



IN 2023 the National Education Nature Park programme from the Department for Education, Natural History Museum and Royal Horticultural Society challenged schools to bring life to their grey outdoor spaces. The first annual report has now been published, showing that more than 3,000 schools and colleges across England have joined the free programme.

What are schools doing?

Students have been tasked with exploring and mapping their school's green space. Along the way, they're asked to note the species that rely on the space and see if they can create new habitats in their school grounds.

How is the programme going?

Fast forward a year and over two million square metres of school green space have been plotted on an interactive

map – that's the equivalent of about 1,600 Olympic-size swimming pools! The map shows all the new habitats such as green walls, ponds and pollinator-friendly plants that have been created across different schools.

Why should you join in?

There are lots of benefits to the programme, including:

- building a connection to nature and helping to create new or improved green spaces
- improving your physical and mental health by spending time outdoors
- feeling empowered to voice your concerns about nature and the climate, as well as what action needs to be taken for your future

You can find out more about the scheme by going to www.educationnaturepark.org.uk.

TAKE PART IN THE HIDDEN NATURE CHALLENGE!

THIS October, we're inviting schools to discover wildlife hiding around their school by joining the Hidden Nature Challenge.

Explore your school grounds and record your discoveries. From the smallest sign of nature to plants in an unexpected place, share your findings online and see what other schools across the country have found on an interactive map.

Ask your teacher to read more at tinyurl.com/HiddenNatureChallenge.

A SPOTLIGHT ON CO-OP ACADEMY MANCHESTER

AT Co-op Academy in Manchester, the Eco Club has transformed their school's grounds to improve biodiversity and create new green spaces.

Meet Zahra

Zahra, a Co-op Academy student and Eco Club member, said: *"We spend our breaks and lunch times in the quad, which is a large, grey, concrete square. We decided that we wanted to build a vertical garden that would 'green' up some of the area and doesn't take up too much space. The vertical garden brightens up our breaks and lunches a little bit."*

The green wall also serves as a cooling device in the summer months, reducing the outside wall temperature by ten degrees Celsius. This makes break times more comfortable and helps to shield the classroom on the other side of the wall from high temperatures.

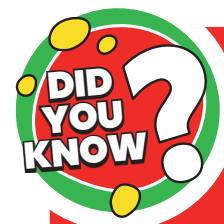
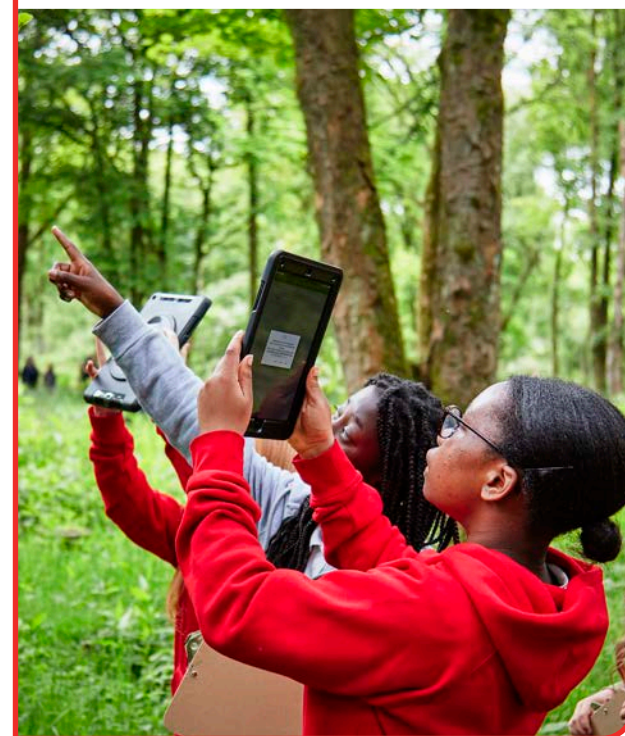


What else has the school been doing?

As part of the National Education Nature Park programme, Co-op Academy's Eco Club has also been researching the local area to see what changes they could make to serve the school grounds and wildlife better.



This autumn, Co-op Academy students will collect dead wood and broken branches to create log piles that will host hibernating mammals, amphibians and invertebrates.



IF all education settings in the country took part in the National Education Nature Park programme, they could create a space twice the size of Birmingham for wildlife to thrive in!