

Education, Children and Families

10am, Tuesday, 1 March 2016

Outdoor Centres and Outdoor Learning

Item number	7.9
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform Elected Members about both recent and newly proposed developments at the Outdoor Centres (in particular an enhanced commercial approach) and to set this in the context of an updated Outdoor Learning Strategy.

Links

Coalition pledges	P42
Council priorities	CO2, CO4
Single Outcome Agreement	SO2, SO3

Outdoor Centres and Outdoor Learning

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Note the progress regarding recent and proposed developments at our Outdoor Centres (in particular an enhanced commercial approach to facilitate future investment in the Centres).
- 1.2 Support the expectation that Primary Schools in Edinburgh choose Benmore or Lagganlia as their first choice of a fully serviced Residential Outdoor Learning week providing there is available space during the peak period of mid February through to mid November.
- 1.3 Approve the updated Outdoor Learning Strategy for the period 2016-2020.
- 1.4 Agree to receive a further report in September 2017 following the completion of an organisational review and the performance of the Outdoor Centres in the next full financial and academic year.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Sports and Outdoor Learning Unit operates two residential Outdoor Learning Centres. Benmore Outdoor Learning Centre in Benmore Botanic Gardens, Nr Dunoon and Lagganlia Outdoor Learning Centre in Glen Feshie, Nr Aviemore. These unique locations provide outstanding opportunities for pupils to experience outdoor learning within Scotland's two National Parks. Bangholm Outdoor Learning Centre is a non-residential centres based on Craighall Avenue in North Edinburgh (adjacent to Trinity High School). Bangholm focuses on technical advice, achievement awards (Duke of Edinburgh's Award, John Muir Award, JASS), training, specialised courses and provision of adventurous activity equipment.
- 2.2 The Residential Outdoor Learning Centres have been self funding since 2007. In the last financial year they generated between the two Centres a turnover in excess of 1.5 million that covered all salary, premises and supplies and services costs. A small self catering business providing lodge accommodation at weekends and holidays has been developed at Lagganlia Outdoor Learning Centre to support core educational delivery.
- 2.3 In the academic year 2013-14, 49 Edinburgh Primary Schools went to either Lagganlia or Benmore. However, a further 26 Edinburgh Primary Schools chose

to go elsewhere to an external provider. This resulted in a total estimated 'leakage' of funds in excess of £326K.

- 2.4 In 2014 a new management structure was introduced with a single Head Teacher and Principal Teacher managing the Residential Centres, the city based team and the Outdoor Learning Strategy as Edinburgh Outdoor Learning. This brought together a previously separate management, staffing, business support and financial structure.
- 2.5 Recent high level structural surveys have noted long term capital investments are required to both Residential Outdoor Centres buildings to ensure their long term sustainability.
- 2.6 On 21st June 2011 the Education, Children and Families Committee approved the Outdoor Learning Strategy for the period 2012 - 2015.
- 2.7 Outdoor learning is a dynamic and engaging context for the delivery of A Curriculum for Excellence. Education Scotland (Curriculum for Excellent Through Outdoor Learning 2010) , The Scottish Government (Learning for Sustainability Report 2013) and the General Teaching Council of Scotland (Standards for Registration and Standards for Career Long Professional Learning 2014) have all affirmed that regular and progressive outdoor learning is an entitlement for every pupil and should be used by teaching staff as an educational approach.

3. Main report

- 3.1 In line with the transformational change process an organisational review is currently taking place within the Residential Outdoor Learning Centres to further enhance and develop the delivery of Outdoor Learning. Key aspects include the alignment of management, instructions and business support functions to support the growth of both core educational and commercial business.
- 3.2 In partnership with Ernst and Young (EY) and their corporate social responsibility programme, the Outdoor Learning staff worked together to outline a commercial strategy to maximise the potential of the self catering business at both Lagganlia and Benmore. The pending organisational review aims to ensure staff are put in place to develop this and provide key income streams to support educational development and a capital investment plan for the buildings and infrastructure (see Appendix 1 for summary of the EY findings). A provision to carry forward any budget surplus generated in a financial year is required to ensure future investment in the centres can be facilitated.
- 3.3 The financial year is not yet complete but it is expected that over 7,000 pupils will have attended either Benmore or Lagganlia during 2015-2016. The Outdoor Centres are well supported by schools in Edinburgh. In the academic year 2014-15, 46 Primary Schools, 8 Secondary Schools and 2 Special Schools

participated in fully serviced residential weeks. However, some Primary Schools choose to go elsewhere. In academic year 2013-14 twenty six primary Schools used other providers creating a total 'leakage' of business of approximately £326K. In 2014-15 this 'leakage' figure was £388K. The annual estimated profit/surplus on this business is around £40K. It is therefore recommended that every Primary School is expected to choose Benmore or Lagganlia as their first choice of a fully serviced Residential Outdoor Learning week providing there is available space during the peak period of mid February through to mid November.

- 3.4 There is an additional 'leakage' (in excess of £36K in 2013-14 and £40K in 2014-15) in relation to our Special Schools using other Residential providers. Both of our Outdoor Centres are very capable of providing inspiring experiences for pupils with additional support needs (see case study example in Appendix 2). In order to make this happen we require specialised adaptive equipment that assist full participation in climbing, paddle sports and other adventure activities. It is hoped that an enhanced commercial approach can raise sufficient funds to purchase specialist equipment and support the additional costs of staff support and carers.
- 3.5 The annual leakage on Secondary Schools is £366K. Some Secondary Schools can simply not be accommodated (for example a full first year intake at a school like Royal High is over two hundred pupils and that exceeds the current capacity of the Centres). There also tends to be an additional focus on international trips. In the short term we are concentrating on reviving the fieldwork studies use of the Centres which was a significant focus back in the nineteen seventies and eighties. With this in mind new funding was secured to develop this in Secondary Schools (see point 3.9).
- 3.6 New residential courses in secondary school fieldwork, Duke of Edinburgh Award and Snow sports have been developed and implemented. Lagganlia was initially located to take advantage of the three ski slopes in the area and the opportunities for snow sports this provide the children and young people of Edinburgh. The use of Lagganlia for snow sports had declined due to overseas excursions, reduction in Scottish snow seasons and a reduction in qualified staff. Following investment in staff training, equipment and a new artificial slope, Lagganlia is now primed to benefit from the renewal of skiing in the Cairngorm area. Lagganlia Snow sports School has been developed and launched to provide both educational and commercial courses, with the guarantee of the artificial slope and or other adventurous activity provision if the weather makes snow sports unsuitable.
- 3.7 To meet the challenge of regular progressive Outdoor Learning for all pupils and through consultation and collaborative working with key partners an Outdoor Learning Strategy has been created for the period 2016 – 2020. Supporting the vision of regular, planned and quality Outdoor Learning experiences for all pupils the strategy is designed with four key development areas - In school, wider

participation, accessible to all and recognising wider achievement and attainment (see Appendix 3 for a copy of the proposed Outdoor Learning Strategy 2016 - 2020).

