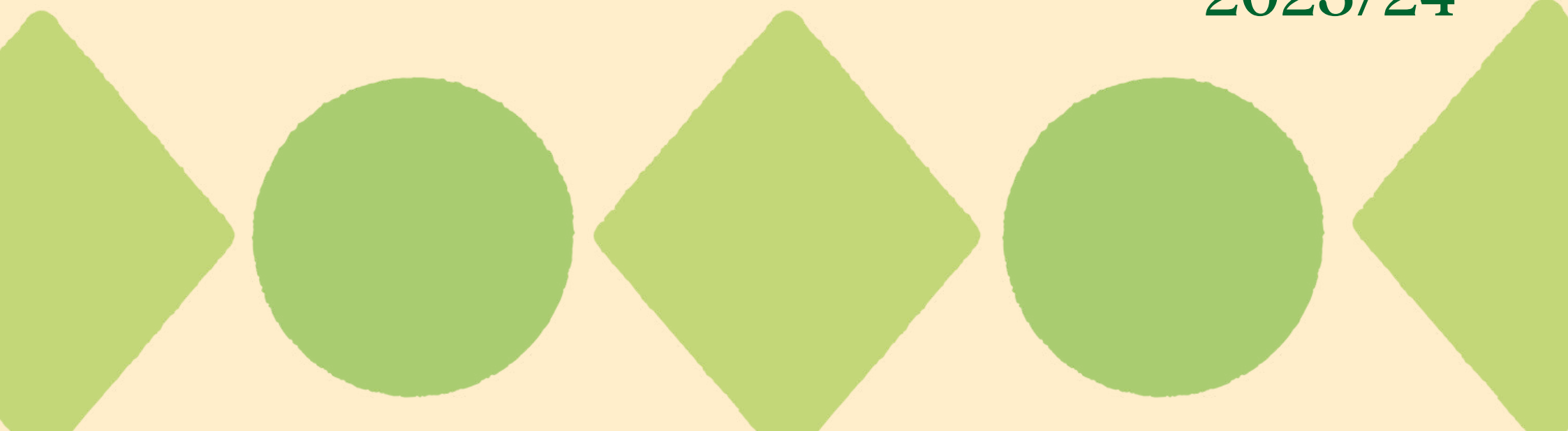


# Annual Report



2023/24











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# Message from our Chair



As Chair of Ufton Court, I have the privilege of supporting a passionate, dedicated team who embody resilience in everything they do. Come rain, shine—or sometimes both in one afternoon—our educators are out there, ensuring children experience the freedom of the outdoors. Their commitment is unwavering because they know, as we do, that learning outside the classroom is not a luxury—it is a necessity.

In today's fast-changing world, children are facing pressures unlike any generation before them. The rise in screen time, growing academic expectations and the complexities of modern childhood mean that too many young people are missing out on the simple, yet profound, experiences that shape confidence, curiosity and resilience.

At Ufton, we offer an alternative. We provide a space where children can step away from the pressures of daily life, connect with nature and heritage to rediscover what they are truly capable of.

As a Board of Trustees, our role is to ensure Ufton remains impactful, relevant and financially sustainable, so that we can continue delivering life-changing experiences for years to come.

This is not without its challenges. Our funding model—relying on school visits, charitable donations and income from weddings and events—requires strong leadership and vision. We are incredibly grateful to our supporters, schools, partners and funders, whose belief in our mission enables us to expand our reach and deepen our impact.

As we look ahead, the Board and I remain steadfast in our commitment to steering Ufton through both challenges and opportunities, ensuring that we continue to offer children the freedom to flourish in a way that shapes them for life.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us—our dedicated staff, our generous donors, schools that have chosen Ufton for their trips and our valued partners. Together, we are making a real, lasting difference.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James".

**James Hawker**  
Chair of Trustees







# Foreword from our CEO



As we reflect on the past year at Ufton Court, one thing remains at the heart of everything we do—ensuring that every child has the freedom to flourish. In an ever-changing world, where the pressures on children are greater than before, we have continued to evolve, listen and respond to their needs in meaningful ways.

In a time of global uncertainty where conflict, economic strain and shifting political landscapes create instability, Ufton's work has never been more vital.

The pressures of the world do not stop at the school gates; they weigh heavily on children, shaping their sense of security, well-being and ability to learn.

For many, time at Ufton offers something increasingly rare: space to breathe, freedom to explore and the chance to build resilience in a safe and supportive environment.

It is just as important for the adults who accompany them who are navigating their own challenges while carrying the weight of supporting young people.

At Ufton, we create moments of joy, connection and discovery that strengthen relationships, restore confidence and remind both children and grown-ups of their own capabilities.

We are deepening our trauma-informed, therapeutic approach, ensuring that our team is equipped with the knowledge and skills to support children who may struggle in traditional learning environments – whether from mainstream schools or not.

The Nest was our newest initiative, designed specifically for children who are on the edge or feeling lost in the classroom due to early childhood trauma. Through targeted support, immersive learning and compassionate guidance, we are helping children find their confidence, giving them the tools to re-engage with learning and thrive.

