

Embedding Outdoor Learning in Schools

Pendle Hill Landscape Project - Impact Report

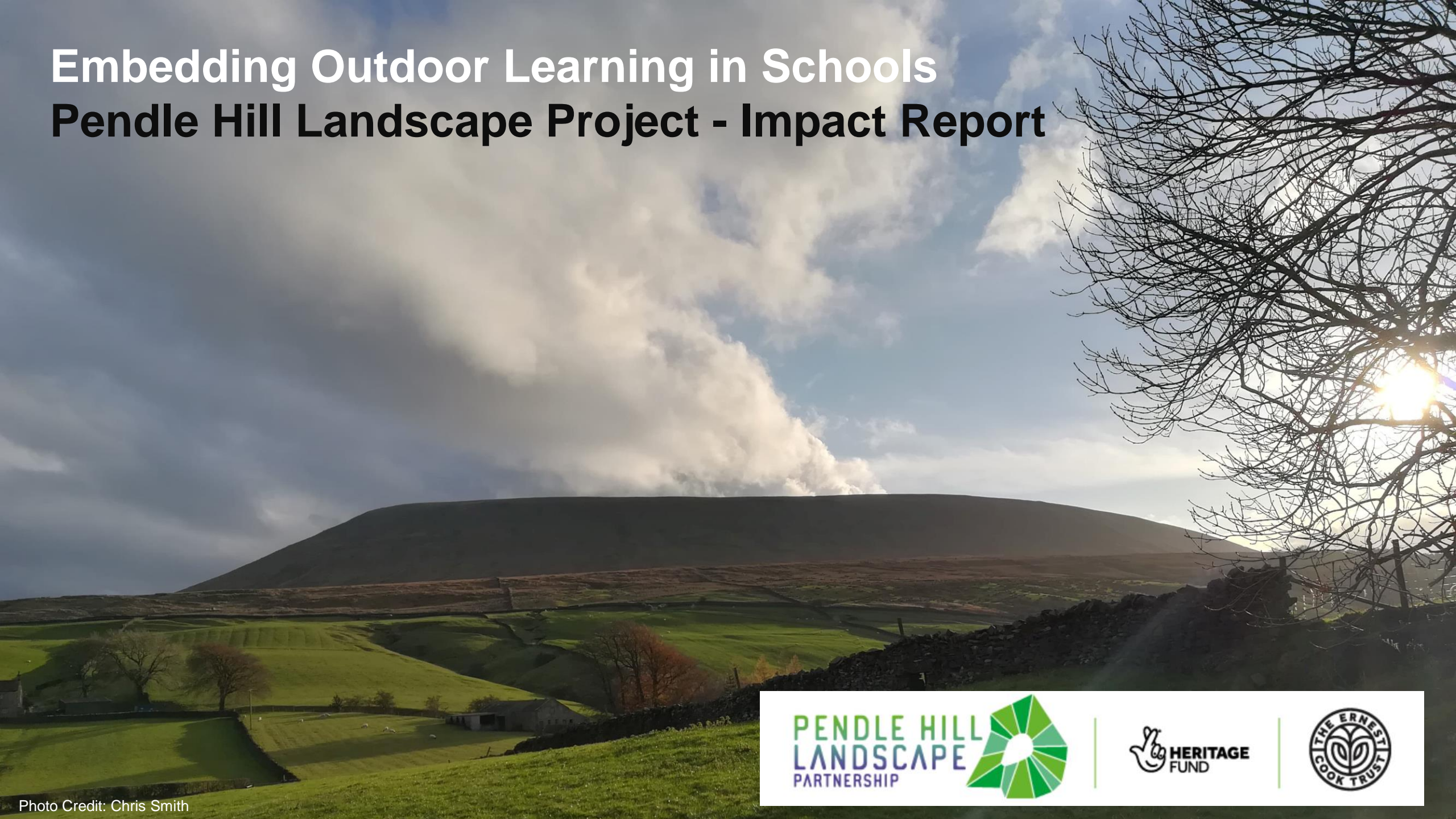


Photo Credit: Chris Smith

The footer contains three logos. On the left is the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership logo, featuring the text 'PENDLE HILL LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP' in blue and green, next to a green geometric icon. In the center is the Heritage Fund logo, which includes a stylized hand icon and the text 'HERITAGE FUND'. On the right is the Ernest Cook Trust logo, a circular emblem with a tree and the text 'THE ERNEST COOK TRUST'.



