

Learning outside the classroom



"Every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability and circumstances."

Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto November 2006

What are the benefits of learning outside the classroom?

Young people of all ages benefit from real life 'hands on' experiences; when they can see, hear, touch and explore the world around them and have opportunities to experience challenge and adventure. They need to find out how what they learn at school relates to their life outside it and to the world around them. **The classroom environment doesn't always provide young people with enough of these opportunities.**

Learning outside the classroom aims to get children and young people out and about. These experiences can take place in the school grounds, in the local environment or further afield on day visits or residential stays, but they all help motivate young people, reducing poor behaviour and truancy, while helping schools to raise attainment and meet Every Child Matters outcomes. Read about how some schools are already integrating learning outside the classroom into their curriculum.



Photo: Low Bank Ground Team

ABLE Project

Wakefield's ABLE project uses learning outside the classroom to improve the lives of young people at risk of exclusion from mainstream education. The project transformed a 34 acre landfill site into a sustainable development project with a working fish farm, tree nursery and agricultural areas. The scheme gives young people the chance to develop practical and social skills, enabling them to participate more fully and take up local employment opportunities.

"All children have a natural enthusiasm for learning about the world around them. But we also know they can become disengaged if their school day is rigid, routine and boring. If we listen to what children and young people say inspires them most, we can be left in little doubt that good quality learning outside the classroom should be part of our educational mainstream."

Sir Al Aynsley-Green
Children's Commissioner for England



Photo: Learning through Landscapes

Ethelred Nursery School

Based in central London, Ethelred Nursery had no green space for children to enjoy quality outdoor play and learning. As a result nursery staff established an outdoor classroom on the only space available – a flat roof. Parents painted murals on the walls, local businesses funded some covered space for wet weather play, and a local community artist created mosaics with the children. The nursery has a quiet garden area where children grow herbs and fruits which they are encouraged to smell and taste. The area allows children to experience challenge in a safe outdoor environment.

The 'Out & About' package will break down many of the barriers to learning outside the classroom and should help schools to build these vital experiences into the school day and beyond.

Consisting of web-based advice and practical guidance, 'Out & About' has been developed to provide schools with the tools to plan, implement and evaluate high quality learning outside the classroom experiences. It also provides downloadable CPD modules to support the whole school workforce in the delivery of these experiences.

Developed for Learning Outside the Classroom providers, the new Quality Badge will help schools identify organisations and venues offering high quality teaching and learning experiences and managing risk effectively.

For more information and to download the resources visit **www.lotc.org.uk**



"The perception of the classroom as the only space for learning needs to be challenged and NASUWT is excited to see there is such a positive direction of travel on this agenda as part of the Children's Plan. Learning outside the classroom can make a significant contribution to the development of children and young people. When it is well organised and responsive, pupils become more engaged and enthusiastic learners, giving teachers another resource to help bring the curriculum to life."

Chris Keates, General Secretary of NASUWT



MAGPIE Project

Manchester's MAGPIE project helps and encourages primary schools to use museums and galleries as learning resources. Now involving 104 of the 130 primary schools in Manchester and five city museums and galleries, the scheme has wide ranging programmes of activity that help raise pupils' attainment. The programme uses artefacts and art pieces to support the teaching and learning of literacy and enhance all curriculum areas. The project is being independently evaluated by Warwick University, with research showing participating children displayed progress in literacy attainment 30% greater than the national average.



Photo: Low Bank Ground Team

Macmillan Academy

Macmillan Academy in Middlesbrough is at the forefront of using learning outside the classroom to inspire every student to succeed. Ranking inside the top 100 state schools, the Academy has a unique specialism in outdoor learning and consistently out-performs other schools in the area. Macmillan pursues an experiential approach that is practical, dynamic and exciting. The experiences are challenging and powerful learning opportunities. Their ethos emphasises enterprise skills such as collaboration, problem solving, decision-making, and self-assessment, with these skills successfully transferring into the classroom.

The implementation of the Manifesto's vision is a long-term project:

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| January 2005 | Education and Skills Select Committee recommends development of LOTC Manifesto |
| February 2005 | Manifesto announced by the Prime Minister |
| July 2005 | 100 organisations attend workshop to develop Manifesto's vision and aims |
| November 2006 | Manifesto launched by Secretary of State after public consultation |
| April 2007 | First meeting of National Advisory Group (NAG) |
| July 2007 | Growing Schools/LOtC Garden wins 'best in show' at Hampton Court Flower Show |
| October 2007 | Work begins on 'Out & About' guidance and quality badge |
| April 2008 | 1,000th signatory to the Manifesto |
| June 2008 | First Awards launched |
| October 2008 | First National Conference; 'Out & About' Package and Quality Badge launched |
| January 2009 | First Quality Badges awarded |
| April 2009 | Council for Learning Outside the Classroom takes over responsibility for Manifesto |

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