Our commitment to continuous improvement has also saw us refine our educational offering, ensuring inclusivity, relevance and even stronger links to the curriculum. We enhanced global perspectives in our learning and expanded our focus on educational outcomes that empower children long after they leave Ufton.

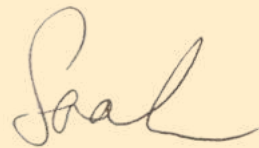
Measuring and understanding our impact is an essential part of remaining at the forefront of meeting children's needs. Our renewed partnership with the University of Reading will provide invaluable insights into the long-term benefits of outdoor learning, helping us refine our approach and contribute to a growing body of research on nature-based education and children's well-being.

This year also marked a milestone in how we present ourselves to the world. Our new brand identity is more than just a fresh look—it is a true reflection of who we are: playful, knowledgeable and deeply committed to our mission. It ensures that we connect meaningfully with children, teachers, parents and supporters, reinforcing our belief that learning should be different.

This year, we are incredibly proud to have welcomed 20,209 children to Ufton Court, with 30% enjoying the immersive experience of a residential visit and 70% engaging in enriching day visits. Each of these experiences helps to inspire, challenge and support young people in their learning and personal development.

We are deeply grateful to the teachers and schools who choose Ufton Court as a place for their students to grow, explore and build confidence. Your trust in us enables us to continue our mission of transforming children's lives through experiential outdoor and historical learning.

In uncertain times, we remain a place of stability—proving that learning and hope can thrive even in the most difficult circumstances.



**Sarah Lindsell**  
CEO



# Our Purpose

## Freedom to flourish

We are a children's experiential education charity dedicated to giving every child the freedom to flourish outside the classroom. We run experiential programmes that deep children's knowledge and connection to nature, history and the self.

Our team of skilled educators know how to make learning fun and bring out the best in all children, whatever their needs and whoever they are.

We give children a safe space to learn about themselves and see everything in a new light, helping them grow up more confident, curious and capable.

Childhood is short. If more children could learn our way, we could turn the tide on the 10-year decline in children's happiness.

## What We Do

Through immersive outdoor and historic learning experiences, we help children connect with nature, history and themselves—developing skills that will stay with them for life.

Set within 44 acres of beautiful, ancient woodland on the Berkshire/Hampshire border, Ufton Court is a children's experiential education charity and one of the South East's leading providers of history and outdoor learning programmes for UK schools.

Our experiential school trips deepen children's knowledge and connection to nature, history and the self.



### History

Ufton History – set in our 550-year-old Tudor Manor House, this programme brings the past to life with immersive, hands-on experiences, deepening historical knowledge and critical thinking skills.



### Outdoors

Ufton Outdoors – set in our 44 acres of woodland, children engage in nature-based learning, building resilience, confidence and environmental awareness.



### The Nest

Ufton Nest – a day-a-week nurturing programme for children who struggle in traditional school environments, supporting emotional and social development in a therapeutic, nature-rich setting.



### Weddings

Ufton Weddings – our historic barn and scenic grounds provide a magical setting for weddings, with all profits going directly funding our education programmes, ensuring that more children can experience the power of experiential learning.

**1 in 7 children in the UK are unhappy with school, making it the least enjoyable part of their lives.**  
The Children's Society, 2024





### Why Our Work Matters

Children today face enormous challenges—from the lasting impacts of COVID-19 and the rising cost of living to climate anxiety and the pressures of social media. Their happiness is at a record low and the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers is wider than ever. A rigid, one-size-fits-all education system leaves many struggling, disengaged and lacking confidence.

According to government data, disadvantaged children, in particular, face the greatest barriers, with only 43% reaching the expected KS2 level compared to 59% of their peers. Without tailored support and opportunities beyond the classroom, too many children risk being left behind.

Beyond academic struggles, children's wellbeing and sense of belonging are under threat. One in four young people feel they do not belong in school and those from disadvantaged backgrounds are twice as likely to experience isolation.

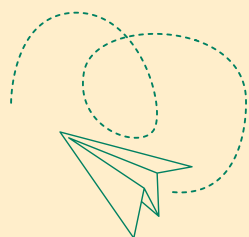
This can impact self-esteem, social skills and overall attainment. Additionally, 60% of children report deep concerns about climate change but aren't able to take action (Marks et al, University of Bath, 2021).

We believe that true education lies in experiences that spark curiosity, support wellbeing and create a sense of belonging for all children. By stepping outside the traditional classroom and into engaging, hands-on environments, children can develop critical skills, boost their confidence and gain the tools they need to thrive.



# Vision, Mission and Values

We want every child to have the freedom to flourish outside the classroom so they can grow into confident, curious and capable adults who have our world in their hands. Our mission is to inspire and empower children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, through transformative historical education and outdoor learning, fostering curiosity, resilience and a love of learning.



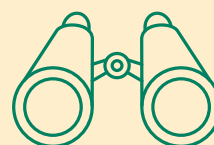
## **Playful and Professional**

This value is all about finding the perfect balance between having fun and getting the job done. We want to create a friendly and enjoyable environment where we can be light-hearted, whilst doing an exceptional job along the way.