Background

Outdoor Learning: For the benefit of this report Outdoor Learning is defined as: 'an umbrella term for actively inclusive facilitated approaches that predominately use activities and experiences in the outdoors which lead to improved learning, nature connectedness, increased health and wellbeing, and environmental awareness'

The Pendle Hill Landscape Project (PHLP) was an ambitious four-year programme of activity based around the heritage and landscape of Pendle Hill, led by the Forest of Bowland AONB and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It ran from 2018 to 2022.

As part of this project The Ernest Cook Trust (ECT) offered a free opportunity to develop Outdoor Learning in local schools within their settings and National Curriculum lessons. This involved working closely with an ECT Outdoor Learning Officer who ran outdoor lessons / activities across various topics.

43 schools signed up to be involved and five themed learning options were available to them that could take place at the school site or in the Pendle Hill countryside at carefully selected sites. These were:

- Tree planting activity and outdoor lesson (October to March only, 2018-2022)
- Plants and Soils outdoor lesson (March to September, 2019-2022)
- Minibeast Hunting outdoor lesson (April to October, 2019-2022)
- Arty Senses, Landscape Explore outdoor lesson (year round, 2019-2022)
- Local History or Local Geography study outdoor lesson (year round, 2019-2021)

The legacy of the Outdoor Learning project was to encourage and enable teachers to deliver the session independently in future years.



Engagement

A total of **43** schools engaged with the programme

In total **160** sessions were run (between **7 to 36** pupils and **1 to 13** adults attended each one)





Methodology

- Between May and July 2022 two self-completion surveys were sent out to participating schools – one to participating teachers and one to the Head teachers.
- The survey sought to understand more about their views and experiences of the PHLP project and how it was delivered.
- n=16 teachers responded to the survey and n=6 head teachers responded. The results of these surveys follow.
- Copies of the surveys can be found here:
 - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KQ9DMXM>
 - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6CS2T77>



Executive Summary

- Satisfaction with the overall experience was extremely high – on average teachers rated it a 9 and Head teachers a 9.5.
- Nearly 2 in 3 of all participating teachers use their outdoor space more on an adhoc basis as a direct result of the ECT support. The remaining schools all plan to. Around half of all participating teachers have additionally made Outdoor Learning part of lesson planning, take their teaching outside more and use the ECT resources provided. Nearly all schools plan to.
- The key project successes were in:
 - providing inspiration and specialist knowledge
 - raising awareness of the benefits of Outdoor Learning
 - improving teachers and children's confidence in Outdoor Learning
 - igniting a passion for Outdoor Learning in teachers and children
 - making local connections that are rippling into family life
- Legacy improvements could be made in these areas:
 - even more focus on staff confidence in delivering Outdoor Learning and communicating the benefits (including more opportunities for observed delivery and further CPD opportunities)
 - more inspiration, tools, resources and equipment
 - more grant sign-posting
 - exploring and addressing barriers to off-site visits



School Aspirations

At the outset of the project all schools were asked to consider their aims and objectives for taking part. These were many and varied but focused on inspiration, improved confidence and building connections:

Show us how Outdoor Learning can be brought into all areas of teaching with a continuous stream of ideas

Link the outdoors to mental health

Structured and informative sessions to inspire children

Building links with local community more

Develop childrens understanding of their immediate natural world more

Improve teacher confidence and skills in delivery of Outdoor Learning

Utilise the outdoor areas more

Embed forest school

Teaching to better suit boisterous boys

Get children outside more particularly in winter

Get teachers outside all year round

Improve awe and wonder



Overall Experience

Satisfaction with the overall experience was extremely high

On average teachers rated the overall experience **9**

On average Head teachers rated the overall experience **9.5**



Q. On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is 'not at all useful' and 10 is 'extremely useful') how useful have you found all the Outdoor Learning support/interactions with Alison over the last 3-4 years (through The Ernest Cook Trust and Pendle Hill Landscape Project partnership)? n=16 / n=6