- 3.8 In 2015 the Outdoor Learning team worked to develop several key areas. Forty teaching colleagues completed a year-long professional development course in outdoor learning and received professional recognition from the General Teaching Council of Scotland. Numerous other CPD courses were delivered to support excursions, curricular development of outdoor learning and accredited achievement awards. This included organising in partnership with the International Unit and Parks and Greenspaces, a conference for 150 Edinburgh teaching colleagues at Napier University.
- 3.9 Grant funding (£38K) was gained from The Forestry Commission to employ an Outdoor Learning Development Officer, developing outdoor learning in secondary schools, with a focus on SQA qualifications and fieldwork. Two city based higher courses have been developed and piloted. Two residential pilot courses for pupils and two teacher development weekends are planned at Benmore and Lagganlia.
- 3.10 Growth continued in completion rates for both the Duke of Edinburgh and John Muir Award, including pioneering work with minority faith communities. A digital platform for Junior Award Scheme for Schools has also been developed in partnership with Friends of the Award Edinburgh. The Duke of Edinburgh celebrates its 60th Anniversary in 2016. To mark the significant presence and impact of the award in Edinburgh over the past 60 years, a celebration event is being held for volunteer award leaders at the City Chamber.
- 3.11 Staff members represented the council on key development groups working in partnership with other local authorities, including the representation of all local authorities on the Scottish Government/Education Scotland Learning for Sustainability working group and the development of a new mountain biking accreditation programme.
- 3.12 The development of skills for work through the student instructor scheme at the Residential Outdoor Learning Centres and the Modern Apprenticeship for Outdoor Learning in the city. The Modern Apprentice for Outdoor Learning, Cameron Wood received, 'The Modern Apprentice of the Year' Award through Pride in our People.
- 3.13 The continued development of key partnerships for the delivery of Outdoor Learning. This includes an All Ability Cycle Club was established in partnership with Cycling Scotland, at Bangholm, providing opportunities for people with additional needs to use a variety of adapted bikes. We have strengthened our relationship with Friends of the Award Edinburgh and The Green Team through new strategic partnership agreements. Friends of Lagganlia continue to support young people in financial difficulty to attend residential experiences at Lagganlia with their peers. We are now working to establish Friends of Benmore charity in

time for the 50th Anniversary of the opening of Benmore Outdoor Learning Centres in the autumn of 2016.

- 3.14 Support, advice and approval of over 700 excursions undertaken by schools and community groups including 71 international experiences. Support to the Polar Academy project in taking 10 pupils from 5 Edinburgh high schools on a polar expedition in Easter 2015, including a training week at Lagganlia Outdoor Learning Centre. The delivery of the first annual Convenors Challenge, an adventure race for secondary school pupils, highlighting the opportunities for Outdoor Learning in Edinburgh.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 We can demonstrate quantitative data and we can also demonstrate qualitative impact through other indices - leadership, personal achievement, teamwork and confidence. We can also provide personal testimonials that demonstrate the positive and powerful benefits of a residential experience (see Appendix 2).

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 The Outdoor Centres are already an impressive example of transformational change and this was recognised by EY. The Centres are currently self funding and it is now envisaged that an enhanced commercial strategy can further assist in bringing in new income to support building investment and the acquisition of new equipment to enhance the quality of the experiences particularly for children and young people with additional support needs. A provision to carry forward any budget surplus generated in a financial year is required, this will ensure future investment in the centres can be facilitated.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The approach and recommendations in this report assist and are complementary to the current Outdoor Learning Strategy within Children and Families. There is no health and safety, compliance or regulatory implications arising from the report.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 A significant number of developments at the Outdoor Centres are specifically targeted at addressing inequality particularly new developments relating to disability sport (see case study example in Appendix 2).

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no adverse economic, social or environmental impacts resulting from these areas of activity.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 The approach to consultation and engagement in ongoing with schools, self catering customers and our key partners.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 Learning Away (Brilliant residentials and their impact on children, young people and schools): Paul Hamlyn Foundation (see appendix 4)

Alistair Gaw

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11. Links

Coalition pledges	P42 - Continue to support and invest in our sporting infrastructure
Council priorities	CO2 - Our children and young people are successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens making a positive contribution to their communities CO4 - Our children and young people are physically and emotionally healthy
Single Outcome Agreement	SO2 - Edinburgh's citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health SO3 - Edinburgh's children and young people enjoy their childhood and fulfil their potential
Appendices	1 - Strategy Findings Ernst & Young (EY) 2 - Additional Support Needs 3 - Outdoor Learning Strategy 2016 -2020 4 - Learning Away (Brilliant residentials and their impact on children, young people and schools): Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Strategy Day Findings

Outdoor Learning

- ▶ High quality experience
- ▶ Nationally recognised as leading provider
- ▶ Good occupancy rates during term weeks
- ▶ Strong customer satisfaction and repeat bookings

Training Educators

- ▶ Informing approach to Curriculum for Excellence
- ▶ Opportunity to support further integration of outdoor learning into curriculum across Scotland
- ▶ Significant support provided to CEC, at no cost

Accommodation and Facilities

- ▶ Lower utilisation outwith term weeks and at weekends
- ▶ Need for rolling capital plan, including facilities and equipment
- ▶ Opportunities for new revenue streams from existing infrastructure.

