

CLIMATE AMBASSADORS

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

End of Phase 1 highlights report



Funded by



In association with



Welcome

“ We are immensely proud of what the Climate Ambassadors programme has achieved in its first phase. In just over two years, this partnership has grown into a national programme supporting thousands of education settings across England. As you read through this summary of our work, we hope you get a sense of the scale, commitment and collective effort behind it.

Although our professional backgrounds differ, we share a clear ambition: an education system that is resilient to climate impacts; that protects and restores nature; that equips every learner with the knowledge and skills to thrive in a changing world; and that reduces its own environmental footprint.

The enthusiasm we have seen from volunteers, and the demand from nurseries, schools, SEND settings and colleges, shows how vital this mission is, and how willing people are to contribute. Taking part ourselves as Climate Ambassadors in September 2025 was a powerful reminder of the difference this support can make in real learning environments.

We are also proud to play our part in the wider ecosystem of organisations supporting climate and nature action in education. Collaboration across this landscape isn't always straightforward, but we remain committed to working openly, constructively and in the spirit of shared purpose so that settings receive clear, coherent and joined-up support.

Our progress has only been possible because of the people involved. Our national and regional teams, Steering Group members, Climate Ambassadors and the educators and leaders we work with have shown extraordinary creativity, commitment and care.

We are delighted that the Department for Education has extended the programme to September 2027. There is still much to do, and many more settings seeking support. If you are interested in joining us over the next phase, we would be very pleased to hear from you.”

Charlotte Bonner and Andrew Charlton-Perez



Our reach



More than **1,100 volunteer Climate Ambassadors**, from more than **500 different employers**, are participating in the programme.



There have been more than **3,200 engagements from more than 2,200 different education settings**, or 1 in 10 of the education settings on the DfE database with the programme.



There are at least **35 Climate Ambassadors** available in every region of England.



Our engagement has been evenly spread between areas with higher and lower socio-economic advantage as measured (for example) by the proportion of pupils with access to free-school meals. **15% of our engagements have been with settings where more than 40% of pupils access FSMs.**



25% of our engagements have been in Rural settings with our engagements in equal proportion between Urban and Rural areas.



At least **5% of settings in each region of England** have engaged with the scheme, while in some regions more than 1 in 6 settings have engaged.



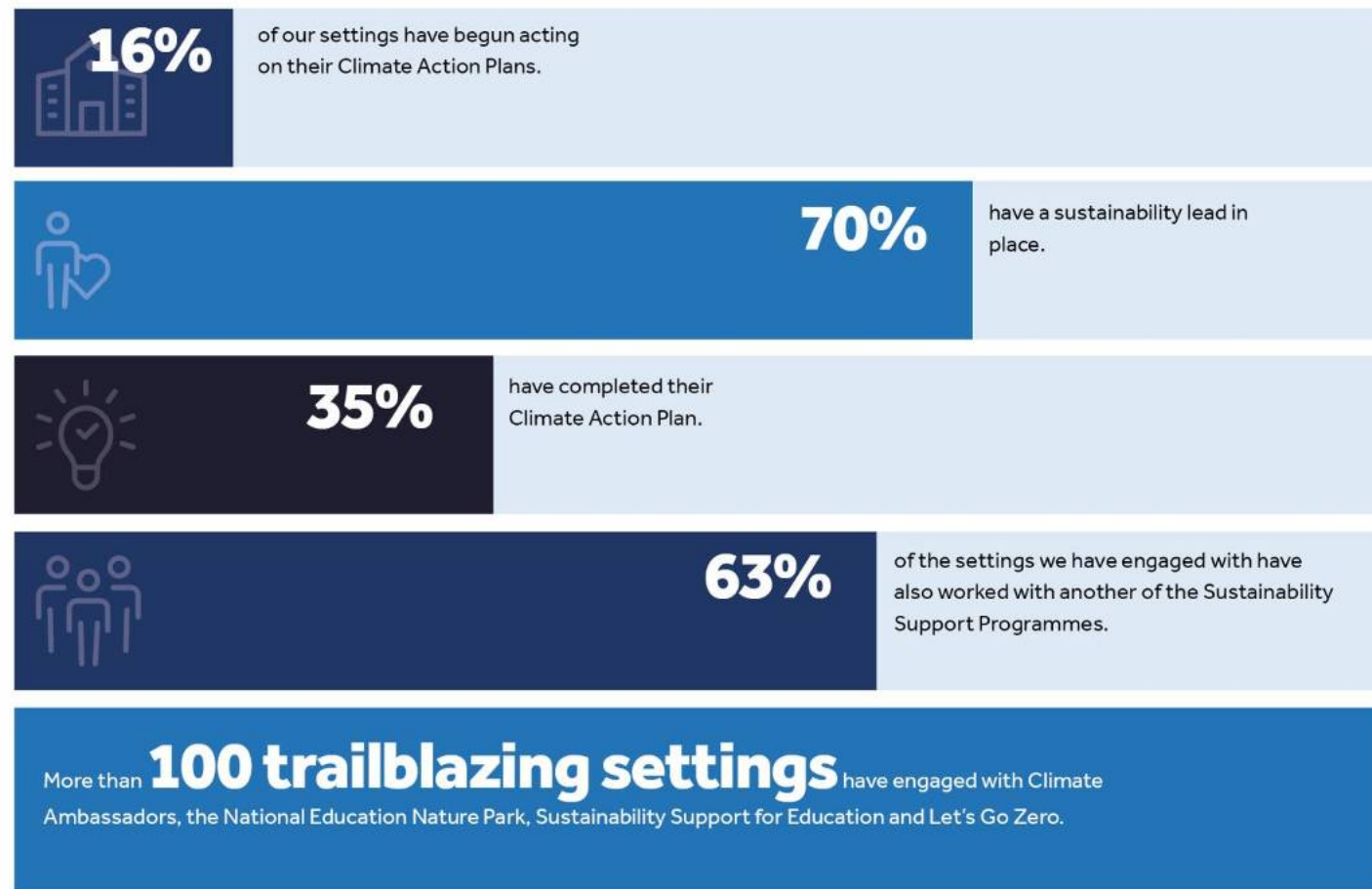
More than **1,200 Primary Schools** and **450 Secondary Schools** have engaged.



