

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

2023



COGNITA

CONTENTS

Foreword	2
Our Approach and Strategy	4
• Our Approach to Sustainability Management	
• Introducing our Sustainability Strategy	4
• Materiality Assessment	7
• Sustainability Oversight and Accountability	8
• Strategy Alignment with UN SDGs	9
Sustainable Learning Environments	10
• Sustainability Action	
• Energy Management	
• Waste Management	
• Ecological Management	
• Case Study: Hastings School	
• Environmental Management	
• GHG Emissions & Energy Consumption	
• Air Emissions	
• Electric Vehicles	
• Water Usage	
Nurturing Responsible Learners	16
• Student Agency	
• Sustainability in our Curriculum	
• Wellbeing	
• Case Study: Call to Earth Day	
Fair & Sustainable Workplaces	21
• Workplace Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	
• Gender Pay Gap	
• Professional Development	
• Mental Health, Wellbeing & Benefits	
• Case Study: CogX	
Impacting Global Education	27
• Student Impact	
• Case Study: Stories on Wheels	
• Teacher Impact	
• Case Study: The Sparkle Foundation	



Leading Responsibly	31
• Culture of Care	
• Health & Safety Governance	
• Case Study: Safeguarding Governance	
• Business Ethics	
• Data Security & Privacy	
• Anti-Bribery & Corruption	
• Sanctions	
• Modern Slavery	
• Ethical Marketing	
• Code of Conduct	
• Labour Practices	
• Board Composition & Independence	
• Risk Management	
Looking Forward	36
Annex	37



Dr Frank Maassen Group Chief Executive Officer



Sustainability focuses on meeting the needs of the communities we serve without compromising the needs of future generations. This is integral to how we, Cognita, operate as a company and as a leading provider of outstanding Holistic Education. We are responsible for enriching the lives of our students, our colleagues, and the communities where we are located which includes being good stewards for the planet.

We take educating our future leaders seriously and intentionally operate by creating impactful ways to address environmental, social, and ethical challenges to enable students to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. The United Nations considers education as a “...critical agent in addressing the issues of climate change.” We believe education is about igniting passions and empowering young people to use their learning to make a difference to themselves and others. Education influences attitudes and behaviours; empowers people to make informed decisions; and supports people in living more healthy and sustainable lives. It is a cornerstone in addressing climate change and is a key element in having a positive impact on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Cognita’s commitment to sustainability applies to how we operate our global family of more than 100 schools in 16 countries. Cognita is pleased to present our inaugural sustainability report which covers our sustainability efforts over the 2023 calendar year. This year, we took additional steps in support of this commitment by engaging an independent consultant to evaluate our sustainability performance. We gained valuable insight into how we can further develop and integrate sustainability into our organisation. This is at the heart of our mindset of being “the best at getting better”. We look forward to collectively building upon these efforts in the years to come and are pleased to share our initial progress on our sustainability initiatives in this inaugural report.

Environmental sustainability

Our schools are regularly highlighted and praised for their commitment to sustainability, with 50% of Cognita schools receiving awards and accreditations for their work in this area. More than a third of our schools intentionally employ methods to measure their environmental impact, including:

- Tracking waste levels
- Tracking photovoltaic energy production from solar panels
- Biodiversity monitoring
- Tracking carbon footprint
- Using a greenhouse gas tracker



And 11 of our schools are actively using solar panels as a key source of energy for day-to-day school life.

We are pleased to build upon this drive and momentum through our partnership with Sustainability at School that forms part of our formal Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy, as covered later in the report.

This demonstrates that we are committed to the ongoing transformation of business and learning environments where our students, colleagues, communities, and environment can flourish and thrive as we co-create our future. It allows us to institutionalise sustainability to achieve even greater success through more formalised goal and target setting.

Social responsibility

In 2023, Cognita schools supported more than 500 unique causes through service-learning projects, local initiatives, and volunteering opportunities to give back to their communities and make a positive impact. Through this collective effort, Cognita schools:

- Devoted more than 1,600,000 hours to charitable work.
- Raised over £400,000 for charities. This included more than 450 occasions where schools supported local charities and more than 180 occasions where schools supported charities operating overseas.
- Provided financial support to charities on 350+ occasions and action-based support on 400+ occasions.

Cognita schools in the Middle East have been working with and supporting one of our partners, The Sparkle Foundation, a charity focused on driving positive change through the delivery of sustainable replicable best practice community models in Malawi. This partnership is supported by both our teachers and students. We are keen to foster and nurture the duty, passion and ambition schools feel to give back to their communities. We are putting in place the tools needed for students to lead and contribute meaningfully to their schools, communities and beyond.

Our progress

Over the past year, Cognita has established a formal ESG programme with dedicated responsibilities and has rolled out several sustainability initiatives throughout our schools. Key highlights include establishment of our foundational principle, Leading Responsibly, and our four interconnected priorities: Sustainable Learning Environments; Nurturing Responsible Learners; Fair & Sustainable Workplaces; and Impacting Global Education. This principle and these four priorities shape our ESG programme and the deployment of our sustainability initiatives including our Sustainability at School programme.



We are very much at the beginning of our ESG journey and while we have made great strides in establishing our ESG strategy, we recognise that there is so much more we need to do. However, we are confident that in collaboration and partnership, Cognita schools will continue to have a positive impact on our communities and our environment as we maintain the highest standards in educating our future leaders.

Thank you for joining Cognita on this journey.

1

Our Approach to Sustainability Management

Cognita is a diverse global community of over 100 schools across 16 countries, teaching over 90,000 students in eight languages. Each school is unique with their own distinctive character and identity, but we are united by one common purpose: to enable our students to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. Because of our diversity, we know there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to sustainability. We recognise that our sustainability approach must be adapted at each level of our organisation. Because we are a diverse system of interconnected schools, we follow a decentralised approach.

We take the same approach towards the goals and topics laid out in this report, allowing individual schools to retain a strong and local regional programme focused on the topics and solutions most appropriate to students and parents. Many schools are at different stages of development and maturity. We ensure each school is progressing and we empower them to drive change locally.

2

Introducing our Sustainability Strategy

Our approach to sustainability is organised into four interconnected priorities, addressing the material impact areas of our business: the environment, our students, our people and our communities.

These four priorities are governed by a foundational principle, which we call Leading Responsibly. This sustainability strategy is inspired by our global purpose, to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.





Sustainable Learning Environments

Sustainable Learning Environments

This priority describes the footprint of our schools and the environmental impacts associated with them. Students, parents, colleagues, and our wider stakeholder community expect us to model sustainable environmental behaviour. We strive to create a sustainable learning environment in each of our schools to meet and ultimately exceed that expectation. We are committed to identifying the metrics we need in order to measure our impact and make progress each year. By taking a closer look at our operations and infrastructure, we aim to find opportunities to increase energy efficiency, including our electricity, building heat and mobile fuel. We also consider our impact on emissions and water.

Nurturing Responsible Learners

This priority describes how we include sustainability in curricula and embed our values in our day-to-day teaching and delivery of an outstanding Holistic Education. Everything we do comes down to our common purpose: to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. We use the word ‘thrive’ intentionally, as to thrive is not just to survive or manage. We want our students to feel empowered to take their future in their own hands and understand that to grow strong and be successful, they need to thrive not only on their own, but in relation to others, with society, and on our planet.