## **Agility with Consistency**

Being agile and consistent means being able to adapt quickly and effectively to changes, challenges and unexpected situations. We need to be able to find creative solutions and implement them effectively, and do this at a consistent level, without compromising the quality of our work.



## **Curiosity Drives Excellence**

This value is all about embracing that curious spirit within us, because that's what takes us from good to jaw-droppingly awesome. We are always on the lookout for fresh approaches and creative ideas to make learning an extraordinary journey. We never settle for "good enough", going above and beyond to help deliver unforgettable experiences.



## **Act Today for Tomorrow**

This highlights the importance of taking proactive actions now to positively impact the future. Educating young people about climate change empowers them to comprehend global issues, spurring action to address climate impacts for future generations. Teaching sustainable practices encourages children to be responsible and take accountability for their impacts on the planet, both short-term and long-term.



# Ufton in Numbers



100% – Of children left Ufton with a new story to tell!



845 – Budding neolithic engineers moved our prehistoric monoliths—one push at a time!



102 – Themed banquets were hosted for over 5,000 children in our Barn!



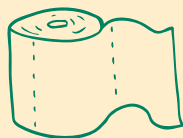
44 acres – Our site is a haven of woodland, meadows and history, giving children space to roam, play and explore.



4,280 – Viking war cries heard resounding through our woodlands.



100 – couples chose Ufton Court as their wedding venue, helping to raise over £324k!



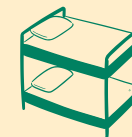
3,000m or 145 loo rolls were used every week!



50 – Lost hats, gloves and scarves reunited with their owners... eventually.



77kgs of carrots used by our cook to create healthy meals for children this year.



5,971 – Sleepy heads rested in our cabins, Tudor house or Longhouse after days full of adventure.



105,705 miles - covered in steps by children, enough to walk around the earth 4 times!



100% – Sessions that went ahead no matter the weather, because a little rain never stops us!



1 – Resident owl who watches over Ufton Adventure at night.



520 – Wild deer spotted wandering through our grounds.



120 – fires lit to make hot chocolate and celebrate success.

# A Closer Look: From Struggle to Strength

For a group of children from Slough, life is tough. Struggles at home and school had left them feeling isolated, lacking confidence, and disconnected from the world around them. But when they stepped off the bus at Ufton Court, something changed.

For the first time in a long time, they weren't just surviving the day; they were about to experience something new, something that could change the way they saw themselves and the world around them.

*"We were so excited to be here. It felt like we had a chance to do something special,"* one child shared.

Nominated as those most in need of social, emotional or behavioural support, these children arrived with little expectation. What they found was an experience that would push them outside their comfort zones and into a place of growth, connection, and self-belief.

From farm work to woodland walks, each challenge unlocked something new. A typically shy and withdrawn girl—who barely spoke in class—stepped forward, encouraging a friend to enter the pig pen. For the first time, she wasn't just observing; she was leading.

By the end of the day, barriers had started to break down. Children who once struggled to communicate now cheered each other on. They took pride in their achievements, no matter how small.

One child, who often said she felt "unwanted," beamed with confidence after feeding a goat—something she never thought she'd do. *"I'm proud of myself for doing that,"* she said with a smile that lit up the moment.

Teachers noticed the shift immediately. *"They're connecting better and showing more empathy toward each other,"* one remarked. The impact didn't stop when they left Ufton—back at school, friendships strengthened, and kindness became second nature.

At Ufton, adventure isn't just about exploring the outdoors—it's about discovering the best in yourself. As one child put it: *"We did empathy, friendship, and self-esteem today... and we were in the woods. That's well-being."*

For these children, Ufton Court wasn't just a trip. It was the start of something bigger—a belief in their own potential.



**36% of children are living in poverty—the highest rate in over 25 years, putting extra pressure on their wellbeing and educational success.**  
Social Metrics Commission Report 2024











# Achievements

This year has been a transformational one for Ufton Court, marked by significant progress in our programmes, operations, and impact on children's lives. From advancing our digital infrastructure to launching new initiatives, we continue to evolve in our mission to empower children through immersive learning experiences. Here are some of our key achievements:

## **Evolving Ufton Outdoors**

Our Outdoor Learning Programme, Ufton Outdoors, has continued to grow, incorporating the principles of Ufton Adventure to foster independence, resilience, and environmental awareness. This evolution means children experience immersive learning in nature, gaining confidence and critical life skills that extend beyond the classroom.

## **Trauma-Informed Practice**

We have deepened our commitment to trauma-informed approaches, ensuring our programmes provide targeted support for children facing emotional and social challenges. By integrating attachment and nurture theories into our outdoor learning experiences, we have helped children improve their self-esteem, self-efficacy, and ability to navigate challenges both in and out of school.

## **Launching The Nest**

In September 2023, we launched The Nest, a trauma-informed initiative providing a safe and nurturing space for children who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences. In partnership with schools, The Nest offers weekly support to children, helping them build resilience, regulate emotions, and rediscover their ability to learn.

