

Reading Schools Eco Newsletter

Edition 3: September 2021

COME OUTSIDE!

The focus of our September edition is on school trips – something that schools have not been able to provide in what feels like a very long time! In our school trip compilation below, you may notice the emphasis on outdoor learning. Why is it important that we give children this opportunity? Drawing on articles by Natalie Ganpatsingh (Nature Nurture CIC), here's [why](#).

According to the 'Dirt is Good' campaign survey in 2016, three-quarters of UK children spend less time outdoors than prison inmates. Meanwhile, the global pandemic and the resulting lockdowns have only added to this, with children learning from home.

However, as well as supporting 'attendance, cognitive performance, motivation to learn and academic attainment', outdoor learning builds resilience in our pupils and supports their mental wellbeing. Reflecting on her own Wild Teaching project, Natalie said: 'We ran workshops and teacher training and witnessed children growing in self-esteem and willingness to take risks.'

A study by the Wildlife Trusts in 2019 highlighted how 'children's wellbeing increased after they had spent time connecting with nature'. They found that 84% of children felt capable of doing new things when they tried; 79% reported feeling more confident in themselves.



White Wolf Bushcraft

YMCA Activity Centre, Ramptons Lane
Reading RG7 4QT

Contact: Mischa Tytel

Email: mischa@whitewolfbushcraft.com

Phone: 07855 273435

Website: www.whitewolfbushcraft.com

What school visit could be more environmentally-friendly than a trip to your local woods? How about regular trips each term to learn bushcraft skills that will last a lifetime? White Wolf Bushcraft was established by Mischa Tytel to provide an outdoor learning journey for primary schools.

White Wolf Bushcraft's "Wild about Learning" program links into many KS1 and KS2 objectives and provides a mix of practical skills (such as fire lighting, shelter building and learning how to use woodland tools) with creative ones (such as stone painting and leather work). What is so special about White Wolf Bushcraft is that Mischa has designed a programme that enables children to build on their skills each year, progressing from Year 1 to Year 6 and culminating in an incredible overnight survival challenge. This is where the children navigate to camp, build their own shelters (that they then sleep in!), start their own fires, cook their own food and so much more.

Caring for the environment is central to everything on a White Wolf Bushcraft adventure day. Their core philosophy is 'leave no trace' every time they go to the woods and the children are always enlisted to help recycle as much as possible during any adventure days. All supplies are bought locally: the wood burnt is sustainably sourced from the same local woodland; the fish and meat is sustainably farmed.

HELLO! This is a termly newsletter produced by Brighter Futures for Children in collaboration with Reading Climate Change Partnership. Its aim is to support your work on environmental education and climate change in your school.

If there is anything of interest to you in this newsletter, then please contact: educateclimate@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

We are here to support all Reading schools to establish themselves as sustainable hubs within the community. We look forward to hearing from you!



So now, more than ever, we need to get our students outside!

A huge thank you to Natalie Ganpatsingh of Nature Nurture CIC for her support with this case study!

Further Reading:

www.healthyreading.co.uk/environmental-health-a-dose-of-nature
www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/new-report-nature-nurtures-children

Visit and Explore

[\[include school-trip related icons\]](#)

Getting Out and About

So what are you waiting for? Get your children out and about! Here is a selection of trips with an outdoor learning [focus](#).



Spotlight Trip!

Mischa and his team at White Wolf Bushcraft clearly love what they do: getting outside, connecting to nature and building children's resilience. Children will learn so much from Mischa – a real-life survival adventurer! He's even slept in a Hammock in the Arctic!

"" – Headteacher, All Saints Schools

"" – Pupil, All Saints Junior School

COME OUTSIDE! MORE TRIPS OUT...

>> Rushall Organic Farm

Scratchface Lane, Reading RG7 6DL

Contact: The John Simonds Trust at Rushall Farm

Email: jst@rushallfarm.org.uk

Phone: 0118 9744547

www.rushallfarm.org.uk/for-schools-organisations/school-visits/

Rushall Organic Farm is a mixed organic farm.

There is a pond, woodland and grassland as well as access to the River Pang, so pupils are able to focus on habitats and river studies as well as farming.

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>> Tolhurst Organic Partnership C.I.C.

Tolhurst Organic Farm, Reading RG8 7RA

Contact: Iain Tolhurst

Phone: 01189843428

Email: info@tolhurstorganic.co.uk

www.tolhurstorganic.co.uk/on-farmopportunities/school-visits

On a school trip to this organic farm just outside of Whitchurch-on-Thames, pupils could participate in a variety of activities including nature walks, beetle watching, bird watching, berry collection, weeding, harvesting, compost mixing and sketching!

>> Nature Discovery Centre

(BBOWT) Lower Way, Thatcham RG19 3FU

Contact: Claire McClafferty

Phone: 01628 829 574 x214

Email: berkshireducation@bbowt.org.uk

www.bbowt.org.uk/explore/discover-and-learn/nature-discovery-centre-berks

Located between Thatcham and Newbury, the Nature Discovery Centre offers days for EYFS & KS1-2. The Nature Discovery Centre offer KS1 & 2 day trips with a focus on wetlands, plants, adaptations and habitats.

Note that Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust has a bursary system to offer free transport and teaching to schools with a high proportion of students with free school meals.

Welcoming Visitors

As well as venturing out, why not have educational visitors come to you? Here are some suggestions for some great ECO visitors.

Groundwork

Contact: Groundwork Education Team

Email: getinvolved@groundwork.org.uk

Phone: 01212368565

www.groundwork.org.uk/partner-with-us/education-sector/

Groundwork can work with your school to inspire pupils through outdoor learning, create amazing outdoor spaces and deliver training to staff. Mentors are also available to help reduce poor attendance, engaging pupils in new ways.

Greenpeace Speakers

Email: getactive.uk@greenpeace.org

www.greenpeace.org.uk/volunteering/greenpeace-speakers/find/

Greenpeace Speakers are available to give online talks and webinars across the UK. They focus on topics such as: the climate emergency and climate change; forests, deforestation and food; oceans and ocean sanctuaries; plastic pollution; and sustainable transport.

David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation

Contact: Jo Elphick

Email: Jo.Elphick@davidsshepherd.org

www.davidsshepherd.org/education/dswf-at-your-school/free-virtual-school-visits/

The DSWF currently offer virtual school visits, with a view to getting back into schools soon enough. They offer a range of FREE wildlife talks suitable for all age groups, from EYFS all the way up to KS4! In-person visits may also include a workshop. The talks are thought-provoking and cover topics such as habitats, endangered species and animal adaptation.

The Junk Orchestra

Email: info@thejunkorchestra.co.uk

www.thejunkorchestra.co.uk/offer-schools/

The Junk Orchestra deliver workshops for schools involving playing music on instruments made from recycled materials! It is a guaranteed session of fun, music and laughter with a green message for how to upcycle and reuse rubbish!

EVENTS

COP26

The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 31 October – 12 November 2021. This is a hugely important event and it's incredibly exciting that it is being held in the UK! There are lots of schools can do to get involved on the run-up to COP26. Check out the link here for resources: <https://tinyurl.com/4dbh3evf>

Reading Climate Festival

In conjunction with the Great Big Green Week, Reading Climate Festival will take place 20th – 26th September. This will be a week of events, talks, workshops, productions and performances to inspire action on climate change. For more information, visit: www.readingcan.org.uk

Climate Education Summit

On 15th September, the University of Reading will be holding a Climate Education Summit. This is a really exciting event for students and teachers in order to ensure climate education is at the forefront of our curriculums. To get involved and book a place, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/5cs53be5>

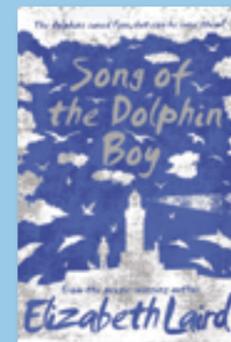
Eco work at school can be approached in various ways. Using our six themes, below you will find a selection of picture books and novels that can serve as talking points to inspire your students. If you are viewing this as a PDF, click on each book to find out more!

