



Energy Sparks

Newsletter 1 – September 2017

Welcome to the first Energy Sparks newsletter!

We are delighted that 10 schools have already signed up to the Energy Sparks project and our first competition. The schools taking part are Bishop Sutton Primary, Castle Primary, Freshford C of E Primary, Marksbury Primary, Paulton Juniors, Pensford Primary, Salford C of E Primary, Stanton Drew Primary, St John's Catholic Primary and Twerton Infant School.

During Terms 1 and 2 we will be sending out regular newsletters to prompt you to try out some of the Energy Sparks activities with your pupils. We also hope to share some inspiring examples of energy saving best practice taking place at other schools.

If you have not already done, we hope you will soon get the opportunity to log into the Energy Sparks website, and start exploring the energy data for your school with your pupils. All participating schools have now received at least one log in password.



Energy Sparks testing at Freshford Primary School

During July we tested out the Energy Sparks site with some of the Year 6 children at Freshford Primary School. We worked with small groups of Year 6 children exploring the new website, and discussing the children's understanding of energy consumption, electric and gas appliances and their use patterns, changes in gas and electricity use over the year, comparing energy use in term time and the school holidays and weekends, and discussing ways the school might save energy.

The 11 year olds provided feedback on labelling and navigation through the website, and ideas of how to improve the imagery, rewards, and data representation on the site. The children embraced the opportunity to provide really helpful feedback, which we have incorporated over the summer to make the site even more informative, interesting and user friendly.

Introduction to Energy Sparks Activities

As well as providing simple charts and summaries of energy usage data, Energy Sparks provides a means to record activities taken to reduce consumption, turning behavioural change into a game, engaging pupils in scoring points and unlocking awards for their school.

Energy Sparks activities are grouped under [five categories](#):

- Investigating Energy Use
- Learning
- Spreading the Message
- Taking Action around the school
- Whole-school activities

A good **Spreading the Message** activity to start with could be:

The school appoints a team of adults and pupils to lead on energy efficiency

(http://www.energysparks.uk/activity_types/33)

Some schools will already have an Eco-committee or similar which will take on this role. Other schools may choose to appoint a class to lead on energy efficiency. Decide which staff will support your team.

Educate your team about climate change and energy by carrying out some of the Energy Sparks Learning activities. Make sure they are really knowledgeable about the importance of energy and climate change, at an appropriate level for their age. It is important that pupils have significant input into the decision-making process and take ownership of any energy saving plans made.



Set up the times and places for your team to meet, including when they will report to the school management team including governor representatives. Your team could split into several sub-groups focussing on different aspects of energy saving.

Your Energy Team will be responsible for reviewing the current energy use situation (using the Energy Sparks charts), developing an energy saving action plan, and monitoring, recording and reducing your energy use. They will particularly be responsible for communicating to your school community, conducting switch off campaigns and measuring how much energy is saved or wasted by pupil and staff behaviour. The group may decide to have a high profile energy efficiency campaign involving the whole school, possibly linked to a national initiative such as the [Switch Off Fortnight](#) in November. The team will also need to revisit energy issues on a regular basis to ensure that changes made are sustained over time.

A simple practical **Investigating Energy Use** task the Energy team could start with is:

Pupils carry out a spot check to see if lights and electrical items are left on at lunch time (http://www.energysparks.uk/activity_types/46)

First of all let the whole school community know what you are doing and why. Each class could appoint an 'energy monitor' to ensure that lights and electrical equipment are switched off at break and lunchtimes and at the end of the school day.



Your Energy team could design their own simple recording sheet, or use one available through the links on the Energy Sparks website.

As they carry out spot checks, the Energy team might like to leave feedback for each class or room they visit, praising the occupants for energy-efficient behaviour (e.g. 'Well done for switching your whiteboard off!') or reminding them of the school's aims to save energy (e.g. 'Please switch off your lights when you go to lunch to save our school energy and money.'). To save time, agree some standard feedback comments and photocopy them, so that children do not need to spend time writing their feedback in each room.



Some schools have used a token system where good performance is rewarded by a green token in a pot in the classroom and poor performance is recorded by a red token in a different pot. This creates a visual representation of the performance of a class. The class with the most green tokens at the end of an agreed period of time gets an award. Discuss the best approach with your Energy team - they are sure to have good ideas!

Don't forget to share the results of your spot checks with the rest of the school, focusing on the positives as well as highlighting the potential for saving more energy. You'll find 'Well done class 5 for switching everything off! If they can do it, we can all do it!' is more motivating than naming and shaming those who have forgotten.

Keep a record of what you find on each spot check, so that you can see if things are improving. And how about creating charts using your spot check data as part of maths lessons?

A lunchtime electricity spot check is an activity that can be repeated regularly - don't forget to enter it as a new activity on the [Energy Sparks website](#) and earn more points each time you carry one out!

If you need help with development of teaching resources or pointers to the many resources already available on the internet, please contact us: hello@energysparks.uk

Opportunity to attend free LESS CO2 workshops for schools

Energy Sparks is exploring the possibility of working with LESS CO2 run by the Ashden Trust. LESS CO2 is a schools energy reduction programme, which links schools within an area together into a geographically close 'cluster'. Each cluster brings together teachers and school managers for a year-long energy saving programme that includes four FREE half-day afternoon workshops covering energy saving and incorporating energy-related sustainability issues into the curriculum. The sessions are typically led by teachers or representatives from schools that have won an [Ashden School Award](#), which champion some of the most exciting sustainable energy pioneers on the planet.

With enough interest within Bath and NE Somerset, Ashden will be able to run a workshop series locally. Alternatively, there is also the option to join the existing cluster in Bristol. If you would be interested in participating in this FREE workshop series, please register your interest at <http://www.lessco2.org.uk/register> by 13th October and let the Energy Sparks team know at hello@energysparks.uk

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<http://www.energysparks.uk>

