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# LEARNING TOGETHER

SCHOOLS AND THE NATURAL  
ENVIRONMENT SECTOR



How schools and natural  
environment organisations can  
work well with each other



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# LEARNING TOGETHER

## SCHOOLS AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SECTOR



**How schools and natural environment organisations can work well with each other**

### ABOUT THIS PAPER

Welcome to this Learning Paper, one of four in the third series of papers. **Here we focus on co-working between natural environment organisations and schools in providing high quality outdoor learning experiences for children and young people. The paper is based on findings from Access to Nature projects about how they are building relationships with schools, and working with teachers to overcome obstacles and challenges to enable learning - for children, young people and those who work with them.**

The third series of papers uses information gathered from well established projects and follows on from Access to Nature's early findings papers. These papers are being produced across the lifetime of Access to Nature and demonstrate what is being learnt about encouraging people who have little or no experience of the natural environment to go out into the outdoors. They also provide insights into the running of a programme such as this. This includes messages which seek to inform the continuing work of Access to Nature projects and the work of other organisations interested in or committed to this kind of work. More Learning Papers will be produced in the final phase of Access to Nature and as we build on our learning to date.



## THE CURRENT CONTEXT

The current political agenda parallels the goals of many of the Access to Nature projects. The vision for a Big Society focuses on a belief that people should be empowered to improve their communities and shape the services they receive. The three core strands of the Localism agenda – promoting social action in communities; empowering communities; and opening up public services – all reflect the kinds of ambitions of many of the funded projects. Providing access to the natural environment is a core aspiration of the 2011 Natural Environment White Paper, a landmark document that emphasised the huge value of a resilient natural environment and the vital role it plays in improving people's lives as well as in underpinning economic growth. Within Natural England, the commitments to reconnect people with nature; protect natural assets; and maximise the opportunities offered by a greener economy are all priorities that underpin and complement Access to Nature.

## LEARNING TOGETHER: benefits for children and young people

The benefits of children engaging in learning in natural outdoor settings are becoming increasingly well documented, with outcomes such as improved educational attainment, the development of natural science skills and environmental awareness, and improved health and wellbeing, social cohesion and attitudes towards others being affirmed by recent research<sup>1</sup>. Early learning from Access to Nature has also contributed to this evidence base, demonstrating that outdoor exploration and discovery provides new understanding for children about the world around them, enables children to engage well with learning processes, and boosts self esteem and confidence to learn<sup>2</sup>. Many schools have recognised their potential to support this learning by providing access to nature for children and delivering outdoor learning within their own grounds and in local green spaces. Access to Nature projects have seized the opportunity to work with schools to release this potential further, utilising the specific areas of expertise that each party offers to children and young people.



## A NATURAL CLASSROOM

### The impact of good co-working between schools and natural environment organisations

Access to Nature evaluation reports from projects illustrate the range of benefits gained by children and young people...

#### Spending time in the outdoors accessing nature



"Prior to the project, there had been no engagement between local schools and the canal, despite one school actually bordering it. At our half way point, four of the five local schools and 145 pupils have now engaged in the project."

Community Liaison Officer, The Waterways Trust  
(Canal Connections, East Manchester)

"It's much better for the pupils to be out looking at plants first hand than just showing pictures on a smart board."

Primary School teacher, Birmingham (Holy Trinity Churchyard project, Birmingham)

#### Learning to care for the natural environment

"I'm proud that my work will be in a brand new park."

Primary School pupil, Enfield, London (Tunnel Vision, London Borough of Enfield)

"I've learnt how to protect the environment, how many animals are there and how to use shears."

"I think it is so much more fun than sitting in a classroom learning about it. You get to see what you are trying to save from pollution."

Primary School pupils, Blackpool (North Blackpool Pond Trail, Groundwork Lancashire West & Wigan)

### Gaining a habit of spending time outdoors

"Four times as many pupils from schools in Nottingham independently returned to the site they had visited as part of Access to Nature than pupils who had not been part of the project."