Outdoor Learning Perceptions

After the programme over **3 in 4 (75%)** of all participating teachers agreed with these statements:

- Spending time in nature is important to me
- I enjoy Outdoor Learning
- I believe in the benefits of Outdoor Learning
- I believe Outdoor Learning is beneficial for me and the children
- I feel knowledgeable about Outdoor Learning
- I feel part of nature
- I feel confident taking my teaching outside
- I feel confident communicating the benefits of Outdoor Learning
- I have access to the tools, equipment and resources to deliver Outdoor Learning

ALL participating Head teachers also agreed that:

- Spending time in nature is important to me
- I enjoy Outdoor Learning
- I feel knowledgeable about Outdoor Learning
- I believe in the benefits of Outdoor Learning
- I believe Outdoor Learning is beneficial to the children
- My teaching staff are confident communicating the benefits of Outdoor Learning





Outdoor Learning Perceptions

Improving staff confidence and providing more Outdoor Learning tools, equipment and resources should be the focus of any improvements to the programme

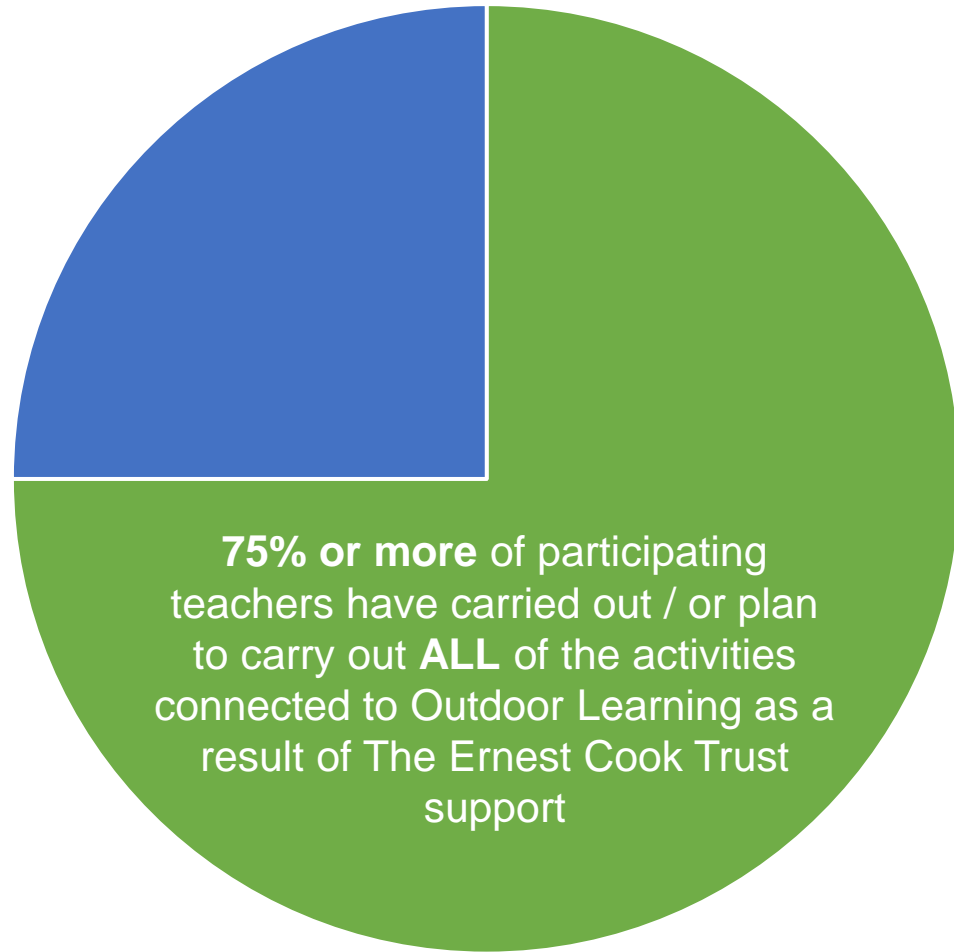
The lowest levels of conviction (i.e. % who 'completely agree' on 7 point scale) were in these areas:

- Only 25% 'completely agreed' they feel confident taking their teaching outside the classroom
- Only 25% 'completely agreed' they feel confident communicating the benefits of Outdoor Learning to others
- Only 13% 'completely agreed' they have access to the tools/equipment needed to deliver Outdoor Learning experiences
- Only 13% 'completely agreed' they have access to the resources needed to deliver Outdoor Learning experience

Further one Head teacher disagreed that they had access to the tools/equipment/resources to deliver Outdoor Learning and that teaching staff had confidence in taking their teaching outside.



Legacy Impact



■ Already carry out / plan to ■ Have no plans to

Use outdoor space more on an adhoc basis

Have purchased more tools/resources/equipment

Have a travel budget

Have carried out specific outdoor activities again

Have applied for other Outdoor Learning grants

Outdoor Learning is part of lesson planning

Use outdoor space more on a pre-planned basis

Have invested in school grounds

Have applied for the ECT Outdoor Essentials grant

Take teaching outside more now

Have taken the children off-site



Legacy Impact

Nearly **2 in 3** (63%) of all participating teachers use their outdoor space more on an adhoc basis as a direct result of the ECT support. The remaining schools all plan to

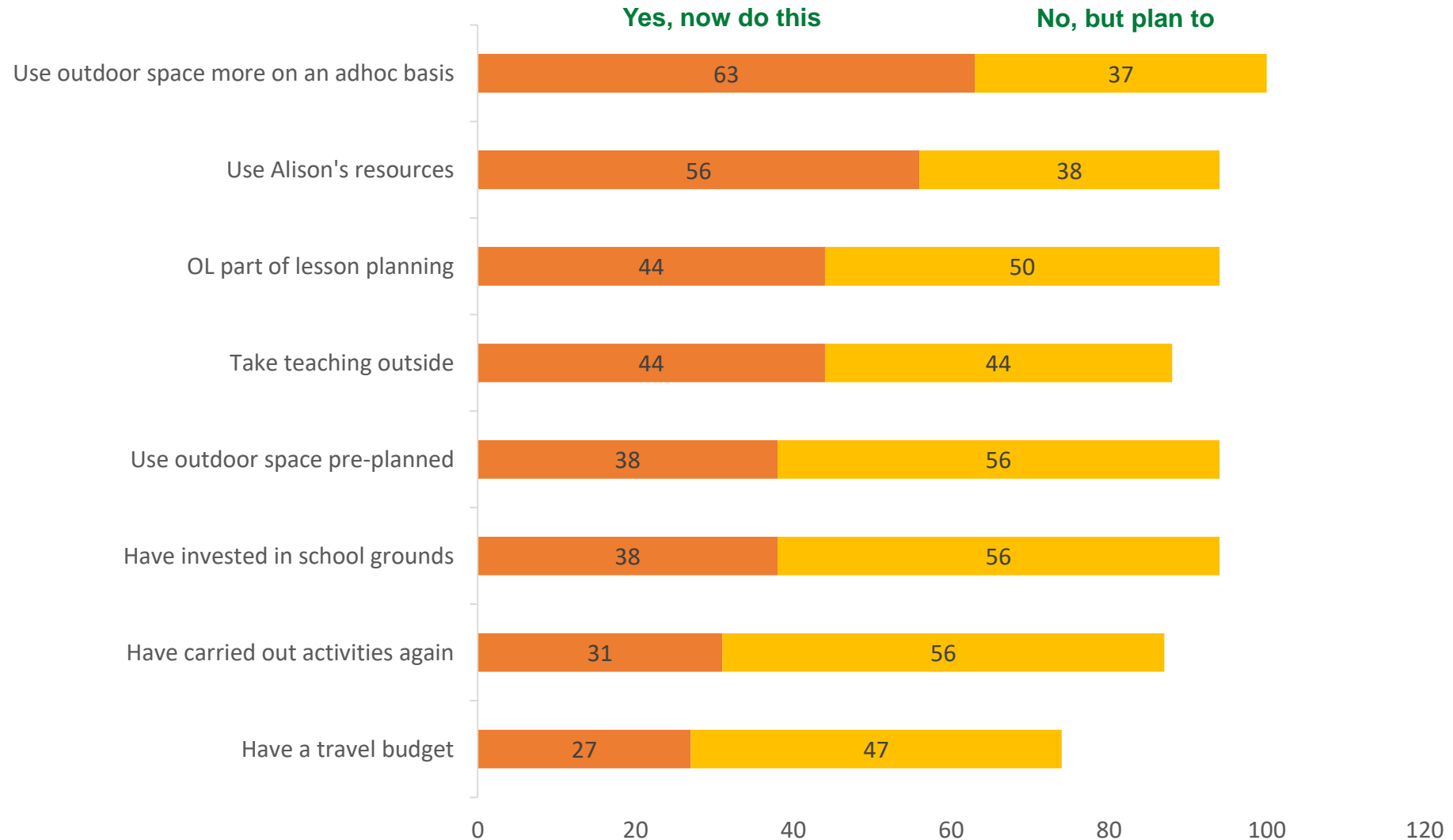
Around **half** (44% to 56%) of all participating teachers have already made Outdoor Learning part of lesson planning, take their teaching outside more and use the ECT resources provided. Nearly all schools plan to