Over 900 new ambassadors have completed our 'Getting Started as a Climate Ambassador' training. **Almost 200 of our Climate Ambassadors have also participated in our Leadership Skills Programme.** 100% of those who have completed the programme and given feedback **rated it as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good'**, and agreed that it helped them develop the skills, values and confidence to tackle sustainability challenges.

Impact snapshot

We measure our impact through our Reach-Engage-Act and Climate Action Tracker surveys which follows the journey of each education setting as they develop a Climate Action Plan. Based on this data we know that:



Working with others – stakeholders and partnerships

Collaboration and relationship-building are at the heart of what we do as we expand and diversify our programme's reach, impact and legacy. This includes working with a wide range of networks and stakeholders including education, professional bodies, government agencies, businesses, NGOs, funders and other sustainability education initiatives.

Governance – Our volunteer Steering Group meets quarterly and is an invaluable critical friend to the project, providing expert support, challenge and strategic direction. The Steering Group has members from industry, education unions, environmental organisations and includes a representative of the DfE Youth Sustainability Champions.

Outreach – Almost 50 outreach events have engaged with more than 700 participants from communities across education, professional bodies, business and third sectors.

Supporters – Our growing cohort of over 20 Climate Ambassadors Supporter Organisations are important allies, champions and advocates including media organisations, industry groups and teaching organisations.

SUPPORTER CLIMATE AMBASSADORS
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Case studies

University of Birmingham's Student Climate Ambassadors

Through a collaboration between The Birmingham Institute of Forestry Research (BIFoR) and The University of Birmingham's Careers Network, a series of Sustainability and Stakeholder Engagement student internships were born. These students, from a wide range of disciplines and levels of study, spent their summers building a strong foundation of green skills with the end goal of delivering the BIFoR Future Forests Summit. This event was targeted towards A-level students from local schools, and involved panels, talks, and research posters. It ended in a workshop where students developed sustainability policies for their schools and learnt about green careers.

A pivotal part of getting the interns ready to run this event was them becoming Climate Ambassadors. When they signed up, they received a DBS and safeguarding training to prepare them for working with young people. They took our Getting Started as a Climate Ambassador training which provided them with essential context for developing sustainability policies in schools. They were connected with their local Climate Ambassador community, a network of people ideal for upcoming sustainability professionals to learn from and build relationships.

The success of this programme is evidenced in both its impact on the student interns and the young people they engaged with. 82% of attendees reported being more interested in a green career after the interns' event:

“ I found it very interesting, specifically to meet everyone working in sustainability and hear their individual roles, as before that I wasn't sure what roles there were in the field. ”

Student attending the BIFoR Future Forests Summit

The interns themselves reported skills and confidence development and increased interest in sustainability related roles:

“ The future forests teams activity and summit helped me improve my social skills and public speaking skills. I developed my communication skills, teamwork. I have also learnt more about sustainability, and would like to consider sustainability related roles in the future. ”

Sustainability and Stakeholder Engagement student interns.



Case studies

Walkington Primary School

Clare Collins is a Climate Ambassador at her child's primary school in Beverley, East Riding of Yorkshire. She is a postgraduate researcher in environmental and biological sciences at the University of Hull. Clare's involvement began with a conversation with headteacher Chris Bullough at the school gates. Chris has a personal passion for sustainability and climate action. About three years ago he had noticed a growing awareness of schools taking a role in our societal movement towards sustainability, heightened by the Department for Education's Sustainability and Climate Change strategy. Due to Chris wanting support with the business sustainability aspect of the school, he reached out to Let's Go Zero.

Richard Berry (Let's Go Zero Climate Action Advisor) shared information about the DfE Sustainability Support Programme sister project Climate Ambassadors scheme with Chris who then reached out to explore local volunteers who may be able to support the school. Immediately Chris thought of Clare.

