

Education, Children and Families Committee

10:00 am, Tuesday, 7 November 2023

Outdoor Learning – Benmore and Lagganlia Outdoor Centres

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Support the ongoing rationale and benefits of the Council operating its own residential outdoor centres. The Centres provide Council Schools with access to consistently safe, sector-leading and good value outdoor learning experiences.
 - 1.1.2 Continue to recognise the importance of safe high-quality residential visits which are embedded into the school curriculum.
 - 1.1.3 Note the collaborative working between families, schools, third sector, the Outdoor Learning and Adventure Education Team and wider Council staff.
 - 1.1.4 Note the significant experiences, outcomes and other achievements associated with the Benmore and Lagganlia Outdoor Centres.

Amanda Hatton

Executive Director of Children, Education and Justice Services

Contact: Andrew Bradshaw, Wider Achievement and Lifelong Learning Manager (Outdoor Learning and Adventure Education)

E-mail: Andrew.Bradshaw@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 07718 660549

Outdoor Learning – Benmore and Lagganlia Outdoor Centres

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report responds to a request to showcase the Council's Benmore and Lagganlia outdoor centres.
- 2.2 The Council continues to be committed to owning and operating Benmore and Lagganlia. These are widely used and provide safe, relevant and innovative experiences and outcomes. They are highly valued by families and schools and play an important part in Edinburgh pupils' education.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Benmore (Loch Lomond and The Trossachs) and Lagganlia (Cairngorms) Outdoor Centres are owned and operated by The City of Edinburgh Council. They are integral to the Outdoor Learning and Adventure Education (OL&AE) Team, which is part of the Wider Achievement and Lifelong Learning Service. Staff are Council employees, and the Centres operate via the Experience Outdoors brand (Appendix 11.1.2)
- 3.2 The Centres' locations provide outstanding opportunities for children, young people and others to experience inspirational outdoor and adventurous learning in wild surroundings (Appendices 11.3.1 and 11.3.3).
- 3.3 There are significant and sustained benefits of the Council owning and operating these centres (Appendix 11.1.4). This allowed the Council to undertake a prompt sector-leading reopening of the Centres during Covid-19. This was hugely valued by Council staff (for example, Appendix 11.1.13).
- 3.4 The OL&AE Team also comprises the Bangholm Outdoor Centre (Edinburgh) and Risk Factory (Edinburgh). See previous reports in Section 10 regarding the significant work undertaken by these centres.
- 3.5 Residential visits are an integral part of Outdoor Learning (OL). OL is one of the three core strands of Learning for Sustainability, alongside Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development Education. Learning for Sustainability is a core part of the General Teaching Council for Scotland's (GTCS) Professional Standards.
- 3.6 OL is a context for learning rather than a discrete subject. National guidance and resources consistently detail the need for planned, progressive and creative outdoor

learning experiences that are part of the curriculum (10.7-10.10). The Council recognises this includes relevant high-quality residential visits. Overnights, along with frequent onsite and local experiences, are complementary i.e. one should not replace another (see past report - 10.1: January 2023).

- 3.7 Relevant and high-quality residential visits integral to the school curriculum can deliver significant outcomes (10.8 and Appendix 11.1.3 – Benefits of residential visits).
- 3.8 Recent research indicates the cost of attending Benmore and Lagganlia is just below average compared to the rest of the sector. Minimising the cost of the school day continues to be a priority for the Council.
- 3.9 There was a recent proposal via a Scottish Parliament Member's Bill (Liz Smith MSP) to ensure that young people can experience residential outdoor education. Discussions are ongoing (10.12). The Council is well placed to respond to any potential statutory requirements.
- 3.10 Additional background information, data, and recent good practice can be found via past reports (Section 10).

4. Main report

- 4.1 The ongoing success of Benmore and Lagganlia residential visits is attributed to collaborative working between school and their families; third sector, including Friends of Lagganlia / Benmore and John Watson's Trust; and OL&AE staff (Appendices 11.1.7 The Edinburgh Primary Head Teachers' Association, 11.1.6 Benmore and Lagganlia Operations Managers, and 11.1.14 the residential journey).
- 4.2 5863 young people visited Benmore and Lagganlia in 2022/23. This included 82 Council primary schools. The Centres are widely used and skilfully led by the Operations Managers (Appendix 11.1.6). The number of visiting schools is at an all-time high with the Centres operating January to December. City of Edinburgh Council schools are given priority booking. Demand for Benmore and Lagganlia spaces from other local authority schools is very high, reflecting significant national concerns of a sector-shortage of high-quality provision. Staff are highly proficient and committed to delivering sector leading residential visits. Benmore and Lagganlia continue to be an integral part of the Council's approach to education.
- 4.3 Visiting Council schools achieved a high pupil attendance rate - 90.9%. This represents significant collaborative work by schools and OL&OE staff (Appendix 11.1.8). Monitoring continues as Council staff regularly examine how pupils are funded and why some do not attend. Reducing the cost of the school day continues to be a priority for the Council, especially within the current financial climate.
- 4.4 The per head cost of visiting Benmore and Lagganlia is below the current sector average of £400 (4 night-visit). Operating its own centres allows the Council to consistently supply safe, sector-leading and good value experiences to the young people of Edinburgh.

- 4.5 School satisfaction rates continue to be extremely high (Appendix 11.1.9). For example, 97.7% agreed the residential programme was adapted to meet the needs of their participants; 99% of group leaders stated the programme had met or exceeded their expectations and 100% agreed the visit had been a success. Evaluation data indicates areas for future development to avoid complacency.
- 4.6 Effective working between schools, OL&AE and other Council staff, plus families ensure Benmore and Lagganlia residentials are for everyone. This includes supporting pupils with additional support needs (Appendices 11.1.11 and 11.1.12 - Bonaly and Leith Walk primary schools); providing high quality social story packages, including videos (Appendix 11.2.3) and ensuring residentials are integral to 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC) and the Child Planning Meeting process (Appendix 11.2.1). Council schools work creatively. For example, Leith Walk Primary School has developed activities at home and school to ensure pupils are well prepared and reassured (Appendix 11.2.2).
- 4.7 Positive feedback from young people and parents / carers continues to be significant. Appendices 11.4.1 – 11.4.4, including Craigroyston and Oxfangs primary schools, demonstrate various experiences and impacts, many of which cannot be replicated by non-residential visits alone. Families continuously reference the importance of an extended stay in supporting independence and widening horizons, as well as providing new experiences to apply activity skills. Schools report improved peer to peer and pupil to staff relationships (e.g. Appendix 11.1.9).
- 4.8 Effective residential visits are not 'islands of learning'. They are integral to a school's curriculum. Appendix 11.4.3 shows examples from Trinity and Colinton primary schools of purposeful post-visit writing activities. These also support future pupils in preparing for their visit.
- 4.9 Council schools continue to evaluate visits and liaise closely with the OL&AE Team to develop future practice. Appendix 11.4.4 provides examples from Buckstone and Sciennes.
- 4.10 The OL&AE Team routinely explores different ways it can support Council priorities and groups. This is evidenced by recent successful visits from the Edinburgh Children's Board (Appendix 11.1.10). The Centres can provide cost effective solutions with high quality outcomes. The work continues.
- 4.11 Benmore and Lagganlia staff continue to undertake Council adventurous activity technical adviser roles. They support the review and approval of over 1750 annual offsite visits involving 16,360 young people and adults across the Council. These are more complex excursions, including adventurous activity. This innovative approach provides the necessary breadth and depth of expertise to support such rich and diverse activity across the Council. Staff also contribute to national working; enhancing the Council's reputation and bringing direct benefits to the city.
- 4.12 The OL&AE Team continues to develop commercial income to invest in the core residential provision. This has grown to £400k (16% of overall income) with future developments planned. Teams from across the Council continue to support the

Centres' ongoing development, including recent capital works investment and installation of electric vehicle chargers.