Legacy Impact

As a result of support from The Ernest Cook Trust...



Q. As a result of the support from The Ernest Cook Trust Outdoor Learning Officer please indicate which of the following you/your school now do n=16



Improving Legacy Impact

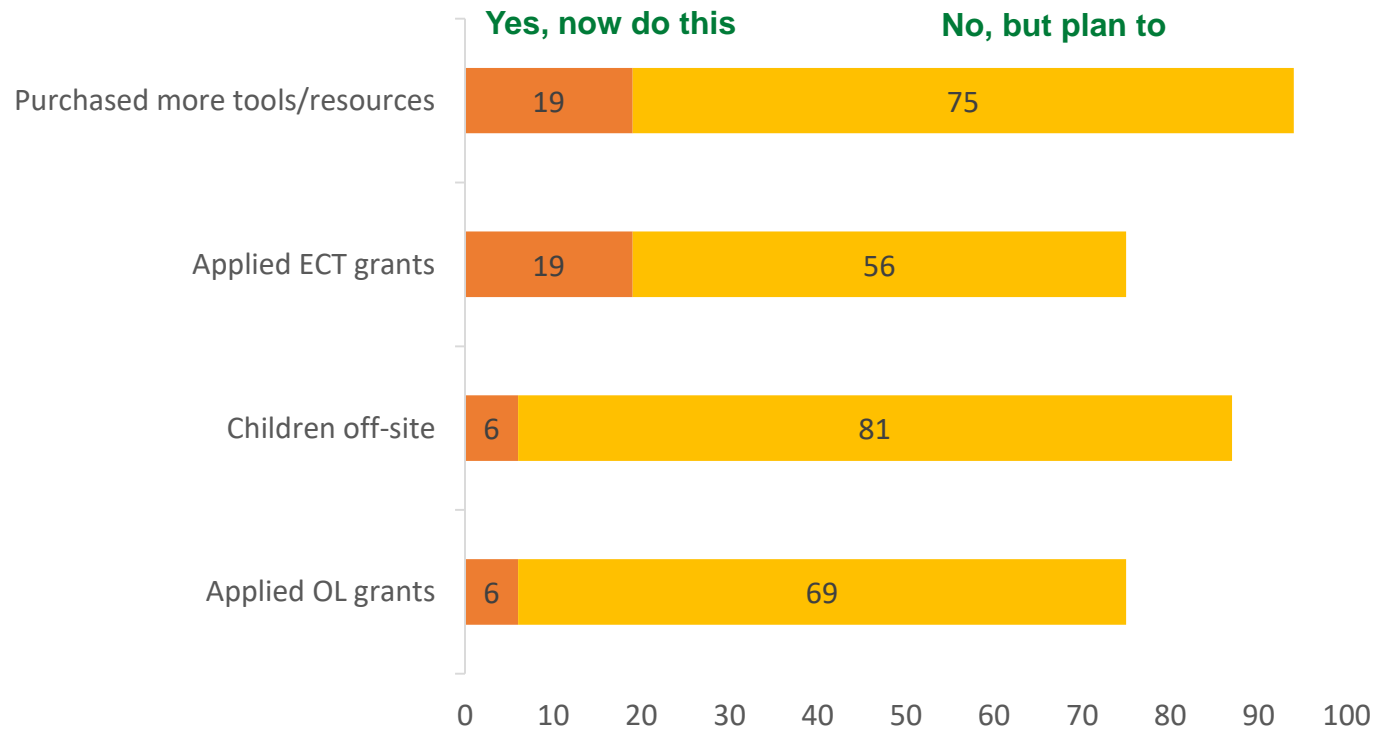
Legacy improvements could be made in terms of grant sign-posting, exploring and addressing barriers to off-site visits and more tools, resources and equipment