Walk on the Wildside, Nottinghamshire  
(Castle Cavendish Foundation)



### Increased confidence and motivation

"We've seen week on week that they are asking more questions and engaging more. They are working harder and longer."

Primary school teacher, Leeds (Wyke Beck  
Valley Pride, Leeds City Council)

### Learning about risks and how to keep safe

"How can children learn what they are capable of if they are in an environment with no risks? In the woods...they've made big progress in physical skills, they've been making real learning about risks and becoming more independent."

Early Years Educator, Newcastle (Early  
Learning in Nature, Sightlines Initiative)

### Connecting with learning back in the classroom

"Meeting a National Park Ranger and having first hand experiences of the habitats in the Peak District has really helped ecology students when back in the classroom."

Secondary school teacher, Staffordshire (Stepping  
Stones to Nature, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust)



Particular benefits for children with additional needs

“There is simply no substitute for being outdoors and experiencing nature first hand. The project is providing children and young people with an unforgettable and meaningful experience that will remain with them for life. Special school pupils particularly benefit from these hands on experiences and achieving an award through their hard work empowers children as ambassadors for enjoying nature and advocates for the importance of nature conservation.”

Outdoor Education Advisor, Cheshire East Council (Wild at Heart, Groundwork Cheshire)

Social skills

“He thoroughly enjoyed the residential, interacting well with pupils from other schools, showing increased confidence and independence.”

Special school teacher, Cheshire (Wild at Heart, Groundwork Cheshire)

Academic achievement

“The impact of the project was noted in advances in children’s learning across all areas of the curriculum as a result of the positive impact on their motivation and ability to make deep connections between different elements of learning, developing the deep and meaning exploration and thinking that is so pertinent to children of this age group.”

School Improvement Service, North Tyneside Council (Early Learning in Nature, Sightlines Initiative)



## LEARNING TOGETHER: successful strategies

Recent studies have sought to interpret the challenges faced by schools and their partners in making outdoor learning work effectively, by identifying difficulties and barriers which need to be addressed by schools and by the natural environment organisations working alongside them<sup>3</sup>. This paper contributes to this debate by identifying the key challenges, successful strategies and learning points from Access to Nature.

The real and effective co-working with schools created by Access to Nature projects has built a picture of the common difficulties facing schools and natural environment organisations and of approaches (and attitudes) that are working well in overcoming those difficulties. This picture is summarised in the table below and discussed in the notes that follow:



“The project has had a positive impact on how staff structure pupils’ learning opportunities and has broadened their knowledge and skills. This has had a direct benefit on what is offered to the pupils and has enriched their learning opportunities. The project has provided us with chance to expand our curriculum and allow pupils to experience new ways of learning.”

Deputy Head Teacher, Rosebank School,  
Cheshire (Wild at Heart, Groundwork Cheshire)

### PRINCIPLE CHALLENGE

### STRATEGY FROM ACCESS TO NATURE

Schools may not immediately appreciate the potential of outdoor learning

Invest time to make good connections with schools

Schools can be inexperienced and lack confidence in delivering outdoor learning

Offer support and resources to schools

Working together outdoors is a complex task

Be highly flexible and well organised

Natural environment organisations can lack knowledge of how schools work

Connect outdoor learning with the curriculum

Co-work needs good communication to succeed

Build collaborative relationships

**Invest time to make good connections with schools**

Access to Nature projects have expressed surprise, and some frustration, at the amount of time it can take to engage schools at the outset of their work. This may be due, at least in part, to the fact that the choice to engage in outdoor learning remains an individual and voluntary one for each school. The body of evidence of the impact of outdoor learning is growing, as is the availability of frameworks for applying learning and established approaches (such as Eco Schools and Forest Schools). However, local factors, such as the ease of access to green spaces, or the enthusiasm and commitment of individual teachers are often strong influences on whether a school adopts outdoor learning practice<sup>4</sup>.

