



Spread your wings, learn new things, fly as high as you can.

Learning Outside the Classroom Policy

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Learning Outside the Classroom Policy (LOtC)

Educational visits and learning outside the classroom are an integral part of life at Dovecotes Primary School. We believe that all children have the right to experience the unique and special nature of being outdoors and that it must be part of our broad and balanced curriculum so that children have first-hand experiences and the opportunity to take part in activities outside the classroom.



(Source: Learning Outside the Classroom)

What is Learning Outside the Classroom?

‘Learning Outside the Classroom is about raising achievement through an organised, powerful approach to learning in which direct experience is of prime importance. This is not only about what we learn but importantly how and where we learn.’ (DfES Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto 2006).

Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) is the use of places other than the classroom for teaching and learning. It is about getting children and young people out and about, providing them with challenging, exciting, and different experiences to help them learn. The places where learning happens can have a significant effect on how a child engages with a subject or an idea. LOtC can happen at almost any time and almost anywhere – outdoors or indoors: in the school grounds, on the high street, in the park, in museums and art galleries, on mountain tops and rivers or anywhere in the world. Outdoor Learning does not have a clearly defined boundary, but it does have a common core in that Learning Outside the Classroom can provide a dramatic contrast to the indoor classroom. There is strong evidence that good quality learning outside the classroom adds much value to classroom learning. It leads to a deeper understanding of concepts that span traditional subject boundaries and which are frequently difficult to teach effectively using classroom methods alone. Direct experience outdoors is powerful, motivating and has impact and credibility. The results from outdoor learning can be instantaneous as well as active and therefore impact on behaviour as well as tapping into the learning styles of the more kinaesthetic learner. Through skilled teaching, outdoor experiences readily become a stimulating source of fascination, personal growth and can lead to breakthroughs in learning. Active learning readily develops the learning skills of enquiry, experiment, feedback, reflection, review, communication, problem solving, an enterprising attitude and co-operative learning. Learning Outside the Classroom can help to bring learning alive. For that

reason the outdoors can have a significant impact on areas of the curriculum as well as attainment and enjoyment. LOtC also provides experiential opportunities allowing pupils to respond positively to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, to manage risk and to cope with change.

Aims of this policy

- To raise the profile of Learning Outside the Classroom and to provide high quality LOtC provision.
- To empower children to take ownership of their learning, allowing them to thrive.
- To encourage children to develop the skills to solve problems, to develop resilience and to become reflective learners.
- To develop skills of communication, co-operation and collaborative learning.
- To provide a challenging, safe and secure environment within which children can take and manage risks.
- To encourage close links with parents, the local and wider communities and the school in celebrating our outdoor space and the rich learning that can take place within it.
- To encourage children to care for their environment.
- To develop LOtC as an entitlement for children.
- To ensure the curriculum is designed so that it includes LOtC experiences for children.

Benefits of Learning Outside the Classroom

- LOtC helps to ensure that children are successful learners enabling them to develop knowledge and skills in ways that add value to their everyday learning experiences.
- LOtC enables children to be confident individuals and impacts positively upon their attitudes, beliefs and self-perceptions.
- LOtC contributes towards creating independent learners with high self-esteem, self-awareness and self-sufficiency.
- LOtC can have a positive impact upon children's behaviour.
- LOtC contributes towards the promotion and children's understanding of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle.
- LOtC has a positive impact upon children's personal and social development. It can also bring about community cohesion and allow children to develop as responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to their wider community. It can create pride in the school and wider community and promote community involvement, renewing children's pride and creating a sense of belonging and responsibility.
- LOtC raises attainment, promotes and strengthens communication skills, problem solving skills, leadership skills, team work and sense of cohesion.
- LOtC broadens horizons and raises aspiration by enabling children to believe that they can achieve.

Embedded LOtC within the Curriculum

Dovecotes Primary School offers a curriculum which is balanced and based on promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. A challenging and stimulating curriculum

encourages our children to learn and think independently and ours is designed to enable each child to reach their full potential. Learning is fun and meaningful and learning outdoors, within our school grounds and the local area, broadens and deepens our children's experiences further.

Beyond the classroom, our children take part in a wide range of enrichment activities including Science and Nature, Computing, Sports, Arts including Music, Technology and Maths.

Teachers ensure LOfC opportunities are exploited by:

- Including LOfC within curriculum planning
- Planning cross curricular links especially with regards to English, Maths and Science
- Providing links with the local and wider community
- Utilising the school grounds for curriculum activities
- Communicating with parents and the wider community on the benefits of Learning Outside the Classroom
- Ensuring LOfC is valued and emphasis is provided on the benefits and the impact it has
- Being committed to continuously improve and review LOfC provision within the curriculum.

Where might outdoor learning take place?



The school grounds

We are lucky to have vast school grounds which include a small wooded area. We have:

- 1) KS1 playground with a trimtrail, house along with a trail and games markings on the floor. Resources such as balls, skittles etc are available to use as well.
- 2) KS2 playground with markings. Resources such as balls, skipping ropes etc are available to use as well.
- 3) A large field with a track and pitch markings on it.
- 4) A wooded copse.
- 5) A small meadow area
- 6) A small KS1 courtyard

- 7) A larger courtyard that joins the KS1 and KS2 together.
- 8) A KS2 courtyard
- 9) An EYFS garden with purpose built areas including a bamboo tunnel. A gazebo and a large under cover area that adjoins a sunken sand pit.

