

Appendix 1: Three year review of the Open Spaces Department's 'Green Spaces, Learning Places' programme

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Executive Summary

'Green Spaces, Learning Places', the City of London Corporation Open Spaces Department's innovative learning programme, launched in 2016 with a remit of effecting change across five impact areas: understanding, confidence, involvement, wellbeing, and connection.

The programme was developed in response to a growing consensus that spending time in nature is beneficial to health and wellbeing, and a concern over health and wellbeing inequalities as people in deprived areas of London face more barriers than most to accessing nature. In order to tackle this inequality, delivery was focused on spaces located near areas of high deprivation, with programmes operating from West Ham Park, Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest and Queens Park.

The programme provided a key method for the City of London to contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents of some of London's most deprived communities through connecting them more powerfully to their local green spaces.

The three year programme delivered:

- Four innovative community-based projects: Green Talent, Wild Schools, Wild East and Playing Wild
- Two reinvigorated school services (Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest)
- Two revitalised play centres (Hampstead Heath)
- A volunteering programme.

Key achievements:

- **The programme has delivered vital aspects of the City of London Corporation's Corporate Plan, Social Mobility Strategy and Education Strategy.**
- **The programme engaged over 120,000 participants and exceeded its participation target by 16 %.**
- **A bespoke evaluation toolkit was developed to measure the learning programme's impact. Evaluation data was analysed by university researchers, who reported that:**
 - **quantitative data showed a "statistically significant" increase across all five impact areas**
 - **qualitative data showed participants were "positively influenced by their engagement with the programme".**
- 100% of participating school teachers reported that their learning outcomes have been met
- 14,554 children who are eligible for pupil premium (an indicator of disadvantage) participated in the school offer
- 80 young people benefitted from work experience placements and associated training
- A vision for volunteering was developed for the Open Spaces Department, positioning volunteers as a key beneficiary
- The programme won the 2017 CoL Award for Innovation in Equality and Inclusion

- The Green Talent programme was shortlisted for the 2018 Horticulture Week Custodian Award for Best Community Initiative
- Bespoke programmes were delivered for Young Carers, Pupil Referral Units children with autism and Grenfell Families
- 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 paper has been accepted for publication in the Journal for Environmental Education, showcasing the development of the evaluation toolkit and the success of the programme across the five impact areas.

Feedback from participants:

- *"A wonderful facility and resource in the heart of London that enables essential learning for inner city children"* (teacher, school services)
- *"This is my first experience in nature, I have a bond with nature, but my mum can't take me to the park"* (student, school services)
- *"The work experience placement really boosted my confidence ... I found the whole thing very motivational and calming"* (young person, Green Talent)
- *'To be honest, I just thought it was football pitches. I had no idea all this nature was here'* (family participant, Wild East)
- *"It's so nice to know my 8 and 10 year old can come and get involved in the play outside and activities as we live in a tower block and my children can't play out where we live"* (parent, Adventure Clubhouse).

Key challenges:

- The programme struggled to raise funding through external grants once the programme had launched as most funders do not fund existing projects, and the reputation of the City as a wealthy organisation hindered fundraising efforts

Introduction

- Background

'Green Spaces, Learning Places'(GSLP), the City of London Corporation Open Spaces Department's innovative learning programme, launched in 2016. Prior to 2016 the Open Spaces Department provided a range of education opportunities across its sites which lacked both consistency and shared strategic focus. GSLP was developed to deliver a unified, outcomes-based and centrally co-ordinated learning programme, focused on delivering to deprived communities close to our open spaces.

- Rationale

The GSLP programme was developed in response to:

- a growing consensus that spending time in nature is beneficial to health and wellbeing, whilst contact with nature is becoming more infrequent
- an understanding that access to green space is not equal, with people in deprived areas of London facing more barriers than most to accessing nature, which can impact on physical activity levels and mental health
- a concern that visitors to our Open Spaces are not always representative of the local communities, with Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (BAME) and deprived communities under-represented
- a recognition that barriers to accessing green spaces exist for local communities, including fear of getting lost, a lack of confidence in the outdoors, a lack of understanding of the activities available, and a feeling that our spaces are 'not for them' (highlighted through consultation with communities adjacent to our Open Spaces)
- a concern about the attainment gap between disadvantaged school students and their peers
- a recognition of the value of play in young people's development, with natural play having a lasting impact on the development of children's connection, understanding and appreciation for the natural environment.

- Strategic Value

The GSLP programme contributes to the delivery of all three of the Corporate Plan's overarching aims and seven of the 12 outcomes:

- *Contribute to a flourishing society:*
 - 1. People are safe and feel safe.
 - 2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
 - 3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.
 - 4. Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.
- *Support a thriving economy:*

- 8. We have access to the skills and talent we need.
- *Shape outstanding environments:*
 - 10. We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration.
 - 12. Our spaces are secure, resilient and well-maintained.

The learning programme also supports delivery of the following corporate strategies:

Social Mobility Strategy: Potential today, success tomorrow:

- Everyone can develop the skills and talent they need to thrive
- Opportunity is accessed more evenly and equally across society

Education Strategy:

- Provide an educational experience that enriches and inspires through access to the learning opportunities that the City's cultural, heritage and environmental assets offer, combining creativity, innovation and enterprise alongside tradition and continuity;
- Provide high quality exposure to the world of work at all stages of education to enable pupils to make informed career choices

Open Spaces Department Business Plan:

- People enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Nature, heritage and place are valued and understood
- People feel welcome and included
- People discover, learn and develop

Funding

Grant funding was provided by City Bridge Trust (CBT) on a tapering three-year grant (£220k, £130k, £50k). The aspiration was to raise additional funds through external grants and school fees, and for the programme to become self-sustaining.

Income generation through the school service was successful, and raised £27k, £41k and £42k per year (whilst addressing cost barriers for schools by partnering with the City of London/Culture Mile School Visits Fund).

Whilst some additional funding was provided by the Ernest Cook Trust (10k) and the Company of Actuaries Charitable Trust (£5k), efforts to obtain sufficient additional grant funding were not successful as most funders do not fund existing projects, and the reputation of the City as a wealthy organisation hindered fundraising efforts. To meet the shortfall, City Cash contribution / Open Spaces Department underspend provided £200k in 2017/18 and 2018/19, and a Priority Investment Pot bid provided £87k in 2018/19 to meet the annual running cost of £382k.

Impact areas

To tackle the challenge of a growing disconnect with nature and green spaces, the learning team designed programmes to effect change across five impact areas:

| <i>Understanding</i> | <i>Confidence</i> | <i>Nature connection</i> | <i>Wellbeing</i> | <i>Involvement</i> |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| People understand the value and importance of green space | People are confident to use green spaces, as part of our activities or independently | People develop a sense of place with green spaces | People have restorative and meaningful experiences in green spaces | People take positive action for, and get involved with, green spaces |

To maximise impact, the learning team targeted our programmes to reach those who could benefit the most, including school children growing up in poverty, young people excluded from mainstream schooling, and local people from communities that were under-represented in our green spaces. Ambitious output targets were set for participation. Measuring our impact was seen as vital, and the team collaborated with academic partners at Derby University to create a bespoke evaluation toolkit.

Learning principles

The team developed a set of learning principles for schools and play (see Appendix 2) which have informed the programme's development. The development of the principles involved combining relevant research with the professional expertise of learning team members to create a shared approach to learning programme development and delivery. Team members' professional expertise (accumulated over time through reflection on experience of learning programme development, delivery and evaluation) was valued from the start and cross-referenced with academic research.

