

Little Chalfont Nature Park Guide For Teachers

1. Introduction

The vision for the park includes education and teachers in local schools are encouraged to bring their children to the park by appointment for field work, study and play. It is a wonderful place to enjoy the natural world with a wider range of useful features for lessons linked to the national curriculum than a school playing field, a local public park or activity centre can offer.

2. Resources

The park provides a variety of resources that will make study more interesting and enjoyable for children and will help you develop lesson plans, linking well to the national curriculum and maximising the learning impact.

The park has maps, information boards at strategic points and a downloadable self-guided tour guide, but it also has a variety of useful features that will make your visit more valuable and enjoyable for your children:

- **Spotting sheets**

Mini guides with pictures to help you look out for interesting flora and fauna in each season. These are available to view either single or as one combined file from the website.

- **The story telling area**

A permanent feature of the park with a story teller's chair and seats shaped like toadstools for children to sit on and listen.

- **The sensory zone**

A dedicated area of carvings and special plants designed to stimulate all your senses – they are there to touch and to smell.

- **The play area**

Play equipment you can use during breaks or at the end of the visit.

- **The picnic area**

Tables and seats are provided for breaks to eat and drink refreshments you bring with you. There is a zero tolerance of litter to protect the natural world. Please apply a 'leave it as you find it' policy and use the litter bins provided.

- **The website**

The Nature Park website is the primary source of information about the park. It should provide much of the information you'll need to prepare for a visit including picture archives and data on flora and fauna observed in the park to show the

children what they might expect to see and some useful downloadable materials such as spotter guides.

3. Risk Assessment

The Park is open to the general public and you will not have exclusive use, but it is a secure site with a fenced perimeter and single gated entrance/exit to contain children if they wander off. There is a hard main path suitable for wheelchairs, mobility scooters or pushchairs. Other paths in the park are accessible to visitors on foot with care, tree roots and uneven ground present some potential trip hazards.

This is a natural place which is generally safe for all, but it has uneven ground and there are stumbling, falling and climbing hazards, also the potential for nettle stings, thorn punctures, bramble scratches and insect stings and seasonally there are poisonous fungi and berries to watch out for. Wear waterproof outdoor clothing appropriate for the season and footwear suitable for walking on open ground.

Public car parking and toilets are two minutes from the park with one-hour free parking. Local shops are very close by. Mobile phone reception is strong in case of emergencies. As a back up to your own first aid kit further medical supplies can be found at the local community library next to the car park during normal school hours. The park does not have buildings or shelter – but in very inclement weather such as a thunderstorm, shelter is at the Community Library near the Park entrance.

4. Teaching plans

You can build use of the park's resources into your teaching plans. We continue to develop new materials and encourage sharing and build a collection of teaching plans with links to the national curriculum while that is required. The website provides information on the birds, mammals, insects, reptiles, flowers, plants and trees that can be seen in the park.

5. Facebook

The Nature Park has a Facebook page where teachers and other visitors can share pictures and wildlife observations made during their visit to the park. We'd like to encourage you to share your news - everyone was very excited when the first grass snake was seen in the park!

6. Suggested activities

Teachers will want to plan for a session, half day or day in the park and to inspire you, we have prepared some suggestions for activities and provided links to other useful websites.

7. Nursery and reception

Early Years Foundation Stage 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World'

Discovery

Explore the natural world in the park, learn about the amazing plants and animals that live on our doorstep:

- **Finding and discovery**

What kinds of flowers, trees, bugs can you find?

- **Story telling**

Hear stories about the natural world whilst seated on the chair and toadstools.

- **Sensory**

Explore the sensations of the natural world through sight, smell, sound and touch.

- **Play**

Use the action play area.

8. Years 1 and 2

Key Stage 1 Science

- **Creatures**

Explore and compare the meadow and woodland habitats in the park and the amazing creatures that live in them - mini-beasts, birds and mammals.

