

OVO
FOUNDATION

**Climate Changers
Call for Ideas and Proposals**

Application Pack
June 2022



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Introduction to OVO Foundation

[OVO Foundation](#) is the charitable arm of OVO Energy. We were set up in 2014 with the mission to support inspiring organisations with smart ideas, so together we can give every child and young person a greener, fairer future. Our annual income is £1m and comes from a combination of customer and OVO Energy donations.

Since our inception, OVO Foundation has worked with some amazing charity partners to tackle youth homelessness and educational inequality here in the UK, and energy access in schools and medical clinics in East Africa. In 2020 we agreed on a new strategy that put climate change education and action at its heart, better aligning the Foundation with OVO's sustainability strategy: Plan Zero.

**Our vision is to give every child
and young person a greener, fairer
world to grow up in.**

We launched [Climate Changers](#), our most recent funding area, in 2020 to help us achieve this vision. Our focus is supporting children and young people to gain knowledge and skills to tackle the climate crisis, while creating green spaces around them in which to take action. We have been working closely with [three partners](#) (pg. 19) to support expansion and scale, and work collectively to tackle the urgency of the climate crisis.

OVO Foundation is now increasing its work in this area to support innovative solutions that create lasting change and help us to realise our vision. We have a total funding pot of approximately £1,000,000 and will look to fund up to three projects for three years. More information on how this funding will be allocated can be found in the [Call for ideas and proposals](#) section below (pg. 8).

Our vision

OVO Foundation's vision is underpinned by two goals:

- 1) Equip less advantaged children and young people with improved skills, knowledge, and confidence to take action on sustainability issues and contribute to building sustainable communities
- 2) Ensure less advantaged children and young people live in a sustainable community with increased access to green spaces and opportunities

In order to meet these goals, we are launching a call for ideas and proposals to find partners and projects that work across the following areas:

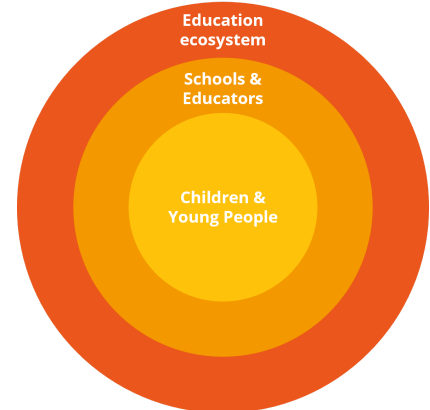


Project activity does not need to fall into more than one of these categories but can do if relevant. The application process will give partners the opportunity to articulate the evidence base and rationale for the design of their projects.

Focusing our funding on these three areas will allow us to:

- Improve the wider ecosystem within which schools operate and climate change education is delivered
- Increase opportunities for children and young people to access local green spaces, helping connect them to nature
- Lead and inspire positive action in and beyond schools to deliver measurable outcomes on the climate crisis

These areas put children and young people at the centre of OVO Foundation's work, while recognising the vital role of schools and educators in supporting them to gain knowledge and access opportunities. We also recognise the need to position the entire education system to have a greater focus on the climate crisis, and in doing so reach all children and young people.




Today's children and young people are our future, and they will soon represent leaders, educators, and changemakers in the world. We believe that what children and young people learn today will affect their lifestyle choices for years to come; educating and empowering children now will give them the opportunity to take action on the climate crisis.

Not all children and young people have the skills, knowledge, or opportunity to take climate action, particularly those from less advantaged or lower income communities. This can be attributed to:

- Educational inequality
- Lack of awareness and education on climate change, and how to tackle it
- The fact that the climate crisis requires new ways of thinking (e.g. design and innovation), as well as the core skills and knowledge to take action
- The need for faster and collaborative action to fight the climate crisis

We know from our research that the school curriculum is not sufficiently prioritising climate change education, despite the opportunity and motivation being there. We also recognise that there's a real shortage of funding for the organisations doing amazing work in this space. It's clear that together we have a significant opportunity here to educate and enable young people to take action on climate change, through:

- Engaging children at school and in their wider community
- Upskilling educators
- Working within the education ecosystem to build long-lasting change
- Building an evidence base - capturing best practice through robust impact measurement



The final points also represent a great opportunity to align with government policy, particularly as we are launching projects in the wake of the Department for Education's Sustainability and Climate Change strategy, published in April 2022, which requires schools to undertake more climate education and action.

