



NIGHTINGALE SCHOOL

Outdoor Learning Curriculum



Nightingale Primary School – Outdoor Learning Curriculum – 2025/26

Vision

- Embed meaningful outdoor learning so every child connects with nature, develops ecological understanding, and practices real sustainability skills.
- Use our school grounds and local environment as active learning spaces across subjects.
- Foster wellbeing, curiosity, and environmental stewardship through regular, developmentally appropriate outdoor experiences.
- Grow a whole-school culture where sustainability is visible, lived, and student-led.

Short-Term Goals (0–3 years)

- Deliver one outdoor learning session per class each half term, plus continued Forest School for allocated classes.
- Map outdoor learning activities to curriculum objectives (science, geography, literacy, maths).
- Launch small, high-impact sustainability actions: recycling, composting, simple biodiversity projects.
- Provide staff training to improve confidence in delivering outdoor sessions safely and effectively.
- Begin pupil voice initiatives (eco-council, class audits) to guide sustainability priorities.
- Measure early impact through engagement, teacher feedback, and visible sustainability changes on site.

Long-Term Goals (3–10 years)

- Establish a consistent progression of outdoor skills and sustainability learning across year groups.
- Expand site features: outdoor classroom areas, garden beds, habitats, and models of sustainable practice (e.g., water collection).
- Position the school as a local sustainability and outdoor learning leader through community partnerships.
- Grow student-led sustainability projects with measurable environmental improvements.
- Embed outdoor learning and sustainability achievements into school reporting and celebrations.
- Explore partnerships for long-term impact evaluation and research opportunities.

Six Key Outdoor Learning Skills (Whole-School Progression)



Environmental Awareness & Stewardship

Understanding nature, seasons, habitats, sustainability, and how to care for the environment.



Practical Outdoor Skills & Tool Use

Developing hands-on confidence using age-appropriate equipment and safe outdoor practices.



Exploration, Navigation & Risk Assessment

Developing confidence exploring outdoor spaces, making safe choices, and understanding natural risks.



Collaboration, Communication & Teamworking

Working effectively with others outdoors through shared tasks and problem-solving.



Creativity, Curiosity & Observation Skills

Using the outdoors as a stimulus for noticing, questioning, imagining, and creating.



Physical Confidence & Outdoor Wellbeing

Building physical literacy, resilience, and an understanding of how nature supports wellbeing.

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Nursery	Texture Treasure Hunt	Colour Spotting Walk	Tree Identification	Story Stones	Shadow Play	Mini Garden Creation
Reception	Bug Hunt	Nature Art Collage (Goldsworthy)	Wind Exploration	Bird Watching	Nature Bracelets	Outdoor Alphabet Hunt
Year 1	Mini Beast Investigation	Outdoor Measurement (non-standard units)	Outdoor Storytelling	Seasonal Changes Observation- Create weather station	Nature's Patterns	Sounds of nature
Year 2	Habitat Investigation (Epping/Marshes)	Outdoor Mapping / Orienteering	Bird Watching Expedition	Pollinator investigation	Outdoor Art Gallery	Outdoor Art & History (Hackney)
Year 3	Outdoor Poetry Writing	Geographical Mapping (Hackney Downs)	Rock Investigation	Outdoor Forces	Tree identification walk	Natural weaving
Year 4	Outdoor Survival Skills Workshop	Nature Photography Expedition	Roman Engineering Challenge	Ecosystem Exploration	Environmental Conservation Project (Roof)	Forest Ecology Adventure
Year 5	Environmental Debate	River Study (River Lea)	Wilderness Exploration	Outdoor Art Installation	Greek Laurels and pottery	Outdoor Maths Trail
Year 6	Historical Re-enactment (WW2)	Ecological Art Installation	Mapping Biodiversity	Environmental Conservation Project	Outdoor Adventure Challenge	Outdoor Leadership Expedition
NEST	Sensory Nature Walk	Giant Nature Collage	Outdoor Music Exploration	Shape Hunt with Prompts	Mini-Beast Sensory Station	Storytelling with Nature Prompts
Treetops	Outdoor Obstacle Course	DIY Weather Station	Photography with Tablets	Nature Sorting Challenge	Outdoor Calm Corner	Team Art Installation

