

St Nicholas Priory Primary School reduced their gas use by 44% through simple changes to their heating settings

Case study



Problem: School staff weren't aware heating was running outside of school hours.

Solution: Energy Sparks charts highlighted out-of-school hours gas use and gave the school confidence to make changes to heating settings.

Results: In the 12 months since joining Energy Sparks, the school:

- Reduced gas consumption by 44%
- Saved £9,800
- Saved 30 tonnes of CO₂

Data access enables energy action

St Nicholas Priory School joined Energy Sparks at the beginning of the 2024/25 academic year. The school very quickly set up an eco team and the school site manager attended free online Energy Sparks training.

Energy Sparks charts and analysis showed that 76% of their gas was used when the school was closed to students. The heating was on for longer than expected, so the site manager began to make improvements.

The school reduced the number of hours of heating on school days, reduced the heating

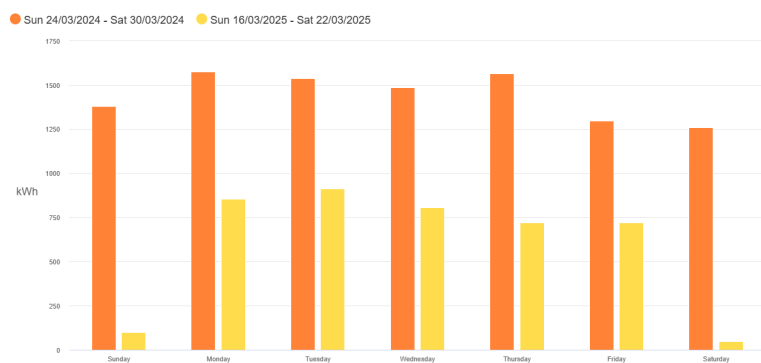
set temperature and switched the heating off at weekends. They have since set up a remote system to control the boiler with support from boiler engineers and the IT manager.

“It was surprising to see how much gas was being wasted when the school was not even in use. I found the pie charts very telling, particularly when starting this journey. I had no idea the heating was being left on at weekends.” - School Site Manager, St Nicholas Priory CE VA Primary School



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“I would encourage other schools to really pester and investigate what controls your boilers have and how to utilise their functions. By simply setting up schedules and holiday modes etc. we have massively reduced our outgoings. It was all relatively simple once we investigated how to do these things.” - School Site Manager, St Nicholas Priory CE VA Primary School



▲ **These two weeks** had similar outdoor temperatures. The yellow bars show gas consumption after changes had been made, when the school spent £355 less on gas.

How can schools investigate their heating control with Energy Sparks?

Improving heating control is often one of the first things schools do when they join Energy Sparks. It is very common that heating systems don't do what is expected, however sophisticated the control system. Energy Sparks' advice is to:

- Check how much gas is used outside of school hours - **the average is 60%**, but this is still more than it should be.
- Check if heating is on at weekends and holidays. Change these settings to frost protection only. **Schools don't need to be comfortable when they're closed, just warm enough that pipes don't freeze.**

- **Check what time the boiler is coming on in the morning** and going off in the evening. Usually, boilers only need an hour or two to warm up a school - a bit longer if the school has underfloor heating. Experiment with changing start and finish times.

 **94%**

of St Nicholas Priory's gas savings came from reducing their out of hours gas use.

Find out how Energy Sparks can help your school or Trust:

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