- 4.13 Benmore and Lagganlia are an integral part of Edinburgh. They are hugely valued and can continue to deliver a wide range of significant experiences and outcomes across the Council.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The OL&AE Team and schools will continue to use self-evaluation and improvement planning to develop residential visits further. The delivery of high-quality residential visits is integral to the Council's recently launched OL Self-Evaluation and Improvement Toolkit: how good is our outdoor learning?
- 5.2 The OL&AE Team has strategic priorities and actions set out in its 2-year action plan (Appendix 11.5.1).
- 5.3 The OL&AE Team will continue to monitor attendance on residential visits to ensure guidance and resources are used to maximise attendance in line with the Council's equity and equality guidance.
- 5.4 Council officers will monitor potential discussions regarding national school residential entitlements and any corresponding funding guidance and resources.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Outdoor Learning provision and improvement work are generally managed at the schools and OL&AE Team level. Allocating and monitoring budgets minimises financial risks.
- 6.2 The OL&AE Team aims to meet the day-to-day Centre operational costs via traded income. Income and attendance numbers are at all-time highs balanced against significant rises in operational costs, including staffing and energy.
- 6.3 The Centres' financial performance for the 4 years prior to Covid was very good. A small surplus was generated most years and reinvested in core school residential activity. The pandemic and continued rising fixed costs make for a challenging context. The Centres are recovering well and are on track to return to meeting day-to-day costs, whilst supporting Council priorities.
- 6.4 There is a potential financial risk if establishments do not comply with the Excursions Policy, Excursions Toolbox and Experience Outdoors terms and conditions.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 Reducing the cost of the school day and removing other barriers to attendance is undertaken by schools.

- 7.2 Guidance, good practice and resources (e.g. [Poverty Proofing \(experienceoutdoors.org.uk\)](https://experienceoutdoors.org.uk)) are used to reduce inequity and inequality.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 Schools and the OL&AE Team continue to work towards meeting the targets within the Edinburgh 2030 Climate Strategy. Current work includes exploring train travel and developing curriculum resources to understand, measure and reduce carbon footprints whilst on residential visits.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 The Council's Excursions Policy, excursions toolbox and resources provide ongoing guidance on safety, educational effectiveness, equity, equality and environmental sustainability. Compliance with this guidance will minimise a range of risks. The Excursions Policy will be reviewed within the next 6 months.
- 9.2 Views of parents/carers, families, and young people continue to be gathered by schools and the OL&AE Team. This is part of the planned excursions review plan and general self-evaluation process.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 Outdoor Learning (Update). Education, Children and Families Committee, Tuesday, 31 January, 2023. [General link to meeting documents \(Item 7.10\)](#).
- 10.2 School Excursions – Equity (Further Update). Education, Children and Families Committee, Tuesday, 01 March, 2022. [General link to meeting documents \(Item 7.7\)](#). [Minutes – Section 12](#).
- 10.3 Excursions – Equity Report (Update). Education, Children and Families Committee, Tuesday, 07 December, 2021. [General link to meeting documents \(Item 7.12\)](#).
- 10.4 Excursions – Equity Report. Education, Children and Families Committee, Tuesday, 24 August, 2021. [General link to meeting documents](#).
- 10.5 Outdoor Learning Report. Education, Children and Families Committee, Tuesday, 10 December, 2019. [General link to meeting documents](#).
- 10.6 Proposed Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill. [Scottish Parliament](#).
- 10.7 Curriculum for Excellence Through Outdoor Learning – a planned and progressive approach: <https://education.gov.scot/Documents/cfe-through-outdoor-learning.pdf>.
- 10.8 Educational value of Scotland's Outdoor Education Centres: <https://www.sapoe.org.uk/links/local-authority-outdoor-education-centres/>.

- 10.9 Education Scotland – Outdoor Learning practical guidance, ideas and support for teachers and practitioners - <https://education.gov.scot/media/0fklf35p/hwb24-ol-support.pdf>
- 10.10 Education Scotland – A summary of outdoor learning resources - <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/a-summary-of-outdoor-learning-resources/>
- 10.11 The City of Edinburgh Council – experienceoutdoors.org.uk website: <https://www.experienceoutdoors.org.uk/>
- 10.12 Proposed Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Bill: <https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/proposals-for-bills/proposed-schools-residential-outdoor-education-scotland-bill>

11. Appendices

11.1 General

Appendix 11.1.1 Benmore and Lagganlia infographic

Appendix 11.1.2 Experience Outdoors brand

Appendix 11.1.3 The benefits of residential visits

Appendix 11.1.4 The benefits of the Council owning and operating its own centres

Appendix 11.1.5 Residentials MATTER – Canal View Primary School

Appendix 11.1.6 Commentary from the Benmore and Lagganlia Operations Managers

Appendix 11.1.7 A statement from the Edinburgh Primary Head Teachers' Association (EPHTA)

Appendix 11.1.8 Benmore and Lagganlia attendance dashboard

Appendix 11.1.9 Benmore and Lagganlia residential visits evaluation data

Appendix 11.1.10 The Edinburgh Champions Board

Appendix 11.1.11 Residentials for EVERYONE: Bonaly Primary School

Appendix 11.1.12 Residentials for EVERYONE: Leith Walk Primary School

Appendix 11.1.13 Residentials MATTER - responding to COVID-19

Appendix 11.1.14 The residential journey – Trinity Primary School

11.2 Pre-Visit

Appendix 11.2.1 Getting Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and Child Planning Meetings

Appendix 11.2.2 Pre-visit activity by Leith Walk Primary School

Appendix 11.2.3 Social stories and movie clips

11.3 Visit

Appendix 11.3.1 Benmore and Lagganlia adventures via pictures

Appendix 11.3.2 Something different!

11.4 Post-Visit

Appendix 11.4.1 Residentials MATTER - feedback from Craigroyston Primary School
pupils and a parent

Appendix 11.4.2 Residentials MATTER - feedback from Oxfgangs Primary School
pupils and parents

Appendix 11.4.3 Purposeful writing (Trinity and Colinton primary schools)

Appendix 11.4.4 School evaluations (Buckstone and Sciennes primary schools)

11.5 The Future

Appendix 11.5.1 The journey ahead

11.1 General

Appendix 11.1.1 Benmore and Lagganlia Infographic (data accurate up to 06/10/23)

Benmore & Lagganlia in NUMBERS!

5863 young people

attended in 2022/23 **.

90.8%*

attendance rate (22/23).

6248

young people expected
in 2023/24.

About **71,687** school

meals provided (22/23).

Technical advisers @ Benmore
and Lagganlia help to review

and approve over **1,750**

excursions, involving about

16,360 young people

across the Council (adventurous
activity & / or residential).

Young people estimated to have cycled at

least **17,589** miles in total (2022/23).

That's the same as cycling from Edinburgh to

the North Pole **7.5** times (if you could).

Council schools secured / directed at least

£144,260 to support **36.9%**

of CEC young people to visit in 2022/23 °.

84 CEC schools use

Benmore & Lagganlia.

2 EV chargers.

*from submitted data (55
CEC schools)

**CEC and non-CEC



EXPERIENCE OUTDOORS

•EDINBURGH•
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Appendix 11.1.2 Experience Outdoors

[Link to Experience Outdoors brand information.](#)

Appendix 11.1.3 The benefits of residential visits

[Link to benefits.](#)

Appendix 11.1.4 The benefits of the Council owning and operating its own centres

[Link to benefits of Benmore and Lagganlia.](#)





The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning

Residential MATTER!

Cross-Party Group on Outdoor Education

28 March 2023

Extract from minutes

Canal View
Primary School

Ann Moore, Former Head Teacher at Canal View Primary School

We have developed a strong relationship with Lagganlia and the instructors there. The primary school is in a built-up area, and our young people have little access to outdoor pursuits such as canoeing or skiing. The experience goes way beyond the Residential. Young people have a voice in the planning. They find Lagganlia on the map, they share what they think the experience could be like – with teachers and peers – then they meet the instructors and they have questions they want to ask.