Within this context, Access to Nature projects are deploying a range of tactics to promote their work and to start making connections with schools, with varying results. The practices shown below provide a mini guide to engaging schools. While not a firm list of do's and don'ts, the projects' experience is helpful in understanding approaches that are more likely to bring about positive engagement with schools and allow projects and schools to move towards working together more quickly:



**WORKS WELL**

**WORKS LESS WELL**

Personal approaches

Open invites to promotional meetings for all schools in an area

Knowledge of available local green spaces

Assuming there will be a suitable site for outdoor learning close to each school

Negotiating taster sessions with individual schools

Offering fixed taster session dates and locations

Being prepared to adjust or tailor work to meet school needs

Offering a fixed, inflexible programme

Seeking out enthusiasts for outdoor learning

Targeting particular roles within a school



The common characteristic of the tactics that are working well is that they each require an investment of time, to make adequate personal contact, to prepare well and to embark on negotiation with schools. On the other hand, choosing not to invest time in engaging schools can be counter-productive. As some Access to Nature projects have learnt, using a more generic approach to engagement which doesn't fit well with schools' needs can ultimately be more time intensive, as it is less likely to yield good results and further interventions may be required, or will need to be repeated or changed.



## ENGAGING SCHOOLS

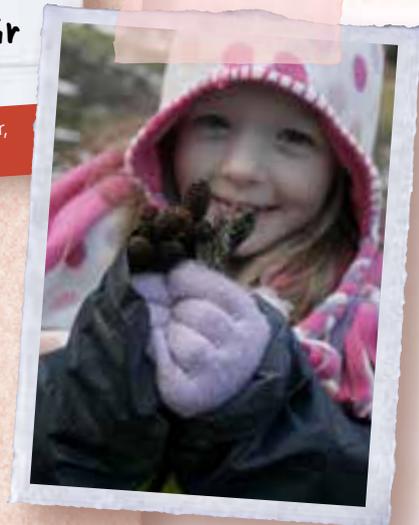
### Stepping Stones to Nature

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust works with secondary schools providing a range of environmental education sessions, residential experiences and teacher training opportunities. Engagement with schools has been good, with positive outcomes for young people and for teachers, and the project has learnt a great deal from the experience of co-working with schools.

The project held initial meetings with schools and colleges in the target area to discuss the offer available to the schools. The project learnt that timetabling restrictions and the time needed to organise outdoor activities were common barriers for teachers in accessing outdoor learning, and that, where practice occurred, it was 'stuck in a rut' and teachers were looking for new ways of delivering the curriculum. These initial meetings also highlighted the need to identify local (i.e. within walking distance) green spaces for work, as this would significantly increase the likelihood of repeat / ongoing use.

*"Trying to persuade teachers to deviate away from their 'usual' field visits can be quite tricky. Some see trips as having to take place miles away, but we want them to realise that there are fantastic green spaces right on their doorstep that they can utilise free of charge."*

Community and Education Manager,  
Staffordshire Wildlife Trust



A pattern of investing time in planning sessions and activities with schools has developed, with project staff working with teachers to ensure sessions meet specific curriculum needs, are pitched at the correct ability level for the young people, and are well timed.

Giving time to good engagement continues within the project. Listening to schools has influenced the timings of residentials, adjustments to booking arrangements, and choices over the timing and location of teacher training events.

The project reports that it took them six months to work out the most successful methods of engaging the schools as well as significant amounts of logistics and organisation. This investment has been worthwhile as it has improved opportunities for young people to take part in outdoor learning. Benefits for teachers include awareness of local sites, commitment to outdoor education, and a willingness to share approaches with colleagues.