Emerging Vision

Delivering world class outdoor learning and supporting educators to embed outdoor learning in the curriculum



Our Priorities

- ▶ *Deliver high quality learning outcomes and experiences*
- ▶ *Develop confidence, resilience, team work and life skills*
- ▶ *Enable access for all, irrespective of ability to pay*
- ▶ *Sustain the legacy of Edinburgh Outdoor Learning*

Looking Forward

Key Challenges

- ▶ Expectation of contribution from EOL to support Council's financial pressures
- ▶ Need for prioritised investment to sustain quality of outdoor learning
- ▶ Need to support and develop current team to address future challenges

Potential Opportunities

- ▶ Maximise occupancy during core outdoor learning weeks
- ▶ Identify new revenue streams from existing assets e.g. ski slope
- ▶ Treat weekend and out-of term income as a separate commercial entity
- ▶ Enhance income from educator training and support

Key Activities

Project	Description
Financial Model	Develop a more comprehensive financial model and pricing strategy to manage and prioritise occupancy, operations and capital activities.
Non-core options appraisal	Consider different delivery models and market offers for weekends and out-of-term income generation.
Asset review	Establish comprehensive asset register and consider revenue opportunities and potential disposals
Capital Plan	Identify and prioritise investment requirements, with a focus on future revenue and quality of outdoor learning
Education Consultancy	Appraise options to enhance the revenue from current and enhanced training and materials to support educators.
Operating Model	Design the necessary staffing structure to support the delivery of future services.
External Support	Identify grants, benefactors and community benefit clauses to support core activities.

Appendix 2: Additional Support Needs

This is a thank you letter to Nick March, our Senior Instructor at Lagganlia from a parent of a pupil at Craigentenny Primary School who has spina bifida. It illustrates our ability to transform the lives of children with additional support needs. Undoubtedly, the staff at both Outdoor Centres have the skills, experience, patience and commitment to deliver these opportunities.

However, on this occasion we had to borrow the adaptive equipment from an external agency. By chance and by personal persuasion of the Senior Instructor it was available. Our view is that we need to invest in this equipment.



Beau Rendall starting his ascent.

Hi Nick,

I just wanted to say a huge thank you from Beau and myself for making a little boy very happy. That is probably the biggest understatement imaginable as you didn't just make him happy, you have changed his life forever.

No longer does Beau feel that he "cannot". He now knows that he very much "can".

We never thought Beau would ever come to "camp" with the rest of his classmates. Even after it had all been arranged and we knew he was actually coming, we still thought he would be very much coming along in an attempt to be inclusive, but with the very real risk of making him feel even more ostracised. I was prepared to keep him entertained while the others went off to activities which he could not accompany them on, never mind actually participate in. I was ready for the crushing disappointment when he was told he could not take part or when we found there was no way to get him to an activity. The very real possibility that he would not be able to actually join in with any of the activities, but at least he would have come to camp with his classmates .

What I was not prepared for were the enormous possibilities which have just opened up for Beau. I still cannot quite believe that he has now climbed a tree. Not just a tree, but a bl**** big tree! Not only that, but he has canoed....on his own! Not with someone else paddling or holding him up, but entirely on his own. He has not just competed, but actually come fourth in an archery competition with his peers. Not other disabled children, but able bodied children.

I could never have imagined that coming to camp could be like this for a child like Beau. I have never heard of such remarkable inclusion. I know many parents of disabled children and I feared Beau would be added to their tales of exclusion, rejection, humiliation, dejection, isolation, disappointment and dismay.

I could not have been more wrong or more delighted. I am not exaggerating when I say this will change Beau's life. Until now Beau has very much felt that he cannot do just about everything that his peers, his siblings and everyone

else can. A gateway has now opened for Beau through which he can see endless possibilities. For if he can climb a tree and paddle a canoe, then what else can he do?

I know this has only been made possible by your determination, imagination and passion for inclusion - that and the incredible generosity of your friend whose equipment you borrowed (and who I hope I get the chance to meet in order to thank him too.) I also know the kind of difference you can make to many other children like Beau's lives if you had this kind of equipment permanently.

If there is anything I can do to help you achieve that goal, then please let me know. I would love to help. Thank you for all you have done for Beau. We are forever in your debt.

I wanted to add a huge thank you to all your fantastic staff. They have been amazing - especially Jude and TJ. And also a huge thank you to Andy for the use of his incredible boat. Thank you everyone.

Kind regards

Tracy Rendall

Footnote: Since returning to Edinburgh Beau Rendall has won a para climbing competition at EICA Ratho

Outdoor Learning Strategy 2016 – 2020

DRAFT – 27/01/2016



1. Vision

‘The journey through education for any child in Edinburgh must include a series of regular, planned, quality Outdoor Learning experiences’

2. Rational

Education Scotland¹, The Scottish Government² and the General Teaching Council of Scotland³ have identified Outdoor Learning as an essential element of a young person’s development and as an entitlement of Curriculum for Excellence and Learning for Sustainability. Outdoor Learning is a dynamic and engaging context for the delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence and for learning about the natural world and provides a wealth of transferable skills directly related to the development of the four capacities.

By 2020 all City of Edinburgh Council educational establishments will have Outdoor Learning embedded throughout the curriculum. Educational establishments will see the outdoors as key environment for learning and be able to use their grounds and local green spaces effectively. Educators will be supported and trained to apply appropriate pedagogies to the outdoor environment, providing a safe and engaging context for learning. Pupils will see the outdoors as part of their classroom and be more informed about sustainable living, the natural world and being physically active in their playgrounds and beyond. City based and residential outdoor learning courses are a key element of a pupils experience and enhance school based outdoor learning.

Outdoor Learning will be accessible to all pupils and provision will be available to meet the needs of all learners and developing the potential of those pupils who excel. Pupils will also have the opportunity to engage in the outdoors in their communities, through extra-curricular provision, outdoor sports and the voluntary youth sector. Wider achievement and attainment will be supported and recognised through accredited awards delivered both in and out with school.