- **Growing Plants**

Learn what plants really need to grow and survive explore the wonderful world of plants in the park. Find prickly plants, soft and silky plants, trees, mosses and grasses.

- **Bug Hunter**

Meet some of the natural world's smallest inhabitants – the mini-beasts that do so much to clean up and recycle in the park. Enjoy an up-close exploration of those creepy, crawly and wriggly mini-beasts and discover their fascinating life cycles.

Key Stage 1 Geography and Maths

- **Where am I?**

Learn how to explore the grassland, orchard and woodland in the park using maps and compass points.

9. Years 3 and 4

Link: Key Stage 2 Science

- **Mini-beasts**

Discover the weird and wonderful creatures in the different habitats found in the park. Identify the different habitats: collect and identify mini-beasts who live there and learn who eats who in this secret world.

- **Land Safari**

Explore the grassland and woodland habitats in the park: spot who's hiding under the logs and find out who the ladybird is eating in the long grass and who might be eating him or her.

- **Little Rotters**

Meet the natural world's greatest recyclers – worms, enjoy an up-close exploration of those wriggly recyclers and their fascinating life cycle.

Key Stage 2 Art and Design

- **Painting & Drawing**

Capture the true sense of the natural world by sketching your choice of attractive flowers, plants and trees that live in the park.

10. Years 5 and 6

Link: Key Stage 2 Science

- **Habitats and Lifecycles**

Take an in-depth look at the habitats of mini-beasts in the park, find and identify these amazing creatures and their important role in the natural world. Discover the incredible adaptations of invertebrates, find out which of them fly, walk, and burrow. Search for larvae and pupae and study the lifecycles of invertebrates that make their home in the grassland and woodland in the park

- **From Flower to Seed**

Investigate the wonderful variety of flowers and plants in the park in spring, summer or autumn season, discover who pollinates what and why and disperses the seeds.

Key Stage 2 Science, Geography, Citizenship, Design Technology.

- **Earth's Energy**

Look at the fuels we use to make energy, how many can we see in the park, investigate wind, wood and solar power design and test a wind turbine and make electricity.

Key Stage 2 Geography, Maths

- **Orienteering**

Explore the park in a different and exciting way with orienteering to gain experience in the use of compasses and maps through practical outdoor experience.

11. Other sources

Several websites have very good suggestions for activities and resources you might use in the nature park:

- **The Woodland Trust** - <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/>
- **Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust**- <http://www.bbwt.org.uk/discover-learn>
- **Wildlife Watch** - <http://www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/spotting-sheets>

12. Senior Schools, Colleges, Universities and Colleges

Learning resources specifically for senior schools, colleges and universities are not available currently, but the intention is to provide this resource in collaboration with local senior schools and colleges.

The park offers opportunities for field work and scientific research, including students looking for subjects for dissertations, field work, the Extended Projects Qualification (EPQ) and other learning activities such as volunteering and enrichment days. The park is very attractive for:

- **Science, particularly biological science study and field work;**
- **Geography, ecology and history;**
- **Sociology, English, maths and design technology - a creative inspiration for project work;**
- **The arts – a rich source of inspiration for photographers, artists and sculptors.**

The Park is a rare example of mesotrophic or MG5 grassland and natural woodland and following its creation, natural flora and fauna are likely to go on populating the habitat providing opportunities for:

- **Updates of the park's baseline study to show change over time;**
- **Observation of rare flora and fauna;**

- Ecology and changes in land use;
- Social, psychological and cultural impacts for users visiting the park;
- A living example of community and voluntary action;
- Projects to reshape and upgrade the photographic archives;
- Projects to reshape and upgrade the observation databases.

There are opportunities to contribute to future educational work to:

- Provide new custom learning resources such as activity sheets and tally charts for the park;
- Create additional learning sheets with wildlife themes, different seasons, for the four seasons or each school term;
- Create a sharing site for teaching plans;
- Develop and hold competitions for children;
- Get involved in volunteering and conservation work;
- Make other suggestions for innovative uses of the park.