Because we exist in a rapidly evolving world, we want our students to have the skills, mindset, and determination to make a positive difference when faced with uncertainty. They face new and difficult challenges such as unknown climate and economic futures as well as increasing digitalisation. They also face great responsibility, and in preparation for the tasks at hand, we encourage and nurture confidence and capability by educating students about these complex topics.



Nurturing Responsible Learners



Fair & Sustainable Workplaces

Fair & Sustainable Workplaces

This priority describes our relationship with our teachers and staff. It is vital that we provide fair work where our people have fair pay and conditions, are heard and represented, and have opportunities to progress. We also strive to identify ways we can better support them through improved culture, wellbeing, inclusion, and development. Cognita is built on the contributions of over 18,000 brilliant colleagues. The viability of our organisation depends on finding ways to sustain the quality and consistency of

that talent. Therefore, creating a fair and sustainable working environment is a critical element of our sustainability plan.



Impacting Global Education

This priority describes all of the ways we benefit global education as a whole. We believe that the best way we can have an impact is opening our toolbox of skills across our organisation and harnessing them to help the larger community. Our ultimate aim is to increase the quality of education of every child we can reach. While we strive to deliver the highest quality education to our students, we are passionate about increasing its reach and spreading education beyond our own school boundaries. We encourage schools, including both our students and colleagues, to increase the impact of education through the idea of “communities helping communities.”

This takes the talent and expertise found within the organisation and shares it with other groups within their communities and abroad. We believe that by engaging with communities through student outreach, scholarships, and pro bono teacher training programmes, we can make a real difference and increase the quality of education globally. We strive to do this in a way that creates lasting impact so that communities will benefit for generations to come.



Leading Responsibly

Leading Responsibly

This foundational principle governs our sustainability priorities as we know what we do is important, but also know how we do it is equally, if not more, important. Leading Responsibly describes our commitment to leading and operating our organisation ethically and with integrity. We strive to achieve the highest standard of governance to safeguard our organisation and stakeholders.

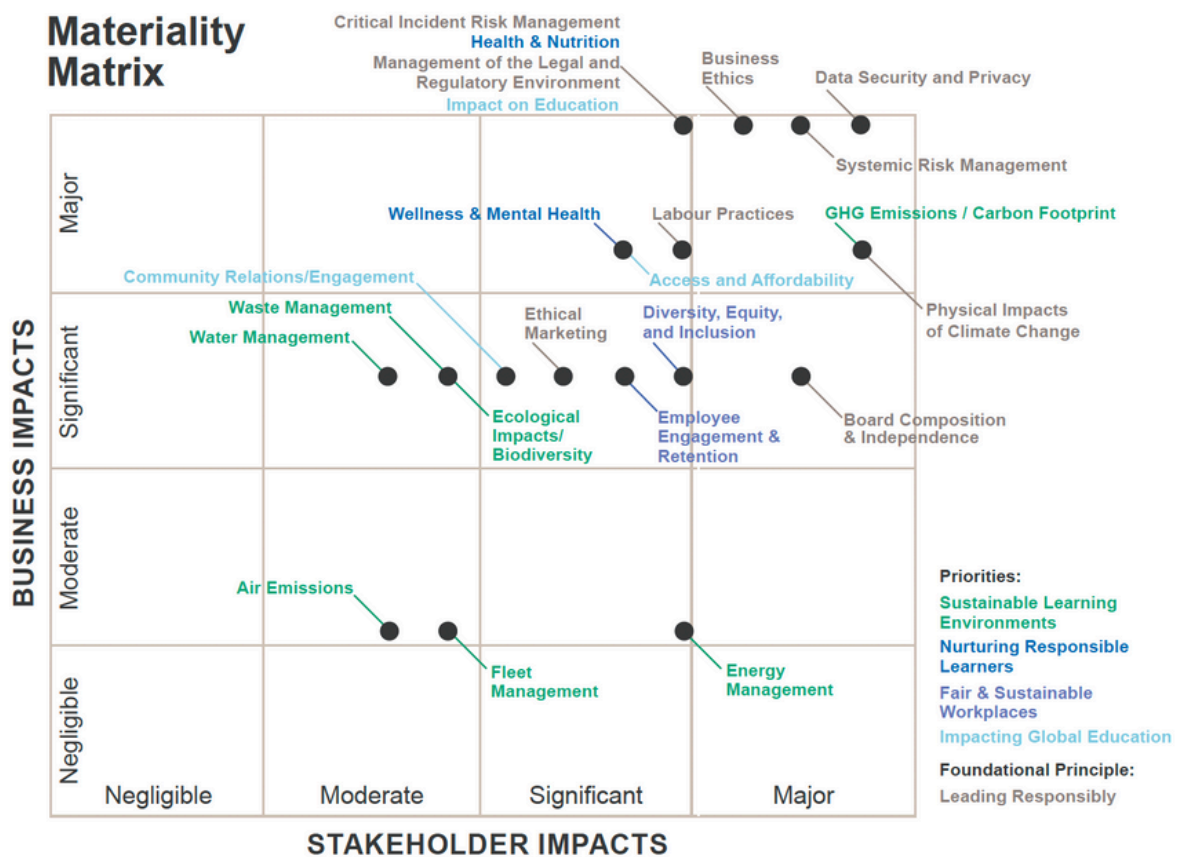
Our group-wide policies and processes provide the framework for the governance of our organisation, including safeguarding, health and safety, data protection and cybersecurity, anti-bribery and corruption, modern slavery, sanctions, whistleblowing and other important elements that are key to us being a responsible organisation.

This principle also reflects our commitment to instilling a culture of honesty and integrity so that we hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards and strive to continuously strengthen our ethics and compliance programme.



3 Materiality Assessment

Building on the external assessment we received from Sustainalytics² in 2023, we undertook an ESG materiality assessment to identify and better understand the ESG topics that potentially impact us as a business and our stakeholders, including students, colleagues, parents, local communities, investors, and regulators. We worked with an independent consultant to conduct our materiality assessment, utilising the Global Reporting Standards (GRI)'s double materiality methodology in order to identify the relevant ESG topics for our business and stakeholders. The materiality matrix below provides an overview of the top ESG topics related to our business and stakeholders. Below, we have grouped these topics by our four sustainability priorities as well as our foundational principle, Leading Responsibly.



Taking into account our Materiality Assessment, we worked with our stakeholders to identify the topics with the highest relevancy to us, which include:

- Impact on education
- Employee engagement and retention
- Greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprint
- Business ethics
- Systemic risk management
- Data security and privacy

While all topics are considered when reviewing our sustainability initiatives, we primarily focus on those listed above to inform the core of our strategy.

4

Sustainability Oversight and Accountability



We are an incredibly diverse organisation, but we are united by one common purpose: to enable our students to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. This purpose focuses our governance structure around the best management of the material issues relevant to our business and stakeholders.

Cognita’s governance structure consists of three core entities that provide oversight: the Board of Directors, the Executive Leadership Team, and the Education and Safeguarding Advisory Committee. Each of these entities provide scrutiny and oversight to ensure Cognita is operating with honesty and integrity. Cognita maintains ethical standards and conducts business in accordance with stringent UK standards and applicable local laws. This ensures each school meets or exceeds local legal and regulatory requirements.