Year overview – External trips and Residential

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
EYFS				Forest School		
Year 1				Forest School		
Year 1	Local walk					Beach
Year 2				Forest School		
Year 2	Epping Forest					Beach
Year 3				Epping Forest Iron Age workshop Countryside Day – Falconhurst Farm		Wonderful World of Bees workshop TGC
Year 4	Countryside Day – Falconhurst Farm		Virtual tour of London Mithraeum	South Downs Residential	Kew Gardens	
Year 5			West Stow		Hobbs Hill camping residential Eco Active	Epping Forest Eco Art workshop
Year 6					Eco active Outdoor adventure (kayaking/orienteering)	Hobbs Hill camping residential
SEND (TBA)						

Termly Learning Opportunities

These sessions can be jointly planned with your partner teacher for a day or half day each half term. You can choose to do these activities as a class or as a whole year group. If you have Forest School, you could ask TGC to help run one of these activities. If you find a bookable activity, then please ask me to book the activity and Chandrika the travel (if trains) TFL bookings are to be done by class teachers. Many of these activities can be done on the school site (rooftop, KS1 playground), Hackney Downs, at the Hackney Marshes, or at Clapton Way. You must complete your own risk assessment for these activities based on the needs of your class and the activity chosen.

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Nursery	Texture Treasure Hunt Children collect items with different textures (smooth, rough, soft) and sort them into baskets. https://ndna.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Activity-Sensory-treasure-hunt.pdf	Colour Spotting Walk Match natural objects to colour cards (e.g., green leaf, brown bark). https://inspiremyplay.com/blogs/blog/nature-colour-hunt-getting-kids-outdoors-this-summer?srslid=AfmBOoo1KOejlCGTk60pnTOfQuhaUzNL1zf0ptG62giDG7pGtJxlgN	Tree Identification Introduce children to common trees found in the area and teach them to identify them by their leaves, bark, and shape. https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/03/tree-id-kids/	Story Stones Use stones collected from the outdoor environment as story prompts for creative storytelling activities. https://scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/resource/make-nature-story-stones/	Shadow Play Use sunlight to explore shadows of objects and bodies, tracing them with chalk.	Mini Garden Creation Plant flowers or herbs in small pots and care for them. https://www.childrensgardeningweek.co.uk/things-to-do/make-a-mini-garden/
Reception	Bug Hunt Explore the outdoor environment to find and observe various insects and bugs, discussing	Nature Art Collage Collect natural materials like leaves, flowers, and twigs to create collaborative art pieces,	Wind Exploration Use ribbons or wind socks to observe wind direction and strength.	Bird Watching Use binoculars to observe and identify different bird species in their	Nature Bracelets Wrap masking tape around wrists (sticky side out) and collect	Outdoor Alphabet Hunt Search for items in the outdoor environment that

	<p>their habitats and characteristics.</p> <p>Can also create a bug hotel</p>	<p>fostering creativity and cooperation.</p> <p>Andy Goldsworthy https://www.redtedart.com/kids-get-arty-andy-goldsworthy/</p>	<p>https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z662h4j</p>	<p>natural habitat, learning about their behaviours and adaptations.</p> <p>https://treetoolsforschools.org.uk/activitymenu/?cat=animal_ticksheets</p>	<p>small natural items to decorate.</p> <p>https://kidworldcitizen.org/make-a-bracelet-on-a-nature-hike/</p>	<p>start with each letter of the alphabet, promoting letter recognition and vocabulary development.</p> <p>https://www.natureplaywa.org.au/alphabetical-nature-walk/</p>
Year 1	<p>Mini Beast Investigation</p> <p>Explore the outdoor environment to find and identify different minibeasts, learning about their habitats and life cycles.</p> <p>Create a bug hotel in KS1 Playground (DT)</p> <p>Science – life cycles https://treetoolsforschools.org.uk/activitymenu/?cat=animal_ticksheets</p>	<p>Outdoor Measurement</p> <p>Use non-standard units like sticks, leaves, and stones to measure different objects and distances in the outdoor area.</p> <p>Linked to mathematics – measure using non-standard units</p> <p>Measurements in Messy Maths – Julia Robertson</p>	<p>Outdoor Storytelling</p> <p>Use natural features in the outdoor environment as inspiration for storytelling, encouraging imaginative thinking and language development.</p> <p>Chris Holland – nature storyteller or Richard Skrein https://www.wholeland.org.uk/for-schools/in-school-workshops/</p>	<p>Create a weather station</p> <p>Observe and document changes in the outdoor environment throughout the seasons, discussing the effects of weather and temperature.</p> <p>https://weather.metoffice.gov.uk/learn-about/met-office-for-schools/other-content/other-</p>	<p>Nature's Patterns</p> <p>Search for natural patterns like symmetry, spirals, and stripes in the outdoor environment, creating art inspired by what they find.</p>	<p>Sounds of nature in a forest</p> <p>Investigate the Sounds that you can hear in nature and draw symbols to represent them. Can you identify specific birds or animals that you can hear?</p> <p>https://www.howwelearn.com/nature-education-exploring-the-5-senses-sound/</p>

