



Avon

# Fungi in Schools pilot project

## Report for Justin Smith Foundation

February 2020

### Project description

The aim of this project was to pilot ways to inspire, inform and educate young people aged 11-14 (KS3) about fungi. We reached budding young naturalists and scientists, by working directly with two secondary school science clubs in Bristol, Bristol Metropolitan Academy and Fairfield High School. We worked closely with Justin Smith Foundation, Feed Bristol and school staff to develop this pilot.

Core project elements for each school were: students growing edible mushrooms in their school, an assembly introducing the wonders of fungi, and a visit to Feed Bristol to discover more about fungi and nature. During this visit students explored the site with a fungi expert, took photos and identified mushrooms, learnt more about the life history and multiple uses of fungi, and ate home-made pizzas topped with their school-grown mushrooms.

### Outcomes and impact

- Approximately 150 students watched our school assembly presentation
- Approximately 35 students cared for fungi in their schools
- 25 students visited Feed Bristol
- 15 students took part in an extended learning project on fungi

### School feedback

*"It was a great experience and the fact that they forgot about their phones was great!" - Teacher*

*"I enjoyed walking around taking photos of all the mushrooms and flowers. It was fun doing different activities" - Year 7 student*

*"I liked everything. I lunned [sic] that fungi makes nearly every food. I never knew there was 15,000 fungi in UK" - Year 7 student*

### Lessons learnt and next steps

During this pilot we saw a clear desire from schools for projects which expand students' horizons and connect them with nature. Students and teachers were interested in fungi and had little knowledge before the visit. We have developed our understand of activities which work best for this demographic, as well as developing our understanding of how to partner effectively with school nature clubs. We are now looking to funding to run this project with more local secondary schools in Autumn 2020.

We value our long-standing relationship with Justin Smith Foundation and we are grateful for their support for our work with children and young people. We look forward to developing our partnership further in the future.



Above: Students visiting Feed Bristol during the project