

Nature Premium Briefing Document



What is the Nature Premium?

- The Nature Premium would be a government funded, statutory requirement for schools to take children regularly into nature (nature defined as wild school grounds, woodlands, gardening, conservation, Forest School, farming, permaculture etc.).
- Nature Premium supports **children's mental health and wellbeing**. It engages them with learning and will transform their lives.
- It will give children **agency** to face three of the biggest challenges we face: **the climate emergency**, biodiversity loss, and mental wellbeing.

Why it's an idea whose time has come?

- In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impending climate crisis there is an urgency that demands supporting the Nature Premium for the benefit of all children.
- [71% of people agreed](#) that time spent in/surrounded by nature has been more important to them since the onset of the Coronavirus crisis in the UK.
- *'We recognise that playing and learning outside is a fundamental part of childhood and supports children's mental health and wellbeing. We also know that some children have good access to natural spaces whilst others do not, such as those living in areas of high disadvantage'*. (Department for Education response 2020-0040431 CRM:0461050).
- [83% of children said](#) that being in nature made them very happy.

The Nature Premium will tackle inequality AND be fair to all children:

- [71% of children](#) from **black and ethnic minority** backgrounds reported spending less time outside since coronavirus, compared with 57% of white children.
- Three-quarters (73%) of children from households with annual income below £17,000 spent less time outdoors, compared with 57% from households with an annual income above £17,000.
- It will help equip children with the skills and knowledge to flourish in the new industries in the 21st century and **'build back greener'**.

Key quotes

- "Connecting children with nature is one of the most important things we can do for them. It can boost their health, wellbeing and learning and give them a life-long love of the natural world", Lord Blencathra, Deputy Chairman, Natural England.
- *"a plea for a transformation of our education systems towards one where children from an early age are encouraged to try and understand the infinitely beautiful tapestry of processes and forms that is Nature"* Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta in his interim report of the Treasury commissioned report [The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review \(April 2020\)](#).
- "No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced" David Attenborough.
- "As a child growing up in Lancashire in the 1950's I had nature on my doorstep and spent hours, mostly on my own, exploring the local fields, ponds and woods, looking for birds and bugs. It was, with hindsight, a happy, healthy childhood, but one that is largely denied to many of our children today. The Nature Premium campaign seeks to change that, first and foremost to improve children's' mental and physical health, and to nurture the innate love of nature that all young people have within them. I think it's a marvellous initiative, with the potential to both transform children's lives and to lay the foundations for a society that will care for our environment in the future". Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS [President of the Institution of Environmental Sciences](#), Chair of [Making Space for Nature](#) government commissioned report.

What outcomes will it deliver for children?

The Nature Premium will increase:

- A range of outdoor education and nature experiences offered to all pupils to benefit their **mental health, wellbeing, and education**.
- The engagement of all pupils with the natural world and human dependence on it.
- The profile of nature, sustainability, and the UN Sustainability Development Goals as a tool for whole-school improvement and community engagement.
- Confidence, knowledge, and skills of staff in teaching in the outdoors - in nature.
- Participation in local and global community environment issues addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, sustainability in school and the local community and volunteering with 'nature' charities.

How can we fund it?

- The Sports Premium provides a model. It was funded using the sugar tax on soft drinks.
- The Sports Premium only funds primary school children. The Nature Premium will support **all** children because:
 - ✓ In early years there is a better return on investment. £1 spent on early years works harder than £1 spent for post year 11 children.
 - ✓ In secondary schools all children need support for their **mental wellbeing**. The UK ranked lowest of 24 European countries for the proportion of children with high life satisfaction – as stated in the [Children's Commissioner's](#) Childhood in the time of COVID report.
 - ✓ Additional funding for young people, **to empower** them to respond to the climate emergency, to solve real life problems in ways that explicitly link to their education.
 - ✓ Young people in the UK worry more about the environment than the economy, Brexit, digital security or homelessness. Two in five young people in the UK worry about the environment and these children will have lower life satisfaction.
 - ✓ Article 12 of the UN CRC Committee on the Rights of a Child states they have the right to have opinions and for these opinions to be heard and taken seriously. The Children's Act 2004 follows up through the Children's Commissioner.
 - ✓ 94% of young people would like or would have liked the option to study a GCSE in Natural History.
 - ✓ It will **encourage good citizenship**, encouraging all children and young people to have a positive impact on their local and global community.

Wouldn't this demand a massive amount of money?

No. Investment in the Nature Premium would cost less each year than the Treasury Scheme 'Eat Out to Help Out' (2020) and have the benefit of supporting all children.

It's just [good policy and smart economics](#). Back in 2010 The World Bank argued *that Countries that produce a skilled, healthy, and productive workforce are better positioned in the global economy to achieve economic prosperity, political stability, and social wellbeing. Since capacities built during childhood and the youth period largely determine adult outcomes, effective investments in young people provide important returns not only to the individual and the community, but to society as a whole.*

The Nature Premium would be an investment to transform the next generation to manage their own wellbeing and sustainable living.

Take a look below, the Nature Premium ticks all the boxes.

THE NATURE PREMIUM TICKS ALL THE BOXES.

MAKE CHILDREN HAPPIER & HEALTHIER AND SET THEM UP TO LEARN

Supporting good mental health:

- Increased self-worth
- Increased resilience
- Supporting eudaimonic wellbeing
- Improved social functioning
- Reduced stress
- Reduced eco-anxiety

Supporting good physical health

- Reducing obesity levels
- Increasing daily activity levels
- Building muscle co-ordination
- Increasing Vitamin D levels
- Building immune systems
- Natural active play builds core skills especially when the play is child-led.

Supporting learning

- Engages children with learning
- Has a positive impact on behaviour
- Leads to a greater understanding of nature
- Makes lessons more enjoyable
- Fulfils an Ofsted Framework requirement to create an enriched curriculum
- Support children's creativity, PISA criterium 2021-22

IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT POLICIES & STRATEGIES

- DEFRA – 25 Year Environment Plan
- Dept for Education - The DfE *Planning Guide for Primary Schools* and the supplementary guidance '*Implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings*'
- *The Ofsted Education Inspection Framework 2019*
- *Children's Act 2004*
- HM Treasury commissioned Dasgupta Review 2021
- DEFRA commissioned National Food Strategy 2021

LEVEL UP; REMOVING THE INEQUITY OF ACCESS TO NATURE

Improves social inclusion, and it is fair to all:

- Increased diversity in the countryside
- All children treated equally
- Build children's understanding of how they fit into the British countryside.
- A ring-fenced funded, statutory requirement would empower schools to teach nature.
- Learn to respect nature and the Country Code

LEARNING OUTSIDE IS SAFER

Reduces the risk of COVID-19 infection:

- Children learn to manage their own risk
- Children understand good hygiene
- Children learn how to stay safe in the countryside
- Children see how time passes, seasons change, see that change can also be good
- Children can be more dispersed than inside

INTERNATIONAL STATESMANSHIP

As Britain led the Industrial Revolution, we can now lead the Nature Revolution:

- UNCRC Article 12/29/31
- OECD children's wellbeing indicator set
- UN decade of ecological recovery
- World Economic Forum Global Risks 2020
- UN Sustainability Development Goals
- COP26
- Net Zero target
- Plans for a green industrial revolution to Build Back Greener

TRANSFORM A GENERATION TO BE STEWARDS FOR THE PLANET

The Nature Premium would establish:

- Children and Young People engaged with caring for their environment
- Whole school communities empowered to live sustainably
- Families inspired to learn with and from their children about nature
- Communities taking responsibility for local biodiversity
- A skilled and knowledgeable generation contributing to a new greener economy
- Inspiration to focus on career paths in both heritage and new 'green' industries

Is it what the public wants?

- A YouGov Survey (May 2020) for the [RSPB](#) sought the views of adults in England on the role of nature in our communities during the Coronavirus crisis and its potential to help in our recovery. The results show that regardless of age, social class or income, adults in England:
 - ✓ **Overwhelmingly support** protecting and investing in nature and increasing accessible natural greenspace as part of our recovery from Coronavirus.
 - ✓ **Strongly oppose** the UK Government reducing spending on nature or putting less emphasis on protecting nature.
 - ✓ See nature as **important for health and wellbeing** and access to nature close to home as beneficial during the Coronavirus crisis.
- An Ipsos-Mori Poll (June 2020) for [Conservative Environment Network](#) CEN revealed that Brits would view a failure to tackle pollution and climate change in a post-coronavirus recovery plan as:
 - ✓ 'Bad for the economy in the long run' (67%).
 - ✓ 'A sign that the government has the wrong priorities' (69%).

By the way, spending time in and connecting with nature is in line with:

- recommendations from The [Committee for Climate Change](#)'s report to increase public awareness of the need to achieve Net Zero and the impact of the climate emergency.
- Educating around the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with only 9 years remaining to achieve government commitments.
- The Environment Audit Select Committee first report [Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust?](#) education recommendations.
- AND children enjoy being in nature! [83% of children said](#) that being in nature made them very happy. It's worth saying twice.

We believe that children need to be eco-literate so that they understand how they fit into the natural world and have the knowledge and skills to thrive in the 21st century. We need to give this generation agency to deal with the climate emergency, the loss of biodiversity and to manage their own mental wellbeing.

Will you help us please?

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