At OVO Foundation we believe that all children and young people, regardless of background, should have the chance to live in a sustainable community, which offers them access to green spaces, education and employment opportunities, and health benefits.

We know that children and young people from lower income communities and less advantaged backgrounds in particular are less likely to live in sustainable communities.

There are a number of attributable factors behind this, including:

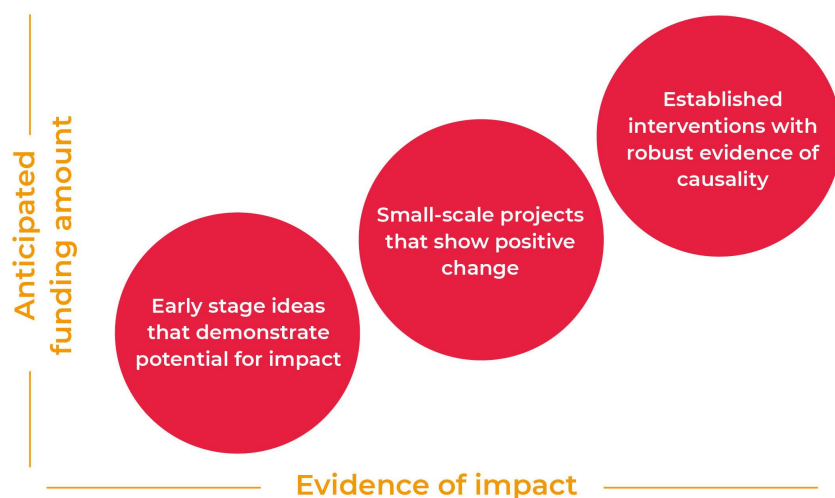
- Resource allocation is often unequal – in and between communities
- Lower income communities are particularly vulnerable to climate change, which worsens inequality
- The voices of lower income communities are often unheard. We need diverse and local solutions from all communities
- We need to improve the physical environment surrounding children and young people before we can empower them to take action

In addition to the benefits to each child and young person, we know that a connection to nature is fundamental to inspiring positive action on the climate crisis and encouraging sustainable behaviour. We have a great opportunity here: by increasing access to green spaces and the positive benefits they provide, we can help young people to connect with nature and learn why it's so important that they take action to protect it for years to come.

You can read more about our research findings in our [Appendix](#) (pg. 16).

Call for ideas and proposals

OVO Foundation is interested in hearing from potential partners who are at different stages of developing and delivering their projects. We are as keen to find established projects with robust measures and evidence of impact as we are to find promising early stage ideas, and will flex funding as per the scale below:



To date, the scope of our involvement has varied according to project; we've been involved in designing and delivering projects from scratch, to helping projects scale, to helping others build capacity from a monitoring and evaluation perspective to demonstrate impact.

OVO Foundation supports children and young people from less advantaged backgrounds or lower income communities, so the projects that we'll fund will be working in UK geographic areas and/or settings which have high levels of evidenced need amongst children and young people. More details on what we're looking for can be found in the [criteria checklist](#) (pg. 9). Underpinning all projects is our willingness to collaborate, learn, and share experiences and best practice across the sector.

Our final decision on how this new programme area is structured will depend on the types of organisations who apply and the proposals we receive. We have a total funding pot of approximately £1,000,000 and will look to fund up to three projects for three years. We anticipate providing lower levels of funding to early stage ideas, and up to £350,000 for more established projects over three years.

