

A world of ADVENTURE

Nikki Ball reflects on how organising ambitious school trips to far-off countries isn't easy, but can transform students' perspectives, behaviours and prospects

Let's be honest, few things beat that moment when you watch as a student steps off a plane (or even a minibus) and realises the world is much bigger, stranger and more wonderful than they ever imagined.

Whether it's a month living within Costa Rican communities, or 10 days spent on a beach in Greece helping to conserve turtles, these are the moments that remind us why school trips matter. Because when you strip away the WiFi, timetables and TikTok, something special happens – young people reconnect with the real world, with people, with nature, and with themselves.

They're suddenly aware that not everyone lives as they do, and the gratitude that grows from that understanding is powerful. Such trips don't just enrich learning; they build empathy, independence and resilience in ways that are lasting, long after the suitcases are unpacked once they're back home.

Extraordinary ambitions

These kinds of trips enable staff to witness students flourish in ways they'd never see inside a classroom. Our school's visit to Greece was what I'd call a more 'traditional' school trip, albeit with a twist. Our Eco Club – a student leadership group passionate about sustainability – wanted to broaden their horizons and make a genuine difference.

From the very start, these students were heavily involved in shaping what the experience would look like.

Over a series of lunchtime meetings, they threw around ideas for potential destinations and causes, while staff began researching how to make it all happen. That research – a mix of late-night internet searches, chats on teacher social media groups, and word-of-mouth recommendations – eventually led us to a travel company with outstanding reviews, all of which we were able to verify through independent checks.

The students wanted to build on a project the club had run in Wales the previous year, though their ambitions quickly grew into something extraordinary – a 10-day turtle conservation expedition in Greece. The prospect of 4am starts and camping on a beach didn't faze them for a moment. Their enthusiasm was contagious.



“Education isn't only about grades or targets – it's about growing as global citizens”



Learning, connection and purpose

So it was that in July 2025, 28 members of the Eco Club set off for Kefalonia, to spend eight days living and working on the island's beaches before finishing with two days of culture and history in Athens. Their days were filled with hands-on conservation activities – monitoring turtle nests, recording turtle populations, and carrying out snorkel and drone surveys to measure seagrass health in the bay.

They also ran a number of public education activities, took part in harbour surveys, attended sustainability and careers workshops and joined litter audits in support of local eco-initiatives.

It turned out to be a packed and purposeful 10 days. The