### **Offer support and resources to schools**

The day-to-day pressures encountered by schools mean that entering into a new venture with a new partner can be a significant undertaking. Access to Nature projects have discovered that what they believe is a good offer which will benefit schools and children is often not enough to encourage engagement. Projects have reported a number of reasons for this including:

- Lack of history at schools of using the outdoors and a subsequent lack of confidence among teachers that they have the skills and experience to use the outdoors well
- Lack of awareness of the green spaces near to the school
- Concerns over the perceived risks associated with outdoor learning.

These findings are consistent with those of other research that has studied teachers' attitudes towards outdoor learning<sup>5</sup>. For example, teachers new to outdoor learning had a tendency to focus on one-off opportunities (such as field trips) or specific aspects of the curriculum (e.g. science or maths). Also their use of local green spaces close to school sites was very limited, with schools tending to either stay within the confines of their own grounds to deliver outdoor learning, or to use distant outdoor sites, such as established outdoor activity centres.



As a result Access to Nature projects have needed to offer a variety of support, resources and opportunities to schools as part of the process of co-working and to help build experience and confidence among teaching colleagues. This has enabled schools to take up the chance of new work with children in the outdoors and to become more aware of the green spaces close to them. It has also helped to begin the process of embedding outdoor learning within the everyday practice of teachers and schools. This support falls into three categories:

- Practical support aimed at making delivery easier e.g. transport, learning materials etc.
- Opportunities for teachers to explore a new way of working and apply their knowledge to new settings e.g. other training, mentoring, coaching and networking
- Providing expertise in learning about the environment (part of the everyday practice for many projects and an area where teachers can often lack confidence).



## SUPPORTING SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

### Early Learning in Nature

Schools and Children's Centres in and around Newcastle have joined with Sightlines Initiative's Early Learning in Nature project to provide creative woodland learning for early years children (aged 3-5). The offer from the project is that of a shared learning experience between the project, the educators from the schools, artists (contracted by the project) and children. To enable schools to embrace the offer, Sightlines provide a substantial package of developmental support to teachers:

- A programme of Continuing Professional Development including termly training and coaching to support teachers to learn outdoor delivery skills, a pedagogical approach to learning in the outdoors, and how to identify, record, document and report benefits for children
- Termly exchange sessions between teachers from different schools involved in the project
- A web forum to enable ongoing connections between teachers from different settings
- Resources including a guidance workbook for educators
- Periodic learning conferences which have brought practitioners together from across the region to share practice and learn from each other.

Offering support recognises the shared role in enabling learning between school and project, and the ambition to embed skills, knowledge and attitudes to outdoor learning within teaching practice and the overall approach of the schools.

*“We feel that the project is clearly making an impact on us as educators, and that this type of approach appears to be being advocated among early years experts.”*

Primary School Teacher, Early Learning in Nature

### Be highly flexible and well organised

Taking learning into the outdoors challenges schools and natural environment organisations in many ways, providing unusual planning, logistical, practical, safety, teaching and learning challenges. A common finding from Access to Nature is the need to have a highly flexible and adaptive style and approach to manage these challenges. The variety of learning settings and learning activities, and the response to those settings and activities from children and young people, adds to a need for flexibility.

This combination of flexibility and organisation has been described differently by projects as a need to ‘think on your feet’ and to ‘anticipate all eventualities’, for example:

- Adjusting timings to suit school needs (some to accommodate after school sessions, some within school hours)
- Coping with different sizes of classes or groups, and having resources available as needed
- Managing in different weather, or having fall back plans in place
- Having alternative activities and approaches available to meet the needs of different children
- Using creative approaches (typically arts techniques) to enable learning
- Offering children choices over activities
- Finding new ways to document learning and record progress.



## PURPOSEFUL PRAGMATISM

### Wild at Heart

Groundwork Cheshire works with 16 Special Schools across the county, taking groups of pupils into natural settings in their school grounds, local green spaces and on a residential to the Peak District National Park. The project uses two environmental awards, the John Muir Award and the RSPB Wildlife Action Award, to support children in learning, and offers training to school staff.

