



Leading Learning through
Action-led Research and Innovation

Guidance on making your Application

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A little about The Laurel Trust

The Laurel Trust is a grant-giving charity which works with collaborations of primary and special schools and early years' settings to secure improvements in teaching, learning, and children's well-being, thereby widening opportunity and reducing disadvantage.

Through the life of the research project the Trustees and the Consultant Director work with the schools to support and challenge them as their research progresses. It is important that the research has the potential for a longer-term as well as a short-term impact. Therefore, we ask that each project has a strong strand of professional development to create sustainability and continuity so that the impact of their research becomes long-term.

Similarly, the Trustees and Consultant Director work with and advise schools on dissemination strategies in order that the widest number of children, teachers, and schools benefit. Local and regional dissemination are important to extend reach and engagement across the neighbouring localities. However, we are ambitious for the work of our partnership schools and wish, where possible, to give their research a national presence. To this end we have recently had articles written by our schools and settings published in educational journals and magazines.





“Multiple studies have found that school closures during lockdown have significantly widened underlying inequalities.”

Your application for funding

The Trustees invite applications from groups and networks of schools or from special and early years' settings in areas of deprivation for funding linked to school improvement. For the years 2021-2023 the Trustees are particularly interested in creative and sustainable projects that will make a difference post-Covid and beyond. Some suggested themes and greater detail are given in the guidance 'Questions to Consider and Criteria for Selection': these are illustrative and not exhaustive. Your ideas and themes will be welcomed.

Multiple studies have found that school closures during lockdown have significantly widened underlying inequalities. For example, The Education Endowment Foundation has identified a 'large and concerning'

attainment gap in which poorer disadvantaged pupils are seven months behind more advantaged children. Public Health England found that more than 50% of parents' greatest concern is the mental health of their children.

Against this background the Trustees have decided on an additional round of recruitment this year.

Some thoughts...

Some of the most successful projects to date have been 'place-based' learning which have taken account of local knowledge, context, and priorities, thereby showing an understanding of local and regional needs. Their approach has been inclusive and practitioner led.

Several projects have formed extremely valuable partnerships with parents and the community,

the NHS and the caring and specialist agencies. The Trustees encourage this integrated working with other partners which fosters a unified approach to the care and well-being of the whole child.

Other projects have been entirely school/setting focused and on occasions have involved primary and special education working and researching together.

However, the key thing is to demonstrate what will be different and better for the children at the end of the project. Your application must be about the difference your research will make to children's lives and the evidence you will gather to demonstrate this impact.



Questions to Consider and Criteria for Selection

Are you part of a group of schools with ideas that will make a difference for children and communities?

If so, The Laurel Trust is really interested in working with you and supporting you to explore innovative approaches to raising children’s aspirations and achievements, changing their lives and life-chances.

Metrics that matter to The Laurel Trust:

- Research that will ask and answer, ‘how well?’ and ‘what difference?’
- Ideas and innovations that promote equity, inclusion and diversity, contribute to system networking and leadership, and that build sustainable and impactful capacity and capability.

Themes this year that really resonate for us are:

- mental health and well-being
- approaches to teaching and learning that foster collaboration, creativity and academic and emotional resilience.
- building sustainable relationships with parents/carers and their communities to support children’s learning and well-being
- a renewed focus on positive approaches to behaviour
- innovative ideas from collaborations that will support children to thrive post-Covid-19.

Additional notes of things we would like you to take into account are:

- one school is a lead school, a school able to take responsibility for the leadership and management of the project, including signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Trust;
- the lead school is judged to be ‘good’ or better by Ofsted;
- your partners including other schools support your application;
- the ethical principles set out in the latest edition of the BERA Guidelines - www.bera.ac.uk;
- the innovation will make a difference for children living, learning and growing up in communities of multiple deprivation and challenge;
- you and your research collaboration need to match fund The Laurel Trust grant. You can do this through match funding people, time, expertise and resources;
- your project has a clear outcome, realistic timeline and shows how it will make sustainable impact;
- the importance of external evaluation - we will need a report from an independent external evaluator at the end of your project, someone with no prior links to your project. The cost of this may be included in your bid application.

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU:

Whilst we always have an inclusive approach and welcome applications from all collaborations of schools from all areas, we are particularly interested in hearing from you if you serve and support communities in the following areas:

Sunderland and Kirklees

The North West

West Midlands

Humberside (Hull, and North/North East Lincolnshire)

London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney, and Newham and Barking and Dagenham

The coastal areas of Essex

Thanet

Torbay

We will work in partnership with you throughout the project to support, challenge and promote your learning and disseminate your findings.



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The Laurel Trust Grants

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We will fund

- Planning, monitoring and evaluation meetings
- Supply Cover/backfill for the release of project staff from classroom teaching
- Supply Cover for SENCOs
- Additional hours by admin staff (necessary to support the research)
- Staff training and development related to the research and its sustainability
- Purchase of necessary materials/resources that have been approved by The Laurel Trust before the start of the research project
- Network meetings
- Travel between partner schools
- Hire of Venues if necessary
- Development of resources
- Data collection and collation
- Monitoring and evaluation costs
- Report writing
- External Evaluation and Report to a maximum of £2500
- Website development related to the research and dissemination (but not core costs of set up and maintenance)
- Dissemination activities and events
- Consultancy costs if an integral part of the research project. For example: NHS and/or Specialist Leaders in Education (SLEs) support costs agreed by the Trust
- Parental meetings that relate to the research
- Necessary mileage related to the research project (for example travel between partner schools) is paid at 45p per mile
- Other individual needs by agreement with The Laurel Trust

We will not fund

- Staff salaries
- Headteacher salaries or supply cover
- Payments to Local Authority Officers or Personnel
- Expenditure which would be a normal part of school spending
- Capital expenditure on land, buildings, grounds, refurbishment of rooms, or fixed assets
- Resources* (unless agreed by the Trustees before the research)

*The Trust has funded small amounts of necessary curriculum resources (for example: books, small equipment) but these must be agreed by the Trustees as part of the funding. Resources can, of course, be part of your matched funding.





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Autumn Recruitment | Timeline 2021-2023

Cohort 5



There will be termly visits by the Trustees and Consultant Director