

THE WATER CONSERVATION TRUST CIO
Registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1199697

Schools Programme – Progress Update May 2026

Winton Primary School

The Green Spaces Project is a core component of Winton School's commitment to a Sustainable Climate Action Plan required by Islington LA, and it aligns with the broader goals of increasing green spaces and enhancing biodiversity at schools, as recommended in the DFE's 'Sustainability and Climate Change' strategy and the national schools "National Education Nature Park" initiative. Winton is a state school with a high percentage of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and SEND needs and was recently assessed as Outstanding by Ofsted. It is a one form entry school with around 230 pupils on school role with a very limited budget, and this project offers an opportunity to significantly increase the facilities for the children.

To date the Trust has funded £2500 for 12 water butts and a further £10,000 funding to complete Phase 2 of the project creating three new, dedicated growing and learning spaces across the school site. These projects are designed to utilize the harvested rainwater, deliver hands-on learning, increase biodiversity, and create a lasting sustainable, green legacy at Winton by providing outdoor educational opportunities inaccessible to many of their families.



The school children were invited to present their proposals to utilise the newly created green spaces at the Livery Climate Action Group Annual Conference on 26th January 2026 at Merchant Taylor's Hall as a demonstration of how schools can contribute to climate action plus increase biodiversity and environmental learning utilising school grounds. The children were presented with certificates by Sheriff Keith Bottomley and WCT prizes by WCT Trustee Rob Casey (see above).

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Regarding progress on the project the water butts are in place and the work on the downpipes is in progress, plus the space in the car park has been cleared. Unfortunately, the school were unable to most of the heavy project work over Easter due to SEND Capital spend (about £20k-£30k of work). It was too much for Ben the caretaker to fit the Green Spaces Project work in. However, their plan is to order the remaining materials and get him to work on Green Spaces during May half-term with a plan to substantially complete the work this summer term. Trustees Rob Casey and Peter Hall visited the school on 5th February to discuss the project and inspect the proposed green spaces.

London Museum of Water And Steam

STEAM EXPLORERS STEM CLUB

The museum has run three STEAM Explorer courses funded by WCT so far and they have all been very successful as reported in previous Schools Updates. A number of explorers have stayed on as permanent volunteers and help with maintenance work every Thursday evening and have become sufficiently experienced to run the engines in the main Steam Hall during steaming weekends. They have also been working on refurbishing their own model steam engine (pictured below) taking it apart and learning exactly how it works.



As agreed at the September 2025 meeting WCT has funded £2,886.67 to run two further Steam Explorers courses one starting in September 2026 (with 5 people already signed up) and another in Spring 2027.

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LMWS BURSARY SCHEME

Currently the museum offers a variety of learning sessions to children from Early Years up to Key Stage 3, including a special SEND session, with costs varying between £250 to £270 per visit for class sizes up to 30 pupils, and the Trust offers bursaries to support visits by schools with a high percentage of disadvantaged children. Currently there is £2,270 funding remaining in the bursary budget for school educational visits. It was agreed at the September 2025 Trust meeting to remove the requirement of being local to Hounslow for 100% coverage of the visit cost. In general school visits are quite down this year, we believe due in part to the exorbitant cost of coach travel. Museum staff are looking to promote further school visits for Autumn 2026 with the new bursary conditions an important part of this. Over 400 children have benefited from the bursary scheme to date.

River Holme Connections

Each year the Water Conservation Trust provides £5000 to support River Holme Connections (RHC) to deliver environmental education and riverfly monitoring with local schools in the Huddersfield area via funding for their Year In Industry student. Current Year In Industry student Kyal Pick posted a report on LinkedIn about his activities so far 8 months into his placement. A copy has been placed on the Water Conservators website and you can read it via the following link:

[Water Conservation Trust – River Holme Connections](#)



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Spitalfields City Farm

Our bursary scheme supports educational visits to the Farm at low cost (£85 -£200). The children learn about food production, growing vegetables and fruit, pollination, natural pest control and animal welfare. To date there have been 13 visits with 5 this year resulting in an expenditure to date of approx. £2400 out of the £4000 Trust funding. The Farm has reduced the length of visits thus reducing the cost which has resulted in substantially more visits. WCT Trustees Rob Casey and Peter Hall met with Kirsten Houser, Education Officer at the Farm on 27th January to discuss the future use of the bursary programme. The following was agreed:

The Farm will extend the bursary offer to all schools in Tower Hamlets, allowing them to book a guided tour free of charge (at a cost of £85 each) from now onwards.

They will keep in touch about uptake and ongoing spend towards using the remaining £1500 (approx) of the bursary.

They will collect some feedback on visits and send over relevant photos for our use (with permissions).

The Farm have offered to organise a site visit for Trustees in the summer. Their site manager Steven is keen to show us around and discuss sustainability on the site.

Quentin Blake Centre For Illustration

Construction work at the new Quentin Blake Centre of Illustration at New River Head is progressing well, including the learning studio they are developing especially for children to learn about the history and development of water technology utilising the power of illustration. The Trust agreed to £6225 of funding to develop the pilot course with a few selected schools (now completed) and further funding support of £5695 to deliver 12 STEAM workshops in the Learning Studio at the centre reaching 360 pupils throughout 2026.

The centre will be open from Friday 5th June 2026 and then Wednesday to Sunday every week. I also received the following note from Emily Curran at the centre :-

We are delighted to announce that Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration will be opening its doors in June 2026. We can't wait to show you how we have realised Quentin's long-held vision for a permanent national space where the "extraordinary wealth of illustration" can be exhibited, discussed and celebrated.

I recommend that Trustees agree a date to visit the centre at our May WCT meeting and I will then make the arrangements with the centre. The cost of a visit is £15.