Wider research indicates that establishing a connection with the natural environment has become part of the work of many Special Schools<sup>6</sup>, in recognition of the value which outdoor learning can offer to pupils who do not respond well to traditional environments or teaching approaches<sup>7</sup>. This can often be restricted to activities in school grounds, as the logistical and human resource challenges of working outdoors with children with additional needs can be significant, and often difficult to predict<sup>8</sup>.

Groundwork adopted a highly flexible approach to their work with Special Schools. For example, they chose a second award to support pupils when it became clear that the John Muir Award was not well suited to all the students. This involved considerable research, adjustment and trialing with schools to ensure all those accessing the project had the chance to achieve an Award.

The project has also needed to be extremely adaptable to circumstances. Because of the additional needs of the children and young people, last minute changes can often occur, and the project has needed to work closely with the schools to re-schedule or adjust activities to enable all the children to gain the most from sessions.

*“The single most important lesson is the need to be as flexible as possible with schools, and to be understanding when planned sessions need to be adapted, postponed or cancelled, sometimes at very short notice. Issues can arise with pupils involved in the project, or with other pupils who are in school, but whose needs require sudden changes in planned staffing levels (meaning staff are lost for the outdoor activity).”*

Project Manager, Wild at Heart



### Connect outdoor learning with the curriculum

Co-working necessarily involves bringing together the agenda of more than one party. Within the relationship between schools and Access to Nature projects, the respective goals of each party (in essence, education and increasing access to the natural environment) need to be reconciled and blended.

For the organisations delivering Access to Nature, this means developing a good working understanding of the culture and set-up within schools. It also necessitates an appreciation of a school's core business, in the shape of the National Curriculum, and where a project's offer of co-working connects with the curriculum.

While there are convincing arguments that focused outdoor experiences will add to children's motivation, social skills and self-confidence, and boost their readiness to learn<sup>9</sup>, schools are still likely to need to see a connection to the formal educational agenda to embrace the opportunities offered by an outdoor learning provider.

Feedback from projects echoes wider research that has highlighted some of the challenges associated with making the connection between activity and curriculum<sup>10</sup>:

- The physical separation of the location of outdoor learning from school can encourage a disconnection with what happens in school - involving teachers at each stage of the planning, delivery and follow up is the most common solution to this challenge
- Enabling preparatory and follow up work, usually within school, to support outdoor activities or programmes - some Access to Nature projects have visited schools to deliver pre- and post-activity work whilst others have supplied materials to enable teachers to accomplish this
- Agreeing how teaching will take place in the outdoors and what learning is anticipated - there are examples from Access to Nature of shared pedagogical approaches emerging between project staff and teachers where approaches to teaching have been discussed, negotiated or co-developed.



## MAKING THE LINK Sea Green

Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust work to connect children and young people from disadvantaged communities with the natural environment of the Bay. The project has included the development of a Sea Green School programme, and developed a new Level 3 qualification to become a Sea Green Leader. The qualification will enable the continued running of the Sea Green School, resulting in the engagement of more children and young people, improved awareness of the marine environment and the promotion of future guardianship of natural resources.

Feedback from children accessing the pilot about their enjoyment and learning has been very positive. Other evaluation suggested potential improvements to the shape of the work, including shorter activities, changes to locations, and a request from teachers to make stronger connections to the curriculum. This led the project to adjust the Sea Green School programme to make direct connections to the new 2014 Schools Curriculum and produce information on learning links and outcomes that will be given to participating teachers.

**“Teachers wanted the programme to be more structured and linked to the curriculum, enabling them to link the learning to the classroom for pre and post visits as well.”**

Project Officer, Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust



## Build collaborative relationships

To deliver good outcomes for children and young people through outdoor learning, Access to Nature projects and schools are working as partners across England. As we have discovered through a previous Learning Paper<sup>11</sup>, effective partnerships are based on shared values, vision and purpose, good joint planning and shared delivery. These are characteristics that have been evident in the reports studied for this paper, and have been made possible through a willingness on behalf of schools and projects to communicate well and work to develop productive relationships that have been co-operative in nature.