1 Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning – Education Scotland 2010

3. Partnership Working

The Outdoor Learning strategy is delivered through partnership working between the Sports and Outdoor Learning Unit, other council departments and key partnership with local and national organisations. These include:

Adventure Edinburgh	The Green Team
Bridge 8	The John Muir Trust
The Duke of Edinburgh Award	My Adventure
Forestry Commission	National Governing Bodies
Friends of the Award	National Park Authorities
Friends of Lagganlia	Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh

In addition the Outdoor Learning strategy is developed and delivered alongside:

- CEC Early Years Strategy
- CEC Play in partnership – A play strategy for the City of Edinburgh
- CEC Parks and Greenspaces Strategy
- CEC Sport and Physical Activity Strategy

4. Key Development Areas

To deliver the vision for Outdoor Learning, four key areas of development have been identified. These areas are:

- In School
- Wider Participation
- Accessible to all
- Recognising wider attainment and achievement

Development Area 1 - In School

Outcome: Early Years Establishments, Primary, Secondary and Special Schools are places where pupils learn outdoors on a regular basis. The educational experiences are well planned and have clear links to Curriculum for Excellence, supporting the outcomes of Learning for Sustainability. This is delivered by a well trained workforce which is confident in working outdoors in a safe and supportive environment following the CEC excursions policy. Bangholm, Benmore and Lagganlia Outdoor learning Centres are a fully integrated part of a pupils 3 – 18 progressive journey providing both city based and residential outdoor learning courses.

What?	Who?	When?
1.1 City based and residential Outdoor Learning courses are reviewed, and developed with links to CfE meeting the needs of all learners.		
1.2 Progressive pathways (3-18) are developed for Outdoor Learning including SQA Qualifications.		
1.3 The excursions policy, processes and training supports Children and Families staff in delivering safe Outdoor Learning experiences		
1.4 Buildings, equipment and resources are well managed, renewed and shared across the Sports and Outdoor Learning Unit to support the development of Outdoor Learning.		
1.5 Outdoor Learning is delivered in school grounds, in the local area and on residential and international excursions.		
1.6 Lead Teachers in Outdoor Learning are trained and supported to develop Outdoor Learning in their own schools and in partnership with cluster and neighbourhoods colleagues		
1.7 Forest Education is developed and expanded.		
1.8 A comprehensive programme of CPD and CLPL supports staff from across the city in confidently and safely delivering Outdoor Learning.		
1.9 The Sports and Outdoor Learning Unit workforce is well trained and has a clear succession plan. An integrated student programme support the development of the next generation of outdoor instructor. A volunteer programme is developed working alongside key partners.		

Development Area 2 - Wider Participation

Outcome: There are clear pathways for participation and progression both in school and the within the wider community. City based and residential extracurricular programmes provide opportunities to try new outdoor activities and sports, alongside a series of outdoor clubs delivered with active schools, community sports hubs, CLD and key partners. Through this wider engagement key outdoor sports are developed and events delivered.

What?	Who?	When?
2.1 Extracurricular programmes are delivered in the city through Bangholm and key partners.		
2.2 Residential extracurricular programmes are delivered at Benmore and Lagganlia		
2.3 Pathways for progressive and competitive engagement in the outdoors are identified, supported by Active Schools; Community Sports Hubs, CLD and the wider community. New clubs are developed to meet demand.		
2.4 An annual calendar of Primary, Secondary and special school events offer opportunities for both participation and competition		
2.5 In partnership with Active Schools, cycling is developed as a key skill for life and all pupils have the opportunity to learn and progress		
2.6 Orienteering and climbing are developed through training and support as a core part of school PE provision and has clear progression to existing and new club links.		
2.7 Snow sports, sailing and canoeing are developed at the residential outdoor centres to provide tailored term time and holiday programmes		
2.8 Key partners and the wider voluntary youth sector are engaged and supported in the delivery of community based outdoor learning		

Development Area 3 - Accessible to All

Outcome: Outdoor Learning is accessible to all children and young people both within school and in their communities. No child is excluded from core educational outdoor experiences due to lack of financial resources or additional needs. Programmes are delivered to support those from minority backgrounds and looked after and accommodated pupils. Children and young people who have a high level of ability in outdoor sport are identified, supported and have a clear progressive competitive pathways available

What?	Who?	When?
3.1 Financial support is available to support participation in outdoor learning courses through CEC and partner charities. New opportunities for charitable support are explored and developed.		
3.2 Courses, buildings and equipment is developed to provide opportunities for pupils with additional needs to fully participate in outdoor learning course alongside their peers. Staff are fully trained and confident in working with the full range of children and young people who access our service.		
3.3 Minority groups are engaged and barriers to participation in residential outdoor courses are explored. Residential and city based solutions are developed. Materials for outdoor learning course are available in variety of languages.		
3.4 Children and young people who are looked after and accommodated have equality of opportunity for outdoor engagement through excursions, city based and residential Outdoor Learning courses.		
3.5 The developing potential programme identifies children and young people who have an interest and ability in outdoor sport and provides progressive competitive pathways in climbing, cycling and orienteering.		

Development Area 4 - Recognising wider achievement and attainment

Outcome: Children and young people’s commitment, effort and successes in the outdoors are celebrated and recognised through wider achievement and attainment awards. These awards are available across a range of schools, outdoor centres and community centres. The awards have clear links to Curriculum for Excellence and enable the development leadership skills.

What?	Who?	When?
<p>4.1 The opportunity to start a Duke of Edinburgh Award is available to all young people through either a school or community based group. Along with a growth in completion levels all young people are able to progress to the next stage of the award. The outdoor centres provide support through expedition training and residential activities.</p>		
<p>4.2 The John Muir Award is widely available in both schools and community groups. Opportunities for quality conservation tasks are supported through the council, key partners and community groups. Leadership qualifications in award delivery are piloted and developed. The Award is available at our outdoor learning centres.</p>		
<p>4.3 The Junior Award Scheme for School continues to be a key partnership between FOTA and the Sports and Outdoor Learning Unit. eJASS is well established and school clusters support progression from bronze to gold level. The award programme has been reviewed to ensure relevance and accessibility.</p>		
<p>4.4 Progressive outdoor skills awards are provided as part of both Outdoor Learning courses, community and club provision.</p>		

5. Action Plans

Annual action plans will be produced, implemented, scrutinised and reviewed to show the work being progressed in each development area and the next steps required. These action plans will be delivered by the Sports and Outdoor Learning Unit in partnership with a number of other council departments, local partners and national organisations. The strategy and action plans are managed by the Outdoor Learning Strategy Group.