Our Executive Leadership Team is comprised of seasoned industry professionals who oversee vision and strategy, are responsible for resource management and allocation, and organisational accountability. The Executive Leadership Team reports to Cognita’s Board of Directors. Both the Board of Directors and the Executive Leadership team oversee Cognita’s ESG strategy. The Board of Directors meet on a regular basis and provide oversight to ensure sound governance principles. ESG is a standing agenda item as part of the Group CFO’s finance update to the Board at every quarterly Board meeting. Three members of the Board form Cognita’s Education and Safeguarding Advisory Committee, which is designed to ensure that the focus on student safeguarding and education remains a constant priority. We also know that risk is inherent in our business operations, and we proactively manage risk through mitigation efforts such as compliance frameworks and committee oversight.

Cognita’s headquarters are in the UK, but we operate a decentralised structure with experienced Chief Executives supported by a regional educational leader and a team of experts in each region. This structure allows Cognita to maintain the same standard of leadership and accountability worldwide. The regional Chief Executives are part of the Executive Leadership Team, which ensures that global policies, standards, and priorities are being implemented consistently throughout each region.



We take pride in creating a nurturing and safe learning environment and maintain robust policies that are foundational to how we educate and safeguard our students and how we manage our schools. Our Code of Professional Conduct is described within the internal employee handbook. This handbook is made available to every colleague through our internal web portal and must be reviewed by every employee annually. To uphold our high standards and ensure consistency across all our schools, all colleagues are required to undertake annual training. Training topics consist of workplace behaviours, diversity, equity and inclusion, child safety, bullying and harassment and other core training courses to help guide our colleagues in making sound decisions.

We provide a means for colleagues to ask questions about training and our code of professional conduct. Lastly, Cognita is committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all colleagues to do the same. We encourage a culture of open communication and accountability; however, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time or unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. Cognita maintains a whistleblowing policy and dedicated email for colleagues to report suspected wrongdoing.

To ensure transparency in reporting on our ESG progress, Cognita is in the process of creating reporting and verification structures. We have recently employed a new Head of ESG who will be responsible for putting together these governance structures and we look forward to sharing these in our next Sustainability Report.

5 Strategy Alignment with UN SDGs

We feature icons in various sections throughout the report to demonstrate when our sustainability strategy aligns with relevant United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN SDGs are a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to climate change, wasting resources, inequality, and lack of equal opportunities for all. By identifying which UN SDGs are most relevant to our organisation, we can use our sustainability strategy to contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future. We have mapped our sustainability strategy and underlying material key topics to the relevant UN SDGs in the Annex of this report.

The Sustainable Development Goals



SUSTAINABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Topics covered:

- Sustainability Action
- Energy Management
- Waste Management
- Ecological Management
- Environmental Management
- GHG Emissions & Energy Consumption
- Air Emissions
- Electric Vehicles
- Water Usage

What are we doing now?

In 2023, we completed our inaugural global greenhouse gas inventory and water use tracking exercise on 2022 data with the support of an external consultant to identify where to focus on next.

We also expanded our partnership with Sustainability at School, a programme for schools to reduce their carbon footprint through student-led, grass-root initiatives, while boosting education on the topic of sustainability at the same time. This programme implements and embeds goals within our schools under two of our sustainability priorities: Sustainable Learning Environments and Nurturing Responsible Learners.



Sustainability Action

Two of our schools in Spain were the first to engage with our partner, Sustainability at School, to launch and develop a sustainability action programme. Because of the success of the programme, we launched it as a pilot programme, in partnership with Sustainability at School, across seven schools in different regions.

The outcomes for the Sustainability at School programme include:

1. measuring the relevant school’s carbon footprint so that the school has a clear understanding of its own environmental impact;
2. identifying environmental areas of focus;
3. creating personalised school action plans with measurable KPIs; and
4. embedding Eco Leadership teams, sustainability goals and best practice within our schools.

The programme has so far been launched at nine schools, however we highlight in particular Hastings School as they have been implementing the Sustainability at School programme for three years and so can show meaningful change. We highlight the programme’s successes in Spain and at Hastings thus far on the next page.



Energy Management

Some of our schools in Spain were the first to participate in the Sustainability at School programme. They are an example of excellence in school environmental management practices and have seen great success, especially in energy management. To date, 80% of lights in our schools in Spain have been updated to high efficiency LED fixtures, improved insulation has been installed, and smart sensors have been incorporated for lighting and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning. In Spain, our most recent building projects are being built in alignment with well-established sustainability standards, such as Passive House and BREEAM. Additionally, 17 buildings across seven schools have solar installations that generate a combined 739 kWp, saving the schools an average of €85,000 annually in energy bills³, and reducing the organisation's greenhouse gas footprint by 164,000 kg annually⁴.

Waste Management

Schools have the potential to generate staggering amounts of food waste through the process of feeding hundreds of students per school every day. To combat this, Sustainability at School programmes engage students in waste reduction campaigns. At Hastings School, students in secondary learned about the real cost of putting food on the table and were encouraged to take only what they would eat, and finish everything on their plate. In primary, the eco committee weighed the food waste every day and shared the information in a highly visible way to raise awareness and reduce food waste. These initiatives resulted in a significant reduction in the amount of food waste, with 30% less organic waste (mostly food) in January 2023 compared to September 2022 at Hastings. Food waste reduction programmes are a common theme of Sustainability at School.

Ecological Management

Sustainability at School survey results and international sustainability frameworks both prioritise biodiversity and ecological management. Students at Hastings School are eager to engage by planting a vegetable garden which is watered using water reclaimed from dining operations. They also planted the Hastings Forest consisting of 800 trees in the school community. Both the garden and forest act as visible reminders of the school's commitments and serve as learning environments for the students.

“Hastings has been working towards becoming Cognita’s first carbon neutral school.”



Hastings School began its journey to becoming a more sustainable school during the 20/21 academic year when we joined the Sustainability at School programme. Given the scale of environmental problems, we wanted to give students the opportunity to take action on the issues they care about, as well as increasing the focus on sustainability in the curriculum.

Neil Tetley
Principal, Hastings School

Hastings was the first of our schools to go through the Sustainability at School programme, before we launched the pilot programme at seven other schools. The programme has been a huge success for Hastings. The school now has an Eco Leadership team that includes representatives from students, leadership, operations, teachers, and families. The school has driven real change on topics including food waste, sustainable and healthy diet, and biodiversity. Since January 2023, Hastings has been working towards becoming Cognita’s first carbon neutral school. Starting by measuring its carbon footprint, Hastings has been working to reduce its emissions, including cutting energy usage, boosting sustainable eating, and reducing food waste. This approach has been complemented by student-led fundraising for carbon offsets to eliminate the remaining emissions. The carbon offsets were purchased through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC's) Climate Neutral Now programme and RIPPLE Africa, a certified carbon offsetting project, that provides people in Nkhata Bay, Malawi, with fuel-efficient cooking stoves. By combining emissions reduction and offsetting, Hastings is on track to achieve its goal of carbon neutrality by June 2024.

