

Sustainable Schools Newsletter

April 2026



What is Sustainable Schools Leicester?

Leicester City Council has a dedicated Sustainable Schools team based in the Energy & Sustainability team who provide *free* support to schools to help them become more sustainable in all that they do. As well as one-to-one support and environmentally linked projects, schools can engage through EcoTeachMeets, staff training, resource planning & workshops, assemblies, Eco-Schools conferences & celebration events and can keep up to date through dedicated social media, monthly eBulletins and termly newsletters.

The Eco-Schools Green Flag programme provides opportunities for students to take an active role in their school community and work on environmentally minded projects that matter to them. Each schools' journey with Eco-Schools will be unique but the Sustainable Schools team are here to support you in any way that we can!



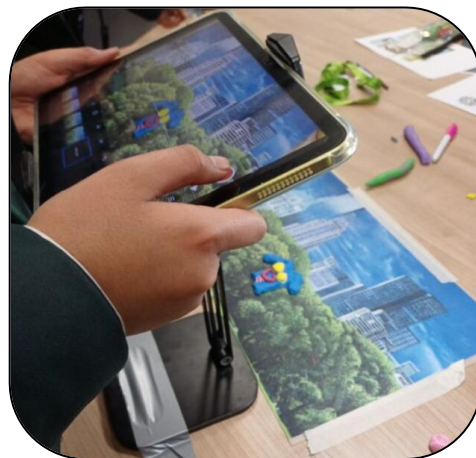
Welcome to the April 2026 Sustainable Schools Leicester newsletter.

Spring has sprung and there are lots of environmental and sustainability projects taking place in the coming weeks and months.

This newsletter will hopefully cover the next round of workshops, training sessions, virtual assemblies, and events!

Take a look at our updated calendar for the academic year for an overview of what is coming up soon.

As always, get in touch if you need any support – Marc, Vicky and Laura.



Students from Sir Jonathan North College and Brook Mead Academy took part in a sustainable fashion workshop at DMU, creating stop motion animations to tell the stories of clothing items

How to find out more Sustainable Schools Team

City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester LE1 1FZ

✉ SustainableSchools@leicester.gov.uk

www schools.leicester.gov.uk/eco-schools

✕ [EcoSchoolsLCC](https://www.instagram.com/EcoSchoolsLCC)

📷 [EcoSchoolsLCC](https://www.instagram.com/EcoSchoolsLCC)

f [EnvEducationLeicester](https://www.facebook.com/EnvEducationLeicester)

☎ 0116 454 6746



Newsletter

Our newsletters are published 4 times per year. If you would like to submit an article for the next newsletter, the deadline is **Friday 19th June 2026**. We ask for around 200 words, at least 1 photo, and contact details e.g. name and email address to:

SustainableSchools@leicester.gov.uk

Finished reading? Pass on to a colleague

Dates for your diary – Eco events to take part in



Event Details	Date	Month
Earth Day - "Our Power, Our Planet"	Wednesday 22	April
Stop Food Waste Day	Wednesday 29	April
Eco-Schools training session 3 (1-3.30pm)	Thursday 30	April
No Mow May	All month	May
Compost Awareness Week	Sun 3 - Sat 9	May
World Fair Trade Day	Friday 8	May
Love a Tree Day	Saturday 16	May
World Bee Day	Wednesday 20	May
Outdoor Classroom Day	Thursday 21	May
International Day for Biological Diversity	Friday 22	May
30 Days Wild	All month	June
World Environment Day	Friday 5	June
Great Big Green Week	Saturday 6 - Sunday 14	June
World Bicycle Week	9 - 15	June
World Oceans Day	Monday 8	June
Eco-Schools Celebration (all day)	Friday 12	June
Clean Air Day	Thursday 18	June
Good Life Schools Celebration (all day)	Tuesday 23	June
Plastic Free July	All month	July
Grow Your Own Grub celebration at Abbey Pumping Station	Saturday 4	July
Plastic bag free day	Friday 3	July

- [Leicester - staff training/information](#)
- [Leicester - student activities/events](#)
- [National events](#)



Eco-Schools Award

application portal opens soon!