Criteria checklist

NOTE: We will only consider applications for projects that are developed and managed by a legally identified not-for-profit.

Please use the key selection and desirable criteria as a checklist for your project before applying.

Key selection criteria:

Projects must:

1. Align with our vision and goals by:

- Campaigning for better climate change education

And / Or

Increasing opportunities for children and young people to learn from and connect to nature in/around schools

And / Or

Inspiring positive action on the climate crisis in/beyond schools.

- Pursuing an ambition to ensure all children and young people grow up in a greener, fairer world.

2. Target the groups that OVO Foundation is passionate about benefiting, which means you:

- Work with children and young people (up to 25).

- Work in UK geographic area(s) and/or settings which have higher levels of need amongst children and young people, as measured by, for example, data on social mobility, child poverty, or pupils in receipt of free school meals.

- Support children and young people from less advantaged backgrounds or lower income communities, including via educators/volunteers who work with children and young people.

3. Be relevant, meaningful and clear on impact, and clearly articulate how the project will be measured, including:

- Demonstrate that there is a clear and compelling need.
- Articulate how impact will be measured, focusing on outcomes as well as outputs.
- Have data that, at a minimum, shows some positive change amongst those already receiving or using your intervention.
- We will take a flexible approach to this question where ideas or proposals are at an early stage.

4. Be confident in delivering, or having potential to deliver, high-impact projects at reasonable cost which means projects:

- Demonstrate value for money in terms of providing a high return on investment (i.e. we seek projects that show high impact in relation to the funding amount), as well as be delivered in a cost-effective way.

5. Share our ambition in wanting to scale which means:

- Demonstrate potential to be scalable to other settings and geographic areas.
- Have considered sustainability of the project beyond our investment.
- Have a project budget up to £350k (for more established projects) over three-years.

Desirable criteria:

In addition, we would be especially interested in projects that:

- Are able to articulate the need for the project by integrating children and young people's voices and opinions on what they believe the barriers to be.
- Bring together more than one delivery partner to tackle communities' multiple needs in order to benefit children and young people. Ideally you will have demonstrable experience of combining resources and sharing expertise to achieve more together.

- Already use, or have an appetite to use, a carbon reduction metric to measure impact.
- Are looking for more than just funding. Following the success of our other projects, we're keen to establish partnerships and provide non-financial advice and support. We'd like to hear from you on what this might look like, including opportunities to maximise on support from OVO staff and customers where relevant to meeting project objectives.

What won't we fund?

- Projects and organisations that don't meet our key selection criteria (at a minimum)
- The promotion of religious or political causes, general appeals or circulars, individual sponsorship, events or conferences
- A project's core costs alone
- Projects that take place outside of the UK
- Individuals, bursaries or student fees
- Short-term or one-off projects

What will OVO Foundation bring to the partnership?

- Total funding of up to £350k over a three-year period, depending on the stage of the project.
- Support for the development and/or expansion of the project.
- An understanding of research and challenges relating to children, young people, and the climate crisis.
- A strong interest in supporting promising projects and helping partners to demonstrate their concept is relevant and applicable elsewhere.
- Support in disseminating learning from the project and connecting with others.

