

Outdoor Learning in Badenoch and Strathspey

Results of an outdoor learning audit undertaken in schools throughout Badenoch and Strathspey in 2017/18

- ✓ Overall, levels of engagement with outdoor learning are extremely high, with activity generally occurring across the curriculum
- ✓ Many schools have a strong outdoor culture



“ Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning states that **all children and young people** should be able to participate in a range of planned, progressive, creative **outdoor learning experiences** that are part of the curriculum. These should be **frequent, regular, enjoyable and challenging** opportunities that take place throughout a child’s school career and beyond. ”

Outdoor Learning: Practical Guidance, Ideas and Support (p. 45)

How often?



Responses to this question varied from daily to weekly, to less often.

- Frequency tends to reduce as learners get older
- Some schools have a structured timetable for outdoor learning; others go out 'as and when'
- Many primary schools go out 'as much as possible'

Nursery	often out daily
Primary	daily / weekly / monthly
Secondary	weekly / monthly

Schools offer a huge range of activities:

Daily Mile
 John Muir Award
 Duke of Edinburgh Award
 Snowsports
 Watersports
 School projects
 Biodiversity study of grounds
 Mindfulness
 Crofting connections
 Courses: Rural Skills; Activity Tourism; ZEST
 'Awesome Clean Team'
 Afterschool clubs: nature, gardening

What?



Where?



Schools make use of many diverse sites and habitats, from their own grounds, to the local area, and further afield.

School grounds vegetable garden, sensory garden, orchard, outdoor classroom, wild area, chickens, dens

Wider area woods, villages, rivers, farms, historical sites, Insh marshes, Wildlife Park, Folk Museum, Cairngorm Mountain, Feshiebridge sculpture park

Local area Findhorn, Cummington, Lochindorb, Lecht, Laggan dam

Residential Abernethy, Lagganlia, Badaguish, Raasay, Shieling project, Edinburgh, London, Malawi

Training

All schools have accessed some outdoor training.

In some schools, there are one or two designated staff who are highly competent and qualified in outdoor learning.

In other schools, skills are shared across staff.

Providers and courses used:

Wild Things!

Forest School

CPD sessions from Outdoor and Woodland Learning Group (OWL)

Teaching in Nature

Visit leader training

Art in Nature

John Muir Award

Outdoor instructor qualifications:

ML, cycle leader



“ The challenge for practitioners is to ensure that outdoor learning is embedded in the curriculum so that it becomes a reality for all children and young people. It is the responsibility of all staff. This means that every teacher and educator needs to plan and integrate outdoor learning as part of a range of learning and teaching approaches within interdisciplinary projects as well as within and across all curriculum areas. ”

Outdoor Learning: Practical Guidance, Ideas and Support (p.45)

Cross curriculum

Most schools report that outdoor learning occurs across the curriculum.

However, this can vary depending on staff knowledge, skills and confidence in the outdoors.

Progression model



- Most schools do not have a specific progression model for outdoor learning.
- Many state that progression occurs through the Experiences and Outcomes in the Curriculum for Excellence.
- One Head had seen an outdoor learning progression model by Highland Council, but she felt it had an urban focus, and was not relevant to schools within Cairngorms National Park

Challenges

Most schools report that outdoor learning is integral to their school culture, and that while there are challenges, most of these can be worked around.

Common issues

- Getting outdoor learning embedded across the whole curriculum
- Staff knowledge, experience and confidence
- Transport costs
- Booking transport
- Clothing and equipment for young people
- Staffing to cover groups outdoors
- Access for disabled pupils
- Partnerships—who to work with

Solutions

- Support all staff to access training
- Create thrift store / donations system for kit
- CNPA travel grant
- Make use of free online resources
- Contact potential partners, e.g. CNPA, Forestry Commission, RSPB, Folk Museum



Going forward

To support schools across the Cairngorms National Park, the CNPA will develop a progression model for outdoor learning.

- This document will help schools to take a strategic approach to outdoor learning, providing learners with progressive experiences, skills, and qualifications.
- The aim is to create a generation of young people who are pro-environmental and possess a deep understanding and sense of ownership of the Cairngorms National Park.
- The progression model will be developed in consultation with teachers in the Park.

Contact

For information, advice and support:

Anna Fleming
Education and Inclusion Officer
annafleming@cairngorms.co.uk
01479 870572

www.cairngorms.co.uk
Cairngorms National Park Authority
14 The Square
Grantown-on-Spey, PH26 3HG

This document was put together by:

CAIRNGORMS
NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
ÙGH DARRAS PÀIRC NÀISEANTA A'
MHONAI DH RUAIDH