Eco-School Green Flag Award

Schools can register for Eco-Schools for free at <https://members.eco-schools.org.uk/signup>

The application form is all done online, with options to apply for Merit and Distinction on top of your Eco-Schools Green Flag award.

Leicester City Council will **subsidise the cost** of the Eco-Schools Green Flag for Leicester Schools, **making it just £50 per school.**

Green Flags are renewed on an **annual basis with the online application window open from 1 May until 31 July every year.**

Top 5 in the country

We are thrilled that Leicester City Council has been placed in the top 5 performing local authorities once again last year for Eco-Schools. Last year we supported 42 schools across Leicester City to achieve their Green Flag accreditation. This year, we are hoping to support even more of you!



Support for Eco-Schools

We are always happy to visit schools and help you with your Green Flag work, whether this is through running sessions with your Eco-Team or meeting with staff to create an action plan. These sessions can fit within your school timetable and can be bespoke to your needs for this year. For more information, please contact Vicky on victoria.brown@leicester.gov.uk



FREE Eco-Schools Training Session – Completing your Eco School Application

FREE in-person training:

Completing your Eco Schools application
and going for Merit or Distinction

Thursday 30th April 2026, 1.00 – 3.30pm

Venue – Elmbrook School, Netherhall Road, LE5 1DT

[Sign Up Here](#)

This training will:

- Cover stages 4-7 of the application process, including how to evaluate your actions
- Review any updates and changes for this year's application process
- Show the application portal and next steps
- Cover how to apply for the Merit and Distinction awards
- Share examples of good practice from schools across Leicester
- Answer any questions you may have



In Leicester there are now 42 schools with the prestigious Green Flag Award putting us in the top 5 Local Authorities in England again!

Who would benefit from this course?

This training is aimed at staff who are new to Eco-Schools or those who would like a refresher on the process. This could be Eco-leads and all school staff with an interest in environmental education - heads, deputy heads, assistant heads, classroom teachers, TAs, support staff, premises officers, business managers and governors/trustees.

For more information please contact:

Vicky Brown at

victoria.brown@leicester.gov.uk

Sustainable Schools Team

✉ SustainableSchools@leicester.gov.uk

🌐 schools.leicester.gov.uk/eco-schools

✕ [EcoSchoolsLCC](https://www.instagram.com/EcoSchoolsLCC)

f [EnvEducationLeicester](https://www.facebook.com/EnvEducationLeicester)

📞 07501 808 330





Eco-Schools Celebration 2026



Friday 12 June 2026 • City Hall, Leicester

Celebrate the work that your school has completed this year by attending our annual Eco-Schools Celebration. Bring along up to 8 students to display your environmental and Eco-Schools projects! Please note that you do not have to have completed or submitted your Eco-Schools application to attend the celebration event.



Schools can display 2 projects that they have worked on throughout the year. Often, schools choose to relate these to the Eco-Schools topics, as listed below:

- Biodiversity
- Energy
- Litter
- Waste
- Transport
- Water
- School Grounds
- Healthy Living
- Global Citizenship
- Marine



All schools will be entered into three categories:

- Eco-School of the Year
- Judge's Special Award
- Eco-factor Award (voted by students)

Prizes will be awarded to top scoring schools (details TBC).

The event will run from 9.30am – 2.15pm.

Students and staff will need to bring a 'plastic clever' packed lunch.



Approximate timings of the day

- 09.30-10.00 Students/staff set up stalls
- 10.00-12.00 Judges visit stalls and speak to students
- 12.00-13.00 Lunch and activities
- 13.00-14.00 Presentations and awards
- 14.00-14.15 Stalls dismantled and students/staff leave

Book your place now via
our [eform](#)



For more information contact:
marc.tench@leicester.gov.uk
07501 808 330

Litter Less Leicester



The Sustainable Schools team at Leicester City Council are running **Litter Less Leicester** again this year! The project runs until Friday 3 June 2026.

We are aiming for as many schools as possible to become Litter Less Champions, running litter awareness assemblies or sessions and carrying out litter picks in your school grounds or local area.

Why take part?

- Get students involved in a great project to **raise awareness** about and **reduce litter** at school and in your community.
- **Borrow litter picking equipment** for the summer 2 half term (if required and subject to availability).
- Links to **Eco-Schools topics** litter, waste, marine and school grounds to help achieve your Green Flag!
- Receive a **free virtual or in-person assembly** (or resources to run your own) on litter, **or individual class sessions**.
- Have fun and help to keep the environment free from litter!



All you need to do:

- Carry out at least **5 litter picks**.
- **Weigh and record** how much you collect (luggage scales can be borrowed for this).
- Write a **short case study** (100 words) once completed with 2 photos (template provided).



Supports the Eco-Schools litter, waste, school grounds and marine topics

If you would like your school to take part in this project please complete our [eform](#)



For more information, please contact Vicky Brown, Education Officer at victoria.brown@leicester.gov.uk

Earth Day - 'Our Power, Our Planet'

Earth is on Wednesday 22 April 2026 and this year the theme is 'Our Power, Our Planet'.

This Earth Day, people of all backgrounds and generations are called to stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of the only home we share – planet Earth.

What will your school do to make a difference or change, to help protect our wonderful planet? Will you calculate your carbon footprint, carry out a litter pick, organise a Bioblitz, turn off devices to save energy, plant trees, write to your local MP, or run a second-hand clothing / uniform shop? The possibilities are endless.

Find out more at: [Earth Day: The Official Site](#)



*Supports the Eco-Schools
Global Citizenship and
other topics*

Clean Air Day 2026

Clean air day is on June 16 2026, so save the date!

Clean Air Day is the UK's biggest initiative to reduce air pollution. It provides an opportunity to raise awareness about air pollution and take action towards improving the quality of air for a healthier environment. Clean Air Day is a national initiative that Leicester City Council has been a part of since 2018.

The day aims to raise awareness of the importance of clean air for our health and the environment. It encourages our city's communities, schools and businesses to take action to reduce air pollution to create a healthier and sustainable future, for everyone.

Keep an eye out for updates!



*Supports the Eco-Schools
transport
topic*

Carbon Literacy Training for School Staff and Governors



In February 2019, Leicester City Council declared a climate emergency. We are working to develop a climate emergency programme of action to reduce carbon with the aim of the city becoming zero carbon.

In order to raise awareness of the climate emergency, we are using the Carbon Literacy Project as a way of accrediting school staff in becoming Carbon Literate. By 2025, the DfE have said that each school should have a sustainability lead who will have taken part in Carbon Literacy Training. By joining us, you will help keep your school ahead of the rest!

In Person:

Friday 2 October 2026, 9am – 4pm
at City Hall, Charles Street, Leicester.
Complete the [eForm](#) to sign up.

Who would benefit from this project: All school staff, including premises officers, and governors with an interest in becoming carbon literate, especially those involved in teaching about climate change and the climate emergency.



Why participate?

- Gain a **better understanding of how climate change will affect you and those around you**
- **Become an accredited Carbon Literate individual**
- Acquire knowledge and skills to develop your own responses to lowering your carbon footprint, and the carbon footprint of others

Your commitments

- Create at least **one significant action, as an individual**, to reduce your own personal carbon footprint
- Create at **least one significant action involving other people** to reduce the collective footprint of your workplace, community or place of education
- **Encourage your school to participate in Carbon Literacy**

Carbon Literacy Training - 2026/27



The cost of the training course is £50 for school staff/governors or £70 for non-school staff and staff outside of Leicester City. This includes the individual and course accreditation fees from the Carbon Literacy Project.

To book your place please complete the [eForm](#). For more information, contact Laura.Barke@leicester.gov.uk

EcoTeachMeet

Presentations from colleagues with a biodiversity/nature in school grounds theme

Montrose School

Wigston Ln, Aylestone, Leicester LE2

Tuesday 9 June 2026, 4pm – 5:15pm

Refreshments and chance for a chat from 3.30pm



Confirmed speakers

Will Warley (Sustainability lead at Montrose School) – Tour of Montrose Ravine (see article below), how other schools and organisations can use it, wildlife recording

Marc Tench – Using Tiny Forests for outdoor education

Final speaker TBC



Sign up using the [eform](#).

All school staff and organisations welcome! If you would like more information or to enquire about presenting, please contact marc.tench@leicester.gov.uk



Montrose Ravine

EDUCATION AND CONSERVATION



Montrose School, in Leicester, have been working on an exciting conservation project called 'Montrose Ravine: Education and Conservation' which has been funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. A boardwalk and steps have been built within the ravine so it can now be used for educational activities such as pond dipping. The school have been recording wildlife using trail cameras, and you can see some of their videos on their YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@MontroseRavine>

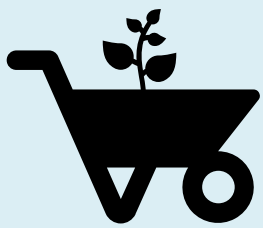
Montrose are keen to engage with local schools and community groups who may be interested in visiting the ravine. If you would like to find out more, you can visit the school website (<https://www.montrose.leicester.sch.uk/montrose-ravine>) or email the office (office@montrose.leicester.sch.uk).





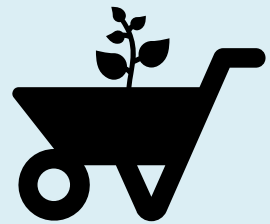
Leicester's Mealbarrow Extravaganza!

(part of the Grow Your Own Grub competition for schools)



Saturday 4 July 2026

11am – 3pm



FREE event at **Abbey Pumping Station Museum**
Corporation Rd, Leicester, LE4 5PX



Come and view the mealbarrows created by local schools and vote for your favourite!

Railway Day – enjoy a ride on the train!

Visit the new electric book bus and enjoy some free activities!

Free entrance to the museum



Funded by

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In association with EAUC, STEM Learning
and the University of Reading



Department
for Education

Supporting nature and biodiversity in education – we need your help!

For many of our local education settings, now is the time to think about making improvements to support nature across their sites. But they cannot do it alone!

If you are passionate about nature, biodiversity and helping people to connect to the world around them, joining the [Climate Ambassadors Scheme](#) as a **nature and biodiversity champion** is the perfect opportunity for you to share your knowledge and skills this spring.

Through tailored training sessions delivered by the team at [National Education Nature Park](#), you will receive ready-made activity guides and resources to use with your local education settings, whether it is mapping/creating habitats, aiding planting schemes, or rejuvenating a pond!

Please complete the [expression of interest form](#) to receive further information and training dates. If you have any questions or would like to know more, please email ca-eastmidlands@nottingham.ac.uk.



National
Education
Nature Park

SuDS in Schools



SuDS or Sustainable Drainage Systems, mimic natural processes to reduce the risk of flooding. They include rainwater planters, rain gardens, tree pits and swales.

With funding from Department for Education, Leicester City Council have installed SuDS features in two Leicester Schools this year which were identified as being at risk from surface water flooding.

The Sustainable Schools team have been running education sessions with their Year 5 and/or 6 classes which involve a mixture of learning in the classroom, science experiments and practical outdoor learning such as planting the rainwater planters and making seeds bombs.

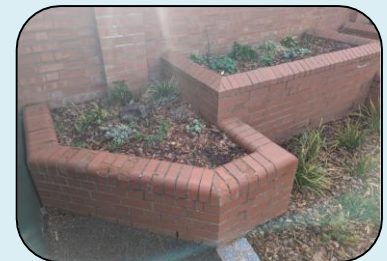
These SuDS features will reduce the risk from flooding, provide habitat for wildlife and provide places for the children to play. The pictures below show some of the completed work – we can't wait to see them when the plants grow!