Recognising the importance of children having time to explore green spaces to build connection and confidence, and emphasising doing and discovering to support participants as active learners, are just some highlights from these principles.

The principles:

- map across the five impact areas
- bring together the expertise of the team and relevant research
- enable shared reflective practice and a shared vision for quality learning
- increase the level of active engagement of participants
- provide a tool for effective decision making and peer review

Learning officers were invited to showcase their work on the principles at the National Sustainable Schools Conference and the London Environmental Education Forum.

Programme delivery and team expertise

A GSLP team was created to develop and deliver the programme, bringing together expertise in outdoor learning, schools, play, volunteering and youth work. Nine full time officers and one part time officer were located at the key delivery sites (Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest and West Ham Park), and an additional pool of casual educators and play workers supported programme delivery on Hampstead Heath.

Programmes

The three-year programme delivered:

- Four innovative community-based projects: Green Talent, Wild Schools, Wild East and Playing Wild
- Two reinvigorated school services (Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest)
- Two revitalised play centres (Hampstead Heath)
- A volunteering programme.

Green Talent

Overview

Green Talent worked with young people struggling in education and/or furthest from the job market, providing opportunities to explore careers in the environmental and green spaces sector. Based at Hampstead Heath and targeting 13 – 18 year olds, as well as 19 - 25 year olds with additional support needs, the programme provided facilitated opportunities for young people to recognise and develop their individual talents and skills. For example, completing outdoor conservation tasks boosted resilience, confidence and self-esteem through the achievement of purposeful goals, and activities such as sharing food around a fire helped to build peer relationships by opening dialogues around a shared new experience.

The project included a number of bespoke sessions for groups including Young Carers and Grenfell Families, and delivered sessions for students at five Pupil Referral Units across Brent, Barnet and Haringey.



Green Talent participants learning and contributing through environmental conservation tasks

Accreditation

To enable the young people to obtain credits for their work, which helped them and others to recognise their achievements, the Green Talent Programme was accredited with ASDAN (a curriculum development and awarding organisation), to offer a flexible, multi-level programme in land-based sector vocational training.

Feedback

Comments from 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”*
- *“I feel ready for work and less scared”*
- *“I felt really involved here, like my opinions mattered so I’d be really happy to come back”*

Project targets

The project exceeded most of the target outputs set at the start of the GSLP programme:

| Programme Strands | Target | Actual | Notes |
|--|--------|--------|--|
| Number of young people participating in one day taster events | 100 | 221 | Achieved |
| Number of one day taster events delivered | 30 | 18 | We ran fewer one day taster events, however, we exceeded the participation target |
| Number of volunteers recruited and trained to help deliver the events | 5 | 19 | Achieved |
| Number of young people participating in longer term placements (minimum 2 weeks) | 6 | 54 | Achieved Included placements of 26 weeks for young people at pupil referral units |
| Total number of young people participating in the programme | 184 | 388 | Achieved |

Partnership working

Green Talent worked with partner organisations to develop the project and improve its reach. Key partners included:

London Ambitions – a London Assembly-led careers programme to match young people with employer-based activities

London Youth – a charity working to give young people access to new and enriching opportunities

The Winch – a Camden based Youth Club working as part of 'North Camden Zone' to improve the life outcomes for young people growing up in North Camden

Capel Manor – a college offering training and qualifications in land-based subjects (horticulture, groundsmanhood, garden design, etc.).

Additional achievements

- The Green Talent programme was shortlisted for the 2018 Horticulture Week Custodian Award for Best Community Initiative

Wild Schools

Overview

Wild Schools took a full-school approach with a small number of London's inner-city primary schools, working to embed outdoor learning in West Ham Park within the schools' practice.

West Ham Park is located in Newham, which is ranked in the worst four London boroughs for child poverty (Trust for London).

Building relationships with a small number of local schools, enabling repeat visits from multiple year groups, and working collaboratively with teachers to produce relevant outdoor learning sessions was key. Set up to tackle the many barriers that exist to schools using their local green spaces, including teacher confidence, health and safety concerns and a lack of understanding of how the natural world can be linked to various curriculum subjects, the project worked directly with teachers and students to deliver a cross curricular learning programme.

Programmes included a hands-on maths trail which enabled children to apply their maths skills to solving practical challenges, immersive multi-sensory workshops to stimulate creative writing, exploration of habitats (e.g. pond dipping), and exploration of local history (e.g. uncovering allotments from WW2 and exploring life for local people through considering the meals they could/could not produce).

The project delivered regular forest school sessions for local Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) students, giving these children time to build confidence and skills together. Regular sessions where children could choose activities of interest to them and contribute to the maintenance of the outdoor space developed a great sense of ownership. Activities such as creating and experiencing the warmth of a fire on a snowy day provided them with a distinctive and memorable experience which facilitated a deeper connection with the space.



Local school children contributing to the development of a new wildlife garden as part of a regular Forest School session



A shelter designed and built by children attending regular sessions for local SEND students

Project targets

The project exceeded the participation targets for number of primary school students and number of schools. In response to teacher feedback, the programme did not run as many CPD sessions or assemblies as planned at the outset.

| Programme strands | Target | Actual | Notes |
|--|---------------|---------------|---|
| Number of primary school children engaged in the project | 9,000 | 10,625 | Achieved |
| Number of schools engaged in the project | 15 | 22 | Achieved 890 outdoor sessions were delivered across 22 schools. |
| Number of volunteers are recruited and trained to help deliver the sessions | 10 | 23 | Achieved |
| Number of CPD sessions are delivered to teachers participating in the project | 30 | 18 | Formal CPD sessions have been delivered as part of whole staff after school INSET sessions and also with smaller groups of teachers to help with delivering specific areas of the curriculum outside. In consultation with schools, alternative methods were also used to upskill teachers, including session observation with one-to-one follow-up discussions, support for teachers working towards Forest School qualifications, and working with teachers and students to create wildlife areas within their school grounds. |
| Number of assemblies are delivered to schools participating in the project | 30 | 3 | In consultation with schools, alternative methods were used for whole school participation, which focused on outdoor engagement. These included a whole school 'Maths Trail' developed in conjunction with Elmhurst Primary and rolled out to our other partner schools, and working with students and teachers to create wildlife areas within their school grounds. |
| Number of nature friendly schools outreach sessions are delivered by the RSPB to participating schools | 15 | 0 | This was not possible due to a restructuring at the RSPB |

Feedback

“Fantastic activity! All the children very excited throughout. Naturally using strong language without being prompted. Carefully planned and executed activity. Thank you for providing reception children with a wonderful experience” Teacher, Wild Schools

Reaching disadvantaged children

Through monitoring school pupil premium as an indicator of disadvantage, we know that Wild Schools have reached a significant numbers of these students. 100% of the visits were from state schools, and of these students, **5,737 (57%) were eligible for pupil premium**, compared to an average of 37.7% for inner London.

Pupil premium is an indicator of disadvantage as it is allocated to children who have been in receipt of free school meals, looked after or adopted from care.

See appendix 3 for maps illustrating the programme reach within areas of deprivation.

Additional achievements

- The project introduced school groups to Wanstead Flats, including a programme for school children to create artwork inspired by their visits which was then displayed in a local library (Forest Gate Curve). The children's work helped to develop knowledge of Wanstead Flats wildlife within the local community
- Regular sessions were developed for a school for children with autism. The specialist teachers commented that they were really impressed and delighted with the positive effects the outdoor programme had on the children's learning
- A new wildlife garden area was created in West Ham Park which provides an additional space for learning activities, including providing a quiet and private space for groups with autism, and a space in which local school children and volunteers can contribute to habitat maintenance. Strong collaboration between the Learning and West Ham Park teams ensured that the garden design and development provided a rich environment for learning.