## **A Refreshed Identity**

Our refreshed brand now truly represents who we are—playful, knowledgeable and deeply committed to helping children flourish. This new look enhances our connection with schools, parents and supporters, reinforcing our mission in a way that is clear, engaging, and professional. We achieved this transformation with cost-effectiveness at the core, completing the entire rebranding for under £15,000—ensuring that resources remained focused on our impact.

## **Digital Transformation**

We embraced a digital-first approach, moving away from paper-based systems to streamline our operations and enhance the experience for both staff and schools. Our investment in new hardware, software, and data management systems has enabled us to work more efficiently, improve communication, and ensure better accessibility of our programmes. These improvements directly benefit the teachers and schools we work with, making our processes smoother and more effective.

These achievements mark a year of impactful change at Ufton Court, as we continue to innovate, expand, and improve the way we support children.

# Our Approach - Trauma Informed

## Trauma-Informed Approach

We recognise that every child carries a story and for too many, that story includes stress, anxiety or experiences that make learning a challenge. Whether it's the impact of poverty, family difficulties, bereavement or simply the growing pressures of childhood in today's world, we know that traditional education can't always meet every child's needs.

A trauma-informed approach means recognising that children's behaviour is often shaped by past experiences and emotional needs, rather than simply 'difficult' or showing 'challenging' behaviour.

Research shows that trauma-informed environments help children feel safe, valued and ready to learn.

Instead of asking, "*What's wrong with this child?*", we ask:

*"What has happened in this child's life that might be affecting how they engage with learning?"*

We weave trauma-informed principles into every aspect of our programmes, whether it's a history session in our Tudor manor, a survival skills challenge in the woods or a quiet reflective moment by the fire.

We believe that learning shouldn't be another stressor—it should be a place of discovery, joy and growth.

Whether it's a reassuring smile, a word of encouragement or a quiet moment to reflect, our team ensures that every child is met with warmth, understanding and belief in their potential.

At Ufton, we use six key trauma-informed principles in everything we do:

**Safety** – Creating an environment where children feel physically and emotionally safe.

**Trust** – Building consistent, supportive relationships with children.

**Choice** – Empowering children to take ownership of their learning experiences.

**Collaboration** – Encouraging teamwork, problem-solving and communication.

**Empowerment** – Helping children build confidence, resilience and self-belief.

**Awareness** – Recognising that every child's background and life experiences are different.

At Ufton, being trauma-informed isn't just a policy—it's part of our culture.

- Every member of our team—from educators to kitchen staff—receive trauma-informed training, ensuring that they understand how to recognise and respond to children's emotional needs.
- Our Outdoor Leaders, Education Leaders and support teams work with schools to understand children's backgrounds and tailor experiences accordingly.
- We practice gentle encouragement, patience and positive reinforcement, ensuring that every child feels supported, not pressured.



# Theory of Change

## Our Theory of Change

At Ufton, we believe that positive experiences create positive change—not just for a moment, but for a lifetime. Our Theory of Change is built on the understanding that children's growth is complex, layered and deeply influenced by their environment. We don't just offer outdoor learning experiences—we create a nurturing space where children can build confidence, resilience and a lifelong love of learning.

At Ufton, we don't just teach. We transform. We don't just offer programmes. We create possibilities. Because when children step beyond the classroom, they step into their potential—and that is what learning should be about.

## Why Experiential Learning Matters

Inspired by educational pioneers like Kurt Hahn, our approach is rooted in real-world, hands-on experiences. We recognise that today's children face greater challenges than ever before—rising mental health concerns, the pressures of academic performance and a fast-changing world.

Traditional learning often leaves many children behind, especially those who struggle in conventional classroom settings. We provide an alternative—one where learning is active, engaging and deeply personal.

A visit to Ufton sparks immediate changes in children—visible in their confidence, enthusiasm and willingness to engage. These early shifts are the foundation for deeper, long-term benefits.





The Nest

# The Nest

Since launching The Nest in September 2023, we have seen remarkable progress in supporting children who struggle in traditional school environments. Designed as a nurturing, trauma-informed space, The Nest offers a unique 'day-a-week' intervention, providing each child with the ongoing safety, stability and support they need to flourish.

## Why The Nest Matters

Children arrive at The Nest with challenges that impact their ability to learn in school—whether due to trauma, attachment difficulties, anxiety or social struggles. Through a carefully structured mix of repeated experiential learning, outdoor activities and positive adult relationships, we help them build trust, confidence and the skills they need to reintegrate into school life.

## Growing Reach and Demand

Since launch, 65 children from seven partner schools have benefited from The Nest, with 100% of schools extending their partnerships.

We now operate five days a week, supporting a different school each day.

## Providing Equitable Access

In January 2024, thanks to funding from The Clothworkers' Foundation, we introduced a dedicated minibus to reduce transport barriers, ensuring more children could attend The Nest without logistical challenges.

## Strengthening Partnerships

The first Nest Open Day in February 2024 welcomed educators, SENCOs and pastoral care teams to see The Nest in action.

Two schools have committed to year-long partnerships, demonstrating confidence in the life-changing impact of The Nest.

Our first cohort completed their programme, showing significant improvements in confidence, emotional regulation and engagement in school.

