

# **HAMPSTEAD HEATH CHARITABLE TRUST**

## **Green Spaces, Learning Places**

### **Year 2 Evaluation Report**

‘Green Spaces, Learning Places’, the CoL Open Spaces Department’s innovative learning programme, contributes to the health and wellbeing of residents of some of London’s most deprived communities by connecting them more powerfully to their local green spaces.

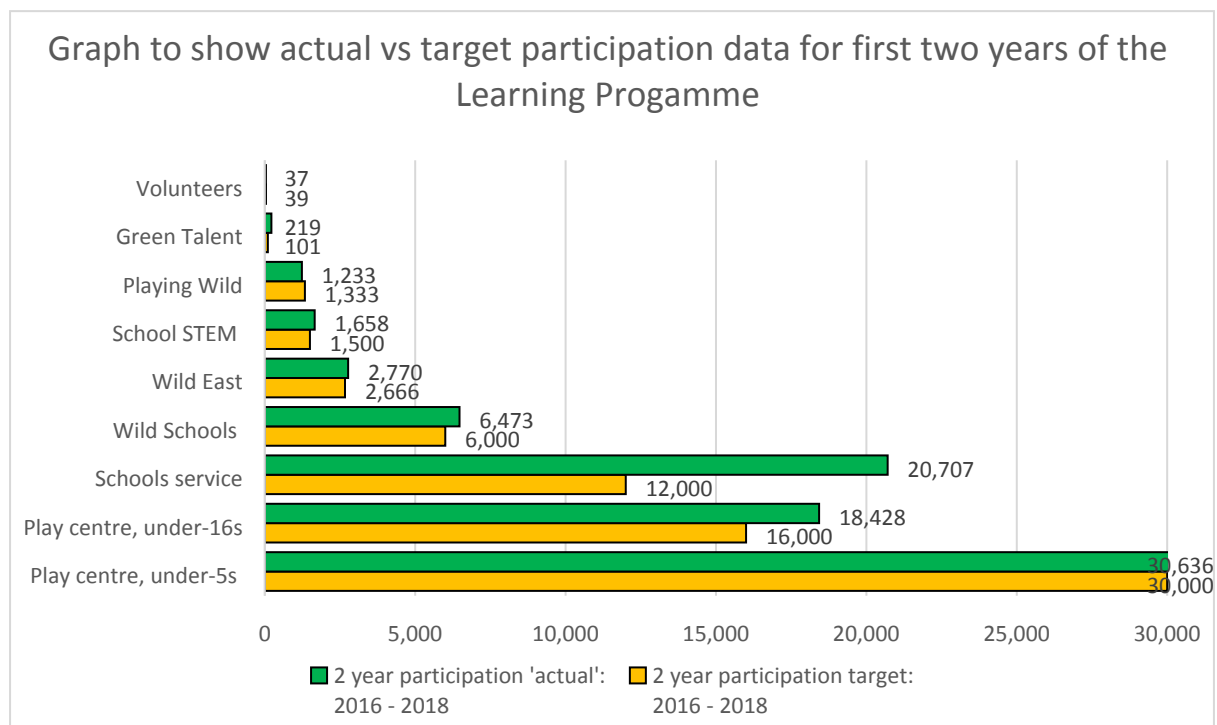
Since 2016 the Open Spaces Learning Team have delivered a programme which supports more Londoners to explore nature, learn about the environment and increase their wellbeing through using their local green spaces regularly. We are concerned that Londoners are becoming disconnected from the natural world, and we know that people in deprived areas of London face more barriers than most to accessing nature. Our green spaces are often located near areas of high deprivation which makes us uniquely placed to tackle this challenge head on. We create engaging opportunities to connect people, particularly from deprived and urban communities, more powerfully to their local green space. Our goal is to get people outdoors to experience the good feelings and health benefits that we all know come from spending time in green spaces. A generous grant from the City Bridge Trust has enabled us to deliver our first two years of the programme and will continue to support a further year.

The programme focusses on five impact areas which made up our strategic learning framework: understanding, confidence, involvement, wellbeing, and connection. The programme delivers:

- Four innovative community based projects:
  - ‘Green Talent’ works with young people furthest from the job market, providing opportunities to explore careers in the environmental and green spaces sector.
  - ‘Wild Schools’ takes a full-school approach with a small number of London’s inner city schools, working to embed outdoor learning in West Ham Park within the schools’ ethos
  - ‘Wild East’ engages teams of volunteers from the local community, who work together to provide exciting mobile events for families in West Ham Park and Wanstead Flats – areas of high deprivation.
  - ‘Playing Wild’ addresses barriers to connection with nature through targeting families with under-5s through natural play activities on Hampstead Heath and Queens Park.