School children making observational drawings at Wanstead Flats, in preparation for collage making.



One of the Wanstead Flats collages produce by the children following their visits to the site.

Wild East

Overview

Wild East delivered exciting mobile events for families in West Ham Park and Wanstead Flats. Using bespoke interpretation tricycles and fun activities, volunteers encouraged families to learn more about the natural environment and build confidence to use their green spaces. Activities such as making bird feeders and identifying local birds helped people connect to nature in their local green space by making close observations, recognising similarities and differences, and playing a part in conserving local species. The activities enabled participants to be physically active, connect socially, learn new skills, contribute, and spend time outdoors, all of which can contribute to improved health and wellbeing.

The programme targeted families and communities in Newham and Redbridge. Newham is a multicultural borough ranked in the worst four London boroughs for poverty (Trust for London).



The Wild East interpretation tricycle on Wanstead Flats

Reaching under-represented local community groups

The programme worked with a variety of under-represented local community groups, including:

- Hibiscus Caribbean Elderly Association
- EKTA Project (Community of Asian older people, including fragile, isolated, mildly confused and disabled people)
- Sheba Project (charity working with a variety local groups including refugees and unemployed people)
- 'Together!' (community group of artists with disabilities)
- Community mental health service user groups

By taking the time to listen and understand the barriers to accessing open spaces, the programme successfully facilitated first-time visits to the open spaces. Support to plan a visit (such as how to get there, knowing where the toilets are and choosing a spot for a picnic), a warm welcome and a short tour helped new groups to feel safe, valued and supported. A facilitated first-time visit to West Ham Park for disabled artists 'Together' led to a number of subsequent visits including a painting trip to Wanstead Flats and participation in a botanical drawing event at West Ham Park. Groups were also introduced to 'Friends of West Ham Park' (a local residents group who run activities in the park) leading to further opportunities for participation.

Project targets:

The project performed well against participation targets set at the start of the GSLP programme, however, there were challenges in engaging local volunteers.

| Programme strands | Target | Actual | Notes |
|---|--------|--------|---|
| Number of participants in family guerrilla interpretation events focusing on building connections with nature | 4000 | 4134 | Achieved |
| Number of volunteers trained to deliver guerrilla interpretation events | 45 | 17 | Below target See 'key challenges and recommendations for the future programme' p31 |
| Number of RSPB family events participants | 800 | 1031 | Achieved |
| Number of interpretation kits developed | 6 | 10 | Achieved |
| Bespoke sessions for community groups | 9 | 15 | Achieved |

Feedback

"Many a family cannot afford summer holidays abroad - missing out on refreshing and enriching experiences. For these families, parks are vital, and we need to unlock these spaces so as we enjoy their full potential." - Wild East participant, West Ham Park

"To be honest, I just thought it was football pitches. I had no idea all this nature was here". Wild East Participant, Wanstead Flats

Additional achievements

- 53% of Wild East participants were from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (BAME).

Playing Wild

Overview

Playing Wild addressed barriers to connection with nature through targeting families with under-5s through natural play activities on Hampstead Heath and Queens Park. The programme provided drop-in natural play events, designed to help families explore the natural world, understand the risks and benefits of natural play, and increase their confidence to play in natural settings. Working in partnership with a range of local nurseries, play groups and family centres, activities were developed to meet their needs, breaking down the barriers of playing outside through building confidence in both parents and children.



Playing Wild participant exploring on Hampstead Heath

Whilst the programme consulted regularly with local people, worked in partnership with local family and early years centres, and delivered events designed to meet the needs of the target audience, session uptake was low. It was felt that the One O'clock Club was a more effective mechanism for working with local families (see lessons learned).

The programme also developed six-week Playing Wild training courses for both parents and early years practitioners, providing them with the knowledge, confidence and skills to play with young children outdoors independently. Participants are provided with playing wild kits to ensure that they can continue to play wild after the course has finished. A Playing Wild trail has also been developed for independent use in the Parliament Hill Fields area (south end of Hampstead Heath).

Project targets

The project achieved many of the targets set at the beginning of the three year GSLP programme, however, numbers participating in the natural play events were very low.

| Programme strands | Target | Actual | Notes |
|--|--------|--------|---|
| Number of bespoke events working with local early years or family centres | 15 | 24 | Achieved 677 participants attended |
| Number of natural play events are delivered | 90 | 91 | Achieved |
| Number of parents and under-5s participating in Playing Wild natural play events | 2,000 | 493 | Below target See 'key challenges and recommendations for the future programme' p31 |
| Number of volunteers are recruited and trained to help deliver the events | 10 | 8 | |
| Number of networks of parents developed to provide continuing support | 1 | 0 | The project engaged with 'Camden Connecting Parents' and 'North Camden Zone, however, a Playing Wild network was not viable due to the relatively low numbers attending the Playing Wild programme. The programme adapted by creating a training programme to bring parents and practitioners together. |

Additional achievements

The project delivered drop-in family learning activities at a variety of events including the 'Give it a Go' festival at Hampstead Heath and the Christmas Fair at The View in Epping Forest, reaching 1,205 participants.

Two reinvigorated school services (Hampstead Heath and Epping Forest)

Overview

High quality booked sessions were delivered to a wide range of schools at our Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath education centres.

The Epping Forest programme was based at The View visitor centre near Chingford, with sessions delivered in the adjacent forest and Tudor hunting lodge. The Hampstead Heath Programme operated from the Education Centre building in Parliament Hill Fields and the 'Glassroom Classroom' in Golders Hill Park, with sessions delivered in bespoke teaching gardens as well as the wider Heath. Both sites provided a variety of habitats for exploration.

Brand new sessions were developed to support the National Curriculum and promote awe, wonder and inspiration as children learned through active engagement with the open spaces. Based on the unique features of the sites and the needs of schools, the programme provided rich opportunities to:

- Learn through first hand observation (e.g. exploring habitats, life cycles, seasons)
- Stimulate the imagination (e.g. creating stories inspired by nature, creating art work using natural materials)
- Give children an active role (e.g. pond dipping, orienteering, field work)
- Enable children to see the relevance and application of their knowledge and skills beyond the classroom (e.g. solving a real-life practical challenge such as assessing pond health or testing materials to build a dam)
- Uncover evidence of local history (e.g. finding bomb craters in the Epping Forest site)
- Develop team working skills (e.g. team den building).

Programmes were offered from nursery to A level, with most visits coming from primary schools.



Primary school group learning from nature on Hampstead Heath

Feedback

“An informative and engaging day that sparked a love of nature in our students” school teacher

“A wonderful facility and resource in the heart of London that enables essential learning for inner city children” school teacher

“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

“I found them (activities) very exciting and very helpful for my learning” primary school student.

Project targets

The schools service exceeded the participation targets set at the start of the GSLP programme:

| Programme strands | Target | Actual | Notes |
|--|--------|--------|----------|
| Number of school students attending school sessions at Epping Forest | 5,125 | 7,737 | Achieved |
| Number of school students attending school sessions at Hampstead Heath | 15,375 | 24,225 | Achieved |

Reaching disadvantaged children

Through monitoring school pupil premium as an indicator of disadvantage, we know that the school services have reached a significant number of these students:

At Epping Forest, 86% of our school visits were from state schools, accounting for 6,654 students. Of these students, **2,129 (32%) were eligible for pupil premium**. The average pupil premium for outer London is 28.2%.