**"I wish school felt like The Nest.  
Here I feel like I can actually be me."**

## The Nest in Numbers

- About 175 sessions per year, providing 875+ hours of direct support.
- Seven school partnerships.
- On average, 6 children per session, ensuring high staff ratios and individualised support.
- One handprint on the wall per child—a symbolic moment of their growth and achievements.

## Looking Ahead

We are strengthening impact measurement to demonstrate and enhance long-term benefits, developing funding partnerships to sustain and grow The Nest, and expanding our reach to older children in Year 7 and 8 with a second provision.

Generously supported by











# Ufton History

Ufton is the only charity in the South of England offering both day and residential heritage learning visits at a heritage location, where children can immerse themselves in a series of curriculum-linked and multi-era historical narratives, supported by a trauma-informed inclusive approach.

At Ufton, we believe that history is not just something to be read about—it's something to be experienced. Our immersive, hands-on approach takes children beyond the classroom and into the heart of history, where they can see, feel and live the past.

From stepping into the shoes of Tudor servants to exploring our 550-year-old manor house, Ufton History ignites curiosity, deepens understanding and fosters a lasting connection to heritage.

Our trauma-informed, inclusive approach ensures that every child—no matter their background or learning style—feels a sense of belonging in history.

## Beyond History

History education is about more than just facts—it shapes identity, belonging and confidence. Research shows that participatory heritage activities support mental health, critical thinking and social development.

At Ufton, we ensure that: Children feel part of history – By engaging in hands-on activities, children see themselves reflected in the past, increasing their sense of identity and belonging.

Learning is active and meaningful – Our storytelling-based, immersive approach transforms history into an experience, making it easier to remember and more enjoyable.

Inclusivity is at the heart of our teaching – We ensure that diverse perspectives and histories are represented, helping every child connect with the stories of the past.

Outdoor learning enhances engagement – Our unique combination of heritage and outdoor learning fosters curiosity and well-being.

Ufton History isn't just about looking back—it's about inspiring children to think critically, understand the world around them and feel empowered to shape the future.

## Key Updates

We expanded curriculum links and inclusivity to include more diverse historical perspectives, ensuring that all children see themselves reflected in the past.

We also increased our residential and day visit capacity ensuring more children experience the magic of Ufton History.

## The Impact of Ufton History

- 16,565 children took part in Ufton History programmes this year.
- 75% of children said that learning in historic spaces made history feel more real and exciting.
- 100% of teachers reported that their children were more engaged with history.







# Upton Adventure and Outdoors

For 12 years, Upton Adventure, based on the principles of Outdoor Learning, has been one of our most impactful programmes, offering children from disadvantaged backgrounds three repeated visits a year, designed to build resilience, confidence and a deep connection with nature. This model has helped thousands of children flourish outside the classroom but as the educational landscape shifts, we have evolved to ensure that Upton Adventure remains accessible and effective.

## Why Change was Needed

Children and schools faced new challenges. Schools were more stretched than ever with tightening budgets and staffing pressures, many schools—especially in disadvantaged areas—could no longer sustain repeated visits across the year.

Children's needs have also changed with more young people are experiencing anxiety, disconnection from nature and difficulty engaging in structured learning.

There were calls for greater flexibility as schools told us they needed more adaptable ways to accessing Upton Adventure—whether through one-off impactful experiences or shorter but more intensive interventions.

In response, we've started to evolve Upton Adventure model to ensure that it remained impactful, accessible and sustainable for the children who needed it most.

## An Adapted Approach

Upton Outdoors has become more closely aligned with our Upton Adventure programme, ensuring that children still develop confidence, teamwork and independence, but in a way that is more flexible for schools.

This shift meant:

- Schools could still access the life-changing benefits of Upton Adventure without the barrier of committing to three separate visits within a year.
- A focus on depth rather than repetition—offering high-impact experiences in a way that works for schools.
- A stronger curriculum link, helping schools target visits as part of their broader learning strategy.

Upton Outdoors: The Foundation – Our core outdoor programme, designed to immerse children in nature-based learning—building environmental awareness, teamwork and confidence through exploration and adventure.

Upton Adventure: The Targeted Intervention – An extension of Upton Outdoors, Upton Adventure provided structured, intensive intervention for schools looking to develop specific life skills in children who need extra support.

**Disadvantaged children in England are, on average, 10 months behind their peers academically by the time they leave primary school.**  
Department for Education, 2024







# Our People

## A Culture of Purpose

At Ufton, our impact is driven by our people—the dedicated staff and volunteers who bring our vision to life every day. Whether guiding children through woodland adventures, teaching history in our Tudor Manor house, or ensuring every visit is filled with hearty meals and a comfortable bed, our team is the beating heart of everything we do.

We know that to provide transformational experiences for children, we must first create a thriving, values-driven culture for our team. Over the past year, we have invested in building a stronger, more connected workforce—one where everyone feels supported, inspired and aligned with our mission.

Culture Workshops – staff from all areas of Ufton came together in interactive workshops to define what our values mean in practice, ensuring that we live them every day.

Better Onboarding – we introduced induction programmes, making sure new team members felt welcome, equipped and connected from day one.