- Two reinvigorated school services (Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest):
  - We deliver high quality inspiring booked sessions to a wide range of schools across 12 London boroughs at our Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath education centres.
- Two reinvigorated play centres (Hampstead Heath):
  - An Open Access Play Centre for under-16 and a play centre for under-5s and their parents/carers, providing free, facilitated play opportunities.
- A volunteer programme which positions volunteers as a key beneficiary of the programmes we run in green spaces.

This innovative three-year learning programme has reached over 82,000 people in the first two years of delivery, 19% above our 2016-2018 two-year target of 69,604. The following graph illustrates the participation figures across the programme.



2016-18 programme highlights include:

- Over 950 school classes have participated in the programme, with 100% of participating teachers reporting that their learning outcomes have been met
- 9,886 children who are eligible for pupil premium (an indicator of poverty and disadvantage) have participated in our primary school programme
- 69% of Green Talent participants reported an increase in their wellbeing
- 52% of Wild East event participants were from black and ethnic minority groups
- Accreditations - the programme won the 2017 CoL Award for Innovation in Equality and Inclusion, and the Green Talent programme is shortlisted for the 2018 Horticulture Week Custodian Award for Best Community Initiative
- Learning officers were invited to showcase their work and share their expertise at the National Sustainable Schools Conference, London Environmental Education Forum and Culture Mile Learning
- A bespoke evaluation toolkit has been developed in collaboration with the University of Derby, the outcomes of which will be shared with the wider sector in December 2018.

The programme champions diversity and inclusion and reaches Londoners of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, taking practical steps to welcome and involve people through highly quality learning activities. Case studies (provided as an appendix) show the value of some of our projects supporting equality, inclusion, health and wellbeing, growing cohesive communities and enabling Londoners to thrive.

To conclude, the Green Spaces, Learning Places project has been very successful in engaging Londoners with their local green spaces, with 82,000 people benefiting over the programme's first two years. The Open Spaces Learning Team are committed to reflecting on their work, and we are particularly excited to have developed and launched an evaluation toolkit with the University of Derby. This toolkit will help us learn more about the impact we are making, and we will use this learning to ensure we are providing the best service for our communities.

## **Appendix: 'Green Spaces, Learning Places' case studies**

### **Case Study 1**

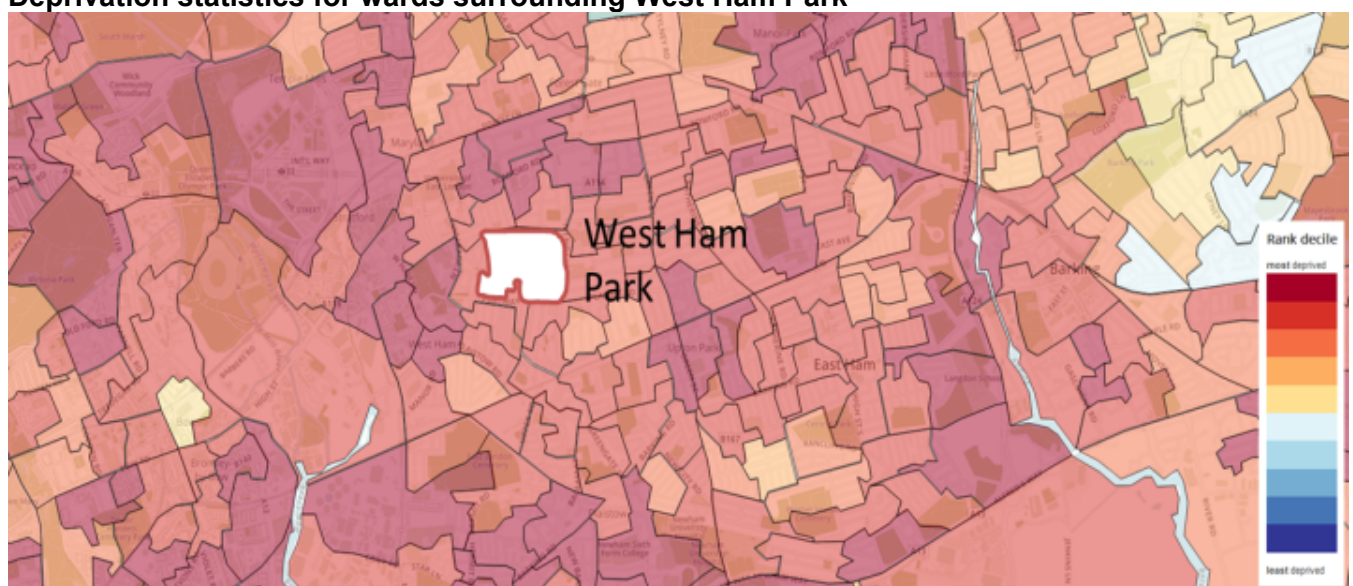
#### **Growing cohesive communities and supporting equality and inclusion in health and wellbeing**

