

Quick Information Guides for Parents and Teachers

SNAPshot No 16 **Wee Beasties**



Widening Participation

Widening participation is important for everyone in Scottish education. Highly able learners from areas of high deprivation in Scotland are less likely to go to university – just 16.7% of Scottish students from the most deprived areas of Scotland go to university. Through widening participation programmes, young people can be encouraged to choose pathways which will make university a choice open to them in the future. This SNAPshot outlines a project that young people can get involved in and highlights the ways student teachers and teachers can engage.

Wee Beasties



The Wee Beasties project has three main aims:

- To encourage late primary and early secondary age pupils to begin considering university as a place they can attend
- To encourage pupils, particularly highly able pupils, in creative approaches to researching, understanding and acting on environmental issues, particularly climate crisis
- To encourage young people to link their current school choices to their future educational goals

In the Wee Beasties project, pupils invent their own fantasy creature and imagine it in a local habitat. Pupils engage in wide ranging and in depth research on their own Wee Beastie's habitat, and produce text explaining how climate change and environmental issues have affected their Beastie. This is displayed on our <https://weebeaties.scot> website. Pupils have the opportunity to visit University of Glasgow to find out about how studying at university could help their Wee Beastie combat climate change. Wee Beasties is a structured Inter Disciplinary Learning (IDL) project and is particularly useful for student and probationer/induction year teachers.

How to Use this SNAP Shot

Student Teachers

Discuss with your school mentor using Wee Beasties to explore how to link creative open ended tasks to key Experiences and Outcomes within Curriculum for Excellence, to explore IDL with classes and to engage in important themes around equitable HE access and climate change. Use the plans, materials and resources at <https://weebeaties.scot/> to help you map out your classes' learning. You can also use the Professional Development questions below to consider how Wee Beasties can contribute towards your development as a teacher.

Probationer/Induction Year Teachers

Wee Beasties provides an opportunity to engage more deeply with how to use and assess creative, open ended tasks within Curriculum for Excellence to support learning for all, including the highly able. Use the plans, materials and resources at <https://weebeaties.scot/> to help you map out your classes' learning. You can also use the Professional Development questions below to consider how Wee Beasties can contribute towards your development as a teacher.

Wee Beasties and Professional Development: Student Teachers

For student teacher Wee Beasties offers opportunities to gain experience collaborating with others to support a school trip, engaging with open ended learning tasks, and experiencing practical approaches to meaningful interdisciplinary learning and HAL. Use the following reflective questions to think about Wee Beasties and the Standard for Provisional Registration:

Knowledge

- How can I fit Wee Beasties into the CfE Es and Os?
- What do I know about ecosystems, and the threat climate changes poses to existing ecosystems?
- How do I keep pupils safe, and ensure they are learning outside school? Which rules apply?
- What resources are available to me to effectively teach research skills?
- What makes open-ended tasks particularly useful for HAL?
- What do I know about widening access to university?
- GTCS Standard for Provisional Registration 2.1 Pedagogical Theories and Practice, 2.2.1 Education Systems, 2.2.2 Learning Communities

Skills

- How do I help young people invent a fantasy animal?
- How can I effectively teach pupils to research science topics?
- What do I need to do in order to lead learning visits outside of school?
- How can I collaborate effectively with busy senior colleagues?
- How do I design, facilitate and assess open ended tasks?
- How can I create opportunities for young people to surprise me with their knowledge, skills and capacities?
- GTCS Standard for Provisional Registration 2.1.4 Planning for Assessment, Teaching and Learning, 2.2.2 Learning Communities 3.1.1 Plan effectively to meet learners' needs 3.1.4 Assessment, evaluating progress, recording, reporting

Beliefs

- How do I feel about open ended research tasks?
- Is it important that everyone in class learns, including the highly able?
- Is knowing about higher education useful to young people? Should we aim to include more young people in university?
- Do fantasy and creativity matter?
- Should we care about climate change?
- Can a learning opportunity be important if it does not lead to summative assessment?
- Should all learners get a chance to take part? How can I make sure Wee Beasties is equitable?
- GTCS Standard for Provisional Registration 1.1 Social Justice, Trust and Respect 3.1.2 Utilise pedagogical approaches and resources 3.2.2 Engage learner participation 3.3.2 Reflective practice

Wee Beasties and Professional Development: Teachers

For probationer or induction year teachers, Wee Beasties offers the opportunity to engage deeply with interdisciplinary learning, research skills, assessing open ended tasks and HAL. Use the following reflective questions to think about Wee Beasties and the Standard for Full Registration:

Knowledge

- What do I know about internet research, algorithms and systemic bias? Do I have access to sources on these topics?
- Am I aware of rich sources of reliable information on climate change? Can I help young people access these?
- How comfortable am I with the idea of an ecosystem, and how deeply do I understand the effects climate change can have on ecosystems?
- GTCS Standard for Full Registration 3.2.1 Learning Contexts, 3.3.1 Engage critically with literature, research and policy

Belief

- Am I comfortable discussing disinformation and bias? Do I feel pupils should include 'both sides' on topics such as climate change?
- Do I believe that open ended tasks are useful in understanding pupil knowledge, skills and capacities?
- How should I respond when pupil knowledge goes beyond my own?
- Is it important that every young person experiences pace and challenge?
- GTCS Standard for Provisional Registration 1.1 Social Justice, Trust and Respect, 2.1.4 Planning for Assessment, Teaching and Learning, 3.1.1 Learner Needs 3.1.4 Assessment 3.2.3 Equity 3.3.2 Reflective Practice

