promote the week, as well as build momentum during the preceding weeks.

'I would like to congratulate Vanguard Learning Trust for organising its first environmental sustainability week. I was delighted to be involved in 2021 with the dragons' den project, which supported students' projects in all five schools, with several being involved in this themed week, including Ruislip High's ecohub and Ryefield's 'emission control' game. I am sure it will be a huge success and I look forward to hearing about the activities including the reduction of the Trust's carbon footprint through the 'how low can we go?' challenge.'

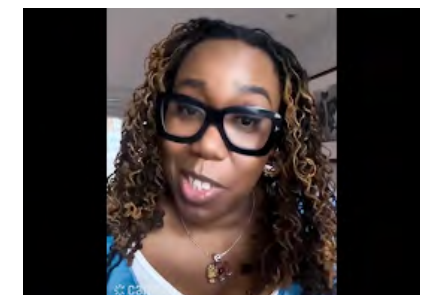
Lord John Randall of Uxbridge



Rebecca Adlington, Olympic swimmer
[Click here](#) to watch the video



Ore Aduba, television and radio presenter
[Click here](#) to watch the video



Chizzy Akudolu, actress, Strictly Come Dancing
[Click here](#) to watch the video



Mike Bushell, BBC presenter
[Click here](#) to watch the video



Sean Gunn, actor
[Click here](#) to watch the video



Adam Hart, biologist, broadcaster and author
[Click here](#) to watch the video



Rt Hon Boris Johnson, MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip
[Click here](#) to watch the video



Kevin McNally, actor
[Click here](#) to watch the video



James Stander, Sustainable Advantage
[Click here](#) to watch the video



Vanguard Learning Trust

With thanks to the environmental sustainability working party:

Justin Barrett, Ruislip High School
Sally Brown, Vyners School
Bridget Colgan, Hermitage Primary School
Sandra Dickinson, Field End Junior School
Joe Doyle, Hermitage Primary School
Richard Gould, Ruislip High School
Bernice Hughes, Ryefield Primary School
Jackie Jones, Field End Junior School
Emma Jordan, Vanguard Learning Trust
Martina Lecky, Vanguard Learning Trust
Julie Mander, Ryefield Primary School
Stephanie Stone-Weyl, Ruislip High School
Anita Tree, Vanguard Learning Trust
Karen Williams, Vyners School

In addition, thanks to Saminder Babra, Vyners School, for making the Emission Control board games, and Alex Green, Programme Manager, Ashden Climate Solutions in Action, for recording our keynote presentation specifically focused on the three objectives for the week ([click here](#)).

Supporting the event:



Trust schools:

