

Hurry if you want to turn over a new LEAF

Keep Scotland Beautiful has expanded its [Learning about Forests \(LEAF\)](#) programme after more than 50 establishments participated in a pilot.

LEAF advocates outdoor learning and hands-on experiences and the key aims are to reconnect children and young people of all ages with natural environments while promoting and expanding outdoor education and improving their knowledge of forest-based ecosystems.

The LEAF pilot programme saw schools and nurseries across 21 local authorities undertaking a variety of nature-based activities, including identifying trees and wildlife that depend on their local nature, working with local councils to make schools better for wildlife, and planting trees, flowers, bulbs, fruit and vegetables.

Nicola Davidson, education and learning officer at Keep Scotland Beautiful, said: "LEAF is a fantastic opportunity for schools and nurseries to get involved in a project that supports mental and physical health of pupils and teachers, as well as giving pupils the opportunity to expand their learning in an outdoor environment.

"Outdoor learning and nature connection are not an extra to be fitted in, they are key components of education that are being demanded by pupils."

Annette Valentine, teacher at Midlothian's St Andrew's RC Primary School, said: "It was lovely to have a reason to be outside. Our playground has been transformed, we have an area outside each classroom where pupils can garden and observe wildlife.

"We have also cleared an area of woodland on our grounds to become an outside classroom. The buzz about the gardens and wildlife was something we did not have before and is there in abundance now."

Numbers for second LEAF programme are limited and schools are encouraged to enroll early to avoid disappointment. Registration forms must be completed before the beginning of October. Visit [LEAF | Keep Scotland Beautiful for more information.](#)