These areas offer excellent opportunities for both formal and informal learning. We aim to use our grounds as frequently as possible through:

- Including it as a planned resource within the curriculum for example, habitats
- Using it as a resource to support other curriculum areas, for example, sketching in art, stimulus for writing activities
- Opening it up for events and welcoming use by members of the community

Wild Tribe

We also have Wild Tribe provision which encourages children to explore their own innate learning through an approach to learning that maximises the emotional, social and developmental benefits of education. Wild Tribe is run by trained Wild Tribe practitioners alongside other school staff and sets the learning in a different context for children where they can undertake a range of practical activities and carry out small achievable tasks. Children can develop their team working skills, learn to become more independent and be encouraged to take risks. Wild Tribe encourages children to learn to solve problems and be creative and imaginative and show enterprising behaviour. Wild Tribe provision includes the use and exposure of activities such as; hand drills, knives, secateurs, fire building/lighting and Kelly Kettles under supervision.

The local environment and community

The locality around our school offers a wealth of opportunities within an accessible distance. All classes are encouraged to make visits into the local community including:

- Visiting religious and community building, such as St Pauls Church.
- Taking part in festivals and events, such as Chinese New Year, Eid, Diwali, Children in Need, Comic Relief, Sport Relief.
- Making links with local clubs, such as the British Military Martial Arts Club.
- Using museums, businesses, such as The Black Country Museum, the Wolverhampton Art Gallery
- Using local facilities such as parks, the canal, swimming pools and Pendeford Library.

Further afield

Learners can develop their skills to explore further afield including museums, art galleries, theatre, cinema, sports arenas, places of business, places of worship, through using the excellent transport links with accessibility to our surrounding areas.

Historically we have been to different places such as the Black Country Museum, Attingham Park, The National Space Centre and The Sealife Centre.

Residential places

Staying away from home is a powerful way of developing key life skills, building confidence, self-esteem, communication and team working. Our residential visits provide children with an opportunity to widen their range of experiences and find new skills and interests in which they may excel.

Historically, but not limited to Kingswood (KS1), Dunfield House (LSKS2) and Llandudno (UKS2).

Inclusion

We ensure Learning Outside the Classroom provides opportunities for all children, regardless of ability, special education need, ethnicity, gender or socio-economic background. Activities are mostly paid for through voluntary parent contribution but is also subsidised by the school using money from the School Fund. Activities are well planned for by teachers to ensure that all children are able to access opportunities to work both independently and in groups. Learning Outside the Classroom acts as a bridge to higher order learning and opportunities to challenge misconceptions and ways of thinking.

Leadership and Management

Learning Outside the Classroom will be an integral part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP), which is written by school leaders. Curriculum leaders will be responsible for monitoring LOfC activities within their subject areas and ensuring it is a fundamental part of the school's timetable. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will be responsible for monitoring at whole-school level. Evaluation of the impact of LOfC will be provided within the school's Self Evaluation Framework (SEF). We provide support and professional development to enable staff to feel confident developing their expertise and knowledge base in order to adapt their practice to include opportunities for learning beyond the confines of the classroom.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Through the monitoring of teaching and learning e.g. forward planning meetings, observations and drop-ins, teacher's self-evaluations, summative assessment records and other school procedures we will closely monitor the use of Learning Outside the Classroom as a key element of the learning experience at the school. Assessment of the children's learning through LOfC may be by:

- Pupil interview
- Staff INSET and conversations with teachers and leaders.
- Planning and work scrutiny
- Parent newsletters

Health and Safety

We support children in taking risks within a safe and secure environment. Pupils are taught to manage risks. It is important to ensure that the outdoor environment offers challenges and teaches the children how to be safe and aware of others. LOfC opportunities will be grasped when available and teachers will assess risk. In the first instance the school's policies relating to Health and Safety and Risk Assessment should be referred to and applied prior to any LOfC activity that may require additional support beyond the reasonable activities one would normally apply within the classroom.

It is also important that the school applies robust safety measures to effectively manage and minimise risks. It is equally important, however, that all involved, including parents, acknowledge that a degree of residual risk remains. Our children are taught to manage risks in regard to LOfC. All pupils are regularly reminded about the importance of staying safe and maintaining the high expectations of behaviour we expect at this school. This policy should be considered alongside our behaviour policy.

The following expectations are understood by all pupils:

- There is a shared understanding of how pupils safeguard themselves and others when undertaking Learning Outside the Classroom
- LOfC is an important part of our learning journey.
- We must uphold our school expectations of being safe at all times when we participate in outdoor learning.
- We must always walk on the path at the front of school and be aware of oncoming traffic.
- We must stay with our group.
- We must always ensure that we close all doors behind us.
- We must be sensible and ensure that we achieve our learning.

If we follow the expectations above, we will enjoy learning and be safe.