The experiences of the projects highlighted in this paper, and the factors and actions described to enable a collaborative approach, are consistent, and can offer insights into good co-working practice:

- Projects have sought to establish and build relationships with schools that are collaborative in nature. The relationships described by projects and by teaching staff have more substance than a simple buyer / supplier or commissioner / provider understanding, and are characterised by a shared vision for learning.
- Relationships are typically described as productive and developing. Projects and schools have sought consistent and regular contact between the key workers, and used this to enter into a dialogue to plan, deliver and evaluate their work.
- Collaborative working, as with good initial engagement, requires time to be invested. Projects have described how time has become easier to prioritise for both schools and projects as relationships have been built and the impact of work has become evident to teachers.
- Where good collaborative working is evident, solid systems for regular communication are present.
- As projects have often been reliant on teaching staff to collect good evaluation feedback from children and young people, collaborative working is helping projects, and schools, to understand the impact of their work together.



## BUILDING TRUST

### Walk on the Wildside / Wild Things

The Castle Cavendish Foundation, Groundwork Greater Nottingham and Wild Things deliver Forest School sessions and Earth Education days alongside Nottingham schools as part of the Walk on the Wildside project.

The project started from a valuable base, as Wild Things had worked with some of the schools previously, although on an ad hoc basis. Access to Nature enabled the project to develop its offer to local schools into a robust, year round, three year programme. This, in turn, provided the chance to firmly establish trusting, collaborative relationships with local schools.

Both the project and the schools report that the consistency of contact and communication created a stronger and more reliable relationship, which extended beyond the initial school point of contact to involve Head Teachers, classroom teachers and teaching assistants.

As the programme progressed, school staff, project workers and volunteers became genuine co-workers in the delivery of learning for the children, and this resulted in shifts in culture within local schools and choices in some schools to continue the work at the end of project funding (see also Embedding Practice below).

**“It has been really positive – an opportunity to create consistency with the schools and to concrete the relationships with schools and teaching assistants.”**

Project Worker, Wild Things



## LEARNING TOGETHER: embedding practice in schools

Access to Nature projects have worked closely with schools to ensure that outdoor learning will remain on offer to children once grant funding has ended.

The work of the projects described in this paper has brought about significant benefits for children and young people, and for schools and teaching staff. Good co-working brings reciprocal benefits for both parties. There is good evidence that teachers have learnt much from working closely with environment practitioners and that workers in environment organisations have developed new understanding about the realities of school operations and culture.

This exchange of learning increases the potential for future collaboration. Without such learning, the benefits will be restricted to those cohorts of children schooled during the Access to Nature period. Embedding the ethos and practice of outdoor learning within schools offers the potential for ongoing benefits for further cohorts. However, schools are left with difficult choices when the funding for co-working ceases and they are left to their own devices. Difficult decisions need to be made about the degree to which they are able to continue to invest in outdoor learning for children and young people.

The examples noted here from projects that have concluded their Access to Nature work are indicative of the fact that schools and projects have indeed learnt together, and that skills and a commitment to outdoor learning have become part of the ongoing practice for schools and teachers.



## SUSTAINING LEARNING - examples of good practice

**Walk on the Wildside** report that the project has created a culture of employing Forest School approaches in several schools. Headteachers have described 'massive impacts' for children. Two schools intend to fund ongoing work directly; another is running termly 'Green Days' based on the experience of the Access to Nature project. Three others are seeking additional funds to continue the work. Plans for a new school are incorporating Forest School activity and a Forest School site within the grounds.

86% of teachers / educators engaged with the **Early Learning in Nature** project reported the intention to continue outdoor learning work and to extend the approach to other year groups. Two Headteachers have approached Sightlines to support them in developing a whole school approach to outdoor learning; a further seven schools have requested training and a Local Education Authority in another part of the country has requested a year long coaching programme.

