Lambeth school project is strictly for the birds

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Lambeth schoolchildren will be taking a close interest in their feathered friends for the next several months in a biodiversity project that will explore how changes in the local environment has affected bird numbers.

The project has been made possible thanks to a grant of £28,387 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Run by the Purple Broccoli Theatre it will include storytelling, drama activities and themed games as well as nature study and tree-planting schemes to increase local bird habitats.

An estimated 450 children from 15 local primary schools will take part in the project which has the blessing of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Lambeth Council's parks department.

Workshop sessions will he held in local parks and open spaces with the children taught how to recognise different bird species, how to record sightings and how habitats should be preserved and managed. Tree and shrub planting will take place in school grounds to provide nesting materials and food for birds and the young people will also be set to work producing artwork that will be on display at West Norwood Library next March.

An aspect of the project will be to look at how changes in the local landscape has impacted on bird populations. Storytelling sessions will explore the role of birds in folklore and aims to fire the children's enthusiasm for birds. The children will learn about the work of the RSPB and schools will have the opportunity to continue their interest after the project ends through the RSPB's Bird Friendly Schools and Wildlife Action Awards programmes.

For Purple Broccoli Theatre, Director Nicola Hart, said: "We are delighted to have this opportunity to engage more young people with nature. There is so much right under our noses.When we begin to notice and take interest we discover an amazing variety of life forms that share our environment. I think it comes naturally to children to appreciate and enjoy the simple wonders of nature and with a little prompting and the right opportunities they can become real enthusiasts. A rewarding experience for them and one which we hope will engage them with helping to conserve birds and their environments."

Commenting for the Heritage Lottery Fund, Head of HLF London Sue Bowers, said: "Greater awareness of the natural world and the need to protect and enhance habitats is so important if species are to be protected. This project will engage hundreds of local children in this vital task."

Notes to editors

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 28,000 projects, allocating over £4.2billion across the UK, with over £840 million granted in London alone.

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