Outdoor Learning Network – West Cumbrian Schools, 11th March 2026

Gina Parker (Mullarkey)

The network is kindly supported by the Ernest Cook Trust and The Outdoor Partnership

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Professional Development Opportunities for teachers

Sessions for Children (in school and pre-school with parents)

Resources to support schools and parents

Contact: Gina Parker (Mullarkey) gina@littlechatters.co.uk

Professional Development Opportunities for teachers

THINKING SKILLS AND ORACY -Philosophy for Children and Communities. Meaningful Talk. Thinking with Nature.

OUTDOORS –Outdoor Adventures, A right to Play, School Grounds Development, Beach and Forest Schools.

GLOBAL EDUCATION –Thinking Citizens through Thinking Games, Carbon Literacy and Climate Fresk

Sessions for Children

Utilising indoor and outdoor spaces to create an engaging environment for learning. Sessions include a strong focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills through fun activities. Little Chatters offers sessions for pre-school children through to the end of KS2. Sessions can be linked to special days/weeks.

Resources

Free resources, practical blogs and up to date information on funding via www.littlechatters.co.uk

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What is Outdoor Learning?

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How do you include Outdoor Learning at your setting?

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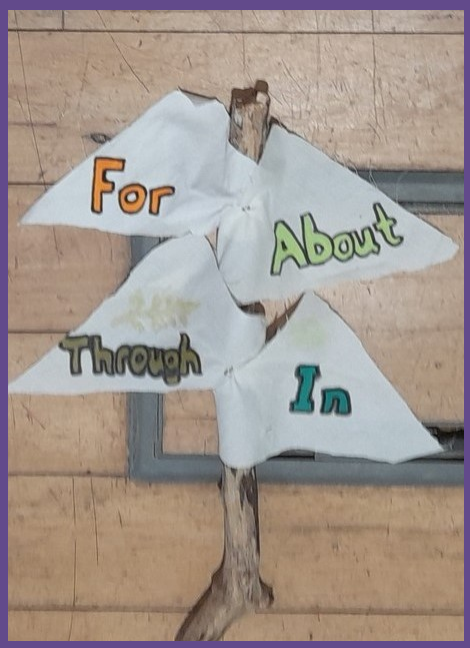

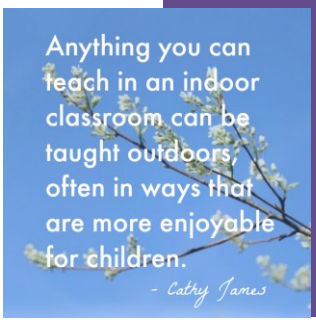

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Why is Outdoor Learning important for you and your pupils?

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"Three quarters of British children spend less time playing outside than the recommended daily period of outdoor exercise for prisoners" ***Telegraph March 2016***

More than a fifth (22%) of children aged 4-5 were overweight in 2023/24, rising to more than a third (36%) for children aged 10-to-11-years old

NHS Digital (2023) Mental Health of Children and Young people in England, 2023; https://cfyl.org.uk/ref/vjg

In 2023, about 1 in 5 children and young people aged 8 to 25 years had a probable mental disorder. NHS 2023

https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2023-wave-4-follow-up?utm_source=chatgpt.com

"51% primary classes reported having spent the recommended 60 minutes of more of outdoor playtime every day" Outdoor Classroom Survey 2023

33% engaged in outdoor activities or lessons (in addition to PE) most days or everyday

Children's People and Nature Survey 2024

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"Felt like I was in bed"

"Peaceful, like I am part of nature"

"I felt relieved from all the stress on my mind"

"I felt free"

"I felt like I was in heaven and I forgot I was with anyone. I had my eyes closed and when I opened my eyes I felt amazing!"

"Children with regular access to nature reported feeling calmer, more relaxed, and better able to concentrate after spending time outdoors."
Natural England 2023

88% children and young people reported that being in nature made them happy
Children's People and Nature Survey 2024

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Agents for change

- DFE Climate and Sustainability Strategy for schools
- School grounds - twice as big as Birmingham. National Education Nature Park.
- 1/3 public sector emissions are from schools.