				resources/weather-station/index		
Year 2	Habitat Investigation Epping Forest Explore different habitats such as woodland, pond, and meadow, identifying plants and animals that live there and discussing their adaptations. Forests (This could be explored during the Epping Forest trip) or at the Hackney/Walthamstow marshes https://learningzone.wwt.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WWT_Who_lives_where_teacher_resource_pck_7-11years.pdf	Bird Watching Expedition Organize a bird watching trip to a local nature reserve or park, identifying different bird species and recording observations. Hackney Marshes or Walthamstow Wetlands Bird Spotting Sheets https://treethinking.org.uk/activitymenu/?cat=animal_ticksheets	Outdoor Mapping/Orienteering Use simple maps and compasses to navigate around the school grounds or local area, developing map reading and directional skills. http://www.solwayorienteers.co.uk/coach/southdowns.pdf	Pollinator Investigation Explore the role of bees, butterflies, and other pollinators in plant reproduction. Observe pollinators in action and record which plants attract them.	Outdoor Art Gallery Create an outdoor art gallery using natural materials like leaves, flowers, and twigs to make sculptures and installations. Forest School opportunity Andy Goldsworthy https://www.redtedart.com/kids-get-arty-andy-goldsworthy/	Outdoor Art and History Take photographs of Hackney and make painted landscapes based on the photographs using natural dyes (beetroot, onion skins, turmeric). This could be repeated with photos of Hackney in the past to compare the similarities and differences.
Year 3	Outdoor Poetry Writing	Geographical Mapping	Rock Investigation	Outdoor Forces Investigation	Tree Identification Walk	Natural weaving

	<p>Use the outdoor environment as inspiration for writing poetry, focusing on descriptive language and sensory imagery.</p> <p>Books for inspiration The Lost Words The Lost Spells (There are copies of both books available on request)</p>	<p>Create simple map of Hackney Downs and include key geographical features (trees, sports grounds, play equipment etc). Pupils can use clip boards and various coloured pencils to walk around the park and jot ideas of what they can see and where. The link below has helpful information for mapping a local park.</p> <p>https://www.field-studies-council.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/KS2-Geography-The-School-Grounds-or-Local-Park.pdf</p>	<p>Collect and examine different types of rocks found outdoors, discussing their properties and how they are formed.</p> <p>Geological Excursion – Chislehurst Caves</p> <p>Visit a geological site such as a quarry, cliff, or cave, observing rock formations and learning about the Earth's structure and history.</p> <p>https://chislehurstcaves.co.uk/</p>	<p>A good opportunity to introduce the science concept of forces outside the classroom. Conduct experiments outdoors to explore forces such as gravity, friction, and magnetism, using natural materials for hands-on learning.</p> <p>Opportunity to use the rooftop science area. See some ideas in the link below.</p> <p>https://themuddypuddleteacher.co.uk/forces-and-magnets-year-3/</p>	<p>Take a guided walk to identify different tree species, learning about their characteristics and ecological importance.</p> <p>(This could be done in Hackney Downs/during Epping Forest trip in Spring)</p> <p>https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/03/tree-id-kids/</p>	<p>Create a frame using twigs and then use natural materials to weave</p>
Year 4	<p>Outdoor Survival Skills Workshop Clapton Way</p> <p>Learn essential survival skills such as shelter</p>	<p>Nature Photography Expedition</p> <p>Explore a natural area with cameras, capturing images of plants, animals, and</p>	<p>Ecosystem Exploration Hackney Marshes OR South Downs Rock Pooling</p>	<p>Roman Engineering Challenge</p> <p>Pupils design and build a Roman road, mosaic or bridge</p>	<p>Environmental Conservation Project School Roof</p> <p>Plan and implement a project to improve</p>	<p>Forest Ecology Adventure</p> <p>tree ID, habitat surveys, and orienteering in</p>

