



Early Learning in Nature Conference 3rd February 2012

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Natural England

Educational Access



- Natural England Advisors work with farmers and land owners in targeted areas to create HLS (Higher Level Stewardship) agreements , an agri-environment scheme which provides funding to deliver significant environmental benefits. Options include access for educational purposes.
- The farm is used as an outdoor classroom to provide the opportunity to explain the links between farming, conservation and food production and to use farm visits for curricular studies at all levels.



Educational Access



- Farms with the Educational Access option are CEVAS accredited (Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme) and deliver between 4 and 25 educational visits per year which are hosted by the farmer.
- Some farms have received additional capital grants to enhance on-site facilities for educational visits such as classrooms and toilet blocks.



Paul Keene - Avico Ltd

Educational Access



Where to get information about farm visits?

Growing Schools website <http://www.growingschools.org.uk/>

Look out for special events such as country shows for schools and Open Farm Sunday.

Where to get information, ideas and learning resources about food, farming and the countryside?

Farming & Countryside Education (FACE) website / membership

<http://www.face-online.org.uk/>

Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF) Virtual Farm Walk

<http://www.virtualfarmwalk.org/>





Everyone knows children would rather be out than in....



Welcome to the Growing Schools website which has been designed to support teachers and practitioners in using the "outdoor classroom" as a resource across the curriculum for pupils of all ages.

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Find places to visit near you!

Postcode, place or town 5km

Book for the Growing Schools Conference, 28th March 2012 here.

Latest News



Free WoodBlocX raised beds for your School!
WoodBlocX are delighted to be involved with Growing Schools for a second year and to help promote School gardening WoodBlocX are delighted to giveaway £2500 of free

Case Studies



Natural Play



- **Exploring Nature Play**

In March 2011 Play England was awarded £500,000 for the *Exploring Nature Play* project, which is aimed at helping children to explore and become more aware of nature around them and the opportunities for play and enjoyment that it provides. The grant is from Natural England's Access to Nature programme funded by the Big Lottery Fund.

- **What do we mean by nature play?**

Nature play is children exploring and enjoying the natural environment through their freely-chosen play. As well as simply enjoying playing outdoors and discovering green spaces near their homes, nature play could include planting and growing vegetables, fruit and flowers; cooking outdoors; playing with the elements or making camps and dens with natural materials.

Natural Play



- Nature play can happen anywhere – in a local patch of grass, green space, bit of woodland or park; in an adventure playground or school grounds; in a garden or allotment; at the beach or in and around a stream or pond; or at destination sites like country parks, forests, environmental and wildlife projects.



Natural Play



- **The Exploring Nature Play Project**

The project has two main elements: a national campaign and working directly on three adventure playgrounds to test nature play activities. The results will be used to develop online resources that can be used by adventure playgrounds, play ranger and environmental projects to engage children and connect them with nature through their play.

- **The Campaign**

- Play England have created an online, interactive map of places for children to engage with nature including staffed adventure playgrounds and green spaces. Anyone can search for or add local natural places to play, upload comments and photos and rate how good the sites are for play

www.playengland.org.uk/map

- Playday, now in its 24th year with 564 locally-run events reaching 750,000 children in 2011 <http://www.playday.org.uk/>

Natural Play



- **The Adventure Playgrounds**

As part of the *Exploring Nature Play project* work is going on at three adventure playgrounds – in London, North Tyneside and Torbay staffed with Play Development Officers. The project explores different ways of increasing children’s understanding of nature through play. A pool of ideas will be created from these playgrounds and others around the country in order to share and promote good practice in promoting environmental awareness through free play.

- The project is also exploring how adventure playgrounds can make better links with local schools and become a resource for learning outside the classroom during the school day.

Natural Play Examples



- At the **Shiremoor** adventure playground in **North Tyneside** children 'grew their own butterflies.' Children gently 'planted' them in their special food containers using a clean paintbrush and watched them pupate and then hatch into butterflies, other children helped to plant buddleia.
- In **Fort Apache** playground in **Torbay** the children use a shave horse and a draw knife to make wooden cooking implements and chair legs out of found wood. The shavings are collected to make kindling for the cooking fire.



