

# Learning in local Greenspace

- connecting young people with nature and their environment



Scottish Natural Heritage  
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

All of nature for all of Scotland  
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad



**BIG STEPS  
FOR NATURE**

MEETING THE 2020 CHALLENGE  
FOR SCOTLAND'S BIODIVERSITY

# What is this project about?

The project aims to help 100 schools across Scotland to get their pupils learning outdoors on a regular and frequent basis. This will be achieved by improving the access to and quality of a local greenspace and building confidence in teachers to take learning outdoors.

The schools that we will work with are those serving some of the most disadvantaged areas of Scotland.

The project will involve addressing barriers that currently prevent frequent outdoor learning across the curriculum.

Key to the success of the project will be partnership working between schools, local authorities (including education and other key departments such as greenspace, parks management and ranger teams) and a range of local and national environmental organisations. The project is supported by Education Scotland and the Scottish Government.



# Where has this project come from?

The main driver behind this project is the **2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity - A Strategy for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Scotland**. A **route map** for delivering this strategy was published June 2015 and it proposes six big steps for nature. This project is part of Big Step 3 "Quality greenspace for health and education benefits".

Research and practical experience shows that when children and young people spend time learning outdoors they benefit in many ways. Their attainment increases; their physical health improves through greater time spent moving about in the environment; their ability to interact socially with their peers benefits; they develop their risk taking skills and their emotional wellbeing also improves. When young, spending time in and around the sights and sounds of nature also increases an understanding of its relevance and can help embed a life-long commitment to its care.

To help maximise these benefits for children and young people, the Curriculum for Excellence states that every child has a right to outdoor learning. The General Teaching Council for Scotland **Standards** requires every school and teacher to enable Learning for Sustainability which includes outdoor learning. This project seeks targeted action to deliver this agenda, helping to improve educational attainment and local environmental quality for schools from more disadvantaged areas of Scotland.



# What will the project achieve?

This project will facilitate, support and encourage schools to break down the barriers to regular and sustained outdoor learning. This work will happen within the context of what schools and other partners are already doing, including John Muir Awards and Eco-schools. It will build on existing good practice and add value to the Scottish Government's Attainment Challenge.



The outcomes of the project sought are:

- Pupils' entitlement to regular, frequent outdoor learning experiences at all stages of learning is realised
- Pupils are more connected to their natural environment
- Pupils health and well-being are improved
- School attainment is raised
- Local greenspaces are improved for local communities and biodiversity is enhanced
- Networks of organisations supporting outdoor learning and greenspace improvements locally and nationally work together more effectively as a team
- Pupils are more engaged in learning both outdoors and in the classroom.

The outputs/deliverables of the project will vary from school to school depending on their requirements but will include:

- Greenspaces are more accessible from school grounds
- Greenspace quality is improved for outdoor learning, play and use by the community
- Teachers of target schools have the increased confidence to take learning outdoors
- Teaching resources and equipment have been sourced
- A range of project resources and reports made available on the internet to enable others to use in future.



# How will the work be led and managed?

The project is being led by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) in partnership with a wide range of environmental organisations that are experienced in helping schools to take learning outdoors. These partners include Forestry Commission Scotland, John Muir Trust, The Conservation Volunteers, Keep Scotland Beautiful, National Trust for Scotland, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Grounds for Learning and Education Scotland.

A national project steering group has been set up to oversee the project. SNH Chairs this group and colleagues from our partnership organisations are members of the steering group.

Local partnership groups are being established in each local authority area. These groups will be led by the local authority where possible and they will oversee the detailed roll out of the project with a number of schools in each area. Local or national environmental organisations will provide dedicated support to the local authority.

The main resources required are staff time and commitment across the range of partner organisations. This is largely being resourced through existing funding arrangements. SNH is providing a small amount of additional project funding for this and for other aspects of the work. It is envisaged that support for greenspace improvements will be drawn from other existing sources of external funding.



# What is the timescale?



SNH aims to work with a broad range of partners to achieve this target by 2020. It is the intention that the project will inspire many more schools to get involved in outdoor learning in a local greenspace in the future.



Progress to date and what happens next:

- A project team and national steering group has been established to manage the project at the national level.
- The project is underway across seven local authorities - West Dunbartonshire, East Ayrshire, Edinburgh, Fife, West Lothian, South Lanarkshire and Dundee. Other local partnership groups are currently proposed for Glasgow, North Lanarkshire and Aberdeen. Partnerships are being established to support each of these areas.
- Local partnership groups have begun working with selected, eligible schools to identify what barriers exist in providing outdoor learning and what nearby greenspace/s could be used for learning. A tailored action plan will be drawn up for each school to overcome these barriers. If greenspaces need work to be made accessible, safe, or better quality, partners will enable improvements where possible. If teachers need help to plan how to deliver lessons outdoors or to deal with health and safety concerns, the partners will also aim to help with this through CLPL programmes such as Teaching in Nature.
- The project has produced a number of resources to support schools to take learning into their local greenspace. A key resource for the project is our on-line resource, [Beyond Your Boundary: easy steps to learning in local greenspace](#). This resource is available for educators in all schools, for all subjects and with pupils at all stages. It will help you to use and improve their local greenspaces and embed outdoor learning in their school across the curriculum.
- The project will be evaluated by SNH and its partners with the aim of assessing how successful this work has been. This information will then be used to inform future initiatives.

You can find out more about the Learning in Local Greenspace Project on our [webpage](#) or search #beyondyourboundary on Twitter to see how the project is progressing and the exciting things schools and partners are doing as part of the project.

If you would like more information about this work, please contact the project team at Scottish Natural Heritage:

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