## LEARNING TOGETHER: in summary

Schools and natural environment organisations offer significant potential to increase access to nature, and learning about nature, to children and young people. Good co-working between schools and organisations in the natural environment sector can boost skill levels in the planning, delivery and evaluation of outdoor learning, and create positive shifts in culture within schools towards better use of the natural places as learning environments.

To bring about these benefits, schools and natural environment organisations need to work collaboratively and efficiently to create a shared agenda that will benefit children and young people. The learning from Access to Nature suggests this process will be facilitated in a number of ways:

- Through the investment of time to make good connections with schools at the outset of work
- Offering support and resources to schools to help build experience and confidence in outdoor learning
- Working in a highly flexible and organised manner, making clear connections between activity in the outdoors and the school curriculum
- Working in a collaborative style to build mutually rewarding relationships with schools.



## PROJECT FACT FILES

### Project Fact File

Name *Early Learning in Nature*

Lead *Sightlines Initiative*

Overview *The project engages Early Years providers in the North East to enable groups of children to regularly access wild spaces, supported by specialist educators and artists.*

Website *www.sightlines-initiative.com*



### Project Fact File

Name *Sea Green*

Lead *Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust*

Overview *The Sea Green project was created to connect and widen the participation of Torbay's deprived communities, especially children and young people, with the marine environment. The project aims to break down the barriers and encourage communities to have a sense of ownership and guardianship of their natural environments. Key elements include creating a Sea Green School for primary and secondary children, providing work traineeships for young adults and engaging the community and public through various events.*

Website *www.countryside-trust.org.uk/seashore/sea-school*

### Project Fact File

Name *Stepping Stones to Nature*

Lead *Staffordshire Wildlife Trust*

Overview *Stepping Stones aims to engage the most deprived communities and disadvantaged people of North Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent in the natural environment via targeted conservation opportunities and engagement with local schools.*

Website *www.staffs-wildlife.org.uk*

**Project Fact File**

**Name** *Walk on the Wildside*

**Lead** *Castle Cavendish Foundation*

**Overview** *Aims to work with schools and community groups to forge stronger relationships with the natural environment in highly deprived areas in the heart of Nottingham.*

**Website** *[www.eastmidlands.groundwork.org.uk](http://www.eastmidlands.groundwork.org.uk)*



**Project Fact File**

**Name** *Wild at Heart*

**Lead** *Groundwork Cheshire*

**Overview** *Wild at Heart supports groups of pupils from 16 special schools in Cheshire through an environmental award; promotes learning in the natural environment; trains school staff in outdoor environmental activities and builds links between the schools and local green spaces.*

**Website** *<http://www.aliasproductions.co.uk/latest-news.html> (project film)*  
*[www.northwest.groundwork.org.uk](http://www.northwest.groundwork.org.uk) (host organisation website)*

**ABOUT ACCESS TO NATURE**

Access to Nature is a scheme run by Natural England and funded by the Big Lottery Fund. Natural England works on behalf of a consortium of eleven other major environmental organisations and distributes £28.75 million Lottery funding under the scheme, which has been developed to encourage more people to enjoy the outdoors, particularly those with little or no previous contact with the natural environment.

Funded projects range from local community based schemes through to national initiatives from large organisations. Diversity in scale is mirrored by a diversity and richness of projects, from equipment to allow people with disabilities to access the natural environment; supporting disadvantaged groups and those who ordinarily face barriers to visiting the countryside; as well as many projects which are providing a range of volunteering and educational opportunities for local communities and young people.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 Dillon, J., 2011. *Understanding the Diverse Benefits of Learning in Natural Environments*. UK: King's College, London
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- 11 Bovey, H., 2012. *Making Partnerships Work*. UK: Natural England



## ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

Our documents are available as pdf downloads from our website, suitable for text reader technology. We may be able to provide other formats (e.g. Braille, a minority language, or large print) for specific documents where there is a proven communication need.

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