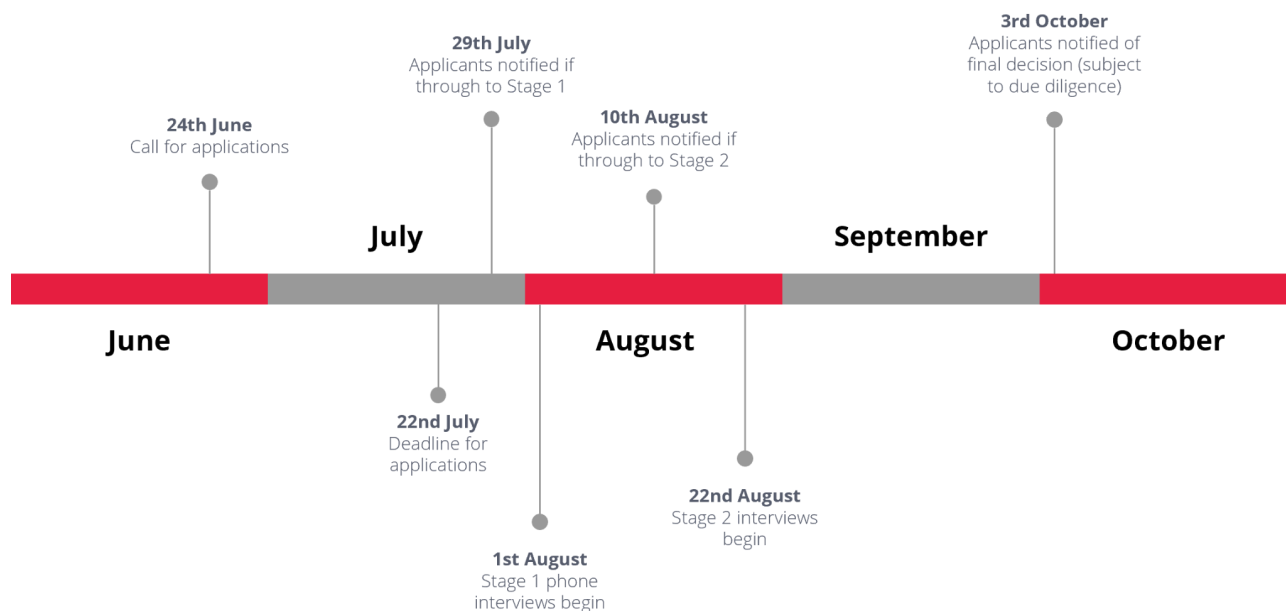


Application process

Once you're confident that your project meets the key selection criteria at a minimum, please [apply here](#) by 11.59pm (GMT) on Friday 22nd July 2022.

- Stage 1: OVO Foundation will inform applicants if they have been successful in reaching the first stage by Friday 29th July 2022. Longlisted applicants will be invited to discuss their proposals on a telephone call between Monday 1st and Monday 8th August 2022.
- Stage 2: OVO Foundation will inform applicants if they have been successful in reaching the next stage by Wednesday 10th August 2022. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to meet with OVO Foundation (in person or via a video call) between Monday 22nd and Friday 26th August 2022.
- Final stage: We expect to communicate our funding decision to shortlisted applicants by 3rd October 2022 (subject to due diligence).

Timeline



We will not take ideas or proposals forward that:

- Do not meet our [key selection criteria](#) (pg. 9).
- Fail to clearly explain the delivery model and anticipated outcomes.
- Miss the application deadline, are incomplete, or lack supporting evidence.

If you have questions about how to apply or need more guidance, please see [the FAQs section](#) (pg. 14) or submit any additional questions [here](#) by Friday 8th July. Depending on the questions we receive, we may consolidate and answer them in a webinar, in which case we will get in touch with all applicants to advise of the date and time. Otherwise we will respond to questions directly.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I submit ideas or proposals for several projects?

We would encourage you to submit an application with details of the project you feel is your strongest only. It must meet our key selection criteria, and ideally our desirable criteria too. You may submit separate forms if you have more than one project that meets the criteria, but please note that we are looking for well-considered applications.

Can I submit a joint application with another organisation?

Yes, we are open to exploring projects which bring together a range of stakeholders and expertise. Please clearly state on the application form which organisations are already involved in your project and how.

What happens after I submit my application form?

You will see a confirmation page saying "Thank you for your submission" and a copy of your responses will be sent to the email address you registered when completing the form. All applicants will be notified of whether they have been successful in reaching the next round or not by Friday 29th July 2022.

How will OVO Foundation choose which applications to proceed to the next stage?

All completed application forms will be assessed against our criteria and the strongest will be invited to discuss the project in more detail and share more about your organisation.