IDL

- What constitutes effective IDL?
- How can I collaborate with colleagues to ensure that IDL tasks lead to deep learning?
- How can I structure IDL activities to ensure that staff and pupil knowledge and skills are synthesised?
- How can I ensure all pupils are experiencing pace and challenge during independent, open ended tasks?
- GTCS Standard for Full Registration 2.1.1 Curriculum and Pedagogy, 2.1.3 Curriculum Design, 2.1.4 Planning for Assessment, Teaching and Learning, 2.1.1 Education Systems (Bias) 2.2.2 Learning Communities 3.1.3 Partnerships for Learning and Wellbeing 3.2.2 Learner Participation

Research

- How do I ensure pupils engage with a wide range of thoughtful research approaches?
- How do I teach effectively about bias, misinformation and the internet?
- How do I help pupils to identify and engage with a wide range appropriate sources?
- How do I introduce citation and plagiarism meaningfully?
- How can I support the learning of pupils who need significantly more challenging research materials to experience challenge?
- GTCS Standard for Full Registration 2.1.3 Curriculum Design, 2.1.4 Planning for Assessment, Teaching and Learning, 2.1.1 Education Systems (Bias) 3.1.2 Pedagogical Approaches and Resources

Resources and Logistics

Wee Beasties offers a structured, flexible approach to widening access activities for younger pupils, which meshes well with Curriculum for Excellence requirements. The following table outlines how each part of Wee Beasties fits with the CfE Es and Os, and how it could fit within your curriculum planning.

Phase	Activity	Experiences and Outcomes	School Resources	University Resources
Phase 1	Invent a creature to live in a local environment. Use the map on our website to upload your story about your creature. Draw a picture of your beastie on some card, cut it out, and take it to the place. Take a picture and email the picture of your beastie in its natural habitat along with a description of your beastie. Tell us what makes your beastie's home a good place for that beastie?	Creativity EXA 2-02a Awareness of adaptation to fit environment Digital skills Literacy LIT 2-20a	Digital camera or smartphone camera Beastie planning and construction session Beastie photography session Beastie pictures and text upload	Website including map which incorporates the beasties submitted by pupils Sample beasties Worksheet guide for how to support beastie creation (including information on adaptation to fit environment)
Phase 2	Beasties are in trouble because of climate change! Think about how your beastie might be affected by climate change.	Learning about climate change SOC 2-08a Note taking skills LIT 2-15a, TCH 2-01a Research and information gathering LIT 2-14a, TCH 02-02a, TCH 2-01a	Lessons delivered about climate change Facilitated discussion about how climate change could affect local environment	Online resources on aspects of climate change Guidance on how to search for new climate change information relevant to a particular beastie Worksheet or other pro forma to allow climate concerns to be recorded for each beastie Information on using Teams for video conferencing
Phase 3	Beasties at university – your beastie is a clever beastie and can learn to do things about these problems. Take your beastie to university to help them cope with these new problems by learning more about them, learning to	Widening participation HWB 2-12a Linking education and research to solutions to climate change SOC 2-08a	Resource and organize trip to university during COP 26	Tour around campus, including any suitable events being run for COP 26, including photo with wee beastie in the 'right' place

	persuade other people to listen to the problems, learning how to use the law to make people do something about them, learning how to use computers to record the issues, learning how to invent scientific fixes.	Reasoning and decision making skills – what would be the most helpful input a particular beastie might make? LIT 2-09a, LIT 2-10a	Support young people discussion their beastie’s university choices Support photography of beasties	
Phase 4	Write a description of what your beastie might learn at university that will help with climate change, and upload this along with the photo of your beastie at university	Literacy LIT 2-20a Creative problem solving SOC 2-08a Aspiration HWB 2-13a, HWB 2-19a	Support young people in writing about their experience Support young people to email images and text for website	Website – create a university map with wee beasties and what they are learning about

Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes included in this project

Literacy across learning

When listening and talking with others for different purposes, I can: · share information, experiences and opinions · explain processes and ideas · identify issues raised and summarise main points or findings · clarify points by asking questions or by asking others to say more. LIT 2-09a

I am developing confidence when engaging with others within and beyond my place of learning. I can communicate in a clear, expressive way and I am learning to select and organise resources independently. LIT 2-10a

Using what I know about the features of different types of texts, I can find, select and sort information from a variety of sources and use this for different purposes. LIT 2-14a

I can make notes, organise them under suitable headings and use them to understand information, develop my thinking, explore problems and create new texts, using my own words as appropriate. LIT 2-15a

I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. LIT 2-20a

Expressive arts

I have the opportunity to choose and explore an extended range of media and technologies to create images and objects, comparing and combining them for specific tasks. EXA 2-02a

Technologies

I can extend and enhance my knowledge of digital technologies to collect, analyse ideas, relevant information and organise these in an appropriate way. TCH 2-01a

I can use digital technologies to search, access and retrieve information and am aware that not all of this information will be credible.
TCH 02-02a

Health and wellbeing

Representing my class, school and/or wider community encourages my self-worth and confidence and allows me to contribute to and participate in society. HWB 2-12a

Through contributing my views, time and talents, I play a part in bringing about positive change in my school and wider community.
HWB 2-13a

Opportunities to carry out different activities and roles in a variety of settings have enabled me to identify my achievements, skills and areas for development. This will help me to prepare for the next stage in my life and learning. HWB 2-19a

Social studies

I can discuss the environmental impact of human activity and suggest ways in which we can live in a more environmentally responsible way.
SOC 2-08a

For more information, resources, presentations and worksheets, please visit

<https://weebeasties.scot> or contact catherine.reid@glasgow.ac.uk