Team Days – each term, our team gathers to learn, reflect, and celebrate, sharing best practices and exploring new approaches.

Ufton's culture of collaboration and shared purpose makes it a place to grow, where every team member helps create life-changing experiences for children.

## Our Team

Our educators, operations staff and support teams don't just deliver programmes—they create the magic of Ufton.

Education Leaders – ignited curiosity and built confidence in every child through engaging history and outdoor learning experiences. Our diverse team, including former teachers, actors and therapeutic professionals, brings a unique blend of skills to create dynamic and enriching educational experiences.

Site Team – ensured our woodland, historic buildings and outdoor learning spaces were safe, welcoming and ready for adventure.

Catering Team – provided the fuel that powers every experience, from nourishing meals to campfire snacks.

Housekeeping Team – provided comfortable, clean and welcoming spaces to all new groups arriving at Ufton – adding a special touch wherever they went.

Weddings Team – delivered beautiful weddings for couples marrying at Ufton Court, with 100% of the proceeds going to our charity.

Leadership & Support Teams – worked to grow our reach, secure funding and shape the future of Ufton.

We are more than colleagues—we are a community, united by our passion for giving children the freedom to flourish.







## Our Volunteers

Alongside our staff team, we are powered by an incredible group of volunteers—people who give their time, energy and skills to help make Ufton the special place it is.

Gardening volunteers dedicated hundreds of hours to keeping our grounds beautiful, creating spaces where children can connect with nature.

Minibus drivers helped transport children to The Nest, ensuring no child misses out due to logistical barriers.

SLT workshop leaders brought invaluable knowledge and insight to help shape the future of Ufton's leadership.

Sewing specialists created historical costumes for Ufton History, ensuring every child's experience feels immersive and exciting.

1,380 volunteer hours were given this year – a true testament to the dedication and generosity of our volunteers.

28 University students (from the University of Reading and the University of Southampton) supported us, working on important projects through their placements with Ufton.

Lastly, our Trustees helped us navigate through our challenges and ensured that opportunities were maximised.

We couldn't do what we do without them. To our staff and volunteers: Thank you. You are the reason Ufton changes lives.





## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We are committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace where everyone feels valued, respected and empowered to contribute.

This year, we have strengthened our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) efforts by implementing staff training on unconscious bias, reviewing our recruitment processes to enhance accessibility and representation and establishing an internal EDI working group to drive meaningful change.

We continue to ensure that our policies align with current legislation promoting a culture of fairness and belonging across our organisation.

Beyond our internal commitments, we recognise our responsibility to embed EDI principles in all aspects of our work with beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders. We have taken proactive steps to engage underrepresented communities, adapt our services to meet diverse needs and ensure that our programmes are accessible to all.

By prioritising lived experiences and fostering open dialogue, we are building a stronger, more inclusive charity that truly reflects the diverse society we serve.

## Safeguarding

At Ufton Court, safeguarding is at the core of everything we do. We are fully committed to ensuring the safety, protection and well-being of every child who engages with our programmes. Our approach aligns with statutory requirements in England and Wales.

This year, we have reinforced our safeguarding policies, ensuring they remain robust and responsive and have provided ongoing training to all staff and volunteers.

Our safeguarding procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure that any concerns are identified and addressed swiftly, in partnership with local authorities and relevant agencies.

We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to any form of harm, neglect or exploitation and all staff members undergo rigorous safeguarding training to ensure they understand their responsibilities.

Clear reporting structures are in place to ensure that any concerns are acted upon immediately, with the welfare of children being our top priority.

By fostering a culture of vigilance, accountability and continuous improvement, Ufton Court remains dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment where every child can learn, grow and thrive.







# Introducing Kayleigh Forbes

We were delighted to welcome Kayleigh Forbes as Head of Learning, a key role in shaping Ufton's educational vision. With a deep passion for experiential learning and child development, Kayleigh has already made a profound impact, working closely with our team to reinvigorate our educational programmes and ensure they remain relevant, engaging and responsive to the needs of today's children.

Kayleigh, a qualified teacher, brings a wealth of experience from her time leading a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), where she supported children facing significant barriers to education. Her background has given her a strong understanding of inclusive learning, trauma-informed approaches and the importance of adapting education to meet diverse needs.

This perspective has been invaluable in repositioning some of our educational offerings, ensuring that every child who comes to Ufton, regardless of their background or challenges, feels seen, supported and inspired to learn.

Beyond her expertise, Kayleigh's love for learning is infectious. She is passionate about creating dynamic outdoor experiences and fostering a sense of curiosity and resilience in every child. Working at a site with such immense history is something she takes great pride in, knowing that every activity at Ufton is enriched by the stories, landscapes and legacies of the past.

As Ufton evolves, Kayleigh's leadership keeps our programmes impactful, forward-thinking, and child-centred. We're excited for the future under her guidance.

"I am thrilled to join Ufton Court, building on its incredible legacy of experiential learning. My vision is to enhance and expand our educational impact, fostering curiosity, confidence and a love for learning in every child."