Throughout the application process we will be looking for applicants who are keen to learn and constantly seek better ways to achieve great results. Please be clear about how you plan to develop and/or expand your project, and how you might work with OVO Foundation.

What happens if my project gets funded?

We would like all projects to begin delivery by the end of 2022 and will discuss the timeline with you during the application process.

What if I have another question about criteria or the application process?

If you have questions about how to apply or need some more guidance please submit them [here](#) by Friday 8th July 2022. Depending on the questions we receive, we may consolidate and answer them in a webinar, in which case we will get in touch with all applicants to advise of the date and time. Otherwise we will respond to questions directly.



Appendix 1: Research into our new thematic areas

In developing our new strategy, we commissioned research to understand some of the key issues relating to climate action and education, and access to nature for children and young people. We are looking for partners and projects that can articulate the challenge but also demonstrate real potential to address them:

Climate action and education

Today's children and young people are our future, and they will soon represent leaders, educators, and changemakers in the world. What children and young people learn today will affect their lifestyle choices for years to come; educating and empowering children now will give them the opportunity to take action on the climate crisis.

We know that not all children and young people have the skills, knowledge, or opportunity to take climate action, particularly those from less advantaged or lower income communities. This can be attributed to:

- Educational inequality
- Lack of awareness and education on climate change, and how to tackle it
- The fact that the climate crisis requires new ways of thinking (e.g. design and innovation), as well as the core skills and knowledge to take action
- The need for faster and collaborative action to fight the climate crisis

Our research has shown that the current school curriculum does not sufficiently prioritise climate change education. A [2022 study](#) reported that 51% of teachers say 'climate change, the ecological crisis and the challenges posed by these issues are not embedded in their school's curriculum... in a meaningful and relevant way'. [Another recent study](#) found that 70% of teachers feel they have not received adequate training to educate students on climate change.

Yet the opportunity and motivation is there. A [2021 report](#) showed that children and young people suffer from 'eco-anxiety', with 85% of youth globally believing they have a responsibility to tackle climate change; over 40% are unsure of how they can make a difference. This [lack of knowledge can create a major barrier to deeper engagement in sustainability issues](#) – especially for young people from less advantaged backgrounds.

Whilst there are organisations doing amazing work in this space, there is a significant shortage

of funding for projects that help young people to take action on climate change—in fact it's estimated to be between only [1-3% of all climate change spending](#). What funding there is for environmental causes is highly fragmented, with many organisations receiving less than £10,000 for their projects.

Our research has made it clear that we have a significant opportunity to educate and enable young people to take action on the climate crisis. This includes:

- Engaging children at school and in their wider community
- Upskilling educators
- Working within the education ecosystem to build long-lasting change
- Building an evidence base - capturing best practice through robust impact measurement


The final points also represent a great opportunity to align with government policy, particularly as we are launching projects in the wake of the Department for Education's Sustainability and Climate Change strategy, published in April 2022, which requires schools to undertake more climate education and action.

Sustainable communities and access to nature

We believe all children and young people, regardless of background, should have the chance to live in a sustainable community, which offers them access to green spaces, education and employment opportunities, and health benefits.

We know that children and young people from lower income communities and less advantaged backgrounds in particular are less likely to live in sustainable communities. Indeed, 18% of children living in the most deprived areas [never visit the natural environment](#) and for many [local green spaces are the first and only opportunity](#) to experience the natural environment on a regular basis. There are a number of attributable factors behind this, including:

- Resource allocation is often unequal – in and between communities
- Lower income communities are particularly vulnerable to climate change, which worsens inequality
- The voices of lower income communities are often unheard. We need diverse and local solutions from all communities
- We need to improve the physical environment surrounding children and young people before we can empower them to take action



Access to nature offers many positive [impacts](#) for young people, including education from first-hand experiences, improved health and wellbeing, and enhanced personal and social skills. It follows therefore that lack of connection with nature may include lower achievement at school, poorer mental and physical health, or under-developed social skills. We also know that a child's ['connection to nature is a strong predictor of \[their\] interests in environmentally friendly practices'](#) and can lead to more sustainable behaviour, yet [only 21% of 8-12 year olds in the UK have an adequate level of connection](#).