The buzz starts from P4, they meet cool, young instructors and see them out in the playground making dens etc. Staff were much more confident as a result of observing, chatting to and getting feedback from instructors. Two-way process, learning from each other, including the children. Very powerful as there are lots of challenges in going away for the first time, the worry of being safe and secure. Prepares them for transition into high school, they start to think – change is good, a necessary part of life, a bit scary but that's how it goes. Young people knew what they wanted to achieve, and they learned about adaptability. Sometimes it was necessary to be flexible, if the weather changed and an activity wasn't available, but they'd carry on and try a new activity and make it happen.

The relationships were improved between staff and children. It had a huge impact for both. Through this experience over more than 9 years, we felt it was crucial that every child had experience of high-quality learning outdoors. We have been lucky; Lagganlia is the gold standard, something the kids will never forget for their whole lives. Former pupils get in touch, remembering the experience. That's also the case for staff who talk warmly about the experience. For young people its development of independence, for us all its sharing and learning together. We do lots of that at school, but going to a wilderness was powerful and we then brought it back to school where children and staff worked together to develop and extend those learning experiences.

Canal View continues to ensure high attendance at Lagganlia. Lagganlia instructors continue to visit the school. The journey continues...

Appendix 11.1.6 Commentary from the Benmore and Lagganlia Operations Managers



Graeme Adams (Operations Manager – Benmore)



Nick March (Operations Manager – Lagganlia)

Benmore and Lagganlia offer young people an opportunity to access a range of adventurous and exciting activities within Scotland's two National Parks. Highly qualified and experienced staff harness their skills to ensure that all young people receive a unique and bespoke residential experience, where challenge and enjoyment are promoted. Whilst activities can be accessed in isolation, the residential experience allows for progression, breadth and depth of transferrable skills. Benmore and Lagganlia work closely with Edinburgh schools to ensure that all Primary 7 receive a unique and personal residential visit as part of their transition process to secondary.

Benmore and Lagganlia value their role in facilitating residential experiences for the young people of Edinburgh. The benefits of working closely with all associated schools allow us to tailor the visit for each class and, indeed, each young person's experience; both pre and post excursion. We pride ourselves on working extremely closely with visiting schools in advance to fine tune all details and cater for everyone's needs; from parents' nights to organising individualised pre visits, and when required, attending child plan meetings to compile social stories, putting the young person at the centre.

Partnerships are key to success and our primary and secondary teaching colleagues from across Edinburgh City play a fundamental part in ensuring every young person has a positive residential experience. The hard work and effort from schools must be commended.

The young people, who are at the heart of everything we stand for and believe in, play the most pivotal role in making the residential experience a success. They bring a wide range of emotions and skills, needs, wants and expectations and it is our duty to respond to and, at times adapt our programmes accordingly. Their interactions and feedback allow us to evaluate our practice, resources and accommodation to ensure we maximise the experience for all.

The positive experience a residential visit can have on a young person is immeasurable. Everyone's experience is unique. Letters, emails, future visits are testament to the success of their stay. Furthermore, some young people have gone on to develop and hone-in-on skills learned and have returned to Benmore and Lagganlia as trainee instructors, and in some cases, permanent outdoor instructors.

From our point of view, the difference we can make to a young person's life can be both exciting and humbling. Providing a safe place for them to explore, build relationships, confidence and self-awareness puts us in a privileged position. They inspire us to be better, to improve and to develop.

Thank you to Edinburgh City Council and everyone who makes Benmore and Lagganlia happen!

Appendix 11.1.7 A statement from the Edinburgh Primary Head Teachers' Association (EPHTA)



The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning

Residentials MATTER!

The Edinburgh Primary Head Teachers' Association (EPHTA) Committee

Benmore and Lagganlia Outdoor Centres are vital partners for schools to deliver the curriculum and offer a range of wider achievement opportunities.

Residentials at both centres are noted as one of the main Primary School highlights by our learners and for some of our young people this is a once in a lifetime experience. The teams at the centres provide rich and high-quality learning experiences. These build on previous learning in our schools and provide depth to the curriculum.

From our experience in schools of delivering residentials opportunities, it is extremely important that the centres are owned by the Council. The centres and the experiences they provide are safe and the staff teams implement and follow Council policies and procedures.

Staff align with values of CEC schools, working through the resilience programme to match what happens in school. The positive relationships and partnerships between the Outdoor Learning Team and schools ensure that we can provide residential experiences that meet the needs of all our young people, including bespoke programmes for individual learners. These relationships provide valuable support to school staff planning and accompanying learners, as well as reassurance to families, to enable young people's participation.

Schools work hard and effectively to achieve high attendance rates in partnership with the Outdoor Learning Team. The commitment to relationships, inclusion and ethos provided at the CEC centres goes above and beyond and has enabled children who would not have been able to access the experience at other settings to take an active part in residentials.

Appendix 11.1.8 Benmore and Lagganlia attendance dashboard

2022/23 Academic Year		
Remaining data being collated.		
1.1	Number of CEC schools (so far):	68
1.2	Percentage of data returns:	79.1%
1.3	Attendance*:	90.9%
1.4	Number of pupils attending*:	3175
1.5	Number of pupils not attending*:	318
1.6	Percentage paying full cost*:	58.0%
1.7	Percentage not paying full cost*:	42.0%
1.8	Total reduction applied by schools (from mixed sources e.g. PEF, grants and fundraising)*.	£193,134.25
1.9	Average reduction / subsidy per pupil*:	£213.77
*from schools in 1.1.		

Appendix 11.1.9 Benmore and Lagganlia residential visits evaluation data (cumulative)

[Link to evaluation data.](#)



The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning

The Edinburgh Champions Board

Emily Dempsey

Corporate Parenting Lead Officer

Residential trips for children and young people who are Care Experienced have been on offer since 2016, supported by children's social work staff and in conjunction with Edinburgh Champions Board. To allow for a more tailored package the decision was taken to create a bespoke programme in 2019, and thus, Champs Camp was born.

In 2022, post pandemic, we held Champs Camp at Lagganlia, and having had such a positive experience returned in 2023 and now have a standing annual booking.

Linking in with our own outdoor centre and working alongside our fellow Corporate Parents to deliver these programmes has been a complete game changer. Lagganlia staff have been exemplary in their adaptability to suit the needs of our young people. They have met the young people at their level and taken a person-centred approach to supporting them and tailoring the week to us. Our young people have loved their time at Lagganlia and regularly ask about getting to go back. Our young people can take time to trust and feel safe. The Lagganlia staff are so skilled at making our young people feel accepted and cared for. I can't sing their praises enough.



Edinburgh
Champions Board

Care ◯ Equality ◯ Change

Appendix 11.1.11 Residentials for EVERYONE: Bonaly Primary School

[next page]



The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning Residentials for EVERYONE - inclusion

Bonaly Primary School

Inclusive Benmore (Autumn 2023)

Benmore Outdoor Centre is a truly magical place that has brought generations of children the most wonderful memories. We are always delighted with the efforts that the centre put into making this residential accessible to all of our learners in P7 at Bonaly Primary. This is done through lots of forward planning, information sharing and great team work.



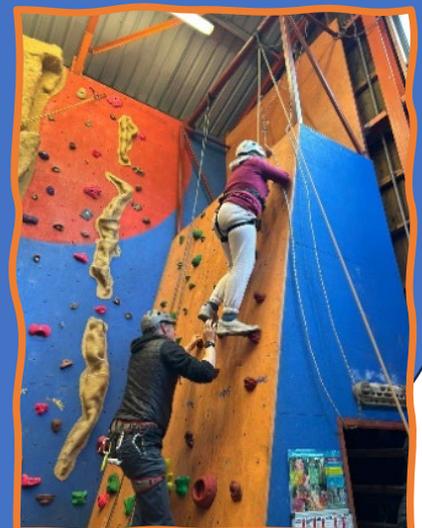
This was particularly this year for one really amazing pupil at our school, who has a visual impairment. This child was very excited at the prospect of visiting the centre, spending time with her classmates, enjoying the sensory stimulation of the wide variety of flora, and accessing as many activities as possible.