At Hampstead Heath, 70% of our school visits were from state schools, accounting for 16,958 students. Of these students, **6,444 (38%) were eligible for pupil premium**. The average pupil premium for inner London is 37.7%.

See appendix 3 for maps illustrating the school programme reach within areas of deprivation.

Partnerships

The school service has worked in partnership with Culture Mile Learning, London Environmental Education Forum (LEEF), Field Studies Council and Waltham Forest Music Education Hub (WFMEH). Highlights include co-delivery of training days for LEEF, working with WFMEH to develop an Epping Forest artist-in-residence learning programme for schools, and working with Culture Mile Learning to develop a shared evaluation framework.

Additional achievements

- A new approach was developed and launched for secondary schools, allowing teachers the flexibility to combine onsite, classroom and online resources. A new web pages provided a menu of activities linked to key themes such as careers, working scientifically and environmental change. Resources included inspiring films of career role models from within the Open Spaces department.
- The team were asked to show case their work in school programme development at the National Sustainable Schools Conference and the London Environmental Education Forum
- 100% of participating teachers reporting that their learning outcomes have been met
- The programme has engaged with 250 pupils from two City Academies: Highgate Hill and Hackney. Teachers commented that the programmes supported the students in seeing the relevance of their learning beyond the classroom, which is vital in raising aspirations.

Two reinvigorated play centres (Hampstead Heath):

Overview

Two play centres at Hampstead Heath provided both indoor and outdoor play facilities, with an Adventure Clubhouse providing play facilities for under-16s, and a One O'clock Club providing play facilities for under-fives and their parents/carers. The centres are located in the south of the Heath, close to areas of deprivation such as Gospel Oak ward where there is 39% child poverty (Open Data, Camden Council).

During opening hours, the play centres were staffed by playworkers who were able to support young people's play and learning. The Adventure Clubhouse is open from April to October, offering a school holiday programme and after school provision. The One O'clock Club is open all year round, offering afternoon sessions every weekday.

Both provisions were free to access and provided a space where children could play and engage in activities that they had freely chosen, including both facilitated play and free play. Outdoor play included den building, sand, mud and water play, obstacle courses and circus skills. Indoor activities included mask making, leaf printing and badge making. At the Adventure Clubhouse, outdoor adventure play structures were also provided.

Children over the age of eight were able to visit without an accompanying adult, which enabled children whose parents/carers are not able to take them to activities outside school to participate.

"It's so nice to know my 8 and 10 year old can come and get involved in the play outside and activities at the Adventure Clubhouse and always feel welcome, as we live in a tower block and my children can't play out where we live" Parent, Adventure Clubhouse



Water slide at the Adventure Clubhouse



'Mud kitchen' at the One O'clock Club

Project targets

The play service exceeded the overall participation target set at the start of the GSLP programme, however, at the One O'clock Club, the number of adult participants was slightly lower than the target.

| Programme strands | Target | Actual | Notes |
|---|---------------|---------------|---|
| Number of young people attending the Clubhouse | 24,000 | 26,063 | Achieved |
| Number of under-5s attending the One O'clock Club | 24,000 | 26,123 | Achieved |
| Number of adults attending the One O'clock Club | 21,000 | 19,870 | The ratio of adults to children was 1:1.3 (actual) rather than 1:1.1 (target) |
| <i>Total number of participants</i> | <i>69,000</i> | <i>72,056</i> | Achieved |

Community cohesion

The play centres are located adjacent to the borough of Camden, which is ranked in the worst four London boroughs for income inequality (Trust for London).

The play centres bring individuals and communities together to share experiences and promote mutual respect and tolerance. Analysis of postcode data from participants shows that the centres are engaging people from wards where poverty is high, such as Gospel Oak and Haverstock, as well as wards in which most areas are affluent, such as Hampstead Town. The play facility provides an open, welcoming space in which communities can meet and engage in a shared interest regardless of background and circumstance, thus supporting community cohesion.

"It's a home from home. A safe and wonderful environment to flourish and for confidence to grow." Parent, Adventure Clubhouse

Additional achievements

- Detailed designs were produced for improved outdoor play areas

In 2016, a review of the play centres identified that the facilities were not aligned to the strategic aim of engaging people with green spaces due to their reliance on traditional play structures. In addition, the learning team audited the play spaces for accessibility and identified barriers and gaps in the provision.

The learning team worked with colleagues at Hampstead Heath to create a set of design criteria for improved outdoor play spaces, with the aims of emphasising natural play and exploration, improving accessibility, catering for a range of styles of play, and providing graded challenges to enable children to take risks and learn at their own pace.

Working with specialist designers and play centre visitors, detailed design and costs for improved outdoor play provision were created. The first construction phase is planned for November 2019.

Volunteering

Overview

The learning volunteering programme created a new Vision for Volunteering which positioned volunteers as beneficiaries of the programme, and defined goals for the volunteering experience:

- A volunteer's experience with us stimulates well-being and connection to the green spaces with which they are involved.
- Each hour spent volunteering benefits the green space, the individual and their community through the fulfilment of a rewarding and achievable task or role.
- Our volunteers represent the diversity of local communities surrounding, accessing and benefiting from our green spaces. We reach out into marginalised and disenfranchised sections of society.
- Volunteers are valued for helping to shape green spaces, through hands-on involvement and by championing their benefits.

The GSLP programme provided a number of volunteering opportunities, aiming to develop a team of volunteers representative of the local communities surrounding our Open Spaces.

Key outputs

- Development of new volunteer roles across the GSLP programme, including Wild East Ambassador, Wild Schools Learning Volunteer and Evaluation Volunteer
- The development of a recruitment, selection and induction guidance, procedures and templates to support the learning team with volunteer management and retention
- Development of a volunteer agreement to manage expectations and responsibility
- A volunteer policy
- A training programme for volunteers
- A training programme for staff managing volunteers

Project targets

| Programme strands | Target | Actual | Notes |
|---|--------|--------|---|
| Number of learning volunteers recruited | 90 | 72 | Below target See 'key challenges and recommendations for the future programme' p31 |



Learning volunteer assisting with the creation of a 'story tent' for schools in the newly developed wildlife garden at West Ham Park

Partnerships

The learning volunteer programme worked with partner organisations to reach and engage new volunteers. Key partners included:

Active Newham - Charitable Trust working in partnership with Newham Council to deliver volunteering opportunities in Newham

Team London – London Assembly led programme linking potential volunteers and volunteering opportunities

Capel Manor – a college offering training and qualifications in land-based subjects (horticulture, groundsmanhood, garden design, etc.).