	<p>building, fire starting, and knot tying using natural materials found outdoors.</p> <p>TGC</p>	<p>landscapes, and creating a photo journal. Could they make their own camera?</p> <p>Falconhurst</p> <p>https://www.instructables.com/Diy-camera/</p>	<p>Investigate a local ecosystem such as a pond or woodland, identifying living and non-living components and their interrelationships.</p> <p>South Downs Residential</p>	<p>using natural materials outdoors.</p>	<p>the environment on the school roof, such as planting, creating wildlife habitats e.g. a bee hotel, or reducing litter.</p> <p>https://thehomeschoolscientist.com/make-a-bee-hotel-activity-for-kids/</p> <p>Rainforests/Benin</p>	<p>woodlands of your choice.</p>
Year 5	<p>Environmental Debate</p> <p>Research and debate environmental issues such as climate change, deforestation, or pollution, considering different perspectives and solutions.</p> <p>Research</p> <p>https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-12/WWF_KS2_Lesson2_Teacher_Notes_Debate_Cards.pdf</p>	<p>River Study</p> <p>Visit a local river or stream to study its characteristics, flow patterns, and the impact of human activity on water quality and wildlife.</p> <p>https://www.ecoactive.org.uk/primary-workshops</p>	<p>Wilderness Exploration</p> <p>Epping Forest or Hackney Marshes</p> <p>Embark on a guided walk through a wilderness area, observing and documenting flora, fauna, and geological features.</p> <p>https://www.forestryengland.uk/family-activity/seasonal-activity-sheets</p>	<p>Outdoor Art Installation</p> <p>Hackney Downs</p> <p>Collaboratively design and create an outdoor art installation using natural materials, exploring themes related to the environment and sustainability.</p> <p>https://galleryc19.eebley.com/environ</p>	<p>Outdoor Mathematics Trail</p> <p>Create a mathematics trail outdoors with activities that involve measuring, estimating, and problem-solving using natural objects and features.</p>	<p>Nature laurel crown making and/or Greek pottery making</p> <p>Create Greek laurels and pottery related to ancient Greece</p>

				mental-art-installations.html		
Year 6	<p>Historical Re-enactment for 2025/6 https://www.schoolworkshops.com/world-war-two/ww2-workshop-by-historic-workshops</p> <p>Stage a historical re-enactment outdoors, bringing history to life by recreating events, costumes, and lifestyles from the past.</p>	<p>Ecological Art Installation</p> <p>Create an ecological art installation that raises awareness of environmental issues, using recycled materials and natural elements.</p> <p>https://galleryc19.weebly.com/environmental-art-installations.html</p>	<p>Mapping Biodiversity</p> <p>Conduct a biodiversity survey of the school grounds and create a map.</p> <p>https://ltl.org.uk/news/boost-biodiversity-school-grounds-surveys-natural-nations/</p>	<p>Environmental Conservation Project School Roof</p> <p>Plan and implement a project to improve the environment on the school roof, such as planting, creating wildlife habitats e.g. a bee hotel, or reducing litter.</p> <p>https://thehomeschoolscientist.com/make-a-bee-hotel-activity-for-kids/</p>	<p>Outdoor Adventure Challenge</p> <p>Participate in outdoor adventure activities such as rock climbing, kayaking, or orienteering, promoting resilience, teamwork, and risk management.</p> <p>https://www.ecoactive.org.uk/at-the-seaside-trust</p>	<p>Outdoor Leadership Expedition</p> <p>Pupils plan and lead a short nature walk for younger children.</p>
Nest	<p>Sensory Nature Walk</p> <p>Focus on textures, sounds, and smells rather than complex identification</p>	<p>Giant Nature Collage</p> <p>Collect large, easy-to-handle natural materials (leaves, sticks) and create a collaborative art piece.</p>	<p>Outdoor Music Exploration</p> <p>Use natural objects (stones, sticks) to make rhythms and sounds.</p>	<p>Shape Hunt with Visual Prompts</p> <p>Provide laminated cards showing shapes (circle, triangle) and ask</p>	<p>Mini-Beast Sensory Station</p> <p>Instead of active bug hunting, set up trays with soil, leaves, and</p>	<p>Storytelling with nature prompts</p> <p>Use large stones, shells, or leaves as story starters.</p>

		Have a look at Andy Goldsworthy		pupils to find matching shapes outdoors.	safe insects for tactile exploration.	
Treetops	Outdoor Obstacle Course Adapt for mobility needs with wide paths and clear markers.	DIY Weather Station Simple tools like wind socks and rain gauges for hands-on observation.	Photography with Tablets Allow pupils to capture nature images and create a digital gallery.	Nature Sorting Challenge Provide trays for sorting objects by size, color, or texture.	Calm Corner Outdoors Create a quiet sensory space with cushions and natural objects for self-regulation.	Team Art Installation Use large natural materials to build a sculpture together.

