



Pictured back row l-r: Kayleigh Ransome, Julia Bourne and Chelsea Baxter, of New York Primary School; Alan Ramsay, of Roots and Wings; Joe Shimwell, of NUSTEM, with Dr Emma Hocking (front)

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Climate change is 'in our hands'

Pupils from a North East Primary School have collaborated with scientists to design a board game which allows young people to explore the issue of climate change and discuss the actions that can be taken in response to this global challenge.

[Climate Change: It's In Our Hands](#) is a classroom-based game, aimed at children aged from ten years old and designed to make the often-complex subject of climate change accessible and engaging in a meaningful way.

It has already been given the seal of approval by pupils at [New York Primary School](#), in North Tyneside, who worked with environmental scientists, graphic designers and outreach practitioners to design the game.

Climate Change: It's In Our Hands is now available for other schools to download and use for free, with New York Primary School STEM Leader, Julia Bourne, saying the children involved were proud and excited to know the game they helped create would be played by children all over the country.

She added: "By being involved in the development of the board game, the children have had the opportunity to have some fantastic discussions about climate change and how they are able to work together to make a positive impact on their world.

"The game can support these vital conversations and allow children to discuss this hugely important topic in a way that is interesting to them.

"It also shows them that trying to make changes alone isn't effective but, by working together, you can make a difference. This is such a key message for our young people to hear."

Speaking about the collaboration with Northumbria University, Julia added: "These types of projects are so important as they bring new and innovative ideas into the primary classroom. The expertise and funding from the university means that children can be involved in something that will have impact far beyond their own school."

Climate Change: It's in Our Hands consists of four rounds, during which groups of children play collaboratively to take actions that will have an impact on our climate. As they play, their choices affect the outcome of the game, and they need to work together to put into action strategies that will limit global temperature rises.

The idea for the game came from environmental scientists and the [NUSTEM](#) outreach group at Northumbria University, with funding from the [Natural Environment Research Council](#) enabling the ideas to come to life. The NUSTEM group work with schools across the region to provide activities and opportunities for children to engage with the STEM subjects of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Environmental scientist [Dr Emma Hocking](#), of Northumbria's [Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences](#); and Joe Shimwell and Annie Padwick from [NUSTEM](#) have all been involved in the *Climate Change: It's in Our Hands* project and hope the final game will be used by schools across the UK, and even further afield, to teach children about climate change.

Speaking about the project, Emma said: "Climate change can often seem like a bit of a vague and scary topic for children, so we wanted to create something which would make it more relevant to young people and enable them to think positively about actions they can take to make a difference.

"Thanks to the feedback from the children we were able to design and then refine the game, ensuring it really appeals to the target age group.

"The game is available online and can be downloaded and printed by schools for free, and we really hope it will be a useful resource for schools when teaching children about environmental issues."

The game was designed with the help of non-profit design company [Roots and Wings](#) – who specialise in projects with social or environmental objectives.

Director of Roots and Wings Alan Ramsay added: "Overhearing the discussion the children were having was fascinating and ultimately they came to the conclusion that the only way to improve the current situation is by everybody working together."

Climate Change: It's in Our Hands can be downloaded for free at nustem.uk/in-our-hands/

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Contacts



Rik Kendall

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk

07923 382339



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk

07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk

07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk