



## Secondary School Assembly Educator Guidance

Below is the accompanying teacher guidance for the Introduction to the National Education Nature Park Secondary School Assembly. All the suggested wording for each slide is optional and you can adapt the script to suit your school or college. Each slide has key messages to cover, at the top of the section, to help you adapt the script if you would like. You could get a small group of pupils to present the assembly or help adapt it to engage their peers. Feel free to choose which slides to include in your assembly to fit time requirements.

Preparation required:

- Choose some quick calls-to-action for pupils and staff to get involved with the Nature Park (slide 12)
- Optional: take photos of 3 things in your education setting's grounds (slide 3)

### Slide 1 - Nature Mindfulness (as pupils are arriving)

#### Key messages

- Listen to nature and observe what you can hear and how that makes you feel
- Nature plays an important role in promoting wellbeing and it is therefore important to protect it and increase our connection to nature

As pupils are arriving into the assembly/for the first minute of the assembly- [play this video](#) 'the sound of biodiversity: Nature soundscapes at Knepp'

Encourage pupils to take time to be mindful and listen to what they can hear.

End the video with a quick plenary asking pupils what they could hear and how the sounds make them feel.

You could ask pupils to share what they heard and how they felt, or you could ask all pupils to indicate if they heard birds, trees moving etc. And share if they felt calm, happy, relaxed and so on.

Transition into the introduction to the assembly by talking about how nature has an important role to play in helping our wellbeing and can help us switch off and relax from the everyday business of life.

Therefore, protecting nature and increasing nature on our school or college site is really important, not just for biodiversity but also for our own wellbeing.

### Slide 2 - Nature is in trouble

#### Key messages

- Nature in England has declined over time, and we are joining schools across England to protect it
- When we work together, we can have a massive positive impact

#### Suggested wording

Nature in England has declined over time, with many plants and animals that live in our country being lost. As a school, we are joining a new programme that other schools across England are taking part in to help restore nature. In today's assembly, we are going to talk about what we are going to do and how you all can play a role in supporting local nature to thrive. When we work together, we can have a massive positive impact and that's what the National Education Nature Park is all about, bringing together places of education across the country, to take action to contribute to nature recovery in England.

Optional: you may like to link this slide to your school's values. Teamwork, curiosity, creativity, wellbeing, responsibility, empathy, kindness, sense of community, determination, hope, compassion etc. all fit well with the aims of the National Education Nature Park.

*Example* "As a school we have a responsibility to help protect the living things that call our school grounds their home. We are going to work together as a whole school community, alongside other schools in England, to help nature in our local area to thrive. When we all come together and are determined and resilient, we can create a positive future for children and nature across the whole of England".

### **Slide 3 - Nature Mysteries**

#### **Key messages**

- Our school or college is home to lots of living things. Humans, animals, insects and plants all use this space!
- Our school or college has many different uses, and we benefit from nature. It helps us to relax, and it also provides areas for us to play.
- We want to make our grounds the best for humans, animals and plants.

For this slide, you can either:

Go outside in your school grounds and take photos of the following:

- A plant growing in an unexpected place
- A shadow made from something natural like a tree
- A living thing students would know the name of, very zoomed in/blurred out so they can't see much of it! Ideally a plant.

Or you can use the pre-prepared images of:

- A plant growing in an unexpected place
- A shadow of a tree
- A fern

Show each image on the screen and ask pupils to put their hand up and share what they think it is. After they have guessed, you can tell some fun facts about the thing and emphasise how plants can grow in loads of spaces, nature provides an important role in providing us with shade and any fun facts about the living thing you found.

### **Suggested wording**

- A plant growing in an unexpected place. Even the smallest plant makes a positive difference, and we can recycle lots of things to use as plant pots. Plants can be found in the most unexpected places.
- The shadow of a tree. Trees are an incredibly important part of nature. Did you know that a mature Oak tree consumes the equivalent of 6048 cups of water per day! Trees can therefore play a crucial role in [protecting against flooding](#). Trees also communicate through an underground fungal internet, referred to as the 'wood wide web'. Trees and plants communicate with each other using a massive [network of underground fungi](#). If a tree is being attacked by insects, it can use the wood wide web to warn other trees to trigger their own defenses.
- A fern. Plants are living things too as well as wildlife and they play an important role in ecosystems. Ferns are really cool! They are some of the oldest plants on the Earth and have been around for millions of years, before dinosaurs even existed. There are over 10,000 [different types of ferns and s](#)ome can live for up to 100 years.

### **Slide 4 - Who has developed the National Education Nature Park?**

Show the logos on the screen and have pupils try to guess what organisations each one is.

### **Slide 5 - Who has developed the National Education Nature Park?**

The National Education Nature Park has been developed by a partnership led by the Natural History Museum (NHM) with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and the Royal Society.

Other organisations are supporting the project including the Royal Geographical Society, Manchester Metropolitan University, Learning Through Landscapes, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology and the National Biodiversity Network Trust.

The Natural History Museum is based in London and is famous for its dinosaurs. As well as being a world-class visitor attraction, the Natural History Museum is a leading science research centre, using their expertise to tackle the biggest challenges facing the world today.

The RHS is the UK's leading gardening charity, working to get everyone involved in gardening. They run the Campaign for School Gardening that 50% of UK schools are members of.

The Royal Society is a group of the world's most influential scientists who encourage the development and use of science for the benefit of humanity.

### **Slide 6- Nature issues in our local area**

(Insert relevant local nature issues.)

Examples could include:

- Trees being removed outside your school grounds
- Air pollution
- Lack of green space
- Flooding

## **Slide 7 - The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world**

- The UK is [one of the most nature-depleted countries](#) in the world
- 41% of UK species have declined since the [1970s](#)
- Hedgehog numbers have declined by 95% since [1950](#)
- Levels of biodiversity monitoring have been scaled back
- Young people are spending [less time outdoors](#)

## **Slide 8 - The National Education Nature Park**

### **Key messages**

- We are joining the National Education Nature Park, a network of education settings across England who are taking action to protect and improve their space for people, plants, animals and insects.
- Our education setting is our nature park, which is a part of the National Education Nature Park, involving schools across England. Small changes add up and we are all working together to make a positive difference.

### **Suggested wording**

To do our bit to help nature restoration in England, we are joining the National Education Nature Park, a network of education settings across the country who are taking action to improve nature on their site.

The planetary emergency requires understanding and action from all, so whether you are an aspiring scientist or writer, campaigner or artist, the programme will develop your specific skills, which you can carry forward into your future careers.

Taking part in the National Education Nature Park will also help us develop a connection to nature and provide us with the agency to do something about nature depletion in England. Research has shown that spending time outdoors has overwhelmingly positive impacts on our physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, so we hope that taking part can provide those benefits for our school community too.

Our grounds are our Nature Park. Each school will be working to make their nature park better for people and nature and together all of the small changes we make will add up to make a large collective positive difference for nature recovery in England. No one is too small to make a difference and every action we take is helping nature to thrive in our local area.

The land from every nursery, school and college in England forms an area that is more than twice the size of Birmingham, so we have a massive opportunity to create wide scale positive change.

## **Slide 9 - Our Nature Park**

### **Key messages**

- In our Nature Park, we will be getting to know our site by understanding what lives there and how pupils, plants and animals use our site. Then we will be creating a plan to improve

our site for nature.

- Everyone in our school or college can make a difference and the more of us who are involved the more impact we can have.

### **Suggested wording**

So how will it work?

We will start by getting to know our site by understanding what lives there and how pupils, plants and animals use our site.

Using creative thinking and collaboration skills, together with the latest scientific evidence provided by the programme, we will then put together a plan to improve their site for nature. Examples of what we could do include creating ponds, planting flowers, growing fruit and vegetables, planting trees, creating a green wall and capturing rainwater in water butts (mention anything you have already done e.g 'We have already built a pond and we will continue to make a positive difference by...').

After changes have been made, we will continue to monitor what is living and growing on their site. We will be able to see the difference we have made for nature on our own learning site and also be able to see the collective difference the National Education Nature Park is making for nature across the country on an online map.

The Nature Park will use exciting new digital technology called Geographic Information System (GIS), which some of you may have heard of. GIS is increasingly used in a wide range of careers including app developers, conservationists, engineers, surveyors, urban planners and is a skill that is in high demand in the UK, so this is an excellent opportunity for you to develop these skills.

Our Nature Park will create the most positive impact if everyone at (insert education setting) gets involved.