We have a significant opportunity here: by increasing access to green spaces and the positive benefits they provide, we can help young people to connect with nature and learn why it's so important that they take action to protect it for years to come.

Climate Changers

We believe there is real need, value, and opportunity in addressing both of these problems together to allow all children and young people to have access to a greener, fairer future. Our Climate Changers programme area seeks to help all children and young people, regardless of income or background, live in a sustainable community, with access to green spaces, and be empowered with the skills and knowledge to take action on the climate crisis.

Appendix 2: Examples of our projects

As mentioned previously, the scope of our involvement has varied according to project. We look for projects where we can add real value, whether taking something from ideation to delivery, or helping projects scale.

In alignment with our vision, we focus on funding projects that address issues relating to energy and climate change as they affect young people at school and in their wider communities. We believe that every small action we do locally can ladder up to a positive change, globally, so we've partnered with organisations whose projects are meaningful to local communities. Here is a snapshot of our current partners and their projects we're supporting:

Action for Conservation: WildED

Since 2014, [Action for Conservation](#) (AFC) have supported young people from diverse backgrounds to become the next generation of environmental leaders. They work in low income communities across UK urban centres to inspire and support young people to create green, sustainable communities, through delivering projects that boost biodiversity, build key skills and knowledge, and cut carbon emissions.

We are funding AFC's WildED programme in 99 secondary schools across three UK regions: South East (London), South West (Bristol and South Wales), and North West (Liverpool and Manchester). The programme consists of tailored workshops and student-led activities that take place during one school term, which equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to lead their own environmental action projects in their local communities. Students then 'pitch' their projects ideas to their peers and the AFC team, developing their analysis and presentation skills, with winning teams getting the opportunity to attend a 'Dragons' Den' event with a panel of conservation industry experts.

The WildED project has some ambitious targets, including:

- Over 2,470 students to participate in the WildED programme, supported by 135 trained local volunteers
- 198 teachers to make use of resources to support students' environmental learning

- Young people to design and deliver 412 projects to boost biodiversity and cut carbon emissions; helping to build a generation of young people who are inspired and supported to create green, sustainable communities

There have been some truly inspiring case studies shared throughout this project, including a group of five 11-13 years olds from North Liverpool Academy, who participated in the WildED programme in Autumn 2020. The team was invited to present their action project 'Midsommar' at the Transform Our World Summit in November 2021, alongside the global gathering of world leaders at the COP26 Climate Conference in Glasgow.

The Midsommar group focussed their project on raising awareness of local levels of air pollution as well as leading hands-on tree-planting and habitat creation initiatives on their school grounds. After raising their concerns with their Headteacher and garnering support on social media, they secured a spot on Sky News to talk to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Liverpool about these issues and the importance of building a youth voice for nature. During the interview the students discussed the high levels of air pollution and litter around where they live and questioned the Mayors on how these issues were going to be solved.



Back at school, they invited other students to join them in creating an urban wildlife garden which would be a home to hedgehogs, birds and bees. As a result, the group gained huge recognition for their efforts to raise awareness and inspired their peers to take action and get more involved with local conservation work.

Energy Sparks

[Energy Sparks](#) is an online energy management tool and education programme that empowers pupils to improve the energy efficiency of their schools, helping them to have a real impact on climate change. It also teaches them energy saving skills to take home to their families and communities.

We know that schools are notoriously energy inefficient and many local authorities have reported they account for a large proportion of the area's carbon emissions. Roughly £44 million per year could be saved by schools investing in carbon reducing strategies, and also prevent 625,000 tonnes of CO2 being released.