Curriculum and Assessment Review

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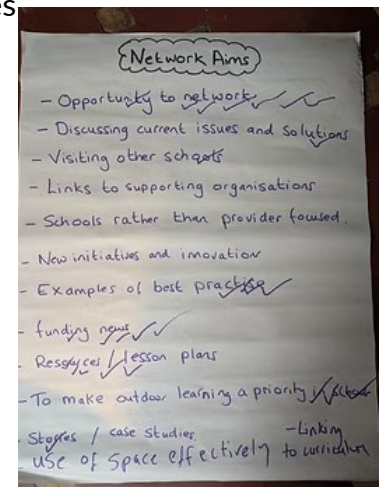
Network aims were developed by the group :

- To make Outdoor Learning a priority in schools
- To provide resources and materials to support outdoor learning
- To share examples of best practise (many of these examples come from within the group of schools in attendance)
- Up to date information on funding to support Outdoor Learning
- Opportunity to network



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Outdoor Learning Network Meeting

- 3 core meetings
- 1 online meeting
- Resources padlet
- Email support
- Linked events
- Badge coming soon!

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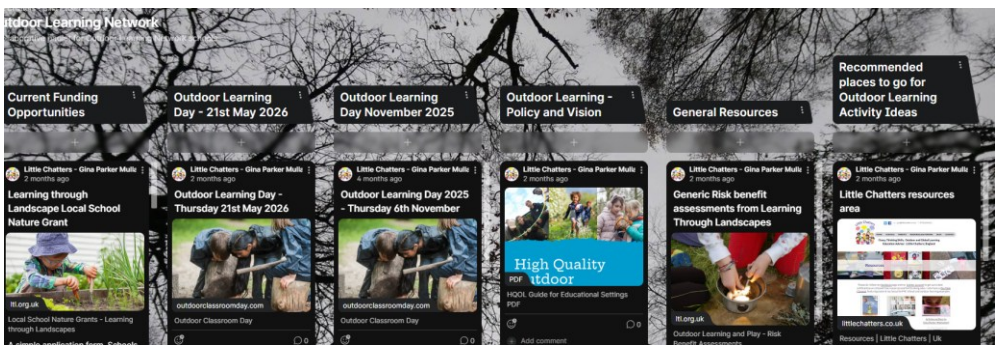
Outdoor Learning Network Padlet



Other sections included on the padlet.

- Planning documents
- Climate action plans
- Quick wins
- Successful School grounds
- Curriculum linked activities

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Grants

https://ltl.org.uk/projects/local-school-nature-grants/

Local School Nature grant from Learning through Landscapes
£500 worth of nature equipment, 2 hour training and a school grounds audit

Local School Nature grant XL – offers settings up to 30 hours of CPD training, alongside equipment and resources, to embed a whole-school approach to outdoor learning. Please email lsngxl@ltl.org.uk for more information.

Friday 13th March deadline!

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- **Where is your school on their Outdoor Learning Journey?**
- **What are your areas of expertise and need?**

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Outdoor Learning Network – next meeting in West Cumbria!

Wednesday 20th May, 1:30 – 4:30pm (arrivals from 1pm), St Begh's, Whitehaven

Gina Parker (Mullarkey).

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Outdoor Learning Network: West Cumbria

Wednesday 20th May, 1:30 – 4:30pm, (Arrivals welcome from 1pm)
St Begh's Catholic Junior School. Coach Road, Whitehaven, CA28 7TD.

1:30 – 2:00 Welcome and Introductions

2:00 – 3:00pm: School grounds tour led by Alisha Siddle and Catherine Mallard (St Begh's) and Mia Ambrose -West Cumbria Rivers Trust (Including a practical activity outdoors)

3:00 – 3:20pm: Break (and networking opportunity)

3:20 – 4:00pm: Alison Cross and Jane Armstrong (The Ernest Cook Trust) – Curriculum linked learning drawing on learning from the Foundations for Outdoor Learning Project

At the Ernest Cook Trust www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk/learning-from-the-land/schools/we specialise in Outdoor Learning. At the meeting, we invite teachers to take part in a collaborative discussion and workshop on how outdoor learning can fit naturally within the curriculum. Together, we'll explore practical ways to use outdoor learning to support curriculum outcomes, pupil wellbeing, and engagement. We'll offer top tips to help embed outdoor learning into everyday teaching and highlight useful resources, guidance, and examples of good practice to help your school develop a confident, sustainable approach to learning outdoors.

We ask you to bring your own curriculum plans (printed or electronically accessible in the meeting) to work from to help you get started or build on what you already do.

4:00 – 4:30pm: Visions for Outdoor Learning
Plans for Future meetings
AOB

If you are no longer able to attend the meeting, please RSVP to Dionne Torkington-Craven - Dionne.Torkington-Craven@ernestcooktrust.org.uk

Gina Parker (Mullarkey).