Environmental Management

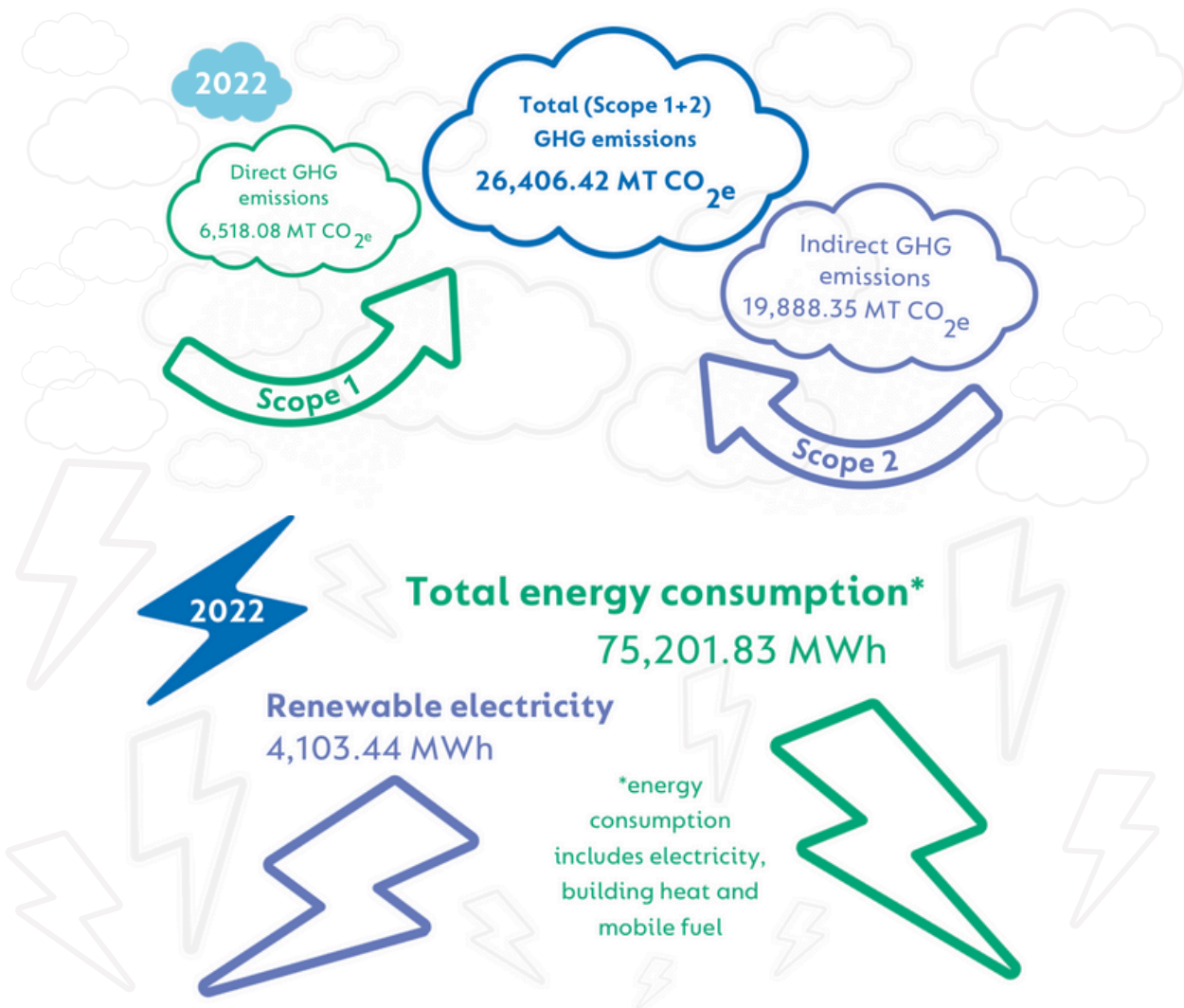
Each school in Cognita’s organisation faces different challenges and opportunities related to environmental management. Some campuses are located in historic buildings and city centres while others are purpose-built, stand-alone facilities. Environmental excellence is driven at group level, but specific programmes are evaluated and incorporated by individual schools as appropriate. We have had excellent feedback with this model to date and will continue to operate this way in the future.



(a) Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy Consumption

Managing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in our schools aligns with broader efforts to address climate change and create sustainable, healthy learning environments. It also demonstrates our environmental responsibility, provides educational opportunities, engages local communities, and even reduces operating costs. Our primary source of GHG emissions is the fuel we burn and electricity we use for a variety of operational necessities including heating, cooling, and ventilating schools, keeping lights on, cooking food, operating refrigerators, heating water, and operating computers.

Over the past year, we began tracking our group-wide GHG emissions and energy usage. The results of this exercise are shown below. We are working to understand how we may manage and reduce our footprint most effectively whilst our group continues to expand and grow.



(b) Air Emissions

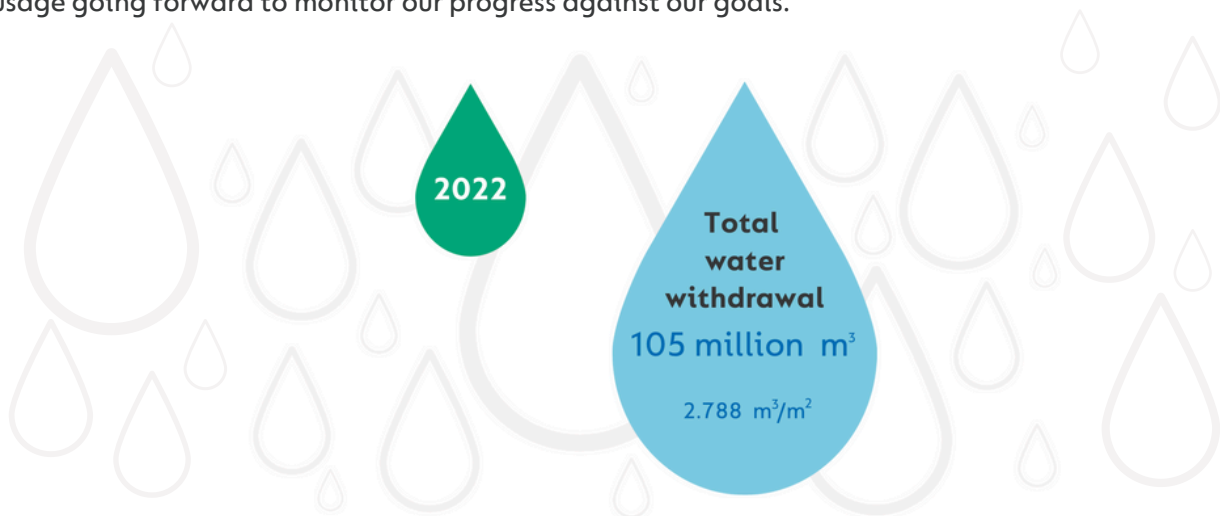
Air emissions include tailpipe emissions from vehicles and combustion emissions from facility heating. Neither fleet nor heating are major sources of regulated air pollutants. Still, we minimise our contribution to air pollution by maintaining properly functioning equipment and operating it according to best management practices.

(c) Electric Vehicles

Another initiative we have undertaken to reduce our Scope 1 emissions is to examine our vehicle fleets and identify opportunities to incorporate electric vehicles (EVs) into our owned fleet and third-party operators. Each school's ability to integrate EVs is determined by regional fuel efficiency regulations which both impacts the availability of these types of vehicles and the underlying EV infrastructure. So far we have invested in two electric mini-buses for UK schools and have plans to expand EV deployment in that region going forward. We also minimise idling our remaining vehicle fleet to the extent practical to reduce unnecessary emissions. We are investigating vehicle fleets and opportunities to reduce emissions in our other countries and regions.