We are funding Energy Sparks' expansion into 350 primary and secondary schools across the UK, reaching up to 100,000 pupils. They aim to help schools to reduce carbon emissions by 6000 tonnes, as well as saving them £1.9m on their energy bills (based on an average of 20% energy saving reduction at schools over a three-year period).

A wonderful example of Energy Sparks in action comes from Widcombe Infant School in Bath. An energy audit provided the perfect opportunity to teach the pupils about energy conservation and climate change. Pupils used a thermal camera to look for cold spots in the classroom, recorded classroom temperatures and made posters about energy conservation.



Following this, the school management put the kids in charge of changing things up. Since then, energy literacy has become part of the daily school routine. Aged just 4 to 7, these children are now aware that by reducing electricity and gas use, they're making the environment better for their future. They also understand that this is linked to plastics, pollution, and climate change. They are empowered to make decisions on how to control the temperature in the classroom, and even when the lights come on.

Earthwatch Europe: Tiny Forests

Earthwatch Europe is an environmental charity whose mission is to connect people with the natural world, monitor the health of our natural resources, and inform the actions that have the greatest positive impact on the environment. They are pioneering the

development of Tiny Forests in the UK: planting dense urban woodlands (the size of a tennis court) to enhance urban environments.

Over the past two years we've funded the planting of 12 Tiny Forests across England and Scotland, helping to improve the physical environment for children in deprived communities and connect them with the environment and sustainability. We have also funded training and resource provisions for teachers to educate children in these compact woodlands, using them as outdoor classrooms and breaking down the boundaries of typical classroom-based learning.

The Tiny Forest project set out to achieve:

- 9,000 students and 480 educators having access to Tiny Forests and the associated training and development
- A further 1,200 young people aged 18 to 25 conducting scientific monitoring of each Tiny Forest
- An average annual uptake of up to 7.2 tonnes of CO2 from the Tiny Forests by 2023



It's particularly meaningful when we hear directly from a participant in our projects, just like Liz Latham, Principal at Queensmead Primary Academy in Leicester:

"We wanted to get involved in the Tiny Forest Project as we have a focus on personal development, as well as a vast array of character-building opportunities built into all aspects of school life. We are committed to ensuring that pupils are inspired to maximise their development as members of both the school and wider community, as well as to understand their responsibilities as national and global citizens both now and into the future as they grow up. With a global focus on environmental education, ecological awareness and sustainability, our school community is embracing all opportunities for pupils to participate in activities which highlight these aspects.

For our school and students, the Tiny Forest provides a fantastic opportunity to be part of something which has an impact locally, nationally, and globally. By developing their knowledge about biodiversity as Citizen Scientists, pupils understand what affects the

natural world in their local area and can link to Tiny Forests in other parts of the country/world to be part of a wider network – this increases their sense of belonging and responsibility. They're learning new, transferrable skills which provide a good grounding for their future in terms of employability.

The challenges addressed by the Tiny Forest project are around expectations and experiences – our school is in the 10% most socially deprived areas in the country: we promote future aspirations and provide experiences that pupils wouldn't otherwise be able to access. [The Tiny Forest] has already had a huge impact on pupils and staff – it's generated a real excitement and awareness about addressing environmental concerns which has spring boarded additional new projects in these areas.

The explicit learning around pupils carrying out their Citizen Scientists role has developed pupils' knowledge and skills. Most importantly for our pupils has been the development of personal skills in our 'Reconnection Curriculum' such as empathy, resilience, problem-solving, and a sense of responsibility. Offering pupils the chance to be proactive in response to wider global issues has been a very important thread.

Highlights have been seeing pupils thoroughly enjoying themselves in whatever task they're doing, from planting and mulching to measuring and recording as well as just sitting, reflecting, and being still.

The lasting change will be the opportunities the Tiny Forest gives to support our curriculum and offer unique experiences for pupils to develop their understanding of their own roles and responsibilities to the environment both now and as they grow to adulthood.

We're really grateful to have been offered this opportunity and the ongoing support that goes with it. Thanks, from us all!"