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Ofsted Inspection

Also see document 3.4p 'Ofsted Inspector – Towards inspection of teaching and Learning Outside'.

The 2008 Ofsted report into Learning Outside, 'How far should we go' recognised the benefits of Learning Outside and identified some aspects for further development. It reported on education that takes place in the school grounds and local area, extending to residential experience, and included activity across the Key Stages during the school day, out of school hours and during school holidays. It found that:

All of the schools and colleges surveyed provided exciting, direct and relevant learning activities outside the classroom. Such hands-on activities led to improved outcomes for pupils and students, including better achievement, standards, motivation, personal development and behaviour. The survey also found examples of the positive effects of learning outside the classroom on young people who were hard to motivate.

And

Learning outside was most successful when it was an integral element of long-term curriculum planning and closely linked to classroom activities.

Further specific examples of good practice can be found in: documents 4.6 a-g and document 2.4c 'Research supporting Outdoor Learning'

Self-Evaluation

Schools are expected to effectively self-evaluate. In its *Clarification for Schools* section, Ofsted explains that self-evaluation is intended to help schools to assess how well they are doing against the core areas set out in legislation. They do not want schools preparing things that are solely for inspection purposes. The process of self-evaluation offers an opportunity to consider Learning Outside within teaching and learning and the difference that it makes to personal and social development, well-being, school improvement and overall effectiveness.

The following are examples of questions that may help you to consider and assess the contribution of curricular and extra-curricular Learning Outside:

- In the school's website, where the distinctive breadth and balance of the school's education and its values are described (commonly under ethos) -

- how well are the benefits to pupils of teaching and Learning Outside explained?
- Does Learning Outside feature in the school's improvement plan and strategic planning?
 - How well is Learning Outside integrated within a whole school approach to learning?
 - Are there examples of work that show pupils' improvement through teaching and Learning Outside?
 - Do pupils feel able to talk about their engagement in the learning?
 - Are they curious, interested learners?
 - Do they love the challenge of Learning Outside?
 - Which groups of pupils and individuals have raised their achievement through teaching and Learning Outside?
 - In what ways can this be evidenced?
 - Is participation in Learning Outside inclusive?
 - Is information about outcomes for pupils entitled to Pupil Premium accessible?
 - In what ways are the experiences of pupils and the views of parents about Learning Outside explored in consultations and surveys?
 - Are the findings readily available?
 - What examples can you show of observations and evaluation of the quality of teaching and Learning Outside?
 - Is there an audit of the Learning Outside resources in the area local to the school?
 - How well is the audit developed, shared and used?
 - What examples are there of where pupils' experiences of Learning Outside have made a positive difference to behaviour and attitudes?
 - Has this also made a difference to trends of improvement?
 - In what ways?
 - Has Learning Outside contributed towards pupils' moral, social and cultural development and their physical well-being, enabling them to thrive?
 - In what ways?
 - What examples are there of where pupils have developed mutual respect and tolerance?
 - What evidence is there that planning follows good practice and approval complies with the employer's requirements?
 - In what ways are pupils involved in decisions about risk and their safety so that they learn how to look after themselves and others?

Some helpful background and resources

The 'Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto' launched in 2006 gave prominence to Learning Outside. Other documents, including 'Time for change', 'Raising achievement through the environment' and 'Learning Away' further support those benefits. You can find these documents (2.4e – 2.4g) in this guidance.

The Learning Outside the Classroom Mark is an accreditation scheme for schools that recognises and supports the development of learning outside the classroom across all subject areas (<http://www.lotc.org.uk/lotc-accreditations/lotc-mark/>).

The English Outdoor Council publication 'High Quality Outdoor Learning' outlines the benefits of working in outdoor contexts and has been written to help evaluate, and set about improving, or further improving, the quality of Outdoor Learning. In support of this, it identifies ten key outcomes of Outdoor Learning, with a range of indicators attributed to each one. It is document 2.4i in this guidance.

A booklet to help schools in the process of embedding outdoor learning in their regular practice has also been published (<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/oelres-net/transforming>). This is available in electronic form or hard copies can be requested by emailing oelresnet@plymouth.ac.uk.