As a school, we had a good idea of how the week would look for this child, through regular communication and planning before our departure. However, what was put in place exceeded expectations. The team's flexibility around her medical and physical needs ensured she was always safe and everything she required was accessible at the centre. The instructors (one in particular, Neil) put a considerable amount of thought into how activities could be adapted, in order to make them inclusive and enjoyable for this child. This involved using a tandem bike to take her on group bike rides and careful guidance and support on the climbing wall. The feeling of pride for all Bonaly staff on seeing this child involved at this level was really wonderful!

Doug Short Bonaly Primary School Group Leader

'My instructor was kind and helpful and I thank him for helping me to ride a tandem for the first time. It felt wobbly at first, but I soon got used to it and I felt really proud of myself for doing it. Another activity I really enjoyed was climbing. Although it was an unusual feeling being off the ground, I enjoyed the challenge of trying to get to the top, and when I did... I felt really proud of myself for doing it!'
P7 Pupil, Bonaly Primary School.



Appendix 11.1.12 Residential for EVERYONE: Leith Walk Primary School
[next page]



The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning Residentials for EVERYONE - inclusion

Leith Walk Primary School

School, Outdoor Learning and other Council staff work collegiately to maximise attendance.

Leith Walk Primary School's 2022/23 visit to Lagganlia is a fine example. The School worked closely with Lagganlia to create a fabulous week for a P7 pupil with additional support needs. This included liaising with ASLS and Fleet to ensure onsite and offsite access and support. Juniper Green PS kindly swapped a member of staff so there was sufficient 2:1 support.

'Lagganlia was an epic win! I loved it, and want to go straight back. I did climbing and abseiling. Kris was my instructor he was funny and he helped me do things I thought I could never do like kayaking and abseiling.'

Leith Walk P7 pupil

'The trip would not have happened without the hard work of Amy Barr and the School in arranging the correct support and ensuring everything was in place for our son to enjoy this experience with his class. Huge thanks to Blanca and Stuart, who accompanied him. It was crucial in allowing him to experience a taste of independence, much like his peers. The staff at Lagganlia were amazing! Our son absolutely loved it! He was able to try so many activities and have so many adventures that he would never have had access to without all the help from the Lagganlia team.' Pupil's parents





The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning

Residentials MATTER - responding to COVID-19

Joanne Doddie

Principal Teacher / Support for Learning
Fox Covert Primary School

Outdoor residential experiences are a vital part of our children's education. The opportunities for developing independence, resilience and life-skills cannot be replicated in the classroom environment.

I was recently speaking to a Primary colleague in another council who was surprised to hear that I had recently been on camp and I could feel her sadness as she could not provide the same opportunity for her pupils. This was due to authority guidance at that point. I too, felt sad as I realise the magnitude of what so many children in Scotland are currently missing out on.

The benefits of residentials transcends home and school contexts and also future opportunities - particularly of those children from more disadvantaged backgrounds.

Our pupils were not affected by any Covid cases whilst being away and our school team felt extremely safe during our stay. I understand that the physical health of our children is important. However the positive impact on our children and their families has been monumental and parental feedback supports this too.



The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning

The Residential Journey

Jacqueline Scott Head Teacher, Trinity Primary School

There is no doubt that a residential visit for all learners is a fabulous experience and we work hard to make sure that no child is unable to take part because of financial reasons or additional support needs, Benmore and Lagganlia are incredibly supportive with this.

What steps do we take when planning?

The Benmore experience sits within our Trinity Learner experience journey and is known to our learners, parents and carers from an early stage.

On their return from Benmore our current P7s share their experience with our current P6s. They have the opportunity to ask them questions and to hear about what happens at Benmore.

P6 Parents / carers then receive information about the date, the expected cost and how payment can be made.

A deposit to secure a place is required at this point. ParentPay allows the cost to be spread.

At this point any parent / carer requiring financial assistance is asked to contact school. We also contact families who we feel maybe reluctant to do this. Our pupil support officer and family support worker assist with this.

School provides financial assistance through allocation of a portion of PEF, application to the John Watson trust and from some parents / carers who pay a bit extra if circumstances allow. We never have any child unable to attend for financial reasons.

Deposit payment is checked and if no deposit paid we speak with learners to ascertain their feelings. On occasion we do have children who do not wish to go. We contact parents / carers and together work with the children to see if we can 'change their mind'. Benmore is extremely supportive in allowing for changes to numbers if minds do change.

Additional support needs - discussion with parents / carers, Benmore staff, school staff and learners means that no child misses out on the opportunity. This may require additional training, additional staff, altered programme etc.

Coaches are booked by school staff.

Prior to visit

Benmore provide easy access to the necessary paperwork including KIC forms and clothing list. This is distributed to parents and carers who complete and return

Learners are given the opportunity to complete a dorm and group request form - we feel it is incredibly important that our learners are given a voice in this to minimise any anxiety about being away from home.

Dorms and groups are made up in accordance with learner info and the necessary spreadsheets completed for Benmore.

Approx two weeks prior to departure an in school evening meeting takes place for parents and carers to share final information and to provide opportunity for questions. We encourage families to bring along any no longer needed items of clothing that might be useful to others and to take anything they can recycle. The emphasis is very much on don't buy anything new!

Staff team meet one week prior to departure to discuss needs, dorms and to decide who brings what snacks!

Departure day

Learners arrive at school for 8.50am. Staff member with overall responsibility for medication meets with parents / carers to ensure forms are completed, medication is correctly labelled etc.

Once registered luggage put on coaches followed by children.

The group are waved off by parents and carers, siblings and their P2 buddies.

Post visit

Our learners write an account of their experience as one of their assessed pieces of writing for the year.

They share with P6 and the cycle begins again.

I cannot emphasise enough how memorable the Benmore experience is for our P7 learners and for the staff who accompany them and are extremely grateful to the City of Edinburgh Council and to the Outdoor Learning team for making it possible.

11.2 Pre-Visit

Appendix 11.2.1 Getting Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and Child Planning Meetings (CPMs).



The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning Team

GIRFEC and Child Planning Meetings (CPMs)

School, Centre and other Council staff work effectively to ensure pupils can attend residential visits. This often involves Centre staff attending MS Teams meetings, including CPMs and hosting pre-residential visits by families. This demonstrates the benefits of the Council operating its own centres.

Katharine Mackintosh

Depute Head Teacher, Liberton Primary School

I am responsible at Liberton Primary for planning and leading the P7 residential to Benmore. Increasingly over the years we have seen the hugely positive impact this experience has for our children with additional support needs.

Although there is often a lot of apprehension on the part of learners and their parents/carers beforehand, we have found many pupils in the CPM system have benefitted hugely and the experience is regularly referred to in CPMs as having been a great success. The impact we see is around engagement and participation as well as children developing socially and emotionally. It often leads to adults raising their expectations around what is possible for the child to achieve having seen what is possible in a different context.