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Northeast Manor School

Northeast Manor is a special educational needs school based in Rodmell, near Lewes on a Grade II listed site, where the students are neurodiverse, most of whom have diagnoses of autism/ADHD.

The Trust has so far provided £1,350 towards stage 1 of a project to restore their horticultural garden, to match the £1,300 raised by the school so far. These funds have been used by the school to buy top soil, turf, sleepers, paving and two solar water pumps for the raised beds/ watering.

The school have made good progress on restoring the garden. The plant beds have new wooden edgings, all the old rotting sleepers have been removed and the students and staff are all saying how good the area looks now. Also, a layer of topsoil has been added to the beds by the students themselves.

At our November 2025 meeting Trustees agreed to a further £4961 of funding to purchase a greenhouse for the horticultural garden and I received the following response from Tri Townsend at the school:-

Thank you so much for your email - this is absolutely fantastic news. I've just shared it with our horticulture teacher, who is completely over the moon. She's already planning what the students will be able to grow now with the significantly-extended growing season for Spring and Autumn; I've heard mention of early-harvest tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, and even a little banana tree that was donated to the school but hasn't had anywhere warm enough to live until now! We will keep you updated on what additional species they are learning about and the impact that this has had on their horticulture study in the Spring term.

We'll also be using this as a chance to teach the students about water conservation. The water butts mean the whole setup can run as a closed loop, with everything grown in the greenhouse being watered entirely from harvested rainwater. The students will also learn more about how to manage our use of water sustainably - how to recycle it and use it efficiently.

We'll make sure to take photos throughout the process, from installation through to filling it with plants and to the first harvest. We are happy to continue sending photos over time. Installing a plaque to recognise this wonderful contribution to the school is a great idea.

The funding has been received by the school, and we are looking forward to hearing about progress on the greenhouse when Tri returns to the school on 6th May.

Cranborne Primary School

Progress is continuing to develop the pond and wildlife area at the school.

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Hugh Myddelton School

The Trust have supported Science Week at Hugh Myddelton School with a gift voucher presented to a winner from each class from Early Years through to Year 6. Some of the prize winners are pictured below.



Thorners' School, Dorset

I have received a request from Thorners', Burton Bradstock, and Portesham primary schools in Dorset via Christine Duthie regarding possible support to a project related to the health of the river Bride. They are working with Dorset National Landscape and have formed a WhatsApp group where there's healthy discussion about what they can do to help the river.

Training in Riverfly monitoring for 11 people is arranged for the 20th June. This will help them get an idea of the overall health of the river. They know that there is interest in the river from farmer clusters in the catchment and that there is survey work underway looking at where overland flow, before the water has reached the river, is causing problems.

They have approached us regarding the supply of monitoring equipment and I responded with details of the pond dipping equipment as recommended by River Holme Connections, and offered further advice on monitoring kit as necessary inviting them to submit a proposal for funding.

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Urbanwise London

At the meeting of the Trust on Tuesday 28th January, we discussed an approach from Urbanwise London and their projects on Greener Canalside and the River Westbourne Project. Greener Canalside had asked for assistance in developing a water quality monitoring protocol. It was agreed that the experience from River Holm Connections would be shared and the Trust would allocate £1,000 against a request for monitoring equipment. Also, Past Masters Martin Bigg and Rob Casey visited Urbanwise for their Open Day on 26th March and presented them with 9 pond dipping kits including nets, sample trays, magnifying glasses and identification guides to support their educational activities with schools and young children.



Slow The Flow

The Trust recently received an enquiry from “Slow The Flow” a West Yorkshire based charity working to advance the education of the public in Natural Flood Management, Sustainable Drainage Systems and other renewable methods of managing the environment. I sent them details of a recent Trust schools report to give them an idea of the range of activities we support and received the following response from Tania Blackburn at Slow The Flow:

Thank you so much for your email and offer for us to submit a proposal for funding. In order for both Slow The Flow and the Water Conservation Trust to get best value from any grant made to us, we would need to properly plan a project, and unfortunately at present we don't have the capacity to do this. Our Trustees are all volunteers, most of whom work. However, we're soon to recruit our first member of staff and once they are onboard we will be in a position to drive forward our educational endeavours. Would we be able to make an application in the future?

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Mora Primary School

I have received the following request from Esther Githu, a Governor at Mora Primary School:

Mora is a North West London Primary and Nursery School that provides education to almost 350 local children. Mora has been rated Good by Ofsted for the last 10 years, and were rated Outstanding for Behaviour and attitudes and Personal development in July 2024.

The school has been introducing more nature-based education within the early years setting using forest school principles to help facilitate sustainability and environmental awareness.

To help understand the Trust's work would it be possible to share a few examples of previous primary school projects the Water Conservators have been involved with?

I have sent Esther a copy of a recent WCT schools report that gives more details on the range of activities we support and offered to set up a short zoom meeting to discuss any proposals they may have and then we can consider a meeting on site.

St John Bosco College

I have received a request from St John Bosco College, a secondary school located in Battersea who are interested to learn about the work of the Trust in promoting environmental education and supporting schools to develop both curriculum-linked learning and practical eco-projects with a focus on water ecology, sustainability, and the development of hands-on learning experiences, such as ponds, aquariums, eco-gardening, and outdoor study. I am following up with a view to setting up an initial zoom meeting to gather more information with the possibility of a visit in the coming weeks

2026 WCT Sponsored Walk

I am proposing to organise this year's WCT Sponsored Walk along part of the route of the River Westbourne in north west London. Possible dates are Sunday 20th or 27th September.

Rob Casey, Water Conservation Trust – 1/05/26