

# Introduction



## Introduction

Children no longer spend their free time playing outdoors, getting dirty in the mud and looking for bugs. Most children cannot identify our most common species and will not be aware of the blackbirds singing in the trees or the song thrush out searching for worms in the garden! Nature is all around us, in our school grounds, in the local park and in everyone's backyard! These areas can be used in our lesson planning enabling us to immerse our children in the natural world, allowing them to be truly amazed by the lifecycles, feeding behaviours and beauty of the plants and creatures that live all around us!

This resource pack can help you utilise your local nature areas in your lesson planning. It is packed full of lesson plans, downloadable resources and fun games to help children understand the importance of wildlife! The pack is aimed at Key Stage 2 pupils but can also be adapted for Key Stage 3. Biodiversity and the natural environment are key elements of The Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC) framework and should be incorporated into all areas of the National Curriculum. Being outdoors and experiencing nature, fits easily into the Science Curriculum but should also be used in every other lesson. For example, children will develop language skills in a new and relaxed environment, the discovery of new wild areas can be used to write wonderful stories and poems, the colours and textures can be used in art, map reading becomes reality when out on a nature reserve or local park and all of these new experiences can be recorded using ICT!

Biodiversity (meaning variety of life) can be found all around us! Fieldwork can be undertaken inside the school grounds or out at the local park, pond or seashore. Biodiversity field trips are inexpensive and this pack will give you the confidence to lead activities that are fun and educational.

Before going on any fieldtrip, teachers need to consider health and safety. Before taking your school group out, ensure you complete a pre-visit to check facilities such as toilets and car parking. Remember to complete a risk assessment, pointing out any hazards such as trip hazards and litter. On the day, you will need to take plenty of adults with you, remember the first aid, mobile phone, spare clothes, sun hats and plenty of water. A well organised field trip means that the day will run smoothly and everybody will learn to love their local environment. There are a wide range of habitats in Neath Port Talbot that can be studied, compared and enjoyed. By experiencing their local woodland, ponds or seashore, children will understand the variety of life that is living on their doorstep!

Following on from a trip, you may wish to work with your pupils to develop your own school nature areas. With the decline of green spaces across the UK, school grounds can also be an important habitat, increasing the biodiversity of the local area. No matter how big or small your school grounds, no matter how green or how concrete they are, there are always opportunities to improve the site for biodiversity! While some schools are lucky enough to have the space to be able to develop meadows, plant trees, lay hedges and dig ponds, many others may only be able to set aside a small wild corner in the corner of their playground! For some schools, it may be necessary to develop miniature nature gardens in window boxes and recycled bins. Whatever your location, it is possible to have a nature area. Please contact Neath Port Talbot Biodiversity Unit who will be able to help you develop a plan of action.

We hope this pack, gives you the confidence and inclination to take your children out into the local area! Wrap up warm, put on your wellies and get outside. Every nature area in every season has many wonders that are waiting to be explored!

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