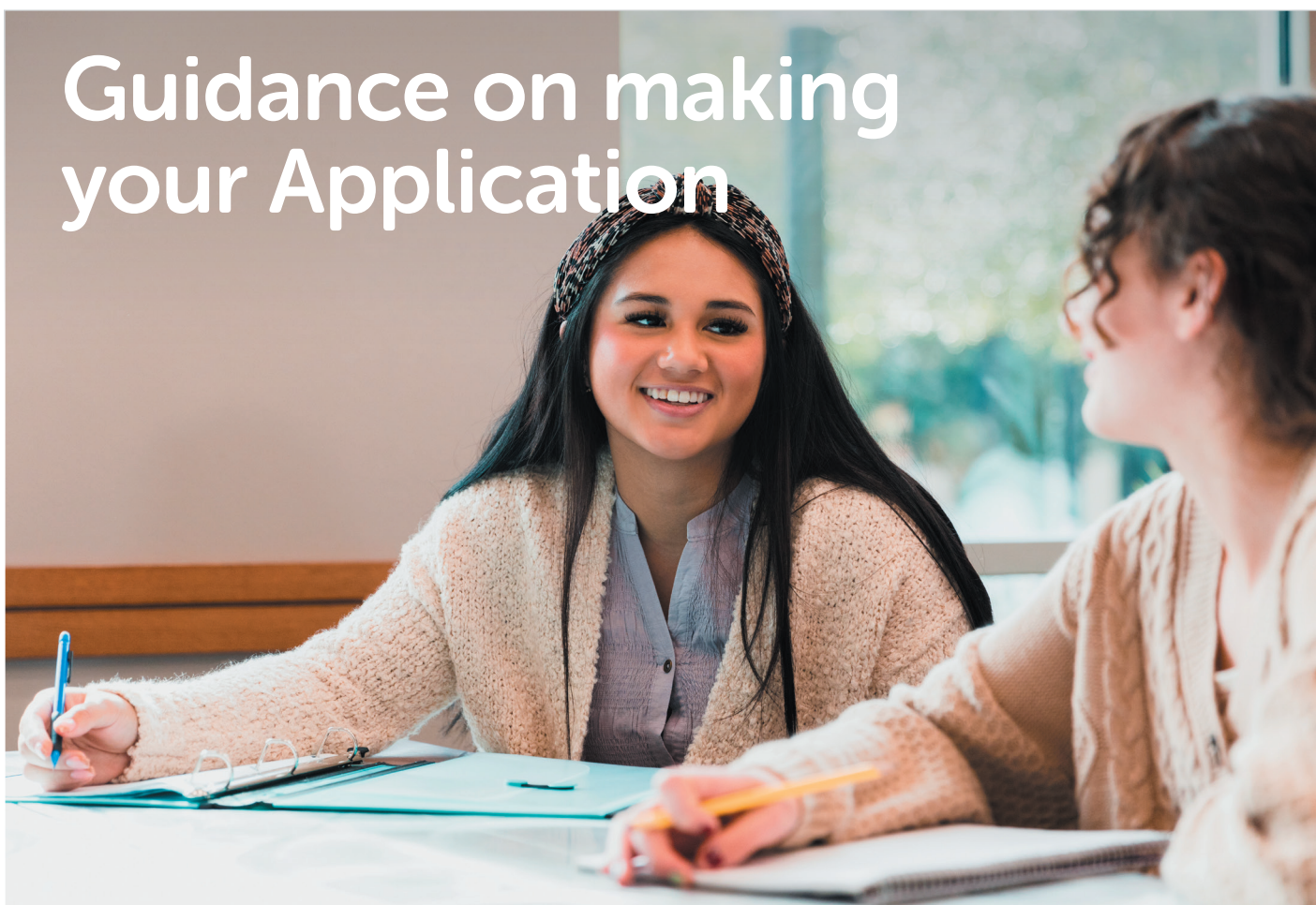




Leading Learning through
Action-led Research and Innovation

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 all phases schools and early years and special 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.

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 regularly have articles written by our schools and settings published in educational journals and magazines.





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

Your application for funding

The Trustees invite applications from groups and networks of schools in all phases and from special schools and early years' settings in areas of deprivation for funding linked to school improvement. For the years 2023-2025 the Trustees are particularly interested in creative and sustainable projects that will make a difference to the learning and achievement of children and young people now and in the future. 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 and post-covid 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 creative ideas that will make a difference for children, their families and communities?

If so, The Laurel Trust is interested in working with you and supporting you to explore innovative approaches to raising children's aspirations and achievements, and 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, most importantly, build sustainable and impactful capacity and capability.

The theme for this year is Championing Children's Learning: making a difference

- approaches to teaching and learning that foster collaboration, creativity and academic and emotional resilience
- mental health and well-being
- building sustainable relationships with parents/carers, their families and 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 and achieve.

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

- one of the schools takes the role of the Lead School and is able to take responsibility for the leadership and management of the project including signing The Laurel Trust School Agreement
- the Lead School is judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted
- your partners include other schools/ organisations that support your application and will be involved
- the ethical principles set out in the latest edition of the BERA guidelines www.bera.ac.uk. You should consider the ethical issues raised by your proposed research and how you would address these
- the research/innovation should make a difference to children living, learning and growing up in communities of multiple disadvantage
- you and your research partners will need to make a contribution to the overall cost of the research. This is likely to be in terms of people, time, expertise and resources
- your project should have a clear outcome and show how it will make a sustainable longer term impact
- on completion an external evaluation will be needed from an independent external evaluator with no prior links to your project. The cost of the evaluation should be included in your application for funding; a maximum of £2,500 is allowed.

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU...

Whilst we always have an inclusive approach and the invitation to apply for grant-funding is open to all schools in England, we are particularly interested in hearing from you if you support and serve communities in the following areas:

The North-West

Yorkshire and Humber

East Anglia

South-West

We will work in partnership with you throughout your research project to support, challenge and promote your learning and to disseminate your findings to reach and engage the other schools. In this way your research will contribute to the school-led system and have the widest possible benefits.



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The Laurel Trust Grants

Autumn 2023-2025 | Cohort 6

We will fund

- Planning, monitoring and evaluation meetings
- Supply Cover/backfill for the release of project staff from classroom teaching
- 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 only 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 do 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.



Recruitment Timeline 2023

17 March 2023

Recruitment and advertising campaign begins. Website goes live with the application form, guidance for applying and Approved Expenditure List with closing date for applications approximately 6 weeks later.

25/27/28 April 2023

Regional briefings.

16 June 2023

Closing date for applications.

26 June 2023

Trustees' selection day for applications received.



3 - 6 July 2023

Potentially successful Lead Schools invited for individual Zoom clarification meeting and Zoom meetings take place to determine final selection of provisional offers.



10 July 2023

Trustees' meeting.

From 12 July 2023

Schools informed of the results of their application.

30 September 2023

All required documentation received from Lead Schools.

November 2023

Initial school visits by Trustees and Consultant Director take place.