



Cleaner Air 4 Primary Schools

The challenge

Air pollution is responsible for about 40,000 premature deaths in the UK, with at least 9,500 in London alone. Particulate matters (PM) and Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) are the most harmful pollutants in major cities, including London. They contribute to a myriad of health problems such as asthma, heart and lung diseases and respiratory infections, with those in deprived communities suffering disproportionately from poorest air quality. In February 2017, a study identified that thousands of children at nurseries, schools and colleges are being exposed to illegal levels of air pollution, which exceed the EU legal limit of 40 µg/m³ per year, on a regular basis.

Children are particularly at risk as growing lungs are most vulnerable to the impact of pollution, and studies show those exposed to poor air quality have 8% reduced lung function.¹ The variation of air quality has been linked to affect children's behaviour, birth outcome, cognitive development and cardiovascular effects.

What the cleaner Air 4 Primary School programme offers

Cleaner Air 4 Schools is a curriculum based, educational investigation into air quality that aims to:

- Measure levels of pollution through citizen-science experiments – distribution of NO₂ diffusion tubes, teaching how to measure pollutants, installation of green barriers
- Increase awareness and understanding of air pollution for students, parents and staff.
- Educate the entire school community about the benefits of sustainable transportation and the power of changing daily practices.
- Empower the school community to adopt less polluting behaviours – such as no idling outside school gates and the greater use of public transports as well as walking and cycling – and encourage the wider community to do the same.

Our track record

London Sustainability Exchange's Cleaner Air 4 Schools projects have successfully raised awareness regarding air quality in primary schools across London and beyond the UK borders. Six projects were led across London encompassing thousands of students, parents and staff. The most recent ones

Revealed: thousands of children at London schools breathe toxic air

Exclusive: 802 schools, nurseries and colleges are in areas where levels of nitrogen dioxide breach EU legal limits
How have you been affected by air pollution?



¹ Kings College London <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/ian.mudway.html>

include the boroughs of Croydon, Merton, Wandsworth, Richmond in 2016 and Richmond-upon-Thames in 2017. All projects led to key successes such as the stronger awareness of pupils regarding air pollution, the empowerment of schools through citizen-science learning and experiments and the reinforcement of communities with significant influence of the projects repercussions over parents and guardians. Furthermore, 2017 was also marked by the Cleaner Air 4 Schools International Project, which was led in London, Nairobi and New Delhi, with the help of the FiA foundation. This project demonstrated the universality of the issue.



Key figures:

- 35 schools have taken part, across the UK, Kenya and India.
- 9 London boroughs have participated, involving thousands of staff, students and parents in the process.
- The citizen science is a highly successful element of the project: 100% of pupil champions claim to have enjoyed all the proposed activities.
- The activities undertaken by the schools demonstrate that air quality is an issue on local and international levels. Each school found levels of NO₂ in excess of EU limits (40 µg/m³), particularly on busy roads where NO₂ levels were as high as 81 µg/m³.
- The final report showed that the majority of pupils in the two years following the intervention were using sustainable and active means of transport to go to school: 71% from Monks Orchard Primary School were walking or cycling to school, 71% at Woodside Primary Academy showed a preference for cycling or walking, and 65% from Cranmer Primary School walk to school.



What people said

"More kids participate, more parents will know. Kids participate more, their parents will know more."
- Parent, St Vincent

"The children have absolutely loved it and have been inspired to really take things further. We don't have to stop do we? They've come up with loads of new ideas for projects and things and want to keep going." Teacher, St Edward's Primary School

"It was wonderful to see how engaged the children were in their learning as a result of the excellent planning and enthusiastic delivery of air quality knowledge." – Lisa Storm, Head Teacher at Tiverton Primary School

Where you can get the Cleaner Air for Schools toolkit: <http://www.lsx.org.uk/air-quality-toolkit/>

Contact us

For more information, contact **Kyvely Vlahakis** on 0207 2349 404 or email K.Vlahakis@lsx.org.uk

The following organisations have supported our Cleaner Air 4 Schools work:

