



PRESS RELEASE

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Grant scheme on course to help more than one thousand schools get their pupils outdoors

Thousands of pounds in grants are being given out to schools across the UK to help get children learning outdoors.

The Outdoor Essentials Grant, launched in 2019 by The Ernest Cook Trust, will have helped 1,000 schools by the end of the year. Each school that successfully applies receives £500 to help engage children with the environment through learning.

The Ernest Cook Trust, based in Gloucestershire, is a UK-wide educational charity, creating outdoor experiences for children, young people and their families. A landowner in six counties, it runs education programmes on its own estates, as well as with partners' estates, and offers grants for land-based learning activities.

Suzie Paton, Head of Grants with The Ernest Cook Trust, said the Outdoor Essentials Grant was a great way to fund outdoor learning activities.

“Our Outdoor Essentials Grant gives schools a great opportunity to get pupils outside and connecting with nature, learning about the environment and giving them an experience they may not necessarily be getting in school,” she said.

“Each round of grants has a theme. Our first was Wellies & Waterproofs, where we were able to provide 486 schools with £500 each to equip the children with the right clothes to get outside. The theme of the second round was Transport & Travel, where we helped schools with travel costs for trips out.”

Among those to benefit from Wellies & Waterproofs was Bearpark Primary School, in Durham. Headteacher Joanne Clements said: “We have started work in our community garden and we were very grateful for the wellies.” The school has even built a special shed for the wellies, from recycled materials.

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Another school, S. Pius X College, in Magherafelt, County Londonderry, Northern Ireland, received a Transport & Travel grant. The secondary school wanted to use the grant to fund a trip to Castle Espie, a Wetland Centre and Nature Reserve which is about one hour from the school.

The school's Claire Hassan said: "The biggest obstacle for going on trips is the cost of transport. I cannot wait to organise an outing for pupils."

Applications for the latest round of £500 Outdoor Essentials Grant are now open and include both Transport & Travel and a new Nature & Nurture theme, available to schools to enhance nature on the doorstep through improvements to their school grounds or local community areas.

Suzie added: "Any state-funded school can apply – primary, secondary or special school – but we have a particular focus on giving grants to those with a genuine interest in learning outdoors, especially if they are in deprived areas, or with high numbers of disadvantaged students."

Additional information about the Outdoor Essentials Grant:

<https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/everything-outdoors/outdoor-essentials-grant/>

