

Making the Case

All schools can benefit from using the living environment as a school resource. Here are four key arguments to help you make your case.

**1. The benefits will be widespread. Whatever level of activity your school can accommodate – from creating a small growing area to running a school farm, or from hunting mini-beasts in the playground to taking a field trip to a nature reserve – everyone will gain:**

* young people will get the chance to learn in new, more relevant and exciting ways – in particular these can benefit those who find classroom learning difficult
* teachers will be able to broaden and deepen their teaching skills and subject knowledge while working with more motivated pupils
* the school can use these new approaches to raise achievement
* the wider community can benefit through involvement in, for example, developing school gardens of all kinds, leading to a wider understanding of issues such as healthy eating, sustainability and caring for the environment.

**2. It’s an ideal way to transmit some key messages. Using the living environment for learning, both within the school grounds and through visits further afield, will have a positive impact on young people’s understanding of some crucial issues including:**

* where food comes from and the role of farmers and growers
* what constitutes healthy eating and why it matters
* the interdependence of the urban and rural environments
* how and why we should care for the natural world
* the need for more sustainable development
* the value of skills in plant cultivation and animal husbandry

**3. All curriculum subjects can be approached through the study of growing plants and animals. It’s not a new topic to cram into an overfull school day, but an effective and exciting way of teaching. There are thousands of ideas in our Places to visit and Resources.**

**4. We’ve got the research to prove it. An increasing body of research supports the value of learning in the living environment. A number of key papers can be found in our resource ‘Making the Case – Research papers’ if you want to delve deeper.**