Teaching the Future

Research with teachers in England on climate education and the curriculum

teachthefuture.uk
Secondary teachers surveyed say climate change, the ecological crisis and the challenges posed by these issues are not embedded in their school's curriculum, in their subject, in a meaningful and relevant way

Base: 4690
Respondents say aspects of climate education are embedded in subject curricula in a meaningful and relevant way...

33% Climate change
21% Ecological crisis
21% Challenges for humanity stemming from either / both these issues

Base: 4690
To support the embedding of climate change within the curriculum for their subject respondents say they need…

- **43%** Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content
- **39%** Opportunities to collaborate with different subjects to develop the curriculum

To support the embedding of the ecological crisis within the curriculum for their subject respondents say they need…

- **39%** Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content
- **33%** Opportunities to collaborate with different subjects to develop the curriculum

Base: 4690
Climate and the curriculum
About the survey

Conducted by Teacher Tapp on 11\textsuperscript{th} January 2022.

4690 secondary education teachers from across England were surveyed.

Data has been weighted to reflect the national population of teachers in England.
How embedded is climate education?
Is climate education embedded in the secondary curriculum?

Q. Which of the following are embedded in your school’s curriculum, in your subject, in a meaningful and relevant way?

- Climate change: 33%
- Ecological crisis (i.e., biodiversity decline and the collapse of systems in nature that support life on our planet): 21%
- Challenges for humanity that result from either or both of the climate emergency and ecological crisis: 21%
- None of the above: 11%
- Not relevant/cannot answer: 51%

Base: 4690

51% say no elements of climate education are embedded into the curriculum for their subject in a meaningful and relevant way.
Where is **climate change** embedded in a meaningful and relevant way?

**in core subjects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**in other subjects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious studies</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; D&amp;T</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where is the **ecological crisis** embedded in a meaningful and relevant way?

### In core subjects

- **English**: 7%
- **Maths**: 3%
- **Science**: 49%

### In other subjects

- **Geography**: 64%
- **History**: 13%
- **Religious studies**: 17%
- **Languages**: 13%
- **Arts & D&T**: 12%
Where are challenges caused by climate change and/or the ecological crisis embedded in a meaningful and relevant way?

in core subjects

- **12%** English
- **4%** Maths
- **34%** Science

in other subjects

- **69%** Geography
- **18%** History
- **30%** Religious studies
- **16%** Languages
- **13%** Arts & D&T
Where are the gaps in climate education?
[respondents report that no aspects of climate change, the ecological crisis and challenges these issues present for humanity are embedded in a meaningful and relevant way]

in core subjects

- English: 63%
- Maths: 75%
- Science: 24%

in other subjects

- Geography: 6%
- History: 54%
- Religious studies: 40%
- Languages: 56%
- Arts & D&T: 60%
Supporting the embedding of climate education
What would most support you to embed climate change within the curriculum for your subject at your school? [top 5]

1. Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content - 43%
2. Collaborating with different subjects to develop the curriculum on cross-cutting issues like climate change - 39%
3. Inclusion within the national curriculum for my subject - 31%
4. National curriculum is reframed around care for oneself, others and the environment, now and for future generations - 26%
5. Climate change included in my subject area’s exams - 26%

Commitment from school leaders - 26%
Further evidence on the benefits for pupils of embedding climate change within my subject curriculum - 14%
Ofsted inspecting coverage of climate change - 10%
None of these – these issues aren’t relevant to my subject area - 11%
Don’t know - 12%
Not relevant / cannot answer - 4%
# Top support needs identified for embedding climate change in core subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Maths</th>
<th>Science</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>45%</strong> - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content&lt;br&gt;<strong>40%</strong> - Collaborating with different subjects to develop the curriculum on cross-cutting issues like climate change</td>
<td><strong>39%</strong> - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content&lt;br&gt;<strong>31%</strong> - Collaborating with different subjects to develop the curriculum on cross-cutting issues like climate change</td>
<td><strong>48%</strong> - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content&lt;br&gt;<strong>43%</strong> - Inclusion within the national curriculum for my subject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Top support needs identified for embedding climate change in other subjects

**Geography**
- 60% - Collaborating with different subjects to develop the curriculum on cross-cutting issues like climate change
- 43% - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content

**History**
- 43% - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content
- 39% - Collaborating with different subjects to develop the curriculum on cross-cutting issues like climate change

**Religious studies**
- 48% - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content
- 46% - Collaborating with different subjects to develop the curriculum on cross-cutting issues like climate change

**Languages**
- 41% - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content
- 35% - Collaborating with different subjects to develop the curriculum on cross-cutting issues like climate change

**Arts & D&T**
- 42% - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content
- 41% - Collaborating with different subjects to develop the curriculum on cross-cutting issues like climate change
What would most support you to embed the ecological crisis within the curriculum for your subject at your school? [top 5]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific capacity/time for developing ecological crisis curriculum content</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<td>Collaborating with different subjects to develop the curriculum on cross-cutting issues like the ecological crisis</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td>Inclusion within the national curriculum for my subject</td>
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<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Further evidence on the benefits for pupils of embedding the ecological crisis within my subject curriculum</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ofsted inspecting coverage of the ecological crisis</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these – these issues aren’t relevant to my subject area</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not relevant / cannot answer</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Top support needs identified for embedding the ecological crisis in core subjects

**English**
- 39% - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content
- 34% - Collaborating with different subjects to develop the curriculum on cross-cutting issues like climate change

**Maths**
- 34% - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content
- 30% - Inclusion within the national curriculum for my subject

**Science**
- 47% - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content
- 44% - Inclusion within the national curriculum for my subject
Top support needs identified for embedding the ecological crisis in other subjects

**Geography**
- 50% - Collaborating with different subjects to develop the curriculum on cross-cutting issues like climate change
- 43% - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content

**History**
- 36% - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content
- 28% - Collaborating with different subjects to develop the curriculum on cross-cutting issues like climate change

**Religious studies**
- 41% - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content
- 38% - Collaborating with different subjects to develop the curriculum on cross-cutting issues like climate change

**Languages**
- 41% - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content
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- 42% - Specific capacity/time for developing climate change curriculum content
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Full research at:
teachthefuture.uk/teacher-research