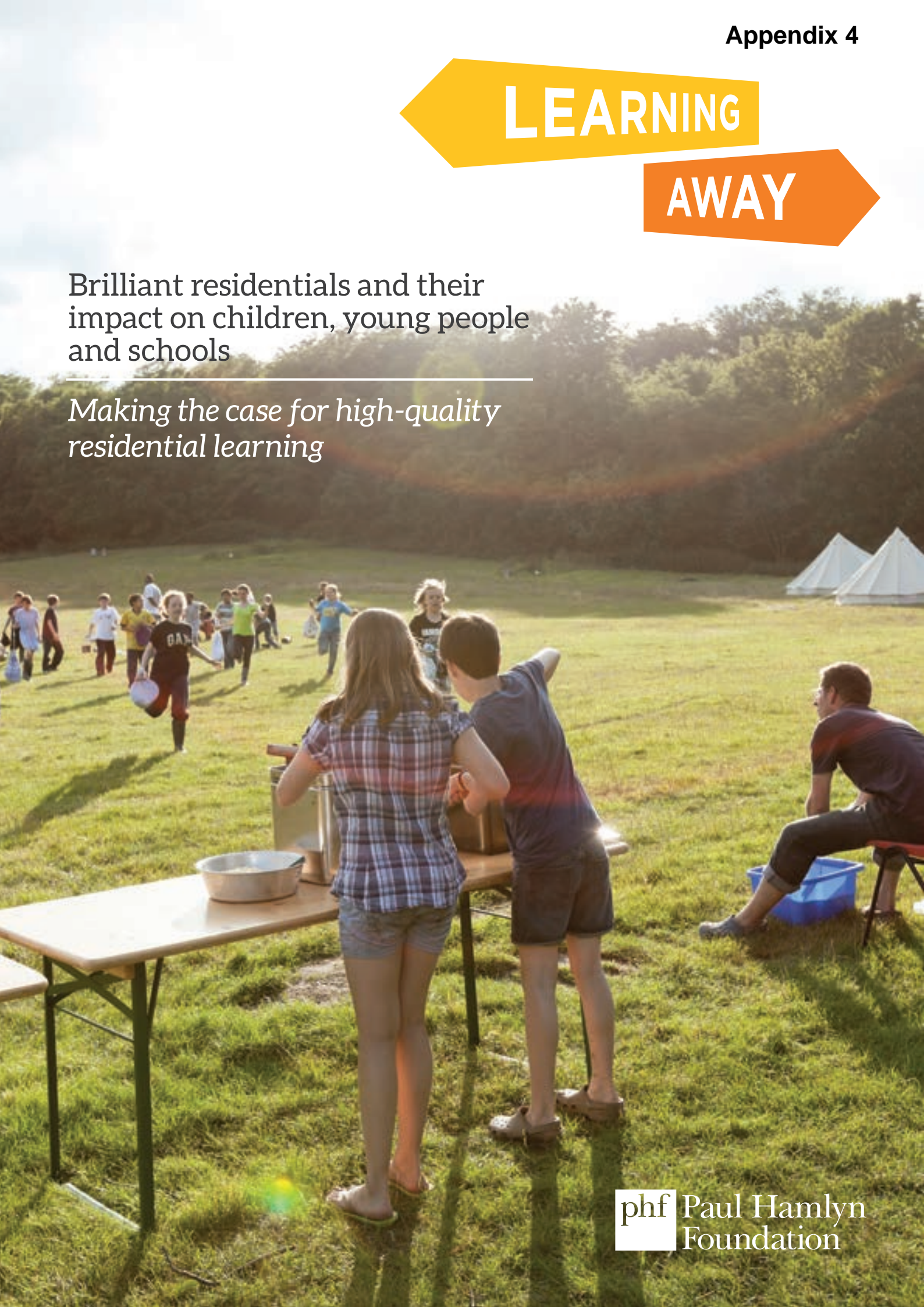


LEARNING

AWAY

Brilliant residentials and their impact on children, young people and schools

Making the case for high-quality residential learning



Contents

“Learning Away has shown that a residential learning experience provides opportunities and benefits/impacts that cannot be achieved in any other educational context or setting. The impact is greater when residential are fully integrated with a school’s curriculum and ethos.”

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Foreword

I have always argued passionately for the benefits of residential trips for all young people who attend state schools.



of learning. I call it - quite wrongly, but to make the point - ‘traumatic’ learning. Residential are examples of such high-impact events.

These two prejudices - for that is what they are - have always been confirmed for me by talking with teachers and experts who have vast experience of residential trips. I have visited more than one school when, on a Friday following a residential, teachers accompanying that week’s trip have collapsed in the staff room, agreeing that despite their exhaustion they ‘wouldn’t have missed it for the world’. Time and again they then regale the rest with stories about children whom they have seen in a new and better light. Part of the currency and ethos of such schools lies in these shared residential experiences.

The unanswered questions, however, crowd in. How do we optimise follow-up? Is there a good time of the year to go? Is it possible to combine one overt primary purpose with others; for example a field trip for history with subtexts for creative writing and practical maths skills? How do we organise the school timetable so that residential aren’t seen as disruptive? How do we get the hard evidence to persuade more headteachers to provide these experiences for all students? How do we get young teachers to make residential part of their professional DNA?

These are some of the questions that Learning Away has sought to explore. I could go on (there are many more), and I do not pretend that you will find ‘beyond doubt’ answers in what follows. But you will not finish your reading without having cause to think.

The staff who have led this programme have shone a bright light on a much neglected area of schools’ work; one which is vital in improving the chances of young people growing up to be fulfilled, and best able to contribute to the fulfilment of others.

Sir Tim Brighouse

Former London Schools Commissioner and Visiting Professor at the Institute of Education
June 2015

In the past I have even resorted to all sorts of tactics and strategies (which wouldn’t have borne close scrutiny) as from time to time I have sought to defend the very existence of residential centres in the face of public spending reviews, first in Oxfordshire and then in Birmingham when I was Education Officer in those places in the late ‘70s and early 2000s. So you can imagine my delight when the Paul Hamlyn Foundation decided to set up and give considerable funds over five years to Learning Away.

My arguments for the value of residential education have always rested more on intuition and personal observations than on data-backed research. Over their first 16 years children are in school for about 15-20% of their waking time, with the enormous balance in their homes or the community. That’s why home background and good parenting are so important - but it’s also why time spent in school matters, and why we need to make the most of it. Having a residential at once raises the time available for influencing the child to 100%, at least for the duration of the trip. Secondly I have always thought that there are events so keenly anticipated by students and so out of the ordinary that they heighten the chance

Introduction to Learning Away

Since 2009 Learning Away has been working closely with sixty primary, secondary and special schools to demonstrate the positive impact that high-quality residential learning can have on learner engagement and achievement, on peer and teacher-student relationships, and on the powerful professional development opportunities it can provide for staff.



