



The National Education Nature Park

Embedding nature-based learning for children and young people

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The [National Education Nature Park](#) is a key strand of the DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy delivery. It seeks to embed nature-based learning in the curriculum and encourage children and young people to take action to improve the biodiversity on their school site for the benefit of people and wildlife. The Nature Park programme is led by the Natural History Museum, with support from leading institutions including the Royal Horticultural Society, the Royal Society, and the Royal Geographical Society. This [short video](#) provides more information on the National Education Nature Park.

The Nature Park programme is transforming climate education, enabling children and young people to take decisive action to boost biodiversity by bringing together school land into a "virtual nature park". The goal is to empower every child and young person in England, through their place of learning, to take action to make a positive difference by:

- Developing a connection to nature
- Understanding the threats facing it
- Feeling able to act for nature

The programme has been designed so that all educational settings can take part regardless of the size of their outdoor or green spaces – you don't need access to any large green spaces to take part. In fact, creating green spaces in previously 'grey' areas, such as concrete paving, brings the greatest benefits for both nature and young people. So, if your site has grey spaces, you have the most potential to make a difference! Improvements can be made to any site, no matter its size or starting point. This means all schools, nurseries and colleges can take part and make a difference for nature.

Since the Nature Park launched in 2023, 2,100 education settings across England have put themselves in the map and mapped nearly 5 million square metres of habitat. In West Sussex, 46 schools have already registered to participate in the Nature Park and are starting to map the habitats on their sites. The Nature Park has regional officers available in the southeast who can visit schools to help with different aspects of the programme. To get in contact with the southeast regional team please email southeastnaturepark@rhs.org.uk.

If your school is already participating in the Nature Park and mapping your site, please share your experiences and progress with the West Sussex County Council Sustainability Team by emailing sustainability@westsussex.gov.uk so that we can help spread the word.

The Nature Park programme is designed around five main aims with several co-benefits:

- **Fostering a connection to nature and improving wellbeing:** the programme's suite of activities develops young people's connection to and confidence in nature in their local environments. Plus, it channels their eco-anxiety into action and allows them to see the collective difference they are making for nature through hundreds of small actions.

- The programme follows five key steps, which support the development of skills and wellbeing to help all children and young people engage with nature. This [video](#) explains the five-step Nature Park process in more detail. By encouraging a strong connection with nature, the Nature Park brings significant co-benefits for mental health and wellbeing. Access to green space has been shown to have [overwhelmingly positive impacts](#) on the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of young people. For more information, please click [here](#) to access the National Education Nature Park's 2023/24 Annual Report.