University College London, University of East London, Queen Mary University – universities with strong student volunteering programmes

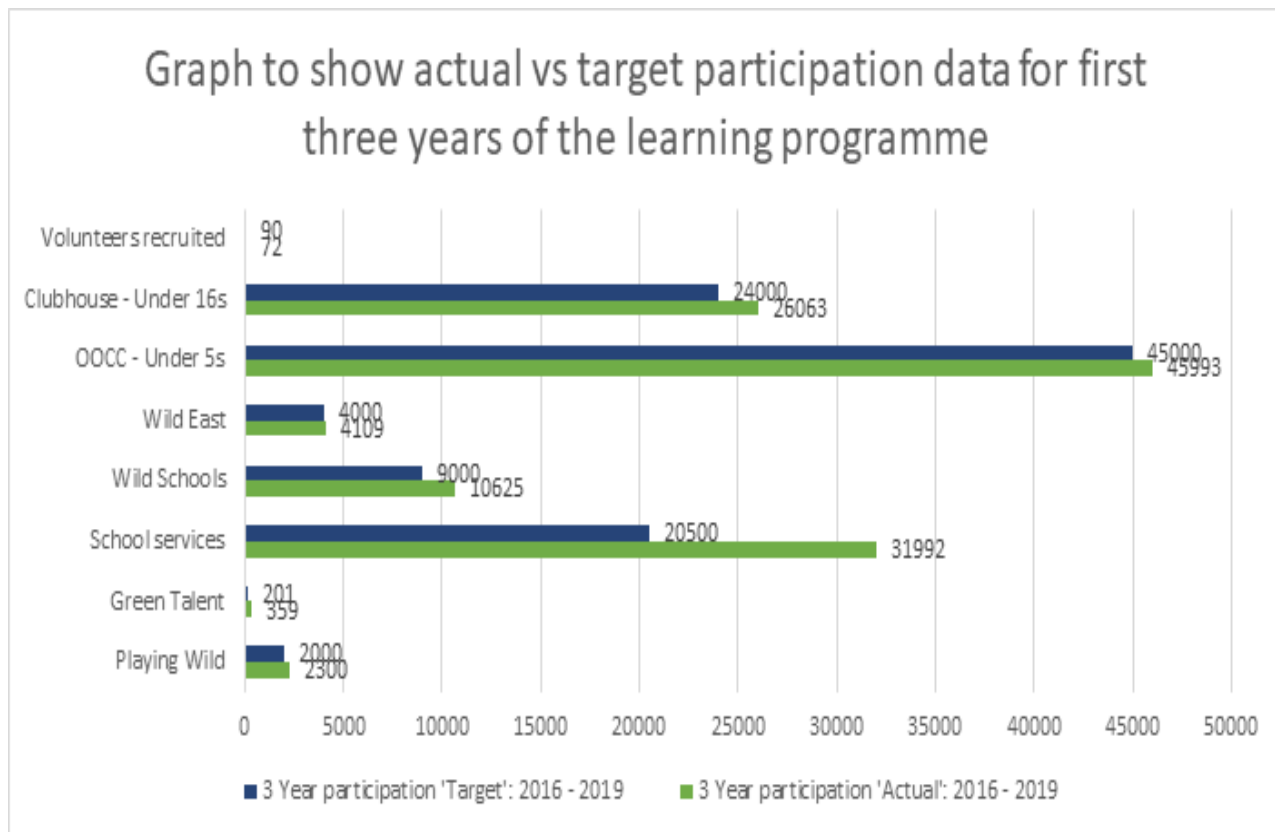
Additional achievements

- The GSLP programme has championed volunteering across the Open Spaces department, providing support to staff supervising volunteers. Outputs include a range of training opportunities, policies, procedures and guidance documents to help with recruitment, engagement and management of volunteers
- A Departmental Volunteering Steering group was established to develop a positive and productive volunteering practice across Open Spaces
- The GSLP Volunteer Officer represents the Open Spaces Department in the City of London Volunteering Working Group

Summary of participation

The learning programme has reached 121,978 participants in the first three years of delivery (April 2016 – March 2019), 16% above the target of 105,276.

The following graph illustrates the participation figures across the programme.



The programme reached

- 32,695 participants aged 0 – 5
- 68,550 participants aged 5 – 18
- 20,473 participants aged 18+

Evaluation toolkit and impact measures

The Learning Team worked in collaboration with researchers at the University of Derby to develop a bespoke evaluation toolkit. The objective of the mixed-methods evaluation, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, was to evaluate whether participation in the programmes increased *understanding, wellbeing, nature connection, confidence, and involvement*.

No suitable evaluation toolkit had been developed within the sector due to challenges around measuring impact areas which are multi-faceted and subjective, and the successful development of a pioneering evaluation toolkit is a key achievement for the team.

Data from programme participants before, during, and after having taken part in the programmes was collected for participants in the Schools' Programme, Green Talent and Playing Wild.

The evaluation toolkit, mapped against the five impact areas, consisted of a mixture of survey and interview questions, and observational indicators.

1) survey questions

2) interview questions

3) observation indicators (behavioural indicators that operationalised the five impact dimensions, e.g. asking relevant questions was an indicator of understanding and non-verbal expressions – e.g. happiness, wonder, calm was an indicator of wellbeing).

4) a drawing activity (for children under the age of 5).

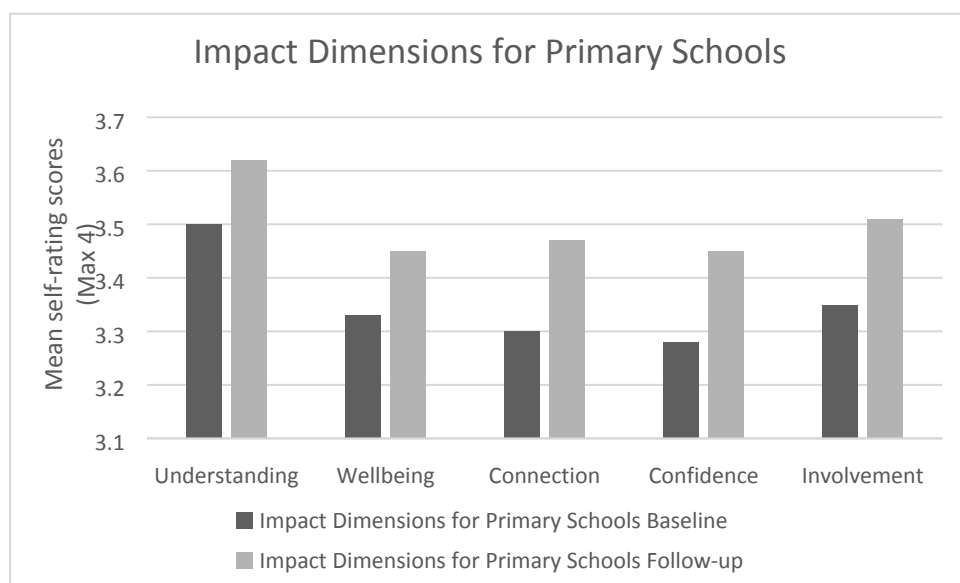
The team recruited evaluation volunteers to carry out the observations and interviews.

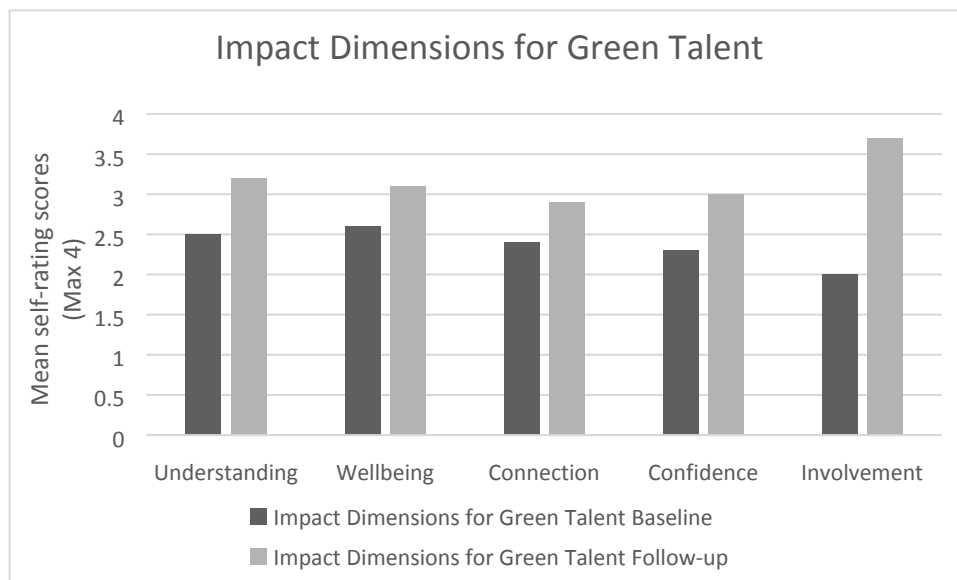
Qualitative data analysis

Survey questions, developed to elicit responses across each of the five impact areas, were used to collect qualitative data for the School and Green Talent programmes using a 1 – 4 scale (where 1= negative, 2 = neutral, 3 = positive, and 4 = very positive). Due to the young age of the Playing Wild participants, it was not appropriate to collect responses to the survey questions.