**OUTDOOR
ESSENTIALS
GRANT**



LOCAL SCHOOL NATURE GRANTS PROGRAMME



Q. As a result of the support from The Ernest Cook Trust Outdoor Learning Officer please indicate which of the following you/your school now do n=16



Successes

Inspiration: Adapting lessons / Showing how easily activities can be adapted for the outdoors / Enabling staff to see how local woods can be used to support many areas of the curriculum at different ages / changing school grounds (e.g. mini-forest / peace garden)

Knowledge: expertise / observation of experts

Awareness: Raising awareness of benefits

Confidence: Changes to staff confidence in using local areas and delivering Outdoor Learning / changes to children's' confidence

Connection: Children becoming more aware and connected to local environments / Rippling into family life too

Passion: Seeing enthusiasm children have for Outdoor Learning / igniting a passion in teachers

“Alison has been a fabulous asset to the team. Her delivery of sessions and resources shared were excellent. We have used these and adapted these for other year groups and sessions. The fact that all of the sessions were funded was a great help to the school. The project has ignited a passion for outdoor learning across the school”

“Teachers and children at our school are more confident to teach and learn in our school garden. Staff have been able to get involved with the practical activities during CPD rather than just read about what you could do. Staff have been able to witness the enthusiasm and passion the children have for their learning when outdoors. Staff will continue to use and adapt the training given”

“Alison is extremely informative, passionate and knowledgeable. Her ideas, support and enthusiasm have been extremely valuable. We would love to keep working with Alison in the future as her support and ideas have been amazing. It is nice to have someone so knowledgeable to be able to ask about different things especially with the Geography curriculum being so vague. Alison has also inspired us to take our learning outside”



Improvements / Further Support

“More time with Alison. It would have been great if Alison showed us an activity previously to teaching the children and then watched/helped us to facilitate the activity to the children and then to be given feedback on it as to how the delivery went in the outdoors and how we could improve”

- Generally no improvements – *“nothing, I just wish we had found you earlier!”*
- A terms notice to fit everything into a busy schedule and take full advantage
- More time / more of it / follow up sessions / longer sessions
- The opportunity to buy in Alison's services to advise and develop our outdoor curriculum / advisory services
- Observed delivery (to help improve confidence)
- Time to share the experience / learnings internally
- Further training / CPD for more staff
- Outdoor Learning validation
- Funding for more resources / an outdoor classroom / grant sign-posting
- Signposting to more inspiration / bigger library of activities / further inspiration on local opportunities e.g. woods/parks