During the initiative, our partner schools have developed and tested a huge range of new and exciting residential programmes, for example working to boost GCSE attainment, support transition, or inspire KS2 writers, with experiences ranging from camping in school grounds to a four-night stay at Hampton Court Palace. It has been a privilege to work with them, draw together their learning and support them to share it with others.

The Learning Away website now hosts over seventy good practice case studies, alongside material to help 'make the case' for residential experiences to school leaders, governors, parents and Ofsted. Writers from our partner schools have helped us to produce a series of practical resources for teachers and visit leaders, including planning information, activity ideas, downloadable templates, presentations and films. These materials are being shared and recommended by peers - via the website, locally and via social media - and their influence on schools and residential providers can already be seen.

The current phase of Learning Away ends in September 2015. The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom and a growing group of like-minded partners are working with us to build on the learning and help us ensure that the policy and practice recommendations emerging from this initiative are taken up by schools and providers nationwide.

Peter Carne OBE
Project Leader, Learning Away
June 2015

The impact of Learning Away has been evaluated throughout the initiative, using survey and focus group data and testing hypotheses that emerged from the first two years of action research carried out with the schools. In June 2015 York Consulting published its final independent evaluation of Learning Away residentials, identifying their impacts as well as what it is about the overnight stay that brings about such powerful positive outcomes for young people long after their return to school.

This publication summarises York Consulting's key findings and our recommendations - for schools, residential providers and policymakers - developed with our partner schools as a result of our shared experience.

Learning Away and brilliant residentials

As a result of working over five years with our partner schools we have begun to understand what we mean by high-quality residential learning, and have coined the phrase 'brilliant residentials' to describe these experiences.

Brilliant residentials are school trips with at least one overnight stay, which are:

- led by teachers (and, where appropriate, students)
- co-designed with students
- fully integrated with the school curriculum and ethos
- inclusive and affordable for all students
- deliberately planned to meet students' specific learning needs
- part of a progressive programme of experiences
- designed to include a wide range of new and memorable experiences

- designed to allow space for students to develop collaborative relationships with both peers and staff
- evaluated rigorously
- planned so that learning is embedded and reinforced back in school
- supported by senior leadership.

In their final evaluation report, our independent evaluators have provided evidence confirming that, by working in this way, schools can achieve significant breakthroughs in learner engagement and progress, while achieving positive outcomes for teachers and the school as a whole.



Why brilliant residentials?

Residentials provide the opportunity and experience of living with others.

This transforms relationships and develops a strong sense of community and belonging between staff and students involved. Our evaluators found that this sense of community supports a wide range of positive social and learning outcomes long after the return to school.

So what is it about the residential that uniquely builds this lasting and impactful sense of community? And how does this experience translate into short, medium and long-term outcomes for students?

This diagram sets out our theory about the changes that happen to learning through brilliant residential experiences.

Residentials bring:

The overnight stay and an intensity of experience

- Extended time away from home
- A new environment and routines
- Fewer distractions
- Opportunities to work intensively and be immersed in learning
- A collaborative community environment
- Unstructured time

A new context for relationships

- Opportunities to break down existing barriers, hierarchies and power relationships
- Students and teachers work more collaboratively in unfamiliar surroundings on unfamiliar tasks
- The teacher is not automatically the expert
- Residentials are a leveller for students and staff
- Opportunities to develop and practise key social skills

Different and varied opportunities to experience success

- A wide range of practical and physical challenges
- Opportunities for everyone to be successful at something
- Opportunities to overcome fears
- Immediate opportunities to revisit and build on learning experiences

New ways of learning

- A safe space to explore new ways of teaching and learning
- Focus on real-life activities and experiences
- Increased levels of student responsibility

Which in the short and medium term lead to:

Enhanced relationships

- Students and staff trust each other
- Students feel more able to ask staff for help
- Students feel more comfortable with each other
- Students are more able to empathise
- The sense of community is sustained

Improved engagement and confidence in learning

- Increased motivation and engagement
- Improved behaviour and attendance
- Increased participation in lessons
- More enjoyment of learning
- Enhanced confidence, resilience and wellbeing
- Increased ability to overcome challenges and try new activities

New and developing skills and understanding

- New learning continues to develop, including skills in: independent learning; study and research; self management; communication; team working and problem solving
- Deeper and better understanding of specific subjects/topics
- Developing vocabulary
- Improving creativity
- Meaningful opportunities to develop and practise leadership skills
- Increased ability to apply learning and skills in new contexts

Which in the longer term lead to:

- Improved achievement, progress and attainment
- Improved knowledge, skills and understanding
- Improved relationships
- Improved engagement
- Improved behaviour and attendance
- More successful transition experiences (at all key stages)
- Raised aspirations
- Greater cohesion and a sense of belonging
- Enhanced trajectories to work, sixth form, further and higher studies



Impacts and benefits

Five years of independent evaluation have produced strong evidence about the numerous positive impacts of Learning Away for participating students, staff and the wider school community. This evidence shows that Learning Away residential:

Improve students' engagement with learning

The different learning environment and deeper relationships on residential contributed to improved engagement with learning, including positive changes in behaviour and attendance.

"Before going on the trip I hated school, but now I just love it. I love to learn about maths, literacy and science."

(Primary Student Focus Group)

"They're not only engaging in the actual learning, but they're engaging in assessing themselves, working out their weaknesses and then progressing. They're taking ownership of their own learning."

(Staff Focus Group)

79% of secondary students indicated that the residential had made them realise that what they learn at school is important to them.

Improve students' knowledge, skills and understanding

Staff and students felt that residential supported their knowledge, skills and understanding in a variety of ways.

"It showed me how to study, what's effective. Now I know what's best for me."

(Secondary Student Focus Group)

"It was a lot easier to understand stuff there, so I think my understanding back in school is going to be better. You can reflect back to stuff you've seen, so I think I can use it again and again."

(Secondary Student Focus Group)

In long-term follow-up surveys, 82% of KS2 pupils said their teachers and lessons on the residential helped them learn; 60% of secondary students felt they had a better understanding of what they were trying to learn.



Support students' achievement

Teachers saw the impact of residential on achievement in school through:

- increased progress in learning
- improved confidence and motivation
- students having a better awareness of their strengths and weaknesses and knowing what to do to improve
- a more collaborative approach to learning.