All data analysis was carried out independently by the University of Derby, which concluded that the programmes significantly improved participants' ratings of the five impact dimensions when comparing self-reports taken before and after participating in the programme. The increase from baseline to follow-up scores is seen as statistically significant; in other words, the probability of the observed differences was greater than would be expected due to chance.

The following charts show increases for primary school participants after spending just two hours in a facilitated learning session, as well as larger increases for Green Talent participants who attend for whole days, intensive weeks, and weekly sessions over a school term.





Qualitative data analysis

A commentary on the qualitative data analysis (interviews, observations and drawings) for the School, Green Talent and Playing Wild programmes is available within the full evaluation report. The researchers concluded that the insights provided into participant's thoughts and behaviours suggested that they were positively influenced by their engagement with the programme. For example, drawings from Playing Wild participants developed from pictures which did not include people to pictures of people engaging with nature (e.g. attending to flowers) after participation in six weekly sessions, suggesting a shift in participants' understanding and sense of connection.

Comments from interviews with school and Green Talent participants were very positive. Relevant comments include:

- *"I feel free when I'm outside"*
- *"I don't usually go out much, but I have found that I enjoy making a difference to the local park"*
- *"The work experience placement really boosted my confidence"*
- *"Very adventurous. Like a special time. Can experience mother nature."*
- *"Usually I would get tired and bored. I may be tired now but I'm not bored. It's been so fun."*

The full evaluation report is available from Abigail.tinkler@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Additional achievements

A paper has been accepted for publication in the Journal for Environmental Education, showcasing the development of the evaluation toolkit and the success of the programme across the five impact areas. The paper is co-authored by the GSLP team and researchers from Derby University.

Key challenges and recommendations for the future programme

- 1) The Playing Wild project struggled to attract and maintain audiences, despite regular consultation, partnership working and trialling a variety of locations and timings for activities. It was also challenging to engage audiences with trialling the Playing Wild play trail. At the same time, the One O'clock Club was engaging the same audiences (local children under-five and their parents/carers) very effectively, with participants enjoying the mix of indoor and outdoor spaces, and combination of play with children and a chance to spend time with other parents/carers. The school programme also attracted nursery and reception classes through its bookable workshop programme (3,617 early years students attended the school programme at Hampstead Heath). Going forward, we will focus our work with under-fives via the One O'clock Club and schools programme, and invest time in increasing opportunities for nature play within these.
- 2) The Wild East project set out to engage volunteers from deprived communities close to West Ham Park, empowering the volunteers to lead the delivery of a family engagement programme and replicating a successful model from Hampstead Heath. The project officer spent time meeting community groups under-represented in the park, and this consultation told us that whilst some members of the community were interested in visiting and being involved in other ways, often volunteering on the family engagement programme wasn't appealing to them. The project adapted to this feedback by facilitating flexible visits from community groups who had not visited West Ham Park or Wanstead Flats previously, whilst recruiting volunteers from a wider pool to help facilitate the family learning programme.

Going forward, the volunteer development role within the team will have a combined remit of community and volunteer engagement, and work closely with learning team colleagues to engage under-represented local communities, ensuring that consultation, observation and research inform our approach to increasing volunteer representation from these groups.

- 3) Having only one staff member based at the Epping Forest site created challenges around staffing through sickness and annual leave, and challenges around lone working in remote sites. Going forward, staffing will be reallocated to enable an additional school officer to work across Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath, and Education Rangers will also work across both sites, to create a more robust staffing system and enable further programme growth.
- 4) The aspiration to raise additional funds through external grants once the programme had launched was challenging as most funders do not fund existing projects, and the reputation of the City as a wealthy organisation hindered fundraising efforts. Going forward, the programme will be funded by an agreed £395k increase to the Open Spaces Department local risk resource base (subject to the Fundamental Review), and the team will also pilot new initiatives and seek additional funding to develop these.

The future for the learning programme

An agreed £395k increase to the Open Spaces Department local risk resource base (subject to the Fundamental Review) will enable the Open spaces learning team to provide a core offer of:

- Schools service operating out of Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest, West Ham Park
- Green Talent programme working with young people who are experiencing disadvantage
- Volunteer development and community outreach work
- Play facilities for under-16s and under-5s and their carers at Hampstead Heath.

The team will also pilot new initiatives and seek additional funding to develop these.

The Open Spaces learning team will continue to connect people with their local green spaces, reaching beyond the Square Mile and making a vital contribution to the delivery of the City of London Corporate Plan, Education Strategy, Social Mobility Strategy and Open Spaces Department Business Plan. Building on success, we will further develop the school and Green Talent programmes, to enable more young people to participate, and recruit more schools with higher than average numbers of students in receipt of pupil premium.

The team will work closely with other learning teams within Open Spaces (Keats House, Tower Bridge, Kenley Common) and engage more widely with City Corporation via Culture Mile Learning.

The team will build on their work on evaluation and use their findings to refine and develop programmes to successfully engage audiences and deliver key outcomes.

A shared set of performance indicators has been developed for learning across Open Spaces, and from 2019 data will be collected from Kenley Common, Keats House and Tower Bridge as well as the GSLP programmes at West Ham Park, Epping Forest and Hampstead Heath. This data will monitor progress against a set of shared indicators which align with outcomes from the City of London Corporate Plan and provide shared methods of data collection.

Appendix Two

Open Spaces learning principles for schools

We facilitate learning through active engagement with our unique spaces. We are learner-centred and provide fun and inspiring activities which support and enrich the National Curriculum. Through defining the following outcomes and principles we seek to align our practice with findings from relevant research, and to contribute to the delivery of the Open Spaces impact areas for learning.