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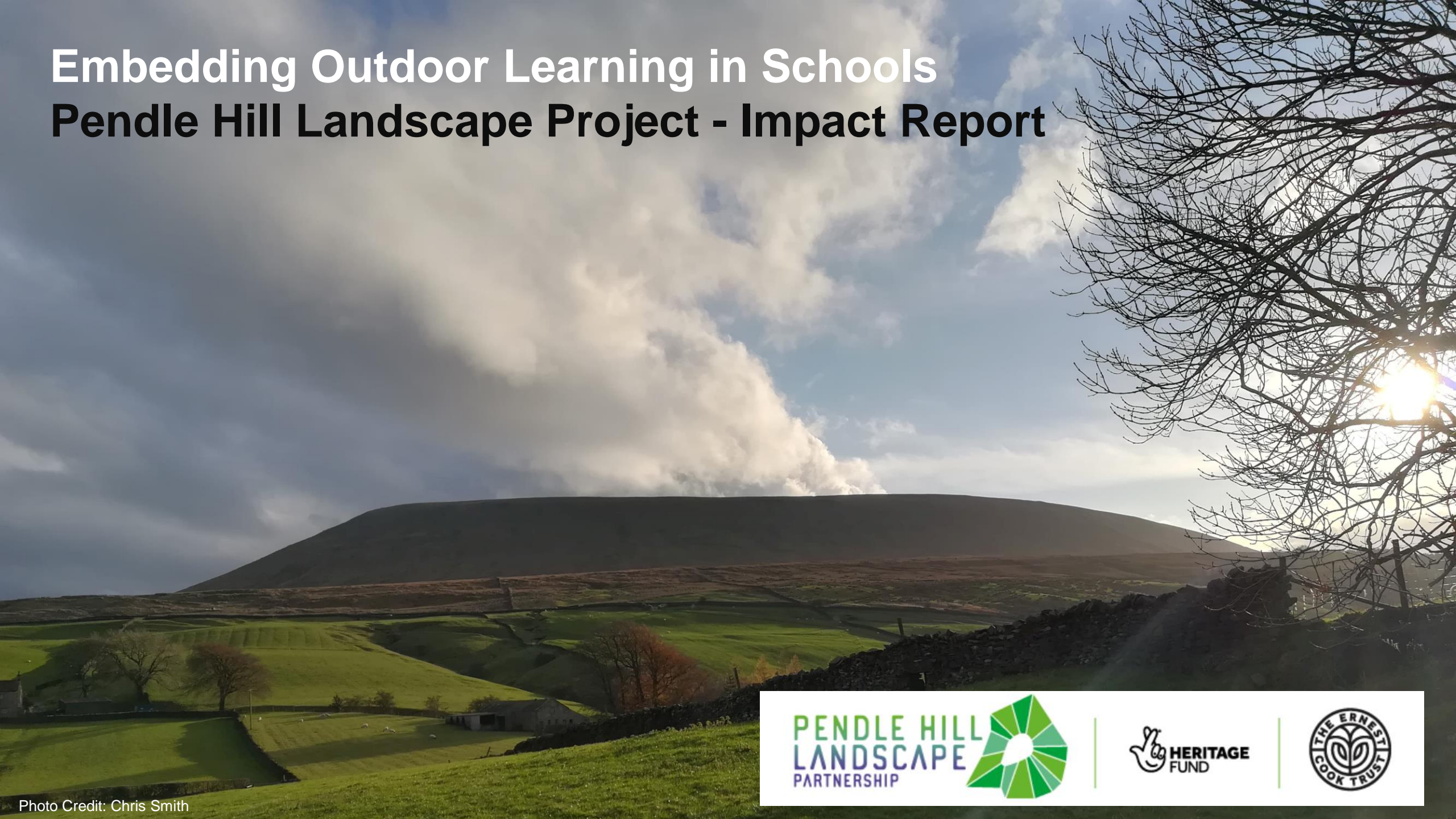


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