61% of students who attended Calderglen's Drama residential achieved higher than their predicted grade, compared to 21% who did not attend.

"The sense of being 'in it together' and mutual encouragement went a long way towards supporting weaker performances and producing a higher attainment for some of the less confident or able candidates. This was something which could almost certainly not have been generated in a school setting."

(Staff Focus Group)



Foster deeper relationships

Students developed social skills and skills to form new relationships on residential and these skills and the relationships they supported were sustained back in school.

In long-term follow-up surveys, 79% of KS2 pupils said, because of the trip, they knew teachers better; 65% of secondary students said their teachers had a better understanding of how they liked to learn.

"I think it probably helped the quiet ones. You can see them building relationships with other students and feeling more comfortable with them. They wouldn't have done this in school."

(Staff Focus Group)

Relationships between staff and students became more trusting and respectful. Students got to know teachers as individuals; staff gained a better understanding of their students and how best to respond to them.

In long-term follow-up surveys, 84% of secondary students and 71% of KS2 pupils said that because of the residential, they get on better with the other pupils in the class.

"The student-teacher relationship built in a week on residential is similar to that of a relationship built over an entire year in a normal class situation."

(Staff Survey)

"In school you see teachers as scary and strict but on the residential trip they're so much nicer. You see them as normal human beings."

(Secondary Student Focus Group)

Improve students' resilience, self-confidence and well-being

Increased confidence was the most common outcome of residential identified by students and staff. Students were more willing to ask for help, try something new including 'scary things', push themselves and participate in class; they also had more self-belief.

78% of KS2 pupils and 87% of secondary students felt more confident to try new things they would not have done before the residential.

"Their confidence has increased. They hold themselves in higher esteem. We're very good in schools at judging on levels and recording achievement based on targets. Camp showed them that we're able to value them in different ways."

(Staff Focus Group)



Boost cohesion and a sense of belonging

The sense of community and the memorability of experiences on residential helped boost cohesion and a sense of belonging amongst participants both on and after them. Staff and students put this down to teamwork, stronger relationships and getting to know people with whom they did not normally work.

"You feel more part of the school now you know more people."

(Secondary Student Focus Group)

82% of secondary and 75% of KS2 students said that their residential experience helped them realise they could get on with people from other classes or schools.

Provide opportunities for student leadership, co-design and facilitation

Residential experiences were enhanced through student involvement in their design, planning and delivery. Impacts were particularly notable for student leaders, who said leadership experiences improved their organisational, presentation, communication and listening skills, and their independence and maturity.

"I think it's made me more organised. When I'm doing a session now I know what I need to do, how I need to do it, how long I've got. Whereas, when I started I just did it until I was told to stop. I think I've become my own type of boss. I work independently without any advice."

(Student Leader Focus Group)

Their peers also valued student-led aspects of residential in terms of developing their understanding, confidence to ask questions and clarify understanding, as well as their levels of enjoyment.

"We were getting taught by students so it was kind of fun. It was better because you didn't have as much pressure as you would with the teacher. You understand each other."

(Secondary Student Focus Group)

Prior to the residential only 40% of secondary students felt that they could be role models to others; after the residential this figure rose to 67%.

Smooth students' transition experiences

In partnerships focussing on primary-secondary transition, staff from both phases stated that a residential was "worth half a term" in terms of gains students made in acquiring skills and relationships helpful for the secondary school environment. Secondary teachers benefited from getting to know new students in a relaxed environment and developed a better understanding of their needs prior to transition.

"The fact he's come to high school knowing staff he can really trust has had a big effect on him."

(Secondary Staff Focus Group)

Post residential, 67% of KS2 pupils said they found it easier to make new friends because of the residential.



Widen and develop teachers' pedagogical skills

Teachers said residential gave them time to reflect on their practice and their teaching became more experimental and flexible; they were more willing and confident to take risks and try new methods. They were also more trusting of their students and linked this to the improved relationships developed on residential.

"My teaching is much more kinaesthetic, more practical, more moving around, it's trusting the kids a little bit more. Before the residential, I was probably a little bit afraid about doing that sort of thing, whereas now I know I can handle it, it's fine and I'm getting much more positive results from it."

(Staff Focus Group)

Residential impacted on curriculum delivery, particularly the development of integrated and thematic approaches, and provided opportunities for staff to share practice and increase their awareness of cross-curricular learning opportunities.

Residential also offered important professional development opportunities, and supported staff to gain a better understanding of their students' skills and needs.

78% of staff involved felt that Learning Away had a 'significant' or 'transformative' impact on their understanding of their students' strengths and limitations.

Visit www.learningaway.org.uk for more detailed information about the impacts of Learning Away and to download the full evaluation report.

Developing brilliant residential

Everything schools and providers need to make the case for, plan, deliver and evaluate the impact of brilliant residential is available on the Learning Away website.

Do you need persuading, or need to persuade others? Explore our 'Brilliant residential' and 'Impacts' sections to find evidence about the differences residential make, and our thinking about what makes them brilliant.

Are you looking for inspiration? Browse our 70 case studies written by staff from the school partnerships covering primary, secondary and special school residential.

Do you need some detailed help with planning and delivering brilliant residential? Take a look at our 'Getting Started' and 'Resources' sections. Written by teachers and school leaders, the resources provide guidance, practical tips, and downloadable templates to support residential with a wide range of aims, experiences, and age groups.

Find out how to:

- integrate your residential programme with the curriculum
- plan your residential to meet specific learning outcomes
- plan and deliver lower-cost residential that also offer more opportunities for more students to participate
- work with students to co-construct residential learning
- foster student leadership on residential and build on these benefits back in school
- provide residential specifically for Early Years and Key Stage 1 children
- provide residential for young people with special educational needs
- use residential with families to support young people struggling in school.



Visit www.learningaway.org.uk to discover more about how to develop your brilliant residential.

Recommendations

The independent evaluation of Learning Away in our partnership schools shows powerful, cumulative, positive impacts from high-quality residential learning, particularly when this learning is fully integrated with the school's curriculum and ethos. The strength of the evaluation evidence suggests that high-quality residential learning provides opportunities, impacts and benefits that are very hard to achieve in any other educational context.