The Wild East programme targets communities in Newham, where there are over 100 languages spoken and significant numbers of ethnic minorities, including Indian (14%), African (12%), Bangladeshi (12%) and Pakistani (10%). In addition, Newham is an area where levels of physical activity are low, the poverty rate is 37%, and self-reported life satisfaction is below the national average.

The programme engages people from these communities to deliver mobile learning activities in West Ham Park and Wanstead Flats, which in turn reach more members of the community including local family groups. Activities designed to get people moving through the green spaces whilst making observations, sharing knowledge and discussing ideas help people to connect to nature in their local green space. For both volunteers and the wider participants, the activities enable them to be aware of the local open spaces, be physically active, connect socially, learn new skills, make a contribution, and spend time outdoors, all of which contribute to improved health and wellbeing.

1. The following map illustrates the areas of deprivation surrounding West Ham Park:

**Deprivation statistics for wards surrounding West Ham Park**



## **Case Study 2**

### **Environmental education programmes introducing London's school students to the benefits of green spaces, including those experiencing disadvantage**

One of the ways the programme enriches lives and supports young people to reach their full potential is via our schools programme, which reaches children growing up in poverty and children whose parents do not take them to visit green spaces or engage in out-of-school learning activities.

- *"This is my first experience in nature, I have a bond with nature but my mum can't take me to the park"* primary school student, Hampstead Heath.

Analysis of our school data shows that over 20,000 primary school students from state schools visited the programme in the first two years, and that 43% of these students are eligible for pupil premium, compared to an average of 28.2% across London. Pupil premium is allocated to children who have been in receipt of free school meals, looked after or adopted from care, and is an indicator of poverty and disadvantage. The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has been an ongoing area of concern in education, and our programmes are reaching the children who can benefit the most.

- *"In England a child's socio-economic status is the best predictor of their educational attainment..... this disproportionate lack of qualifications among disadvantaged young people has a substantial impact on every aspect of their future, from employment and pay to health and happiness"* Report for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The programme enables children to solve problems, be creative and work as a team – elements which build their confidence as learners – whilst showing them the relevance and application of their knowledge and skills in the wider world, raising their aspirations and supporting them to reach their full potential.

## **Case Study 3**

### **Enabling young people to thrive, especially those experiencing disadvantage and marginalisation.**

Bespoke and in-depth talent and skill building programmes are offered through our Green Talent project, which targets young people who are furthest from education or employment, providing facilitated opportunities for participants to reflect on and build skills relevant to their career aspirations. The programme reaches out to and engages students in Pupil Referral Units who have struggled within formal education

settings and young people who have been unemployed long-term (NEET). This programme enables participants to recognise and develop their individual talents and skills, and to explore careers in the environmental and green space sector, including conservation, leisure and education.

Comments from our Green Talent participants show how the programme has boosted their confidence and broadened their skills, knowledge and horizons - both of which are key to enabling people to expand their career and life opportunities:

- *“The work experience placement really boosted my confidence, I really enjoyed being able to do lots of different activities. I found the whole thing very motivational and calming”*
- *“The work experience was truly eye-opening into the reality of work and how work opportunities can vary. I am not limited to select a few occupations”*

The programme includes long term supported work experience placements, and the young people participating in this programme has told us that the impact has been high. The outcome stars diagram below illustrates the change in young people’s self-reported perception from the beginning to the end of the programme (on a 0 – 5 scales where 1 = very low level and 5 = high level). The diagram illustrates a marked increase in confidence, from 2.2 to 4.8, and a sense of involvement from 2.2 to 4.4.