| <u>Outcomes</u> | Children increase their knowledge, skills and understanding | Children conceptually link the site, their learning, and the wider world | Children explore freely and take part in playful, fun and enjoyable experiences | Children feel safe, confident and empowered to learn | Children begin to connect with green spaces |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| <u>Principles</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cater to different learning styles and ensure pace and variety - Enable children to develop transferable skills e.g. team work and working scientifically - Support and enrich the National Curriculum - Have clear outcomes focusing on quality not quantity - Ensure all information is fact-checked - Challenge assumptions - Give adults clear roles and guidance to enhance children's learning - Ensure sessions flow and have structure - Assess children's knowledge, skills and understanding, and scaffold/question/challenge/support as appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make relevant links between learning in open spaces with schools and home <p>Create opportunities for children to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - apply their learning in a new context - relate new learning to prior experience or knowledge - see the relevance and application of their knowledge and skills in the wider world (e.g. relate their skills to careers, take part in real conservation work) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tailor your approach: respond dynamically to the individual group <p>Create opportunities for children to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have fun - explore - spend time doing and discovering - be creative and imaginative - assess and take risks - play games - use their senses - be surprised | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow Safe systems of Work (SSOW) and communicate with the group re how they will be safe in the space. - Be present for children who appear unsure or afraid - work in partnership with teachers to listen and support. - Provide activities which are both challenging and achievable - Encourage and respect children's ideas - Ask meaningful and relevant questions which enable children to take part in reflective conversations - Be inclusive by providing children with variety and choice - Provide opportunities for children to take ownership of their learning through choice and opportunities to lead - Be welcoming and build initial relationship with group - Provide opportunities to work both in groups and individually | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maximise the unique opportunities that your site provides - Provide opportunities to be outside, explore and take part in memorable activities - Communicate to children that they can visit the space freely in the future - Role model, discuss and provide opportunities for caring for living things - Find beauty and magic in nature, e.g. hugging a tree, listening to sounds of nature - Give children time to simply connect through their own exploration or having time to sit quietly - Enable children to interact with the site and build memories (e.g. create objects/art to leave on site or take back to school/home) |
| <u>Learning strategy impact areas</u> | Understanding | Understanding | Understanding, confidence, wellbeing, connection | Confidence | Connection |

Open Spaces learning principles for play

We are child-centred in our approach, and provide fun and creative activities which support and enrich child development. We seek to create inclusive play opportunities which inspire children to connect with green spaces. Through defining the following outcomes and principles we seek to align our practice with findings from relevant research, and to contribute to delivery of the Open Spaces Learning Strategy.

| Outcomes | Children are free to play, explore, be imaginative and take part in fun and enjoyable experiences | Children are respected and our approach is child-centred | Children feel safe, confident and empowered to learn | Children begin to connect with green spaces | Parents and carers become more aware of the importance of play and are more involved | Space design invites and enables play 4, 5 |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| Principles | <p>Provide a rich range of resources to choose from</p> <p>Provide a mix of self-directed and structured play opportunities, scaffolding according to the needs of the child</p> <p>Understand and respect that children can enter into imaginary worlds, exploring life and make connections between real and imagined experiences (Bob Hughes taxonomy of play) ¹</p> <p>Create opportunities for children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have fun - Explore - Spend time doing and discovering - Be creative and imaginative - Assess and take risks - Play games - Use their senses - Be surprised | <p>Uphold the UN convention on children's rights ² and the Play England play charter ³</p> <p>Accept each child as they are (although certain behaviours are not acceptable in our spaces)</p> <p>Understand and respect children's play cycles and play cues</p> <p>Be present and aware of own impact, choosing when to step back and when to support.</p> <p>Consult children on changes to our play facilities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Follow SSOWs - Be present for children who appear unsure or afraid - Provide activities which are both challenging and achievable - Encourage and respect children's ideas - Be inclusive by providing children with variety and choice - Provide opportunities for children to take ownership of their play through providing choice and respecting their ideas and decisions. - Be welcoming and build initial relationship with visitors <p>Provide opportunities to work both in groups and individually</p> <p>Provide opportunities for children to take risks and make judgements</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maximise the unique opportunities that your site provides - Provide opportunities to be outside, explore and take part in memorable activities - Communicate to children that they can visit the space freely in the future - Role model, discuss and provide opportunities for caring for living things - Find beauty and magic in nature, e.g. hugging a tree, listening to sounds of nature - Give children time to simply connect through their own exploration or having time to sit quietly - Enable children to interact with the site and build memories (e.g. create objects/art to leave on site or take back to home) | <p>The value of play is communicated to adults (e.g. conversations, signs, leaflets)</p> <p>There are opportunities for adults to get involved in activities</p> <p>Space design considers opportunities for adult involvement (e.g. different sized tunnels or gateways for adults and children)</p> | <p>The play space will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stimulate the five senses - allow social interaction - allow a range of movements and physical activity through and around the space - harmonise with and enhance the local green space - incorporate planting, trees and greenery - offer graded challenges so children can learn and take risks at their own pace - be located near well-used foot paths - include non-prescriptive play equipment (which encourages creativity) - enable children of a range of ages and abilities to play together - be accessible to, and usable by disabled children and disabled parents - incorporate natural materials to encourage connection with the natural world |
| Learning strategy impact areas | Confidence, wellbeing | Confidence, wellbeing, involvement | Confidence, wellbeing | Connection, wellbeing | Understanding, involvement | Confidence, wellbeing, connection |

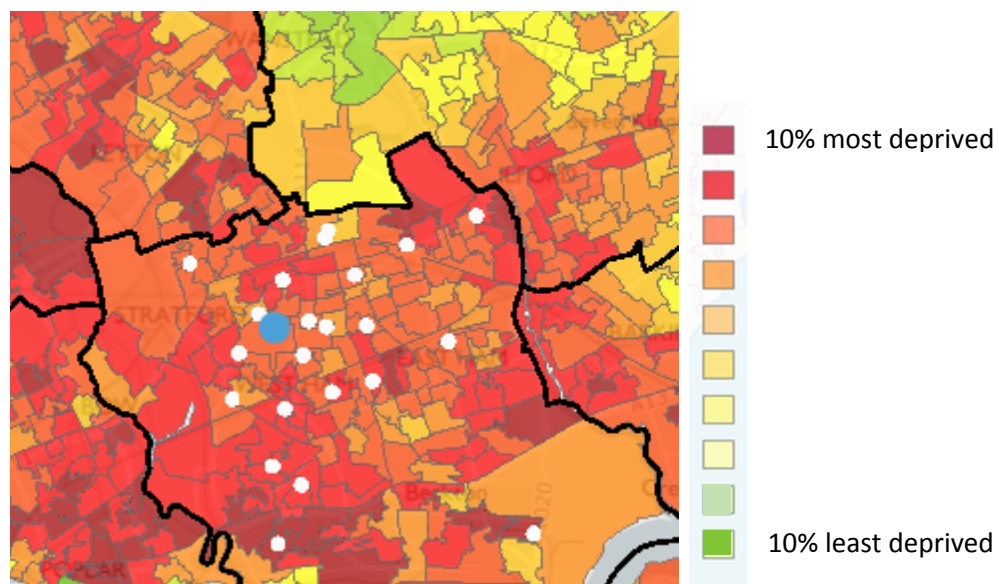
Appendix Three

Maps showing school programme reach and areas of deprivation in London

Data from the 2015 Government Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2015) for England is shown on the maps using a coloured scale. Schools participating in the GSLP programme (2016 – 2019) have been overlaid on the map, showing programme reach.

IMD 2015 was created using indicators across seven domains: income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing and services, living environment, and provides a measure of relative deprivation.