Top row and left - **Evington Valley Primary's** new raingarden, rainwater planter, water butt and permeable paving.



Right and bottom row - **Spinney Hill Primary's** new raingardens and tree pits that have been created.



Registration now open for **JUST ONE Tree Day – Friday 16th October 2026** (or do any time of the year)

Last year 33 schools across Leicester took part!

Inspire your pupils to tackle climate action and grow a greener future with JUST ONE Tree Day – a fun, educational non-uniform day where every £1 raised plants a tree in a reforestation project in Africa, Asia & South America.

It's **free** for schools to take part, comes with **curriculum-linked resources**, and helps children feel empowered rather than anxious about the planet.

Run by non-profit JUST ONE Tree – proud partner of the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration** and **Eco-Schools England** – the initiative tackles climate change head-on by growing forests, regenerating oceans and educating future generations.

Over 250,000 pupils have already taken part, helping plant **442,000+** trees.

“In a recent Student Council meeting, pupils said they thought that supporting Just One Tree was a great idea and, because of that, they were proud to be part of Oakwood Community School!”

“We've met the team at JUST ONE Tree and believe this is a fantastic and high-impact project for all schools to get involved in.”

Unite with schools across the world and make sure your school is part of this growing movement. Sign up today at www.justonetree.life/schools-sustainability





Energy Sparks



Energy Sparks is an online platform which monitor schools' gas and electricity consumption. The platform includes an educational programme which can be used with classes or small groups of children, such as your eco-committee. Energy Sparks can help to reduce carbon emissions and work towards addressing the climate emergency.


How can Energy Sparks help you?

- Using smart meter data will show you how much energy your school uses.
- Pupils and staff can use information to help save energy.
- A scoreboard is in place for schools to compare energy savings with others nearby.
- Online, email and text notification of changes in energy consumption, with recommended energy saving actions tailored just for your school.
- Energy saving interventions and investments are suggested to maximise cost and energy savings.
- Over 70 energy related activities for eco-teams or class-based learning.

Last year your school used 280,000 kWh of gas.

It will take 66 trees, each living 40 years, to absorb the carbon dioxide released when this gas was burnt.

Find out how much energy has been used



<

Let's look at the energy use data for your school:



For more information about Energy Sparks, please visit the website at <https://energysparks.uk/>



Supports the Eco-Schools energy topic



Plastic Clever Schools



As we start the new year, we are really pleased to say that there are over 40 schools in Leicester currently registered on the Plastic Clever Schools website. This means we have a huge opportunity to reduce problem plastics in Leicester!

What does Plastic Clever Schools involve?

There are three stages to the programme:

1. Inspire – hold a litter pick and share why YOU want to be a Plastic Clever School
2. Investigate – look at the use of plastic in your school and create an action plan
3. Act – Take steps to reduce 2 problem plastics in your school and celebrate YOUR success!

There are brand new resources available on the online platform, including workbooks for students, resources for teachers and a display board showing success stories from schools across the countries.

How can you join?

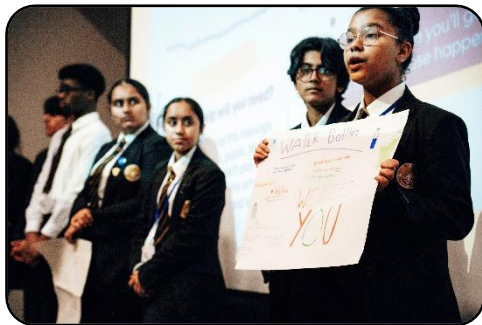
Simply sign up online through the Plastic Clever Schools [website](#). Work through the stages and start reducing your schools plastic waste now!

All of the work you do for Plastic Clever Schools can be used to support your Green Flag application!

For more information about the award, please contact Vicky on victoria.brown@leicester.gov.uk



Inspire



Investigate



Act



Supports the Eco-Schools water, litter, waste and marine topics