### **Slide 10 - Your contribution to nature restoration**

#### **Key messages**

- Taking part in the Nature Park has many benefits to pupils
- Taking part in the Nature Park has so many benefits, for biodiversity and people.

### **Suggested wording**

The Nature Park will allow us to:

- Develop green and digital skills to use in future careers. GIS is a highly valued skill.
- Improve our physical, mental and emotional wellbeing- access to green space and outdoor learning has been shown to have overwhelmingly positive impacts on the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of young people. The Nature Park will also help to build agency to respond positively and tangibly to biodiversity and climate crises.
- Contribute to nature recovery in England- every small improvement we make on our school site will add up, when combined with other schools in England taking action on their sites.
- Take part in real life scientific research- school grounds are the most under-recorded urban habitat type in England. We will be contributing to a deeper understanding of biodiversity in England.
- Enhance biodiversity in our local area- we will lead the way for our local

community.

- Gain recognition with the Climate Action Awards- we will be able to apply for Climate Action Awards, which will recognise schools who are championing nature and working towards a sustainable future.

## **Slide 11 - How can staff members help?**

### **Key messages**

- Everyone in our school has an important role to play in our nature park journey
- Every member of staff can contribute
- The National Education Nature Park will help meet existing goals for our school

### **Suggested wording**

Our Nature Park journey will involve pupils and school staff! We will all come together to make the biggest difference for nature. Everyone has a part to play, and you don't need any previous experience teaching about nature or climate change.

Staff, we need you too! On the screen there are some suggestions about how you could get involved and use your expertise to help our Nature Park journey. The programme is flexible and can be used by all members of school staff in different ways.

Teachers can use the free resources to meet curriculum goals and use the activities to develop confidence in building green and digital skills and delivering climate and nature content.

Headteachers can support our Nature Park by giving teachers time, providing permission to make changes to outdoor space and helping support pupils to make changes.

Geography leads can take part in fieldwork studies using GIS technology.

Science leads can take part in real life scientific research on biodiversity.

Wellbeing leads can help pupils build agency to respond positively to the biodiversity crisis.

Careers leads can help pupils develop skills for their future.

*Other examples you can include if relevant to your school or college:*

School council leads can use the nature park to improve pupil voice and give children the power to make decisions about their school.

Eco club leads can use the free resources to deliver sessions to the eco club and help channel climate anxiety into agency to tackle climate change.

Outdoor leads can use the activities to help get more pupils outside into nature and help pupils develop a meaningful connection to nature that they will carry forward throughout their lives.

Sustainability leads can use the nature park to help support climate action plans and develop an approach to nature that satisfies the biodiversity elements of Climate Action Plans.



## Slide 12 - What impact could we have?

### Key messages

- Although doing something small might not feel like you are making a difference, combined with all the other schools taking action, we are able to make a massive difference
- So, let's get started on our Nature Park journey today!

### Suggested wording

If every school in England - that's 24,413 schools - did one small thing such as install plants for pollinators, we would create thousands of safe homes for insects and animals. Homes for bugs, bees, butterflies, birds, spiders, worms, frogs and more.

If every pupil in England - that's 9.1 million children - did one small thing such as plant a fruit tree, we would create millions of homes for wildlife, provide food for pollinators and people and help clean the air that we breathe.

Through taking part in the National Education Nature Park, we can create thriving school grounds that can be enjoyed by people, animals, insects and plants. Who knows what we might discover in our school grounds!

## Slide 13- Let's get started!

### Key messages

- Everyone at our school or college can get involved

### Suggested wording

On this slide, you can insert any specific information about how pupils and staff at your school can get involved. If you are a lead teacher, you could put your contact details down for other staff to contact you to get involved. You could insert information about how pupils could help. This slide could also include information about what the first thing you will be doing or what different year groups will be doing. If you are not sure yet this slide can just be a closing thank you slide.

You could also suggest tiny calls-to-action that pupils (and staff!) could do. For example: spend time outside at break/lunch and do some nature mindfulness and take some time to listen to what you can hear, walk around the grounds and think about what you like and don't like, brainstorm some ideas for how we could improve our site for nature, talk to a teacher and encourage them to sign up, email other staff with [this template](#), use the [Nature Park starter activity](#) with your class.



For more quality-assured learning resources visit  
[www.educationnaturepark.org.uk](http://www.educationnaturepark.org.uk)

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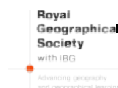


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