(d) Water Usage

We have set a goal of reducing overall water usage through water consumption reduction measures at our facilities. Building operations and landscaping at our schools contribute to the majority of Cognita's water usage. We tracked water usage for the first time in 2022 and will continue to track usage going forward to monitor our progress against our goals.



What are we doing next?

We strive to replicate the success of the Sustainability at School programme across our network of schools over the next few years. Over the next year we will be launching our Sustainability Action Framework to provide schools and regional teams with practical guidance on how to implement sustainability action at the school level. Within this framework, we plan to expand the Sustainability at School model to increase engagement with schools through setting achievable goals and programmes to support those goals. In addition, we will begin our GHG footprint inventory and water tracking exercise this summer with the goal of aligning the data with our financial year, resulting in data for FY2023 and FY2024, respectively. As we are taking considerable steps to measure our environmental impact across the group, we plan to create meaningful and measurable goals going forward.

NURTURING RESPONSIBLE LEARNERS

Topics covered:

- **Student Agency**
- **Sustainability in our Curriculum**
- **Wellbeing**

What are we doing now?

We want our students to be responsible learners, equipped with the best tools to tackle the sustainability topics they care about. We encourage the development of leadership skills so that students can drive initiatives in these areas.

Cognita’s majority owner is Jacobs Holdings AG, and the sole economic beneficiary of their investments is the Jacobs Foundation. Our mission and the mission of the Jacobs Foundation is to transform education systems by providing children with practical knowledge, skills, attitudes, tools and equitable opportunities to reach their full learning potential and thrive together. Both the Jacobs Foundation and Cognita are committed to ensuring that every child can thrive through an evidence-based approach to learning and development.



“We take our responsibility to educate and nurture each student seriously, preparing them for the next stage of their education and for a fulfilling life. Strong academic outcomes are critical, but we want more. We understand that education is about igniting passions and empowering young people to use their learning to make a difference to themselves and others. This is critical in our rapidly evolving world. Our ambition is that each Cognita student will have agency, adaptability, and positive outcomes so that they will be making a positive difference to their peers, community and environment.”



Dr Simon Camby
Chief Education Officer, Cognita

We are focusing on learning all about the impactful action taking place across our organisation already and identifying opportunities to further educate our students about sustainability and social responsibility, as well as agency to lead initiatives of their own.

Student Agency

We want to invoke a sense of responsibility in our students so that they can manage their own learning and feel empowered to participate in society. We want to encourage our students to take charge of their future by developing agency and leadership skills. To nurture agency with our students, Cognita schools operate a number of initiatives and strategies that focus on student leadership. For example, our Sustainability at School programme not only contributes to our strategy to provide Sustainable Learning Environments, but also our strategy of Nurturing Responsible Learners. A key output of the programme is the establishment of Eco leaders, a team of highly engaged leaders, including students, to drive environmental action focused on a central topic.

The outcome is significantly increased student learning, leadership, action, and engagement on key environmental issues. In addition, over 100 schools have active student councils that drive change within their community. The majority of councils cover initiatives relating to sustainability, wellbeing and/or charitable causes.



Sustainability in our Curriculum

We want to empower and educate students on sustainability topics by embedding sustainability into the curriculum at each school. Some examples of our existing programming include:

- Lessons on environmental and sustainability topics such as recycling, climate change and waste, during personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) and science classes.
- Hands-on learning such as testing pollutants during science classes.
- Inviting guest speakers and experts to speak to students on sustainability.
- Celebration of Earth Day, World Environment Day, World Wildlife Day, and World Ocean Day.
- Eco-literacy framework of lessons that focuses on student leadership, agency and action on environmental issues in Thailand and Singapore.
- Green Education Framework that focuses on school trips with a sustainability focus, sustainability within the curriculum, including cross-curriculum links in the UAE.
- Formal coursework in environmental science.
- Projects on various subjects that are significant social and environmental issues in their local communities, as part of the IB programme.

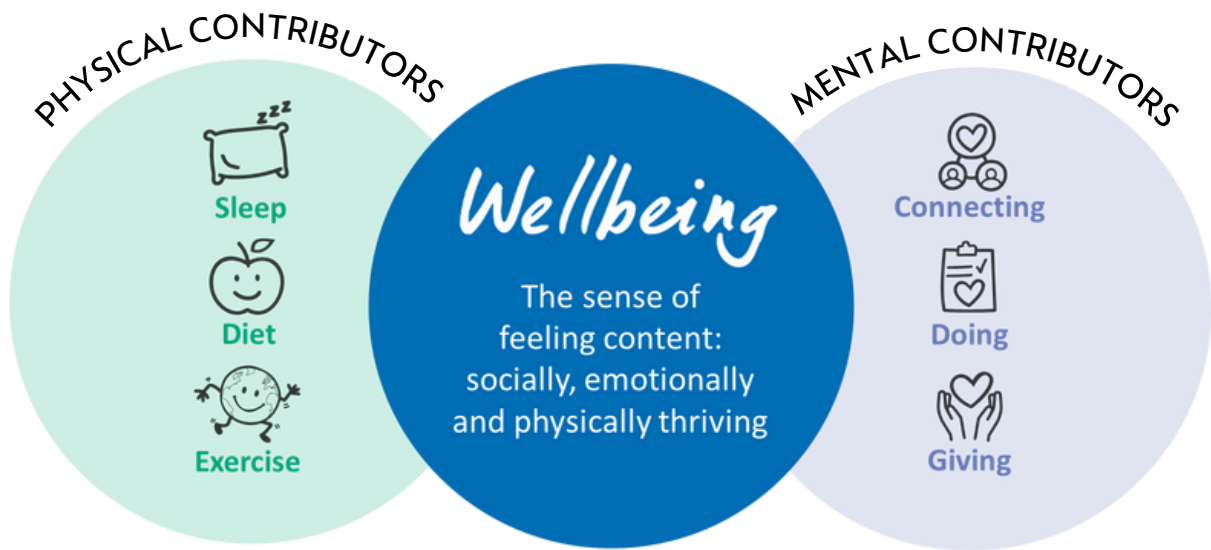
Wellbeing

Besides having a positive impact on their school, community and environment, we also want our students to feel empowered to take charge of their own physical and mental wellbeing. We know that wellbeing is central to living a happy and healthy life, now and in the future.

Our Be Well Charter is a bespoke way of looking at physical and mental wellbeing and is underpinned by global research. It identifies the main physical and mental contributors to wellbeing. It also is a reference point for the entire organisation in terms of what we mean by wellbeing.

We conduct our Care and Wellbeing Survey each year with students aged 7 and above. The intention of the survey is to gain feedback from students on their perception of care in their school and the six contributors to wellbeing outlined in the Cognita Be Well Charter. The results of the surveys are used as a piece of the jigsaw when determining how best to meet the needs of our students.

Cognita’s Be Well Charter



Since 2019, the main event in our wellbeing calendar is our annual Global Be Well Day. This day is a celebration that brings the whole school and Cognita community together. It is a reminder of everything schools do throughout the year to prioritise wellbeing and a reminder of its importance. This presents an opportunity to have a deeper and prolonged focus on our Be Well Charter as a school community. Global Be Well Day also acts as a vehicle to connect students and colleagues from around the world through wellbeing.