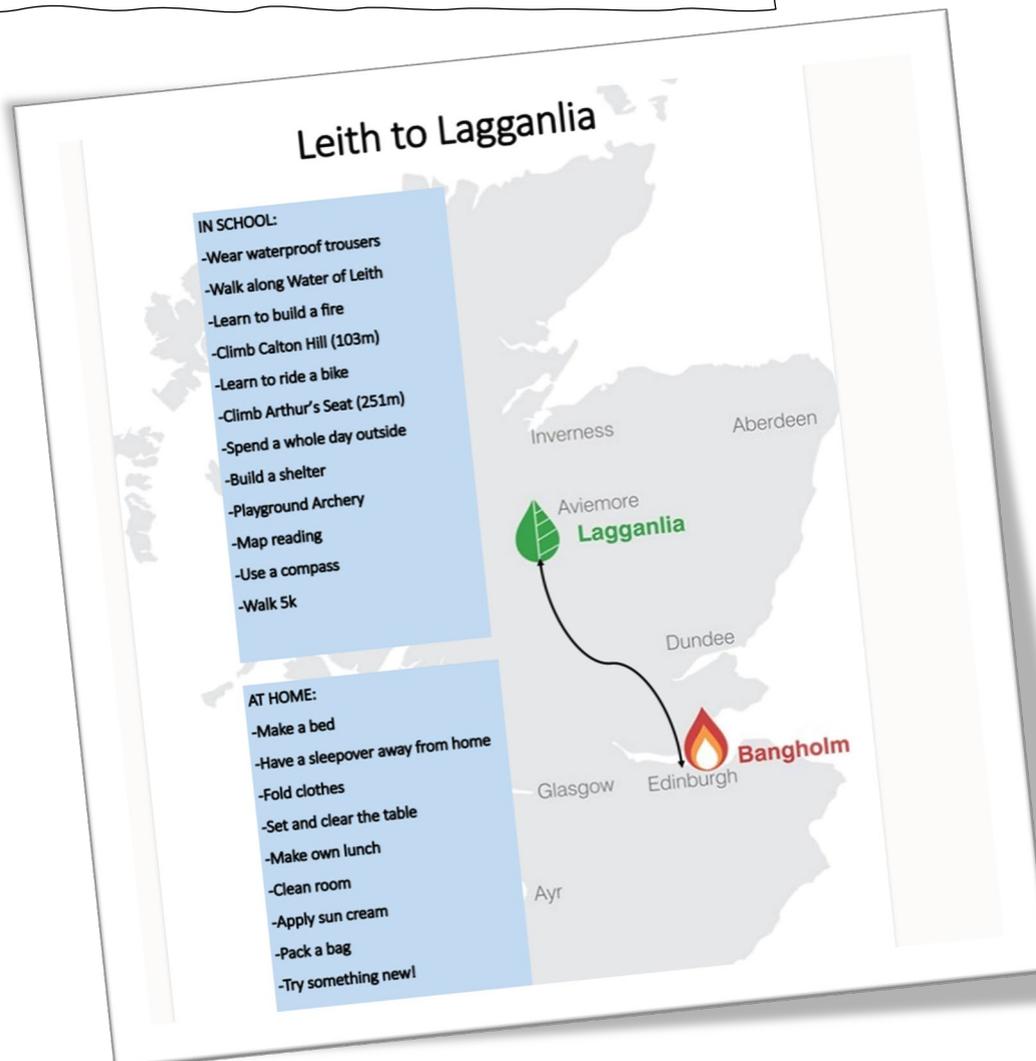
In order to make the experience a success we ensure we have individual plans and meet regularly with parents in the run up to the week away. Sometimes these plans include supports and strategies we find are not needed, partly due to the environment and experience supporting inclusion. The Benmore experience often raises the confidence of children with additional support needs. It contributes positively to preparing them for the changes ahead with transition to high school, through developing strategies to manage new environments and challenge their own and others' perceptions of what they are able to achieve.

The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning Getting ready for a residential!

Staff at Leith Walk Primary School have devised an innovative programme to support pupils in their preparations to attend Lagganlia. This includes **school** and **home activities**.

This makes a significant difference.

Leith Walk Primary School



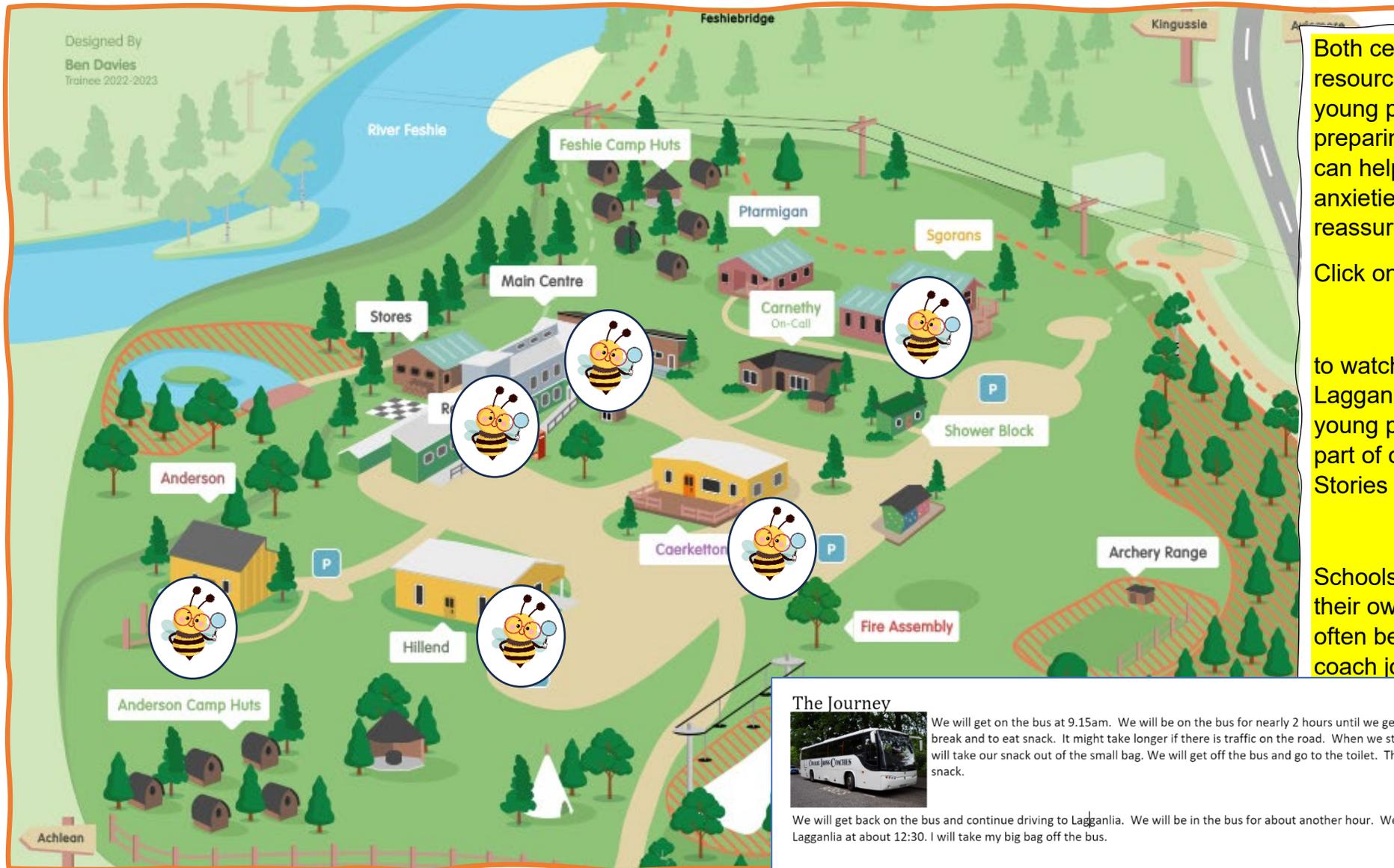
Appendix 11.2.3 Social stories and movie clips

[next page]



The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning

Getting to know Lagganlia!



Designed By
Ben Davies
Trainee 2022-2023

Both centres provide resources to support young people in preparing to visit. This can help with any anxieties and to reassure.

Click on the  to watch some Lagganlia videos for young people. This is part of our Social Stories toolkit.

Schools also produce their own social stories, often beginning with the coach journey.

The Journey



We will get on the bus at 9.15am. We will be on the bus for nearly 2 hours until we get to Pitlochry for a break and to eat snack. It might take longer if there is traffic on the road. When we stop in Pitlochry, we will take our snack out of the small bag. We will get off the bus and go to the toilet. Then we will have our snack.

