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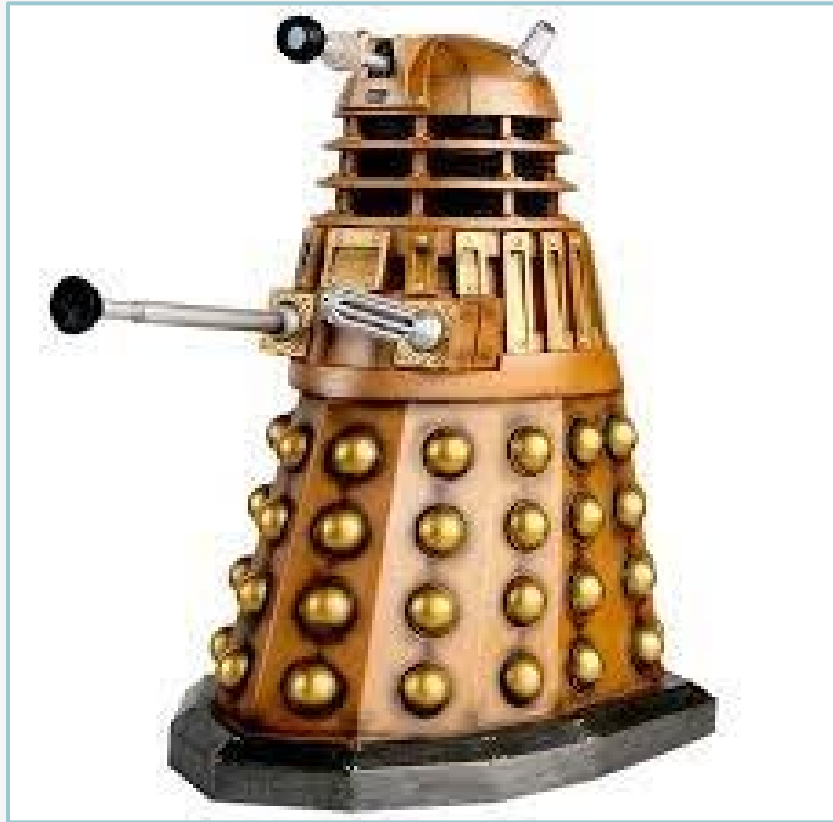
# Curriculum outdoor practice in local natural spaces and places



Heather Prince  
Professor of Outdoor and Environmental Education

# We are losing the language of nature (National Trust, 2019)

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<https://youtu.be/vbCCR4kCIIc>



# The outdoor and the natural are being displaced in childhood by the indoor and virtual (Macfarlane, 2015)

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## Consequences for ?

- Nature literacy & cognition
- Physical & mental health and wellbeing
- Care & concern for the environment
- Personal, social and emotional development  
etc



# Good practice – making it happen

Key ingredients for successful outdoor learning in primary schools  
(Prince, 2019)

- Values & beliefs of teachers
- An open approach to curriculum interpretation
- Suitable location

- Culture of risk benefit
- Initiatives

# Challenges

- Expense
- Time
- Competing pressures
- Teacher confidence
- Teacher expertise
- Paperwork
- Accessibility etc



- + Sustained experiences through teacher commitment
- + Sustaining experiences over time through adolescence

# Do we need something more radical?

- 'Rewild the child'?
- Work towards a new natural contract with the more-than-human world (Sitka-Sage et al., 2017)?
- Change in education (Bekoff, 2014)?
- Child-centred, progressive approaches (Dewey, 1963)
- Freire's 'Conscientisation'? (Fenton, Playdon & Prince, 2022)





# Voices of children and young people

- Friends
- Autonomy
- Risky play (Hayball et al., 2018)
- ‘Make it easier to go’  
Accessibility, cost (Ford et al, 2020)
- Feel safe, belonging (Pound, Larkins & Pound, 2019)

- Language



“Nature ‘connection’?”



# Wild is a child

*Wild is a child who stays out until dark*

*Wild is the child that lights fire with bark*

*Wild is a child with mud on their knees*

*Wild is the child who climbs up in the trees*

*Wild is a child a long way from home*

*Wild is the child with no need for a comb*

*Wild is a child who wipes their bum with a leaf*

*Wild is the child who uses a stick to brush their teeth.*

*Wild is a child who sleeps under the stars*

*Wild is the child who keeps tadpoles in jars*

*Wild is a child who fell out of a tree*

*Wild is the child with their own parking space at A&E*

*Wild is a child that I would like to be.*



Rowan Ashworth (9)

Winner of the  
Wordsworth poetry  
prize, 2017

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