Clare was already signed up with STEM Learning as a STEM Ambassador and had previously shown interest with environmental issues at the school. To become a Climate Ambassador she simply attached the scheme to her existing STEM Learning profile and completed a two-hour remote training session. Clare then met with Chris to discuss what the school were already doing and what she could bring to support and extend this. Following this, Clare, Richard and Chris met together as a group to tour the school site and discuss feasible actions to form their Climate Action Plan.

Clare feels that her role of a parent and the school Climate Ambassador allow her to formally be involved with the school's sustainability journey. It gives her a voice in her community and opportunity for growth aligning her professional and personal priorities.

“ Being a Climate Ambassador gives me the opportunity to really make a difference for our kid's future: it makes me feel so much more positive. ”

Clare Collins, Climate Ambassador.



Chris Bullough (Head Teacher), Clare Collins (Climate Ambassador), Richard Berry (Let's Go Zero Climate Action Advisor).
Photo by Harry Collins of Walkington Primary School

Case studies

Rob Sparkes and Oldfield Brow Primary School

Rob Sparkes, a senior lecturer in Environmental Science at Manchester Metropolitan University, had long wanted to share his knowledge and passion around sustainability with his daughter's school, Oldfield Brow Primary School, in Altrincham, Greater Manchester.

His offers of support had previously never come to fruition, largely because of time barriers, but with the Climate Ambassadors programme, Rob saw an opportunity to offer Carbon Literacy training, and its potential co-benefits, to the school.

Rob worked with the headteacher and a Year 5 teacher to discuss what might be appropriate for younger learners. To maintain students' concentration and minimise disruption to their usual learning, the teacher suggested five post-lunch 20-minute sessions. Rob then adapted the Carbon Literacy materials that he uses with his university students, condensing them into five digestible sessions full of engaging age-appropriate games and tasks.

The sessions were very well-received, and led to wider work, as the school's Pupil Parliament newsletter recounts:

“ Following his work with Year 5, Dr. Sparkes met with the Environmental Committee of the Pupil Parliament to begin shaping the school's first Climate Action Plan. The meeting focused on practical steps the school can take to become more environmentally responsible, covering four key areas: Decarbonisation, Biodiversity, Adaptation and Resilience, and Climate Education. Learners and committee members shared thoughtful ideas, from installing solar panels and improving insulation to creating a herb garden and bug hotel. Dr. Sparkes provided expert guidance and shared useful resources and funding opportunities to help bring these ideas to life. He has offered to continue supporting the school as the Climate Action Plan develops, helping to ensure that learners, staff, leadership and the Governing Board all play a part in building a greener future. ”

James Cash, Headteacher, also reflected on the wider impact of Rob's support:

“ Dr Sparkes' climate education sessions helped me reflect more deeply on my own impact and choices. They were definitely one of the reasons I decided to make the switch to an electric car. They've made a real impact, not just on the pupils, but on us as staff too. ”

Stephanie Gilliver, Head of Responsible Investing, Virgin Money Investments

Leading on Virgin Money Investment's journey to be a responsible investor, Stephanie's role is to lead on how we consider people and the planet in the way they help the customer grow their money over the long-term. She is also passionate about wanting to use knowledge and energy to help create positive change. Wanting to be part of the opportunity to build more sustainable and regenerative systems for a brighter future for all, Stephanie joined the Climate Ambassadors community.

Stephanie is fortunate enough to work for a company that values volunteering, with two days given for all staff to be used as they wish and flexible working which enables this to be put to the most effective use. Through Virgin Money she signed up as a STEM volunteer, a committed group that do amazing educational outreach, and has been fortunate enough to work with this group in some career events.

“ I work full time, have two children and a house that doesn't clean itself... Why would I want to add to my spinning plates by volunteering?

Anyone that spares their precious free time volunteering will know the answer to that question:

- It is enriching and rewarding
- It teaches you stuff and provides a different perspective
- It has a positive impact

That positive impact can be made in lots of different ways. For me I wanted to help with local impact in responding to the climate emergency. When I heard about the Climate Ambassadors programme operating through STEM Learning my hand shot up, I am in! ”

Stephanie Gilliver, Climate Ambassador

National infrastructure

Funded by



Led by



Digital Infrastructure



Training and Mentoring



Engagement



Regional hubs



Sister projects



Identify a sustainability lead or team



Enhance climate education



Refill Recycle



Develop mindset for a sustainable future



Make a climate action plan



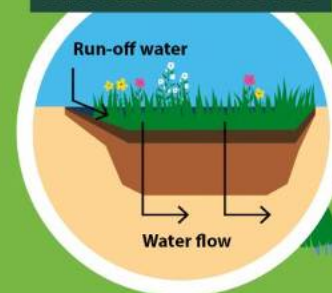
Map and monitor biodiversity



Encourage active travel



Solutions for climate resilience



Use data to reduce energy, waste and emissions