Water

A River
by Marc Martin

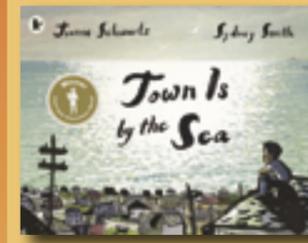


Song of the Dolphin Boy
by Elizabeth Laird

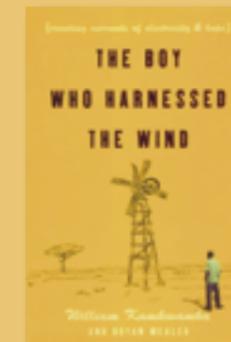


Energy

Town is by the Sea
by Joanne Schwartz

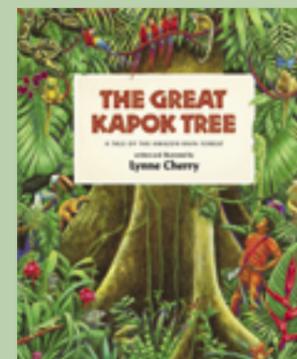


The Boy who Harnessed the Wind
by William Kamkwamba



Nature and Green Spaces

The Great Kapok Tree
by Lynne Cherry



Moon Bear
by Gill Lewis

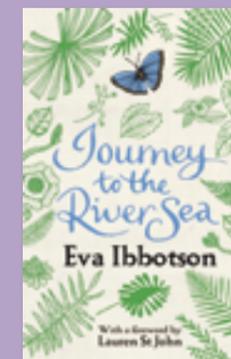


Transport

Touch the Earth
by Julian Lennon



Journey to the River Sea
by Eva Ibbotson



Health and Wellbeing

The Gardener
by Sarah Stewart



You Are Awesome
by Matthew Syed

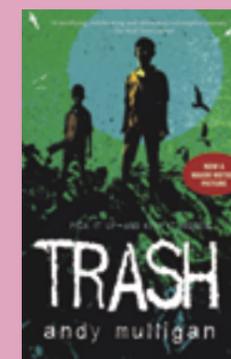


Purchasing, Recycling and Waste

One Plastic Bag
by Miranda Paul



Trash
by Andy Mulligan



FREE Renewable Energy Kits for schools

Don't forget that Brighter Futures for Children have FREE renewable energy kits available for schools to hire! These kits are available on loan to schools for up to half a term at a time. All of the kits come with instructions, training, lesson plans and risk assessments available here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1-wEJf1P6tqCdVNH_4fcThHKIERAnU-wm

"Thank you so much for letting us use them, the children really enjoyed seeing how they worked! Might even consider getting some for the school now."

– Churchend Primary Academy

"Here at The Heights Primary School, we absolutely loved the renewable energy kits! The children in class are extremely environmentally aware and love finding out how things work. The quality of the kits was quite unbelievable and it was so easy to assemble and use. The children gained such a valuable learning experience that they won't forget in a hurry. Thank you so much for providing such a high-quality resource and for letting us use them!" – The Heights Primary School

Solar Water Heater Kit

This kit demonstrates how the sun's energy is used to heat water.



Solar Photovoltaic Kit

This kit demonstrates how the sun's energy is used to produce electricity.



Wind Turbine Kit

This kit demonstrates how wind energy is used to produce electricity.



Eco Schools

www.eco-schools.org.uk

We encourage all Reading schools to sign up to Eco Schools, an international award scheme that empowers pupils, raises environmental awareness and improves your school environment.

Already an Eco School?

Get in touch and we can link you to local teachers who have achieved Green Flag status and are very happy to support you through the journey in the simplest, easiest way, with minimal effort!

You can also join this very useful Facebook group for further advice and support: www.facebook.com/groups/ecoschoolsenglandecocoordinators

THIS MONTH'S TOP TIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE SCHOOLS

HANSON BOX



Hanson Box

Apply for your free Hanson box! Named in memory of the British philanthropist Don Hanson, each Hanson Box contains educational books, DVDs, and activity kits to help educators empower children, and drive curiosity and learning.

Find out more at <https://hansonbox.org/>



Young Climate Warriors

Climate Change Club in a Box: 'a ready-to-use, off-the-shelf, zero cost 'Climate Change Club'. A series of ten sessions that can be used as an 'after-school club' or for 'eco council' meetings.

For more information, visit: www.youngclimatewarriors.org/club-in-a-box

Refill your white board pens!

Don't throw the pens away when they are empty or dried up; refill them with this simple refill pot. Each pot contains approximately 20 refills.



UN Accredited Climate Change Teacher

We encourage all Eco Co-ordinators to complete the UN Accredited Climate Change course.

Find out more here: <https://unccelearn.org/educate> or get in touch for more information and support!



AimHi Live

AimHi Live are providing a new course (starting September 2021) especially for teachers, to support them when bringing climate change into the classroom.

Find out more here: www.aimhi.co/climate-course-for-teachers

Training Opportunities



RISC

RISC has an education team who work with teachers and schools to promote Global Citizenship in the curriculum.

Find out more about what's on offer here: www.risc.org.uk/education/training

Calendar

Here are some key environmental dates for your diaries, to inspire work you do with your classes and Eco Councils this half term!

- All September Organic September
- 18th - 26th September Great Big Green Week
- 22nd September World Car Free Day
- 20th - 26th September Recycle Week
- 24th September World Clean Up Day
- 6th October Energy Efficiency Day

Reading Climate Action for Schools Website

www.readingcan.org.uk/schools

Find out more about what you can do in Reading to promote sustainable choices at your school. Access our suite of planning and resources and be inspired by our tips to lead a carbon neutral lifestyle



Reading Schools Climate Action Network Join us!

We have set up the Reading Schools Climate Action Network (RSCAN) to support and link up primary and secondary school staff who are working with the challenges of environmental education. This gives all school staff concerned about climate change and sustainability the opportunity to meet others interested in similar issues and share ideas. We would like to offer shared practice, areas for collaboration, access to training and shared resources.

Get in touch if you are interested in joining us! educateclimate@brighterfuturesforchildren.org



Contact us:
educateclimate@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
www.readingcan.org.uk/schools