Wild Schools, West Ham Park

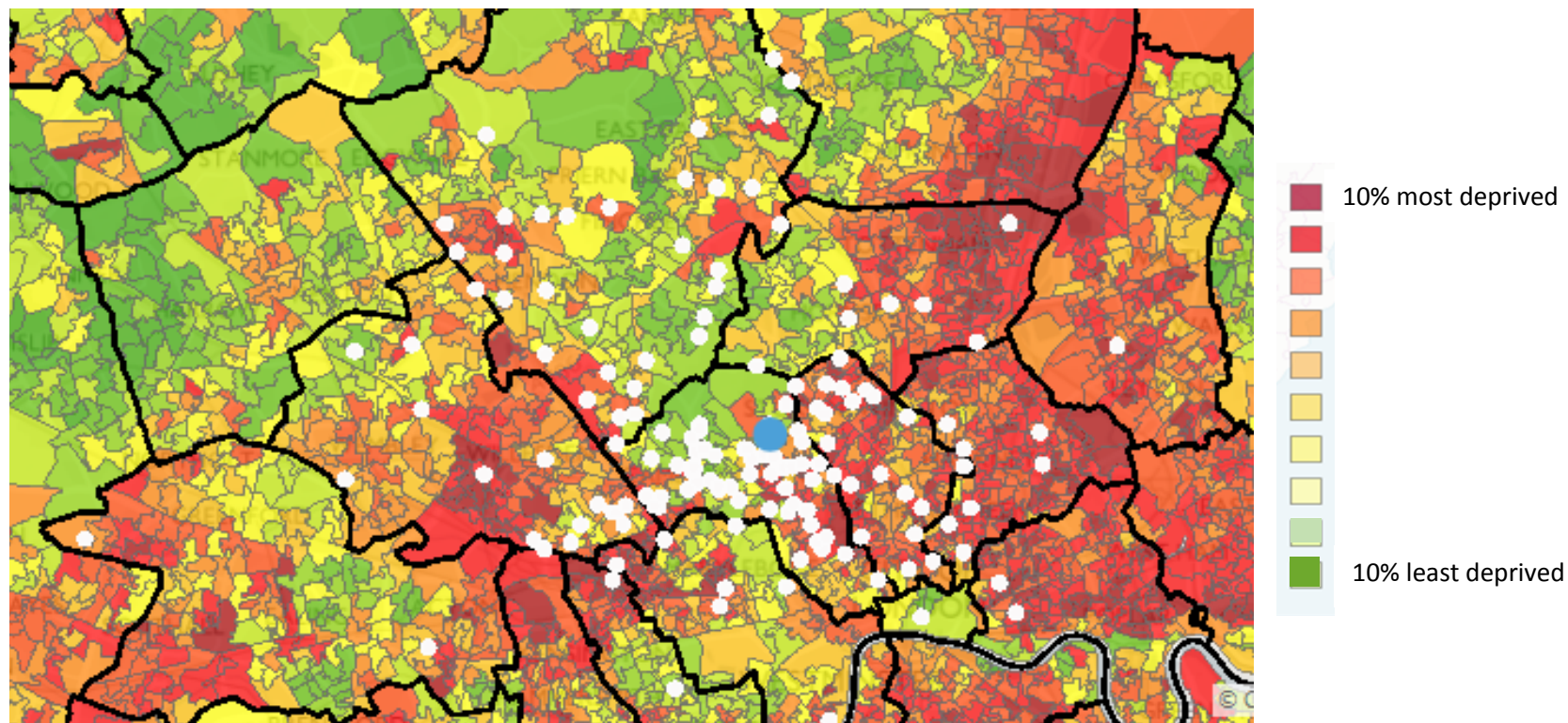


Blue circle = programme base

White circles = schools engaged

The programme focused on Newham schools close to West Ham Park, where deprivation is relatively high.

Schools service, Hampstead Heath

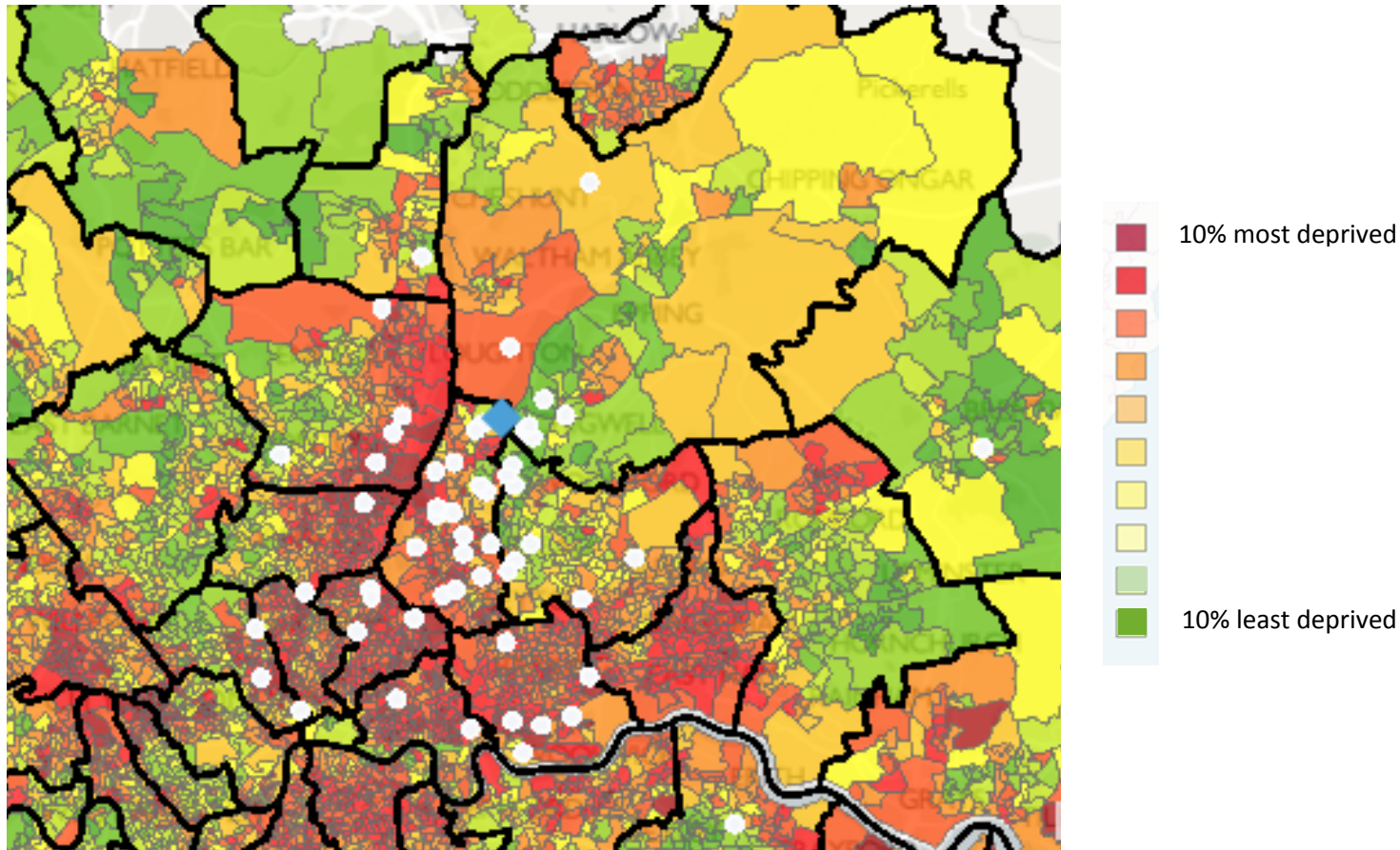


Blue circle = programme base

White circles = schools engaged

The Hampstead Heath school service reached schools across 12 London boroughs, including Camden, Islington, Hackney, Brent, Tower Hamlets and Haringey, where deprivation is relatively high.

Schools service, Epping Forest



Blue diamond = programme base

White circles = schools engaged

The Epping Forest school service reached schools across ten London boroughs, including Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Newham, Enfield and Haringey, where deprivation is relatively high.

Reference map showing London boroughs