# Our Place

Ufton is more than just a location—it's a place of wonder, discovery and transformation. Spanning 44 acres of woodland, meadows and historic buildings, our site provides the perfect environment for children to explore, learn and grow. Whether climbing into a treehouse, gathering around a fire in the Viking Village or meeting animals on the farm, every part of Ufton is designed to immerse children in learning experiences they'll never forget.

## A Site Beyond Expectations

In September 2023, we unveiled our newest additions to the site at a special event—Celebrating Ufton. More than 100 guests joined us to mark the occasion, exploring the new spaces designed to enhance the experiences of children, schools and our team.

- The Longhouse – a treehouse-like structure nestled in the woodland beside our Viking Village, providing a magical, immersive space for history and adventure.
- The Adventure Classroom – a calm space designed to give children at Ufton Adventure a place to reflect, recharge and process their experiences.
- Multi-Purpose Space – a new, flexible building that has served as a central hub for our team.
- The Nest – a refurbished building, the Old Pumphouse, transformed into a safe and nurturing space for children attending The Nest.
- Wedding Preparation Room – previously used as storage, this refurbished space is provided to marrying couples as a room to get ready for their big day.

## Enhancing Our Site

Alongside these exciting new spaces, we have been continuously improving Ufton to ensure it remains a beautiful, inspiring place for children to explore. Recent upgrades included:

- New woodland trails to help children navigate and discover hidden corners of Ufton.
- Upgraded facilities in the woodland cabins, making overnight stays even more comfortable and memorable.
- Enhancements to our Viking Village, ensuring an even more immersive experience for history-based learning.
- Expanded campfire areas, providing safe, dedicated spaces for storytelling, reflection and warmth.

## Ufton Farm

One of the most beloved parts of Ufton is our farm, where children had hands-on with nature, learning about animals, food and sustainability.

New arrivals on the farm! This year, we welcomed 12 new animals, adding to the thriving community that brings joy and learning to every child who visits.

Farm-based learning activities continued to grow, giving children the chance to care for animals, understand where food comes from and build confidence in a natural setting.

The farm is a living, breathing classroom, where children develop a deeper connection to nature, responsibility and the rhythms of rural life.





# Our Partners

At Ufton, we believe that collaboration amplifies our ability to effect meaningful change. By partnering with like-minded charities, educational institutions and community organisations, we strived to enhance our programmes and extend our reach, ensuring that more children benefited from transformative outdoor learning experiences.

## The OWL Collaboration

In response to the challenges faced by young people during the COVID-19 pandemic, we joined forces with The Ernest Cook Trust through the OWL Collaboration (Outdoor Week of Learning). This initiative aims to provide immersive outdoor learning experiences for disadvantaged pupils, fostering resilience, mental well-being and a connection to nature.

A key component of this partnership is the monitoring and evaluation of our programmes against four key themes:

- Educational Outcomes – Assessing improvements in academic performance and engagement.
- Emotional Well-being – Evaluating the impact on mental health and resilience.
- Connection to Nature – Measuring the development of environmental stewardship and appreciation.
- Social Development – Observing enhancements in teamwork, communication and social skills.

Through this comprehensive evaluation, we aim to understand and demonstrate the lifelong benefits that outdoor learning can impart on children.

## University of Reading

To ensure that The Nest—our alternative learning provision—is delivering meaningful outcomes, we have partnered with the University of Reading for a rigorous evaluation of its impact. This collaboration focuses on several key research areas:


Emotional Regulation – Investigating how participation in The Nest helps children manage their emotions more effectively.

Social Integration – Assessing improvements in peer relationships and social interactions.

Academic Engagement – Measuring changes in enthusiasm and participation in learning activities.

Behavioural Adjustments – Monitoring reductions in disruptive behaviours and enhancements in classroom conduct.

The insights gained from this research will guide us in refining The Nest's programmes, ensuring they are tailored to meet the evolving needs of the children we support.



**Nearly 1 in 4 children feel they don't belong at school, with those from disadvantaged backgrounds twice as likely to feel isolated.**  
The Children's Society, 2024





### Community Partnerships

Our commitment to supporting children extends beyond our own initiatives. We actively collaborate with community organisations to share our site and resources, providing enriching experiences for diverse groups. Notable partnerships included:

Home-Start Berkshire – Offering families supported by Home-Start opportunities to engage in outdoor activities, strengthening family bonds and promoting well-being.

PACT (Parents and Children Together) – Hosting events and workshops for adoptive and foster families, facilitating shared experiences in a nurturing environment.

Daisy's Dream – Providing therapeutic sessions for children dealing with bereavement, using nature as a healing backdrop.

These collaborations enrich our community and ensure that a wider audience benefits from the unique environment and programmes that Ufton offers.

Through these strategic partnerships, we are amplified our impact, ensuring that more children experienced the profound benefits of outdoor learning and supportive interventions. Together, we are building a brighter, more resilient future for the next generation.





# Our Funding

At Ufton, we are committed to ensuring that every child has the freedom to flourish outside the classroom. To achieve this, we have built a diverse and sustainable funding model, allowing us to provide transformational experiences while maintaining financial resilience.