What are we doing next?

We strive to foster student agency and passion in sustainability by further incorporating sustainability into the curriculum as well as encouraging engagement from our students. We will encourage individual schools to hold one or more fundraising or awareness campaigns each school term. In support of these goals, we have committed resources to enable schools to drive their own leadership and learning, improve data collection, understand desired regional outcomes, and implement group-level reporting to understand Cognita’s success in achieving these objectives.



This project has proven invaluable to our students, offering a unique learning experience that extends far beyond the classroom. The breadth of their chosen topics has been impressive, with some students shedding light on the dire consequences and causes of a terrible drought plaguing their local area. Air pollution, the endangered Iberian lynx, and the critically threatened monk seal have also been passionately explored. As they delve into their chosen environmental topics, our students are not just raising awareness but also becoming influential voices advocating for change.

Hannah Wright

Year 6 Teacher, The British School of Barcelona

“Participation and recognition at a global level highlights the way we empower our students.”



This year 40 of our schools around the world participated in CNN International’s Call to Earth Day. Students’ artwork, videos, and even a 30-minute broadcast special were all showcased on CNN International’s channel. Participation and recognition at a global level highlights the way we empower our students.

FAIR & SUSTAINABLE WORKPLACES

Topics covered:

- **Workplace Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**
- **Gender Pay Gap**
- **Professional Development**
- **Mental Health, Wellbeing & Benefits**

What are we doing now?

We are committed to fostering a fair working environment where all colleagues thrive. The base of a sustainable working environment is inclusion, ensuring our colleagues feel welcome, appreciated, and engaged. We are continuing to develop programmes around Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in recruitment, professional learning, staff mental health and wellbeing, staff-centred benefits, and philanthropy.



Workplace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

A sustainable workplace is supported by a culture of inclusion and engagement across students and colleagues. We are aware of who our employees are and what issues are critical to them and cater specifically to these needs. We are a global community of over 100 schools across five regions, with over 18,000 colleagues. We recognise how diverse our Cognita community is and its value in our organisation. Over the last three years, we have:

- Curated our group DEI statement, which can be found on the Cognita website.
- Expanded our inclusion programme by celebrating key awareness days in Europe and the US such as Three Kings Day, Chinese New Year, and World Cancer Day.
- Launched employee engagement surveys with key inclusion indicators across the group.
- Conducted a review of reward and benefits policies from a DEI lens in Europe and the US.

We are building a truly inclusive culture that will spread throughout our Cognita community. We aspire for a culture where people see themselves represented, feel they can do their best work, meet their career aspirations, and thrive.

“For those who lead or aspire to lead, we owe it to ourselves, our staff, and our students to bring an inclusive world view to our discussions and decisions. We need to lead in a way that includes everything and everyone because not only does difference spark brilliance, but a revolutionary idea can come from anywhere or anyone.”



Emily Lofting-Kisakye
HR Director, Europe and US, Cognita

We want Cognita to have:

- A truly diverse workforce that reflects society and represents the communities we serve.
- An inclusive culture that welcomes and inspires all people.
- Leaders who are role models and inspire change through leading with a difference.
- Processes, systems and policies that are equitable and fair.
- Colleagues who take personal responsibility and drive organisational accountability.

To help drive these improvements, we are working on creating new targets to improve ethnicity and gender representation within Cognita.

Gender Pay Gap

Over the past three years, we have conducted our annual Gender Pay Gap (GPG) review in the UK as part of our responsibilities under UK legislation.

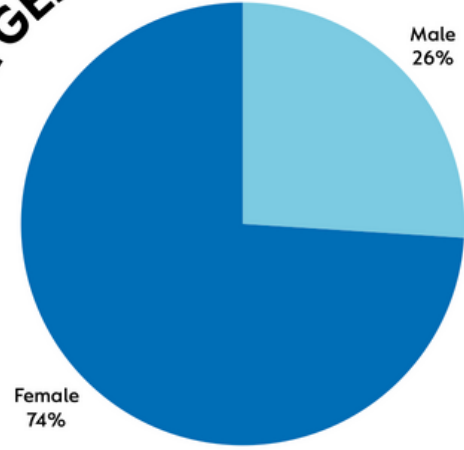
In 2023, in preparation for the launch of our formal sustainability strategy, we conducted our first annual global GPG review, the results of which are shown below.

In addition to the results, we have also identified actions to close the GPG. In 2023, these actions included:

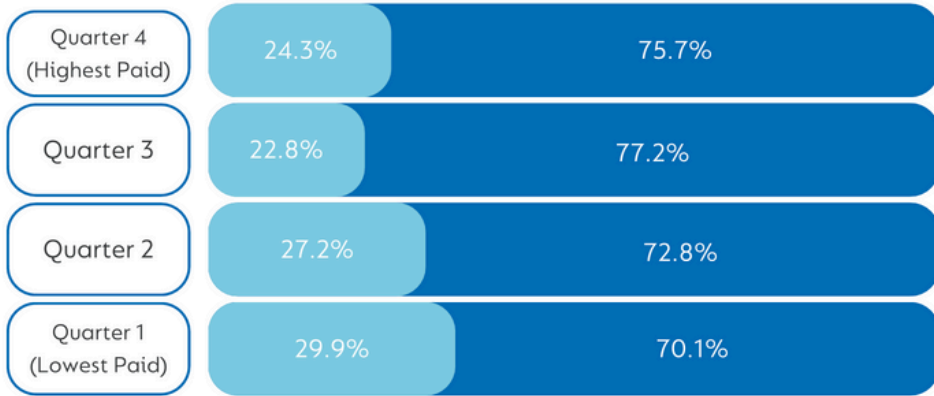
- Active use of talent and succession planning;
- Foundational diversity training for executive teams; and
- Recruitment strategy guides to aid in our focus on gender balance.



OVERALL GENDER SPLIT



PAY QUARTERS



KEY STATISTICS

All converted and shown in GBP

			Pay Gap
Mean Pay	20,761	25,730	19.3% in favour of men
Median Pay	15,840	21,086	24.9% in favour of men
Mean Bonus	1,529	3,679	58.4% in favour of men
Median Bonus	702	788	10.9% in favour of men
Proportion Received Bonus	32%	35%	

Professional Development

We support the growth and development of our teaching colleagues through training programmes and online resources. They are designed to help colleagues improve their skills, knowledge, and abilities in order to further their career and reach their professional goals. They also have the intention of bolstering confidence in their work. Greater confidence often means greater job satisfaction.

We have many opportunities for professional development including:

- CogX, an internal platform for sharing education resources and examples of best practice from our global community.
- Digital Learning site, including an AI toolkit, to educate and empower teachers on how to integrate digital learning and AI into education.
- Learning Beyond Borders, an initiative in Latin America whereby colleagues from Chile and Brazil are integrated within Cognita school communities in Europe and the Middle East for periods of up to one term.
- UCL Team Fellowship and leadership programmes available in English and Spanish.
- Annual Regional Leadership Summits.
- School of the Future, an online EdTech conference organised by our team in Chile.
- CogCon, a regional professional development event for colleagues in Asia.