We will get back on the bus and continue driving to Lagganlia. We will be in the bus for about another hour. We will arrive at Lagganlia at about 12:30. I will take my big bag off the bus.

11.3 Visit

Appendix 11.3.1 Benmore and Lagganlia adventures via pictures

[next page]

[Link to Benmore photo page.](#)

[Link to Lagganlia photo page.](#)



The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning Adventure Education Expedition & Focus

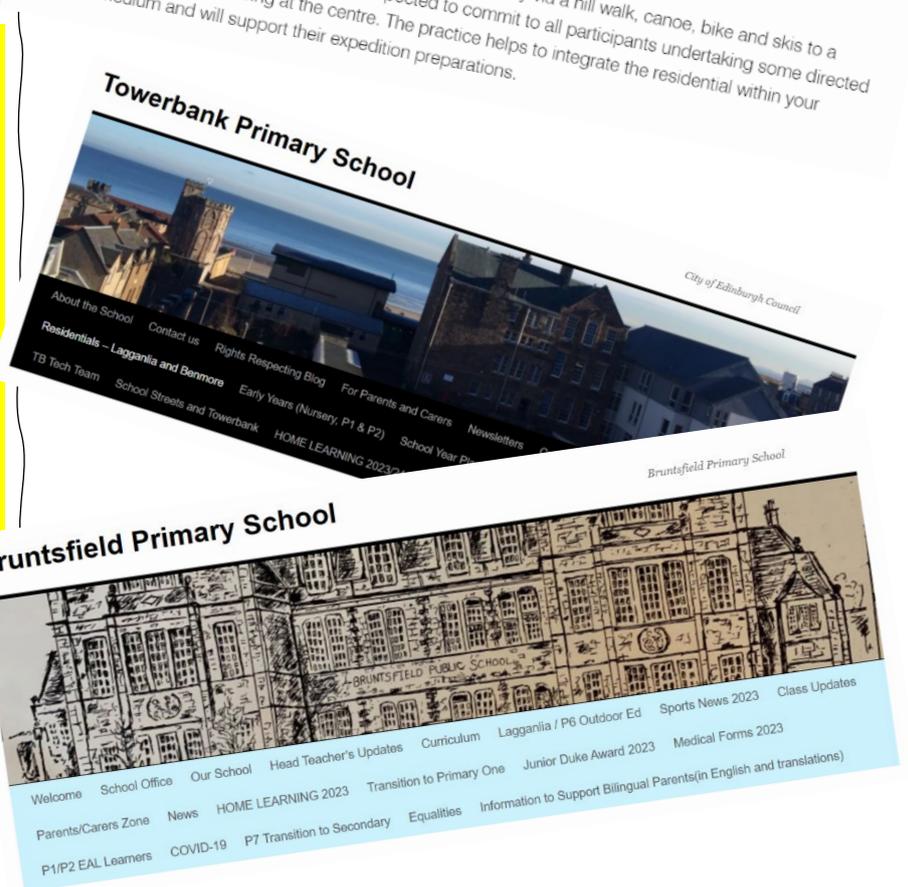


The Council's Outdoor Learning Team provides a range of residential packages:

- [Adventure Education Core](#)
 - [Adventure Education Expedition](#)
 - [Adventure Education Field](#)
 - [Adventure Education Focus](#)
- (e.g. skiing or sailing)
- [Adventure Education Activity](#)
 - [Adventure Education Design](#)
- (bespoke design)

Towerbank PS has a well-established skiing residential at Lagganlia (Focus) and Bruntisfield PS an innovative expedition residential also via Lagganlia.

Click on the pictures to visit the school websites to find out more.



11.4 Post-Visit

Appendix 11.4.1 Residentials MATTER - feedback from Craigroyston Primary School pupils and a parent



The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning

Residentials MATTER - don't just take our word for it!

Best memory of primary school, learned to be without my phone, learned lots and related this to stuff I'd learned at school like maths. I had to dig deep and conquer my fear of heights. Used my determination to overcome a fear of heights. All round brilliant! Best experience and I would go back in a heartbeat!

Feedback from former P7 pupils at Craigroyston Primary School (now in S1).

The people who were there were loving and caring- they made us feel safe and secure.

I would recommend this experience to everyone - it was amazing. There were some wee accidents, so people had to learn to manage risk.

Comfy beds and nice room: great sleep. Not all about outdoor learning, we did other stuff too. Gorge walking was challenging but great- had to push myself.



The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning

Residential MATTTER - don't just take our word for it!

In-depth feedback from a parent at Craigroyston Primary School.

For my daughter - helped her to ride a bike - never interested and she went mountain biking and loved it. Huge increase in confidence and interest in cycling. She still cycles now- all thanks to camp!

Confidence - significant impact, pushed herself and was pushed and supported just the right amount.

She tried new foods so helped her to experiment with foods and social eating.

Offered opportunity to develop her independence, organising herself, her equipment and setting her level of challenge etc.

As a parent, I believe it's essential that our children get the opportunity to experience new places... some of our kids never get beyond the very local spaces - how wonderful to exercise the great outdoors in such high quality environments. Wild - but safe!

Honestly - my child loved it, still talks about! Crucial that they get this opportunity- that the Council offers it and ensures cost is not a barrier is amazing.

Getting a break from technology- away from Social media for a week is hugely beneficial for the children.

Oxgangs Primary School

Pupil feedback

Going to Lagganlia made me feel more confident about myself and my abilities. The staff at Lagganlia really encouraged us to do things that were difficult and challenging.

The staff got to know us and they taught us about ourselves and how to accomplish things.

The staff made us feel more confident about trying scary stuff.

The staff pushed me to get better at things.

I learned more about my strengths and how to get better at new things.

The staff were amazing. They were really funny and helped us to try new things.

I think I made better relationships with all the P7s and with the staff at school.

It was overall amazing and I will tell everyone they should go.

I have made so many memories.

I tried lots of new food.

The whole trip was amazing, everything was great. I loved the gorge walking and abseiling.

Parents' feedback

Our daughter attended Lagganlia as part of the P7 camp last month. She and her friends have looked forward to their P7 camp in Lagganlia since they had heard about it from older children at the school – and the reality more than lived up to the expectation. She referred to it as “the best week of her life”!

We were particularly impressed by the sheer number of new experiences she enjoyed which took her beyond what we would normally have considered her comfort zone, but in a way that she thoroughly enjoyed rather than felt anxious about.

A specific example would be mountain biking: we've tried this with her ourselves without much success, but the guidance and encouragement offered by the staff at Lagganlia, combined with the enthusiasm of participating alongside her friends, really made the difference. She is now keen to try more – which is great news for us!

In summary, our daughter really enjoyed her time at Lagganlia, and we can see the real boost it has given to her confidence in trying new activities.

Our child hasn't stopped talking about camp since the moment she got back! She's essentially been homesick for Lagganlia which is pretty incredible having been there for only a few days. She's been on several Brownie camps before but this was somehow different - she came home a bit more grown-up, a bit more independent, and a bit more confident. Clearly the benefits of this will last far beyond P7.

4 days at Lagganlia had a tremendous impact on my daughter. She absolutely loved it. She loved that they got to try so many activities with their schoolmates and make memories that will last the lifetime. My daughter became so emotional that she cried at school assembly when watching the video from camp and she cried at home again today while watching the video because the camp was so great and she misses the place and experiences so much. Kids are talking that it would be great to go to camp in P6 AND P7 (as some other schools apparently are doing), or to go to Lagganlia again. They have such wonderful memories from the camp, they are still filled with positivity, kindness and love of adventure.



The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning
Purposeful writing - Trinity Primary School

11.9.23 WALT: describe events and express our feelings.

Steps to Success:

- Write in the 1st person and past tense about your experience.
- Write in a logical order.
- Use figurative language.
- Explain your thoughts and feelings.