National Curriculum Links to Outdoor Learning

Year / Setting	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Nursery	Texture Treasure Hunt EYFS: UW, PD Sensory exploration, descriptive language	Colour Spotting Walk EYFS: UW, CL Colour recognition, observation	Tree Identification EYFS: UW Observation, classification	Story Stones EYFS: Literacy, CL Storytelling, sequencing	Shadow Play EYFS: PD, UW Coordination, light/shadow understanding	Mini Garden Creation EYFS: UW Responsibility, observation
Reception	Bug Hunt EYFS: UW, Science Observation, classification	Nature Art Collage EYFS: EAD Creativity, fine motor	Wind Exploration EYFS: UW Investigating forces, vocabulary	Bird Watching EYFS: UW Observation, patience	Nature Bracelets EYFS: EAD Pattern recognition, creativity	Outdoor Alphabet Hunt EYFS: Literacy Letter recognition, phonics
Year 1	Mini Beast Investigation Science: Living things Observation, inquiry	Outdoor Measurement (non-standard) Maths: Measurement Estimation, teamwork	Outdoor Storytelling English: Narrative Sequencing, oral language	Seasonal Changes / Weather Station Science: Seasons Observation, recording	Nature's Patterns Maths: Patterns Pattern recognition	Sounds of Nature Science / Music Auditory discrimination
Year 2	Habitat Investigation (Epping/Marshes) Science Fieldwork, classification	Outdoor Mapping / Orienteering Geography Map reading, spatial awareness	Bird Watching Expedition Science Observation, identification	Pollinator Investigation Science Biodiversity awareness	Outdoor Art Gallery Art & Design Creativity, collaboration	Outdoor Art & History (Hackney) History / Art Linking historical context
Year 3	Outdoor Poetry Writing	Geographical Mapping (Hackney)	Rock Investigation Science: Rocks	Outdoor Forces Science: Forces	Tree Identification Walk	Natural Weaving Art & Design

Year / Setting	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
	English: Writing Vocabulary, descriptive language	Downs) Geography Mapping, spatial awareness	Observation, classification	Experimentation, predicting	Science Observation, classification	Creativity, fine motor
Year 4	Outdoor Survival Skills Workshop PSHE, PE Teamwork, resilience	Nature Photography Expedition Art & Design Observation, creativity	Roman Engineering Challenge History / DT / Science Design, problem-solving	Ecosystem Exploration Science Observation, data collection	Environmental Conservation Project (Roof) Science / PSHE Stewardship, teamwork	Forest Ecology Adventure Science: Habitats Observation, resilience
Year 5	Environmental Debate PSHE / English Critical thinking, communication	River Study (River Lea) Geography / Science Fieldwork, mapping	Wilderness Exploration Science / PE Observation, resilience	Outdoor Art Installation Art & Design Collaboration, planning	Greek Laurels and Pottery History / Art Historical knowledge, creativity	Outdoor Maths Trail Maths Problem-solving, teamwork
Year 6	Historical Re-enactment (WW2) History / PE Empathy, teamwork	Ecological Art Installation Art / Science Creativity, environmental awareness	Mapping Biodiversity Geography / Science Fieldwork, data collection	Environmental Conservation Project Science / PSHE Responsibility, teamwork	Outdoor Adventure Challenge PE / PSHE Physical development, leadership	Outdoor Leadership Expedition PE / PSHE Leadership, problem-solving
Nest (KS1 SEND, PKS)	Sensory Nature Walk PKS: Communication & Interaction, PD Engagement, following instructions	Giant Nature Collage PKS: Cognition, EAD Creativity, collaboration	Outdoor Music Exploration PKS: Communication, EAD	Shape Hunt with Prompts PKS: Cognition, Maths	Mini-Beast Sensory Station PKS: Understanding the World	Storytelling with Nature Prompts PKS: Communication, EAD

Year / Setting	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
			Responding to sound, rhythm	Shape recognition, counting	Investigation, tactile exploration	Vocabulary, sequencing
Treetops (KS2 SEND, PKS)	Outdoor Obstacle Course PKS: PD, PSHE Balance, confidence, teamwork	DIY Weather Station PKS: Cognition, UW Observation, cause & effect	Photography with Tablets PKS: EAD, Communication Capturing ideas, creativity	Nature Sorting Challenge PKS: Cognition, Maths Sorting, classification	Outdoor Calm Corner PKS: PSHE Mindfulness, self-regulation	Team Art Installation PKS: EAD, Communication Collaboration, cre