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Outdoor Learning Network – forthcoming wider network meetings

- **Outdoor Classroom Day, Thursday 21st May**.
- **Tuesday, 9 June, 1:30–4:30pm** at Sedbergh Primary School, with input from Eleanor Levin – Tree Tours.
- **Tuesday 6th October, 1:30 – 4:30pm** at Patterdale School (this meeting will include an optional morning Forest School Session led by Lily Horseman at a reduced cost to OLN members from 9:15 – 12:45).

Gina Parker (Mullarkey).

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Outdoor Learning Network – Logo

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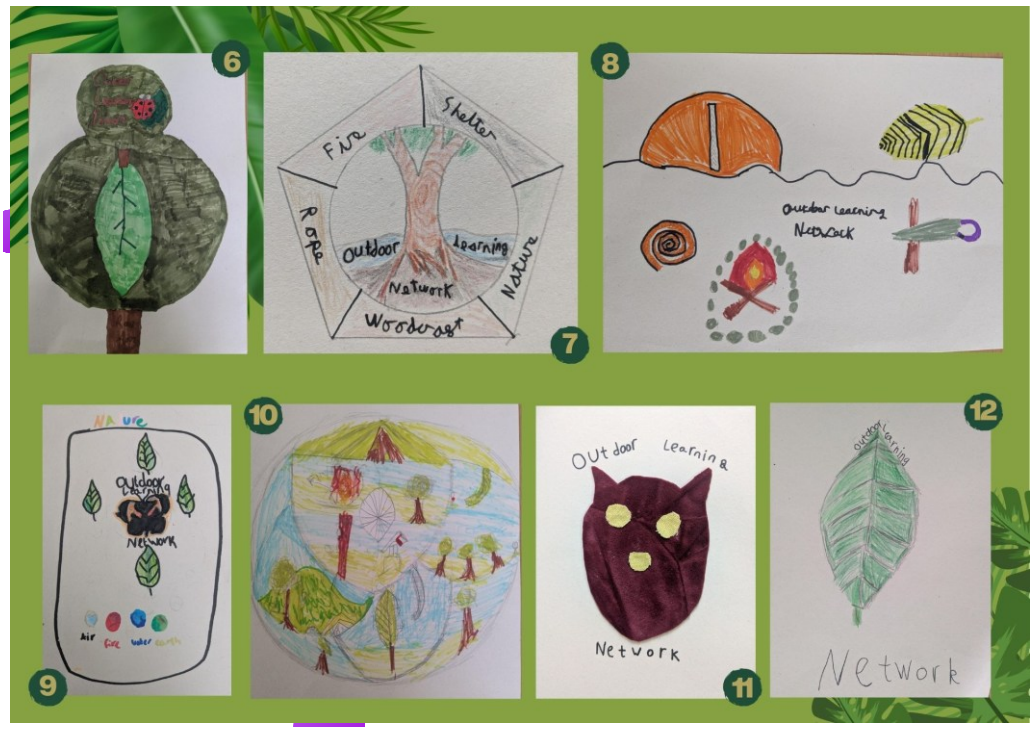

Outdoor Learning Network – Logo

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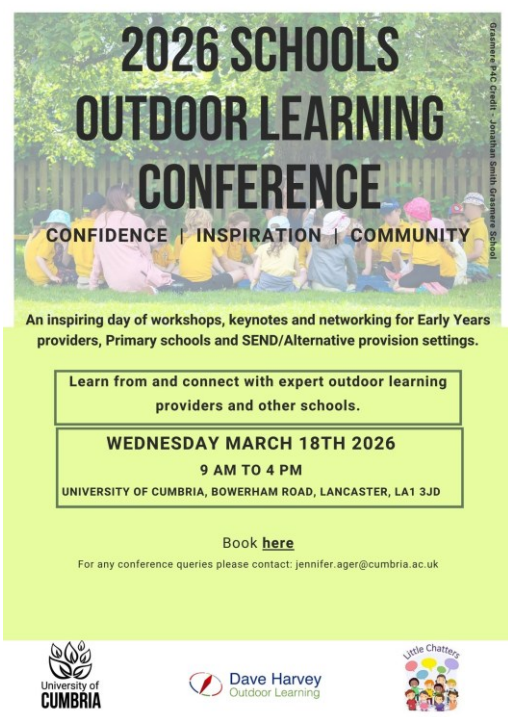