During my time at Benmore Outdoor centre, I had the best time. I was a member of Group 5 and a member of Muck, which was my dorm name.

My favourite activity was the Kayaking because I went outside my comfort zone. At first I felt like a baby bird learning to fly, I was so scared shaking like jelly. I took some time to get used to the kayak and after a good 10 minutes or so I was kayaking like it was never my first time.

My best evening activity in my opinion, was the disco. It was so fun screaming our hearts out, staying up late

and listening to our favourite tunes. My all time favourite song from the disco was let it go from ariana grande.

One thing I'll never forget were the breathtaking sites, the beautiful rivers, the magical forests that made me feel as if I was in a fairytale story and the mountain that looks exactly like mount Lee. (Mount Lee based in America, hollywood sign)

One thing that challenged me the most was the forest walk, facing my fears of heights through the puffs glenn, and looking down at the water was a big fright for me.

But as perseverance is one of our school values I persevered and carried on with the forest walk.

Throughout my journey at Benmore I had a wonderful time kayaking, doing the forest walk, dancing under the disco

ball, watching the best movies ever, mountain biking and eating the mouth watering food.

Effective, independent writing. Next time, use the questions as a guide for each paragraph.

WALT describe and share our experiences, expressing how they made us feel

Steps to success:	😊	😐	😞
Use descriptive words	Use 3 or less adjectives to describe the experiences.	Use a variety of adjectives (more than 4) to describe the experiences.	Use a variety of adjectives to describe the experiences (use/hear/smile).
Write in 1 st person and past tense	No use of the correct person and tense throughout your writing.	Some use of the correct person and tense throughout your writing.	Consistent use of the correct person and tense throughout your writing.
Explain your thoughts and feelings	Make some reference to what you were thinking and feeling during the experiences (e.g. happy/sad).	Make some reference to what you were thinking and feeling during the experiences using emotive language (e.g. worried/relaxed).	Explain in detail the variety of thoughts and emotions you were feeling during the experiences, and how they affected your behaviour.

Non-negotiables: Capital letters Full stops Check Spelling

11.9.23 WALT: describe events and express our feelings.

Steps to Success:

- Write in the 1st person and past tense about your experience.
- Write in a logical order.
- Use figurative language.
- Explain your thoughts and feelings.

Hello, my name is Megan and I'm going to tell what I did at Benmore.

During my time at Benmore I was part of group 5.

The rest of my group was 2 other girls from my dorm, Eigg, 2 girls from Muck and 5 boys. Our instructor was called Nicki and she helped us with all the activities.

My favourite daytime activity ^{had to be the} was abseiling because you got to climb up rocks and then walk back down backwards.

I felt as free as a bird.

My favourite night activity was definitely the disco on Thursday night. It was so entertaining and enjoyable.

Everyone was dancing and singing along to all the

Songs. I could tell that everyone loved it.

One thing I learned was how to kayak. I was afraid at first, afraid to fall in. But I felt a lot better when I got in the kayak.

Something I will never forget was when Mrs Scott made me and Eijot sit down in the freezing cold water. We got absolutely drenched!

A Trinity Value I displayed was perseverance. I showed this when we were gorgewalking and we had to climb up a massive waterfall, I was really afraid but I did it.

A Learning Power I used during the week was ^{you could say} Have a go Hamster. I at least gave everything a go, ^{of} I did try all the activities our group did, even though I was scared for some of them.

Overall, I think it was an ^{extraordinary} extraordinary experience and the next people who go will really enjoy it. My best moment was all of my friends and me rolling down the big grassy hill.

WALT describe and share our experiences, expressing how they made us feel

Steps to success:	😊	😄	😁
Use descriptive words	Use 3 or less adjectives to describe the experiences.	Use a variety of adjectives (more than 4) to describe the experiences.	Use a variety of adjectives to describe the experiences (see/hear/smell).
Write in 1 st person and past tense	No use of the correct person and tense throughout your writing.	Some use of the correct person and tense throughout your writing.	Consistent use of the correct person and tense throughout your writing.
Explain your thoughts and feelings	Make some reference to what you were thinking and feeling during the experiences (e.g. happy/sad).	Make some reference to what you were thinking and feeling during the experiences, using more advanced emotional language (e.g. worried/amused).	Explain in detail the variety of thoughts and emotions you were feeling during the experiences, and how they affected your behavior.

Non-negotiables: Capital letters Full stops Check Spelling

The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning

Post-visit persuasive writing!

Should I go to camp?

Dear Future p7s,

Around this time next year, you'll be going to Benmore outdoor centre/camp, and I am going to tell you all about it. Hopefully it will convince you to go. Benmore was an amazing experience and I have created so many memories there. The bus ride is only one of the many exciting parts because you know you're on the way but it gets a bit boring halfway through. When you arrive, you'll find out your rooms and make your beds, the beds are a bit squeaky, but you get used to it. Don't worry about sharing showers and people walking in whilst you're using the bathrooms as you have 2 separated showers, and you can lock the door to the toilet. They have a bottom floor, a middle floor and a top floor. I can't tell you much about the top and bottom floor as I was on the middle floor except for the fact they all have fire exits with lights that stay on at night but they're pretty dim.

If you're a picky eater, vegetarian, have allergies or a specific diet not to worry because Benmore provide food for everyone, here is what we had whilst at Benmore. Breakfast: cereal options and bacon rolls, cereal options hash browns beans and toast, cereal options and sausage rolls, cereal options pancakes and toast. Lunch: ham rolls, egg mayo rolls, tuna mayo rolls, cheese rolls and soup with bread every lunch. Dinner: fish and chips with sauce options and a salad option, cheesy pasta bake and salad options, chicken and rice with salad options and on the last day pizza with wedges and sauce. Desserts: chocolate cake, birthday cake, sticky toffee pudding and on the last day waffles with ice cream (optional) and chocolate or strawberry sauce. I'm not gonna go through all of our meals but that's pretty much all of them, if you don't like any of the food they are extremely understanding and always have another option for you.

The activity's keep you busy all day and are very fun, even if you're scared it's so worth it. A few of my favourite activities were gorge walking, abseiling and caving. You do 2-3 activities every day. A morning activity, an afternoon activity and a night activity usually the night activity is a walk or a game. By nighttime you're absolutely shattered and need a good rest. You go to bed at 10 and wake up at 8. Breakfast is at half 8 so you have half a hour to get ready for the day. After tea and cake at 5 you have an hour of free time as dinner is at quarter past 6. After dinner you are given a paper folder thing to write about your day so you can remember what you did at camp, it's basically a diary.

I know some people don't want to go because they don't want to leave their phone but camp is the most fun I've ever had without devices ever. Although you miss your parents it's so much fun and you don't have time to think about how much you miss them. When your doing activities your having too much fun to give them a second thought and when you go to bed your too tired to think about them and maybe you'll think about them at free time but most of the time your too busy or tired to. I also

recommend brining a book as it gives you something to do during free time. I hope this convinced you to go to Benmore.

Should you go to camp?

To Future Primary 7s,

Are you questioning whether you should go to camp? Well I'm here to persuade you to go. At first camp seemed terrifying to me I was adamant about not going but then I realised that it was a once in a life time opportunity and I decided to go and it was one of the best decisions I've ever made camp was amazing and you should definitely go but here are some reasons to persuade you even More to go.

At benmore the instructors are very nice people and if you are ever in doubt about wanting to do an activity they will try to their very best abilities to get you to do it but you will never be forced to do anything you don't want to. The bedrooms at benmore are not luxury but they are nice but the beds are very creaky and the walls are thin so be quite at night and in the bathroom the showers are quite small.

When you get woken up in the morning you go down for breakfast at 8:30 and the food for breakfast is very good you get cereal then toast and a roll that can either have bacon or sausage in it. If you are worried about being bored at benmore you most likely won't be because when you are doing activities they are all fun, everything is really fun you get free time after dinner until the evening activity in free time there are rooms you can go to like the common room which is pretty much just a hall, the lecture hall which has a pool table, football table thing and connect four and then there is the library which is always quite so I'd recommend going there if your wanting to just chill or read.

