

REPORTS ON GRANTS AWARDED

A selection of recent grant recipients - June 2017

TEESMOUTH FIELD CENTRE

£4,200

A grant in October 2015 allowed this charity, based at Hartlepool Power Station Visitor Centre, to provide environmental education activities for primary school groups on the river Tees and the national nature reserve at Teesmouth. Six schools participated, with pupils learning to use digital thermometers to record soil and air temperatures in two different habitats, and to record observations about plants and animals using digital photography. Visitor



Centre staff visited the schools, exploring their grounds to record habitats. At the centre, the children explored the beach, sand dune and rocky shore habitats, making a comparison between creatures found there and in the school grounds.

BASKETRY AND BEYOND

£4,700

A grant in 2105 allowed this not-for-profit group in Devon to teach basketry skills to children from a primary and a special needs school, and to demonstrate basketry production from sustainable and locally-available plants. The children explored the surrounding countryside, and many materials used were sourced from local willow. Following workshops over nine weeks, the children worked with their teacher to design and make woven, wearable basketry costumes. The course presented an intensive learning opportunity not only for the children, but also for workshop leaders and school staff. Although much was achieved in a relatively short time, more lessons would help establish basketry as an important addition to curriculum subjects - especially maths and sustainability. The group feels that it has made a valuable start and has established good relationships with the two schools. Children's comments included: "I loved it, I was very focused" (Hannah) and "brilliant weaving - I would like to do more" (Tom).

GLADE PRIMARY SCHOOL

£771



This Essex school which has a large field, a nature garden with a pond and a woodland area, has an on-going woodland project using the resources for Science, Maths and Art. A grant in October 2015 provided tools and equipment to help children understand how things grow, and how nature depends on the land and what it has to offer. Key Stage 1 and 2 children wandered in the woodland area to find what was living there – they were encouraged to understand what grows there, and learned to identify types of trees and bushes and the fruits and seeds they produce. Back in the classroom, teachers have been able to undertake their own experiments and the project has had a significant impact on children's written work.

SETPOINT LONDON EAST**£10,000**

This charity works to help children learn about and engage with Science, Engineering and Technology. An ECT grant in October 2015 contributed to its environmental and science hands-on workshops, developed to raise achievement in science for East London primary school pupils. Through its base at the Soanes Centre in Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, the charity uses the park as an outdoor classroom. It taught 297 workshops, reaching 7,073 pupils and accompanying teachers. Feedback has been very positive – the workshops have helped staff teach new topics and integrate them into other areas of the curriculum. The impact extends beyond the course content itself, to developing new ways of thinking, appreciating the environment and encouraging new ways to classify information and to ask questions.

RIVER AND ROWING MUSEUM**£8,500**

A grant in October 2015 enabled this Henley-on-Thames museum to undertake its 'Tails of the Riverbank' project, for children in the Thames Valley to discover, explore and understand the natural environment. The grant supported visits by young people from disadvantaged areas, investment in new equipment for fieldwork, upgrading the museum's collection and developing an online resource to support school visits. Schools took part in a full-day workshop,

identifying and grouping plants and animals, walking along the tow path to record river birds and their behaviour, sampling and recording the range of plants found in two habitats and exploring museum displays relating to the river environment. The workshop was tailored closely to the National Curriculum to make it relevant and beneficial. One teacher wrote: "A great experience which has helped to deepen the children's understanding through real life experiences".

BRIDGEWATER SCHOOL**£2,500**

This Newcastle primary school has incorporated the acclaimed Reggio Emilia approach to education. An ECT grant in April 2016 supported a project based around the arts and the environment. Six classes worked with different professional artists to produce artworks using a variety of media, such as recycled material to make a sculpture, painting, drawing, textiles, silk painting and water colours. The theme was 'Newcastle past and present'. Each child was encouraged to investigate, explore and reflect by asking questions and making observations. The project provided continuing professional development for staff, who learned skills and techniques from the artists while developing their application of the Reggio Emilia approach.

PAINSHILL PARK TRUST

£2,658

With 158 acres of natural and historic landscape, a crystal grotto, ancient ruins and a lake, the education programme at Painshill helps children discover, explore and learn in an inspiring and safe environment. A grant in February 2016 allowed the education team to purchase robust pond-dipping nets, meadow-sweeping nets and ID sheets, enhancing



the resources available for two of Painshill's most popular activities. Pond-dipping allowed the children to learn about the fresh water habitat with observations of a range of different creatures - on 'minibeast safaris', they discovered food chains, adaptations and life cycles and investigated habitats and invertebrates. The education manager commented: "ECT's donation enabled us to widen opportunities for children to explore the great outdoors."

CEDARWILDLIFESANCTUARY

£2,200



A grant in December 2013 enabled this community interest company in Kirkby-in-Ashfield to run clubs for children to learn about wildlife, conservation and care. Over 50 youngsters took part, creating bird boxes and similar wildlife habitats to monitor and record wildlife. The children also helped produce information booklets and leaflets about their chosen animals, and learned how to ensure the conservation of local species. They visited the sanctuary to learn about

local wildlife and its issues, and how to rehabilitate animals and release them back to the wild. Teaching packs were produced based on the children's experiences. The company worked with a range of children, some of whom were excluded from school or needed one-to-one attention due to behavioural problems.

RIVERDALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

£750

The outdoor environment at this school in Redcar offers children first-hand contact with the weather, seasons and the natural world. Due to tight financial constraints, many parents cannot provide adequate clothing for their children, which often prevents pupils from accessing the outdoor environment all year round. Thanks to a grant in September 2015, the school bought waterproofs so that the children can go outside in any weather. The school noted that the grant process was easy to follow and that the team at ECT were very helpful in offering advice as needed.



TIPTOE PRIMARY SCHOOL

£700



A grant in December 2015 allowed this small rural school in the New Forest to develop an overgrown area of its grounds into an outdoor classroom. Using new trowels and hand forks, the children planted and tended raised beds. To help them learn about wildlife, wild flower seeds were planted in the pond area and 30 saplings were planted. The children enjoy pond dipping and learning about the species living there – also, they have made use of outdoor weaving frames and tree-shaped chalkboards, and a visit from a local storyteller inspired the children to create their own stories and pictures. Now the school has an outdoor classroom, it has introduced an after-school nature club, which was heavily over-subscribed last term.

THE MERSEY FOREST

£10,000

An ECT grant in October 2015 allowed this charity in Warrington - one of the UK's largest community forests - to employ an education co-ordinator to deliver Forest School programmes to schools in deprived areas of Liverpool. The co-ordinator worked with five schools to prepare sites for Forest School training and sessions. School staff trained as Forest School leaders after attending the charity's taster courses, and pupils are benefiting from the Forest School sessions as the schools develop their outdoor curriculum. The programme also offered a training opportunity for high school students to work alongside a qualified Forest School leader at the primary school. At some schools, parents joined a Forest School session to help them understand how children learn and play in a natural setting. 113 people attended training events over the year, 33 of whom will gain Open College Network accreditation. ECT support enabled Forest School to be developed at a much higher level, offering future sustainability and new partnerships.

NATIONAL FOREST/SOUTH DERBYSHIRE CLUSTER GROUP

£10,000

An award in April 2016 allowed this group of countryside organisations to develop an educational woodland craft project for local teachers and education providers, offering skills to deliver woodland art & craft sessions for young people. The group also piloted taster activity sessions to develop new educational woodland art and craft learning resources. Teachers' comments included: "Good ideas for ways to use natural objects and the environment to create pieces of music a wide range of activities that would be easily adapted for school" – and: "Before the session I was unsure how Maths can be taught outside. It has opened my eyes to these opportunities".



NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

£8,500



The Real World Science programme helps young people and teachers around the UK to enjoy learning about science. It is a national partnership of eight museums, collaborating to unlock the potential of their natural history collections to engage young people teachers in science learning outside the classroom. Students take part in interactive workshops and debates, meet research scientists and curators

and enjoy behind-the-scenes collections access, looking at topics ranging from microfossils to human evolution. The project will gain a high-profile ambassador in 2018 when the Natural History Museum's famous Diplodocus skeleton cast, 'Dippy' will embark on a tour to eight venues across the UK, inspiring in children a passion for science and the natural world. An ECT grant allowed the museum to develop and expand the scope of the programme in 2016/2017 to give more students access to informal science learning throughout the UK. The programme reached 33,681 young people, 103 teachers and 257 trainee teachers.

FRIENDS OF WESTONBIRT ARBORETUM

£10,000

An ECT grant in October 2015 allowed the Friends to run a second Student Arborist placement. Their placement scheme offers countryside management students practical experience and training to complement their studies, preparing them for future careers as arborists. The two students started in July 2016 and are well on their way to receiving professional qualifications – they have been involved in a large project felling ash and cypress trees, operating forest machinery to maintain the arboretum, learning how to prevent the spread of pests and diseases, and gaining skills in propagation and improving their botanical knowledge. One student, who is part-way through university, will use this experience to inform his final year project.