National Nature Reserves (NNR) Outreach Work



- National Nature Reserves are inspirational places, each having its own special wildlife and landscape. Many are well suited to outdoor learning and some of the larger sites have the benefit of a Community Outreach Adviser to support school and group visits.
- Many National Nature Reserves have downloadable education packs with details of their education programmes available from their individual pages which can be accessed via Natural England's website.

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/places/nnr>



[Skip to content](#) [Skip to section navigation](#) [Home](#) [Contact us](#)

Search [go](#)

- [About us](#)
- [Our work](#)
- [Publications, maps & data](#)
- [Grants & funding](#)
- [Advice & information](#)

Our work



- ▶ [Biodiversity](#)
- ▶ [Geodiversity](#)
- ▼ [Designated Areas](#)
 - ▶ [Sites of Special Scientific Interest](#)
 - ▶ [National Nature Reserves](#)
 - ▶ [Events](#)
 - ▶ [Regions](#)
 - ▶ [Recent designations](#)
 - ▶ [Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty](#)
 - ▶ [National Parks](#)
 - ▶ [Local Nature Reserves](#)
 - ▶ [New designations](#)
 - ▶ [Marine Protected Areas](#)
 - ▶ [Heritage Coasts](#)

▶ [Home](#) > [Our work](#) > [Conservation](#) > [Designated Areas](#) > [National Nature Reserves](#)

Humberhead Peatlands NNR

The moors are remnants of wetland that occupied the floodplain of the Humberhead Levels thousands of years ago.

Where: South Yorkshire

Main habitats: Peatland

Why visit: The Humberhead Peatlands NNR comprises Thorne, Goole, and [Crowle](#) Moors, as well as Hatfield Moors and it represents the largest area of raised bog



Contents

- [Humberhead Peatlands NNR](#)
- [Seasonal highlights](#)
- [History](#)
- [How to get there](#)
- [School and community groups](#)
- [Want to get involved?](#)
- Resources**
 - [Information leaflet](#)

NNR EY Outreach Examples



- **Eco Tots story walks** run for Sure Start groups, local nurseries and at public events. Using books such as Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and Julia Donaldson's *Gruffalo* a group story reading is followed by an exploration of the woods or a short trail within the NNR. The built in craft and field related activities include studying habitats and lifecycles, building log piles for mini beasts and making masks and pictures using natural materials.



NNR EY Outreach Examples

- **Treasure crowns** (card crowns with double sided tape). Children wear a crown on an exploration of the NNR. When they find something natural of interest (and small!) they stick it to their crown without removing crown from their head. At the end of walk children admire their crowns and identify 'treasure' items.



Natural Connections



- **Natural Connections** is a new initiative led by Natural England together with the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom and a large consortium of civil society organisations, which aims to significantly increase the number of school aged children experiencing the full range of benefits that come from learning in natural environments.
- **The Natural Connections Demonstration Project 2012-2016 (currently out to tender):** aims to practically test, assess and evaluate all aspects of a proposed outdoor learning service for schools. The Project approach and design is informed by the latest insight research of teachers needs, evidence of barriers and benefits of learning in natural environments and best practice models for engaging volunteers.
- The project will target c200 schools that currently provide little or no learning in natural environments, often schools from deprived urban areas using their local green spaces to meet their learning needs as part of their school curriculum, with practical support, advice and expertise provided by local organisations and individuals.

Natural Connections



The objectives of the Demonstration Project are to:

- **stimulate the demand from schools and teachers for learning outside the classroom in natural environments**

By engaging schools (head teachers, staff, governors and families etc.) with a more compelling case for the benefits of learning outside the classroom in natural environments and giving them the confidence that they can overcome perceived challenges.

- **support schools and teachers to build learning outside the classroom in natural environments into their planning and practices**

By providing better local face to face support to help teachers identify and access the local support and resources that are most likely to meet their needs.

- **stimulate the supply of high quality learning outside the classroom in natural environments services for schools and teachers.**

By developing insight into how to support schools with learning outside the classroom in local natural environments and by evaluating key outputs and outcomes for schools, teachers, children, and local communities.

Further Information



www.naturalengland.org.uk

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