Mental Health, Wellbeing, and Benefits

In order for our colleagues to serve their students and fellow colleagues to the best of their ability, they must feel supported by Cognita. That is why we are looking into what further resources, support and benefits we can provide to our colleagues. In Latin America, we have been focusing on employee wellbeing by incorporating questions on this topic in employee engagement surveys to understand what support is needed. In Europe, we provide mental health training and support to staff. Our colleagues in Europe also receive specific wellbeing-related benefits, such as around menopausal support, parental bereavement, neo-natal leave, and fertility and surrogacy.

What are we doing next?

Our future focus in this area includes improving human resources systems to support DEI tracking, especially for recruitment. We are also working towards more comprehensive global statements and policies that cover DEI and gender.



Professional learning is critical to our staff and to the success of our schools. This happens through teacher professional development programmes run both internally and externally, and through internal platforms such as CogX.

COGX

CogX is an internal learning platform for leaders (but available to all colleagues) within our global Cognita community.

The primary aim of this platform is to facilitate ‘Knowledge Animation’ within our community, with a primary focus on educational content that would be valuable for leaders across all our schools.

Knowledge Animation is when best practice is shared and then ‘animated’ to make it work in a different school setting. Our school leaders have the power and influence to animate knowledge and bring it to life in their own schools.

CogX is also a place for bringing our Cognita Quality Framework to life and for sharing valuable resources such as toolkits, latest research and advice on continuous improvement.



IMPACTING GLOBAL EDUCATION

Topics covered:

- **Student Impact**
- **Teacher Impact**



What are we doing now?

We work with our students and colleagues to engage and make a positive impact on education globally by providing programmes of access to education and other community engagement initiatives.

In September 2022, we established a formal partnership with The Sparkle Foundation, a charity dedicated to creating a future where every community in Malawi can access equal opportunities for health, education and self-sufficiency. We leverage our expertise to support the education pillar by encouraging holistic education, leadership, and growth through colleague mentorship.

In addition, we have been considering opportunities to provide scholarships to children from low-income families. RedCol, our partner in Colombia, operates Programa Amparo, a scholarship programme with the goal of breaking down barriers and transforming lives by providing access to equitable, high-quality education for vulnerable children in their community.

We have also been gathering data from our schools on all of the amazing projects our students have been embarking on to help other communities.

Student Impact

Our largest impact is on our students. Every decision we make surrounds our global purpose of preparing them to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. To enable that purpose, we deliver the highest quality education on topics such as cultural and religious inclusion, philanthropic giving and volunteerism, and eco-literacy in addition to more traditional learning.

We hope to empower and inspire our students to make an impact on students outside of their schools by contributing to the quality of education in their community, region, country or anywhere in the world.

This is achieved through specific initiatives that target supporting charities or local communities with the goal of improving the quality of education of students outside the boundaries of our Cognita schools. Some examples include our students:

- Building schools and developing community facilities in underprivileged areas.
- Fundraising to support salaries for local educators.
- Sharing and/or fundraising to purchase educational materials for use in schools without adequate resources.
- Providing classroom support.





Ananya, from CHIREC International School exemplifies what it means to be a Student Leader. As part of her "Stories on Wheels" project, Ananya has been awarded a grant of up to \$3,000 and 8 weeks of Social Entrepreneurship training from the IB Global Youth Action Fund. Ananya will use this to enhance her mobile library that aims to provide underprivileged students in rural villages with access to better physical and digital learning resources to help them have a better schooling environment. Ananya aims to help students expand their horizons, with the ultimate aim of supporting students to educate themselves and the people around them to the best of their abilities.



Teacher Impact

Many countries struggle to develop access to good quality education for all children. We firmly believe that we have an important and impactful role to play in the quality of education worldwide. We wish to address societal needs and to have an impact on education for those students that do not attend our schools.

Our students can have an impact, but we also engage our experts: our educators. We have fantastic teachers, and we aim to give them the opportunity to share their experiences, pedagogy and wisdom with teachers all over the globe so that those teachers can benefit and have an exponential impact on students beyond Cognita.

What are we doing next?

We will continue to expand our partnership with The Sparkle Foundation by supporting and developing the Teacher Mentor Programme. We are also in the process of hiring a dedicated resource to develop a comprehensive curriculum tailored to The Sparkle Foundation’s needs in Malawi, whilst also holding the potential for adaptation and replication in other global contexts.

We will work with our regions and schools to identify other partnership opportunities. We will also encourage schools to continue engage in initiatives that specifically target communities that will most benefit from our time, resources and skills.





THE SPARKLE FOUNDATION

CREATING BRIGHTER FUTURES



As part of our support for The Sparkle Foundation, we have established a Teacher Mentor Programme. The teacher volunteer team works collaboratively across our schools to create and deliver an online learning programme for the teachers at The Sparkle Foundation. This includes CPD sessions and a mentor programme. This programme involves group-wide colleagues but is particularly important to our schools in the Middle East region.



Cognita's invaluable support has been a beacon, shining a spotlight on Sparkle's endeavours. From engaging teachers, parents, and students to hosting remarkable events like art week and choir sessions, our partnership radiates positivity. Each effort contributes to our education programme in Malawi, ensuring equal opportunities for all and bridging the gap for children there. The teacher-mentor programme's growth in Malawi promises an even stronger partnership.

Sarah Brook
The Sparkle Foundation

LEADING RESPONSIBLY

Topics covered:

- **Culture of Care**
- **Health & Safety Governance**
- **Safeguarding Governance**
- **Business Ethics**
- **Data Security & Privacy**
- **Anti-Bribery & Corruption**
- **Sanctions**
- **Modern Slavery**
- **Ethical Marketing**
- **Code of Conduct**
- **Labour Practices**
- **Board Composition & Independence**
- **Risk Management**

What are we doing now?

We are committed to operating our organisation with integrity. We strive to adopt governance policies and practices that represent our stakeholders' interests.

Two of the most critical regulatory topics to our business are the safeguarding of our students and the health and safety of anyone attending our schools, including our students, our colleagues, and our visitors. We continue to strengthen governance in these areas, but also across other areas of business.

We have been working on launching more group-wide compliance policies, such as Anti-Bribery and Corruption and Whistleblowing, so that we maintain a robust standard across all our offices and schools.

Culture of Care

Our uncompromising culture of care ensures the safety and wellbeing of all children is at the heart of every Cognita school. This includes the security of our learning environments, the emotional wellbeing of our students, the rigorous vetting of our employees, and robust policies, procedures and training in child safeguarding.

Cognita takes its responsibility for safeguarding all children in its care seriously. We are committed to promoting the welfare of each child. We create and maintain a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment where each child may thrive and develop physically, socially, emotionally, and academically. For more information on our safeguarding governance framework, please see the Case Study on the next page.

Cognita also has a robust system in place to provide a safe and healthy working and learning environment on and off site.

Our policies and performance in both Safeguarding and Health and Safety are reviewed by independent third parties with industry expertise on an annual basis. The outcome of these reviews is shared with our schools to promote continuous learning, improvement, and development, and with our corporate colleagues, and the Cognita Board to maintain independence, oversight and strong corporate governance.



Health and Safety Governance

We have a Group Framework on Health & Safety Governance Oversight which clearly outlines accountability and responsibilities at each level of our organisation. Our Group Chief Education Officer is responsible for setting and providing oversight on the framework. Cognita exercises governance oversight through the deployment of external Independent Health & Safety Reviews at all Cognita schools and offices. This review process ensures that we comply with relevant policies, identify, and share effective practice, identify points for development, and check that each school is meeting relevant statutory and/or regulatory requirements.