Given its potential, it is clear that we need to make a cultural shift away from viewing high-quality residential learning as an enrichment activity to a position where it is firmly embedded as part of each young person's entitlement. Therefore, Learning Away makes the following recommendations, which we are convinced will not only support the development of high-quality residential learning, but also encourage the shift from enrichment to entitlement.

In order to provide brilliant residential learning, schools should:

1. Provide a range of inclusive residential experiences that progress throughout each phase of education and are integrated with class-based and learning outside the classroom (LOtC) activities. The learning on residential should be planned:
 - with clear learning objectives based on students' needs
 - collaboratively by school staff, venue staff and students
 - so that the experiences are embedded and reinforced once back in school.
2. Work closely with residential providers during the planning process to ensure the right mix of activities and delivery – both logistically and in terms of different approaches – and feel confident to ask them for flexibility.
3. Recognise and plan for the value of informal social time during residential – the transformed relationships that happen during this time are crucial to residential's sustained impact.
4. Plan for rigorous evaluation as an essential part of the residential programme using both quantitative and qualitative methods that enable staff to understand, develop and confirm the value of their practice.
5. Develop a climate that supports healthy risk-taking around learning and teaching that will encourage helpful changes to pedagogy both on residential and back in school.
6. Develop staffing and support structures, and CPD, to assist teachers running residential. The commitment of headteachers and senior management teams is key to effective and sustainable residential programmes, and a critical factor in successfully embedding the learning.
7. Look across the wider school community for residential expertise and, when appropriate, for volunteer adults and/or student leaders.
8. Work in partnerships with other schools to plan and deliver residential programmes, provide support and training, develop creative solutions, share equipment and resources, combine purchasing power and share findings and practice.
9. Develop inclusive residential programmes by investigating lower-cost residential and using Pupil Premium to support students who would not otherwise be able to attend.
10. Seek opportunities to use residential to support students through key transition points.

In order to promote and support brilliant residential learning, providers should:

1. Draw on the findings from Learning Away to inform their residential offer and approach to working with schools.
2. Publicise the benefits of residential experiences for young people of all ages, and the range of opportunities they offer, to a wide audience using local and national networks.
3. Direct schools and policymakers to the Learning Away research evidence and website.
4. Publicise the unique nature of the overnight stay and the opportunities this offers for learning, teaching and relationship-building.
5. Promote and support the development of curriculum-integrated, inclusive and progressive residential programmes, encouraging schools to recognise that residential should be an entitlement rather than an enrichment activity.
6. Work collaboratively with teachers and students to both plan and deliver high-quality residential learning programmes, ensuring they are tailored to the needs of students and schools.
7. Support schools to include and make good use of informal social time as part of their programme by being clear about its benefits to relationship building.
8. Evaluate the impact of their residential programmes rigorously, working in partnership with schools to do so and sharing evidence with them.
9. Support lower-cost residential models by, for example, offering:
 - camping opportunities (sites, equipment, support)
 - shorter residentials
 - more opportunities for teacher-led activities.
10. Draw schools' attention to the use of Pupil Premium and other funding opportunities for residential, and help schools evaluate the impact of this funding.

In order to facilitate and support the development of brilliant residential learning, we encourage policymakers to:

1. Recognise and promote the ways in which residential learning can impact on curriculum reviews, and their design and delivery in schools, across the UK.
2. Promote the clear links between the impact of residential on resilience, confidence, and 'grit', and the current focus on character education in schools.
3. Recognise the opportunities that residential experiences provide to support the current focus on promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing.
4. Promote the impact of residential on families as demonstrated by Learning Away, linking these to the family support agenda.
5. Publicise the findings of the Learning Away programme to the informal education sector; the findings of Learning Away have implications for children and young people beyond their lives in school.

In order to further understand brilliant residential learning and their impact, we have identified the following areas that would benefit from further research:

1. The impact of residential experiences on attainment.
2. The longer-term impacts of residential experiences.
3. The impact of residential experiences on students' emotional health and wellbeing.
4. Effective strategies for reinforcing and embedding residential learning.
5. The benefits of residential experiences in the non-formal youth sector.

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The Paul Hamlyn Foundation is one of the UK's largest independent grant-giving organisations. We aim to help people overcome disadvantage and lack of opportunity, so that they can realise their potential and enjoy fulfilling and creative lives. We have a particular interest in supporting young people and a strong belief in the importance of the arts. In June 2015 we launched six new strategic priorities for change in the UK, building on our existing commitments and experience. Between 2007-15 PHF operated a broad Education and Learning programme, using a blend of open grants and larger Foundation-led initiatives to support the development and dissemination of new ideas with potential to make a significant contribution to young people's learning and achievement. Learning Away was one of these Foundation initiatives, delivered in partnership with expert consultants and sixty schools in England and Scotland.

Find out more at **www.phf.org.uk**

Participating school partnerships

"Before going on the trip I had hated school but now I just love it. I love to learn about maths, literacy and science. I think it's just changed me basically, changed my abilities."

Year 4 pupil, The Pilot Partnership (East EAZ)



“Learning Away confirms, adds to and deepens the existing research base by its specific focus on the residential experience. Most important is its articulation of a ‘theory of change’ that explains how learning is enhanced through the residential experience. This proposition makes it abundantly clear that in education residentials are, almost without exception, the gift that keeps on giving.”

Professor David Hopkins, Professor Emeritus at the Institute of Education, Executive Director of Adventure Learning Schools



“When I was at Hampton Court there was just loads of stuff to inspire me. I probably did more hours of work in that one week than I did in the whole term, I just had so much inspiration from it.”

Year 10 student, Canterbury Academy

Since 2009 Learning Away has worked with 60 schools across the UK to develop, test and evaluate what we now describe as ‘brilliant residentials’. Residential learning is ‘brilliant’ when it is led by teachers, co-designed with students, and fully integrated into the curriculum. Our independent evaluators have found that, by working in this way, schools can achieve significant breakthroughs in learner engagement and progress, while achieving positive outcomes for teachers and the school as a whole.

Supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, this publication shares key recommendations for teachers and school leaders, residential providers and education policymakers.

The Learning Away website hosts more than 70 inspiring good practice case studies, plus material to help make the case for residential learning to school leaders, governors and Ofsted. Our free resource packs, written by teachers and school leaders, share guidance, practical tips and downloadable templates, and are designed to help schools plan and deliver their own brilliant residentials.

Download the resources at www.learningaway.org.uk

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