Our income comes from three key sources:

1. School Visits
2. Weddings and Events
3. Donations

## School Visits

At Ufton, our mission has always been to ensure that every child can learn outside the classroom, regardless of their background. In 2023/24, we maintained a sustainable funding model that balanced affordability, accessibility and long-term impact, allowing us to continue delivering high-quality, immersive experiences for thousands of children.

Schools contributed a subsidised fee to take part in our History, Outdoor Learning and The Nest programmes, helping to cover some of the essential costs such as staffing, site maintenance and resources. This model enabled us to provide financial support to schools in areas of disadvantage, ensuring that cost was never a barrier to access.

By reinvesting school visit income, we were able to expand our reach, enhance our site and improve our programmes. The fees paid by schools are about sustainability, ensuring that Ufton remains a place where children can flourish. We raised £1,242,055 through school visits.

## Weddings

Every wedding at Ufton is more than just a celebration—it's an investment in a child's future. In the past year, 100 couples chose Ufton Court as their wedding venue, raising £324,478 (after costs) to support our educational programmes. With 100% of wedding profits funding subsidised school visits, outdoor learning and support for disadvantaged children, these celebrations have directly enabled children's visits to Ufton.

The impact of this funding is profound. Every wedding that takes place helps ensure that cost is never a barrier for schools and children who need Ufton the most. We are incredibly grateful to every couple who has made their special day part of something bigger—a moment of love that creates opportunities for thousands of children to learn, explore and grow.

## Events

We hosted a series of community events, including our first Twilight Tales, Valentines Dinner, Spring Day, Mother's Day celebrations, Proms and other special gatherings, each designed to bring people together while raising vital funds for our work.













## Donations

Donations played a critical role in our work throughout 2023/24.

Thanks to the generosity of our funders and supporters, we were able to expand our programmes, develop new projects and enhance our site, ensuring that more children had the opportunity to step beyond the classroom.

This year, we raised £339,955 through donations, with funders supporting both new initiatives and essential ongoing work. Donations also helped us invest in capital projects, including new site developments that enriched the Ufton experience for all children.

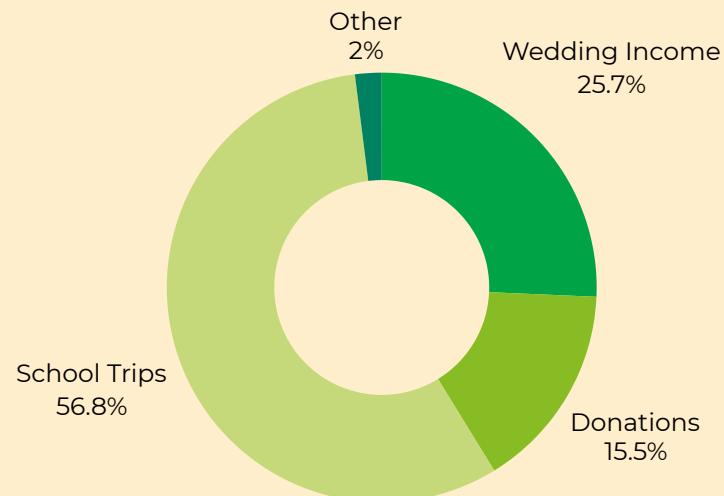
We were particularly proud to take part in The Big Give Christmas Challenge 2023, raising over £20,000.

With special thanks to the: The Billington Charity Foundation; Bluecube Technology Solutions; The Clothworkers' Foundation (one-off capital item); Englefield Charitable Trust; The Ernest Cook Trust; John Maynard, The Peter Cundill Foundation; St James's Place Charitable Foundation and the Ufton Nerve Fuel Allotment Charity.

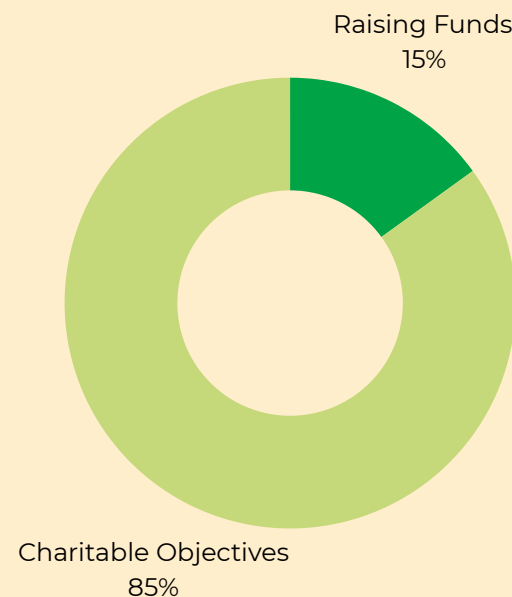
We were grateful to receive funding from The Clothworkers' Foundation, which enabled us to purchase a dedicated minibus for The Nest. This vital addition removed a barrier for children accessing our programme, ensuring that transport was never an obstacle to receiving the support they needed.

Our commitment remains clear: to use every pound wisely, ensuring that children continue to benefit from the life-changing experiences Ufton provides.

## Income



## Expenditure















# Freedom to flourish

**We run experiential programmes that deepen children's knowledge and connection to nature, history and the self.**



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