Programme

Time	Description	Location
08:45	Arrival/Registration	Sentamu Building Foyer
09:15 - 10:15	**Celebrating Success in Outdoor Learning** Gina Parker Mullarkey, Emma Littlewood, Sandy Lockett, Mia Ambrose	Sentamu Lecture Theatre
10:15 - 11:15	**Workshop 1**	
11:15 - 11:45	Tea/Coffee break and opportunity to visit the Conference Market Place	Sentamu Building Foyer
11:45 - 12:45	**Workshop 2**	
12:45 - 13:45	Lunch and opportunity to visit the Conference Market Place	Sentamu Building Foyer
13:45 - 14:45	**Workshop 3**	
14:45 - 15:00	Tea/Coffee	Sentamu Building Foyer
15:00 - 15:30	**Whose stories shape the outdoors?** Mohammed Dhalech	Sentamu Lecture Theatre
15:30 - 16:00	**Maintaining the Momentum** Jen Ager and Dave Harvey **Close and Raffle** Gina Parker Mullarkey	Sentamu Lecture Theatre

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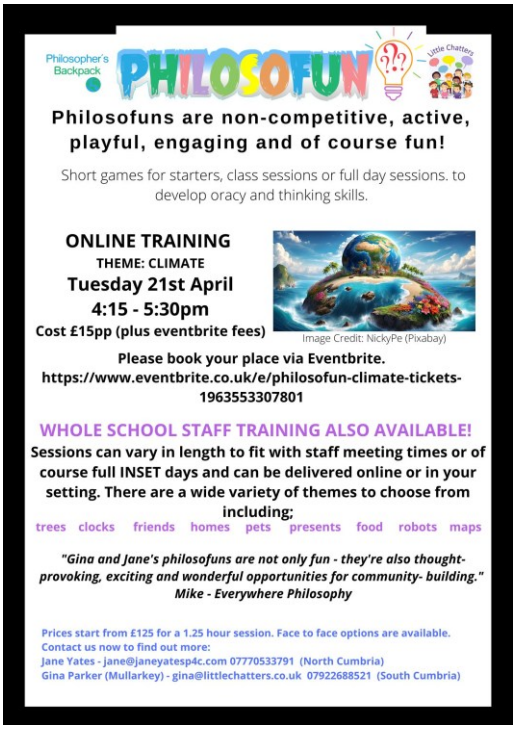

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/philosofun-climate-tickets-1963553307801

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FUTURE PROOF CUMBRIA

Copeland Climate Cascade

Free & discounted climate training for young people, school staff and youth practitioners in the Copeland area – for 2026 only!

We can come to your school, youth group or community setting with the climate training you need for young people, adults, or for both at the same time.

What training's on offer?

- Climate Fresk – *a lively 2 or 3-hr workshop*
- Climate Fresk Taster
- Climate & Carbon Literacy Training – *an 8-hr deep dive*
- Workshops for staff, eco-groups and the community
- Train-the-trainer workshops

What does it cost

- Sessions for young people - FREE
- Sessions for young people & adults - FREE
- Sessions for adults – 80% discount

COPELAND COMMUNITY FUND

www.futureproofcumbria.org.uk/training/copeland/

Email: training@futureproofcumbria.org.uk

March 2026

FUTUREPROOF CUMBRIA | Penrith, CA11 8ET | Company Number: 6492907 | Charity Number: 1123155

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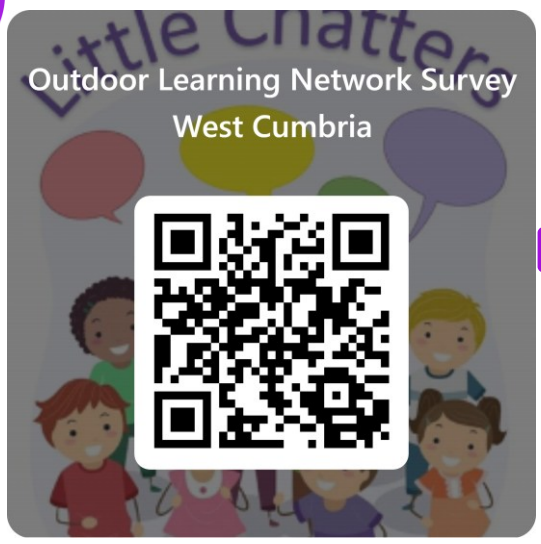

Outdoor Learning Network Survey West Cumbria – Fill in form

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