Our safeguarding framework, policies and practices for all our schools globally are based on globally leading standards. Our standards are aligned with three key sources:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The International Task Force on Child Protection.
- Leading principles of safeguarding from stringent UK standards.

In each locality, we blend our global standards with local laws to ensure that our expectations are context specific.



Our Group Framework on Safeguarding Governance and Oversight clearly outlines accountability and responsibilities at each level of our organisation. Our Group Chief Education Officer is accountable for setting and providing oversight of the framework. Cognita engages Independent Safeguarding Reviewers for all Cognita schools. The Reviewers are responsible for reviewing safeguarding and child protection practice in relation to our policies as well as relevant statutory and/or regulatory requirements.

At the regional level, the Regional CEO is ultimately accountable for the standards of safeguarding in their region. The Regional CEO is responsible for overseeing safeguarding arrangements within their region, including the effective implementation of policies and practices across all Cognita schools in their region.

At the school level, each individual Head of School is accountable for the standards of safeguarding at their school. Each school also has at least one Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Regional Governance Meetings take place once a year, with a mid-year check-in to track progress. The Group Chief Education Officer prepares a board report and provides updates to the Cognita Board of Directors. Regional Assurance Board Meetings take place at a minimum of three times a year. Other meetings take place within schools and between schools and regions throughout the year.

Other Areas of Business Ethics & Regulatory Compliance

We are committed to the highest standards of business ethics and regulatory compliance, which is reflected in our ways of working. There are many important areas, but we highlight those that are of particular importance to us and that have been identified via our Materiality Assessment below.



(a) Data Security and Privacy

We recognise the importance of collecting and using personal data in a lawful and transparent way, with respect for the rights of individuals with regards to the use of their data. We prioritise the rights, safety and welfare of individuals, particularly children, in relation to the use of personal data within our organisation.

We have a comprehensive set of data protection policies and processes, including privacy notices tailored for parents, prospective parents/enquiries, students and colleagues. We maintain a robust data security and privacy policy, which can be found on the Cognita website. Our policies are tailored to each country based on local legislation, however the foundation of these policies is based on EU data protection legislation. We have a central data protection team based in the UK and Data Protection Coordinators are appointed and trained at each of our schools in Europe.

(b) Anti-Bribery and Corruption

Cognita is committed to doing business ethically. We have a Group Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy that applies to our entire organisation and indicates our zero-tolerance policy to bribery and corruption.

We strongly believe in having an open and honest organisational culture and encourage employees with concerns to email our dedicated Compliance Mailbox. We have an approval process in place for any expenditures relating to hospitality, gifts, entertainment and donations above a set threshold. Training is provided to all relevant employees on a regular basis.

(c) Sanctions

We take compliance with economic sanctions very seriously and are committed to doing our part. We operate schools across the globe and it is critical to our success that Cognita's work is never used to improperly benefit those whose conduct or position has led them to being targeted by global sanctions authorities. We are in the process of launching our Group Sanctions Policy that applies to our entire organisation. The policy outlines our principles, as well as the screening process for higher risk counterparties. We ensure that senior management and relevant colleagues receive regular sanctions training.

(d) Modern Slavery

We are committed to practices that combat slavery and human trafficking. Over the past few years, we have published an annual Modern Slavery Statement in the UK as part of our responsibilities under UK legislation. This statement is available on the Cognita website and outlines our policy on slavery and human trafficking, our relationship with suppliers, our due diligence process, and our planned activities to address risks relating to slavery and human trafficking.

(e) Ethical Marketing

We take great care to ensure that marketing materials do not overstate capabilities. Claims of excellence are backed by data such as results of inspections or exam levels, and only reputable sources are cited.

(f) Code of Conduct

Our colleagues have crucial roles to play in the lives of children. To help establish the safest possible learning and working environment which safeguards children, each country and/or region has a professional Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct provides clarity on our expectations of colleagues, including the minimum standards of behaviour. It is specifically described within the internal employee handbook. Colleagues are required to read and sign the Code of Conduct as part of the annual declaration process.

(g) Labour Practices

Cognita complies with all local labour regulations where we operate and ensures that our schools comply with international labour frameworks so that all of our workforce have the essential rights, which includes a living wage, prohibition on child labour, and occupational health and safety.

Board Composition & Independence

We seek to have a well-rounded Board of Directors. The Board is made up of ten members, three of which are independent. We choose directors based on relevant experience, including from experts in our industry, and encompassing a diverse range of skills and expertise. Three members of the Board form the Education and Safeguarding Advisory Committee, which is designed to ensure that the focus on student safeguarding and education remains a constant priority.

Risk Management

We manage risk through the annual preparation of a risk register that includes topics such as legal, health and safety, finance, tax, safeguarding, and IT. In 2022, with the support of an external consultant, 66 separate risks were considered and ranked by classification, region, likelihood, and severity. High risk topics are assigned ownership and additional work required or monitoring steps. The risk register is presented to the Board. Where needed, appropriate mitigation action is decided and reviewed at regular intervals.



What are we doing next?

We plan to launch our Group Sanctions Policy in 2024. Our main priority over the next year is to adopt a global Code of Ethics, bringing together existing ethics and compliance policies into one statement of our principles and commitments.

Where we go next

Cognita's commitment to sustainability is long term. Our goal is to mature in our sustainability journey and over 2024, we have taken on the following targets/initiatives:












- Head of ESG role established to manage our sustainability programme.
- Launching our Sustainability Action Framework.
- Rollout of Sustainability at School programme.
- Reducing water usage.
- Reducing GHG emissions.
- Encouraging and supporting schools with developing sustainability content to incorporate into the school curriculum.
- Encouraging one or more fundraising or awareness campaigns each school term.
- Expanding our partnership with The Sparkle Foundation.
- Developing a comprehensive early years curriculum for The Sparkle Foundation and Malawi.
- Launching our Group Sanctions Policy.
- Adopting a global Code of Ethics.

We are also working to align our corporate goals with our material sustainability areas and establishing a reporting programme that aligns with the International Sustainable Standards Board – IFRS Sustainability Standards and reporting under the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive.



Cognita Alignment with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The table below shows how some of the UN SDGs align with Cognita’s sustainability priorities.

SDG	SDG Description	Key Topic(s)	Cognita Priority
 13 CLIMATE ACTION	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GHG Emissions and Energy • Air Emissions • Electric Vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Learning Environments • Nurturing Responsible Learners
 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Usage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Learning Environments
 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Learning Environments
 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Management • Consumption Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Learning Environments
 15 LIFE ON LAND	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Learning Environments
 4 QUALITY EDUCATION	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability in our Curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurturing Responsible Learners • Impacting Global Education
 2 ZERO HUNGER	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Nutrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurturing Responsible Learners
 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellness & Mental Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurturing Responsible Learners
 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Capital • Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair & Sustainable Workplaces
 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	Reduce inequality within and among countries		
 5 GENDER EQUALITY	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 	

¹ United Nations, Climate Change, Cities and Local Action, Education is key to addressing climate change

² The results of this evaluation ranked Cognita as “low risk”

³ Calculated based on what schools were paying two years prior

⁴ In comparison to coal-generated electricity

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COGNITA

THRIVE IN A RAPIDLY EVOLVING WORLD