When it comes to lunch every day you get soup and rolls but it is a new type of soup every day but with the rolls you get a selection of cheese rolls, ham rolls, egg mayo rolls and tuna rolls I highly recommend the cheese rolls but that is my personal opinion. When you have dinner you get different food everyday when we first arrived on the Monday we had fish n chips also highly recommend putting cheese on the chips then on the Tuesday we had pasta bake which was alright on the Wednesday we had chicken and rice also recommend putting cheese on the chicken the chicken was nice and so was the rice that was probably my favourite meal there.

After dinner you get dessert which was ok I only ate one of them so I can't really give my opinion on this one and I can't remember what we even had so your gonna have to figure that one out on your own sorry. Benmore is a great place and I highly recommend you go because you learn new skills and get opportunities that you might never get again also when you go to benmore you cannot bring any electronics so sadly you can't bring your phone but when you are there you don't really even think about your phone because you are always busy either doing activities or stuff during free time. when you go to benmore you learn to be more independent and survive without your tv and phone or your parents which is hard and once you get back home you get a good sense of achievement. I hope this has persuaded you to think about going to camp.

Colinton Primary School

Pupils from Colinton undertake persuasive writing. Their visit provides a purpose / context for writing. The content for the letters was gained form the residential, which then allows the pupils to focus on their writing skills.

The letters are then shared with the next cohort of pupils. This provides a valuable introduction to Benmore.



The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning

Evaluating the RESIDENTIAL

Buckstone Primary School undertakes effective evaluation with learners, parents / carers and staff each year. They then work with Outdoor Learning Team to develop the following year's visit to Lagganlia. This supports the pre, delivery and post residential work.

Buckstone Primary School - Lagganlia

Learners

If you could change one thing, what would it be?

Is there anything you'd like to have known more about Lagganlia?

Was there anything missing from the kit list that you wish you'd brought?

Parent and Carers

What do you think your child gained most from the residential?

Did you find the camp meeting and online question form ahead of camp helpful? Is there anything you feel we should add?

Did you find the information sent to you via email about Lagganlia helpful? Is there anything you feel we should add?

Is there anything you'd like to have had more information about ahead of the residential?

Anything else you'd like to tell us?

Parent and Carers

What do you think your child gained most from the residential?

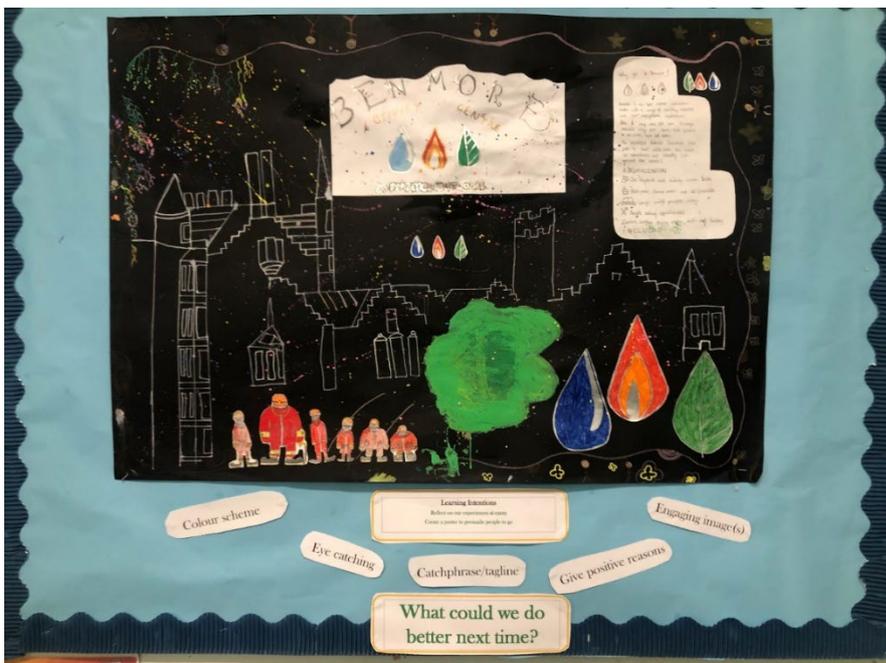
- Confidence in his abilities.
- Trying and enjoying new activities.
- Trying a range of outdoor activities.
- Being able to try new activities and challenging themselves.
- Confidence, time with friends and a chance to try new outdoor activities.
- Experiencing lots of different activities, independence and team work!
- Fun with friends.
- Confidence in themselves.
- An amazing experience that they will never forget.
- It was a wonderful experience and the best thing has been just pushing them out of their comfort zones in many different ways.
- New experiences.
- Self-organisation, trying new things.
- Self-confidence of being away from home for 5 days.
- Confidence.

The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning

Post-visit persuasion writing and evaluation

Sciennes Primary School undertake persuasive writing and create displays to support the following year group. This helps to reassure their peers and provides a valuable introduction to Benmore. Lots of schools encourage their current year groups to support the next group. This can also include parents and carers.

Sciennes Primary School - Benmore



Pupils are also asked about what support they need for their next visit (Lagganlia).

Any targets for Lagganlia?

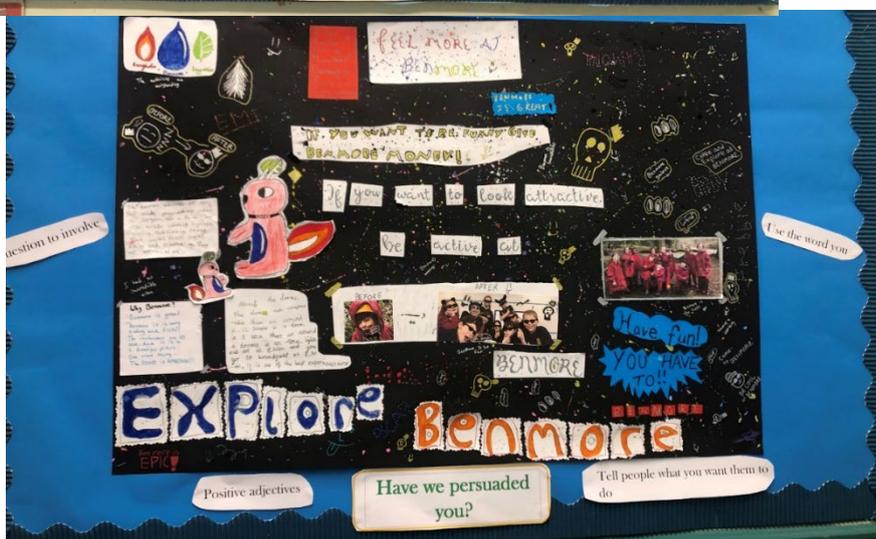
To be more confident.

To be better at making my bed.

Survive a whole-day adventure.

To be more organised.

To not forget to pack and shove everything in my suitcase on the Friday morning.



11.5 The journey ahead

Appendix 11.5.1 The journey ahead



The City of Edinburgh Council Outdoor Learning

The JOURNEY continues!

Development priorities include:

- Develop a new 3 to 5-year business plan. Support meeting day to day costs.
- Continue to monitor and maximise attendance.
- Create new pre and post visit resources. Embed within the Edinburgh school curriculum.
- Embed high quality residential visits in the recently launched OL Self-Evaluation & Improvement Toolkit.
- Implement the new MS Teams pre-visit toolkit to support safe and effective planning and delivery.
- Expansion of the Epics Adventure programme via Bangholm Outdoor Centre; to support pupils' readiness for Benmore and Lagganlia.
- Support schools in contributing to the Edinburgh 2030 Climate Strategy. Understand, measure and reduce carbon footprints; building on existing resources including new EV chargers and solar panels. Develop train travel and measuring carbon footprints. **Make integral to the curriculum.**

