**Research on Outdoor Learning**

1. The use of residential experiences and their impact on attainment -Learning Away - <http://learningaway.org.uk/>

2. Improving Social and Emotional skills in children to enhance their learning - Transforming outdoor learning in schools - <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/uploads/production/document/path/7/7634/Transforming_Outdoor_Learning_in_Schools_SCN.pdf>

3. The health benefits of being in green spaces to learn - Natural connections report <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6636651036540928>

4. Increase of ‘Character’ in pupils - <http://relationalschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/More-than-just-a-ski-trip-Relational-Schools-Foundation-Report.pdf>

5. Meta-analysis of the health benefits of being outdoors. Includes references to research in education establishments <https://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/naturalthinking_tcm9-161856.pdf>

6. Pupils social relations, motivation to learn, well being and academic performance in relation to outdoor learning - <http://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-016-3780-8>

7. Evidence of the relationships between natural environment and range of outcomes - Connections to Nature - <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6636651036540928>

8. Participation in conservation of natural spaces increases health and wellbeing - <http://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-015-2214-3>

9. Making Gains- evidence of attainment following residential experiences - <http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.stir.ac.uk/doi/full/10.1080/00131911.2016.1199538>

10. Effects of environment based education on students motivation to learn - <http://www.seer.org/pages/research/AthmanandMonroeJIR2004.pdf>

11. Three case studies on assessing outdoor learning - <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03004279.2015.1042987>

Education Scotland links that reference outdoor learning:

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/sacfi5-outdoor-learning-as-a-context-and-an-approach-for-learning-middleton-park.aspx>

[How can schools develop a literacy-rich curriculum in P1-3 to help to close the vocabulary gap?](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/sac58-how-can-schools-develop-a-literacy-rich-curriculum-in-p1-3-to-help-to-close-the-vocabulary-gap.aspx)

[Developing nurturing relationships in Early Years in Dundee](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/sacfi1a-developing-nurturing-relationships.aspx)

[Developing whole school nurturing approaches](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/sacfi2b-Whole-School-Nurturing-Approaches.aspx) (references nurturing playgrounds)

[Approaches to physical activity in the primary years](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/hwb13-approaches-to-physical-activity-in-the-primary-years)

[Development of 'A Curriculum for All' in Craigroyston Community High School, Edinburgh](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/sacfi8b-curriculum-for-all-craigroyston.aspx)

[Family learning at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI](https://education.gov.scot/improvement/elc26-family-learning-at-sabhal-mor-ostaig)

How good is our school 4 <http://www.ltl.org.uk/resources/results.php?id=868>

**Comments from South of the Border which may be of use….**

**The benefits of outdoor learning**

1. Good quality outdoor learning is a vital part of an imaginative and contemporary education. This has been recognised by successive governments both at Westminster and in devolved administrations. It is strongly supported by school inspectorates as not only having a role to play in improving subject understanding, but also in a student’s overall personal development. OFSTED stated

“When planned and implemented well, learning outside the classroom contributed significantly to raising standards and improving pupil’s personal, social and emotional development”[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Increased Motivation for Learning**

1. Outdoor learning can improve motivation and attitude to learning by providing new and stimulating environments in which to learn – often in ways that are not always possible in school. Learning from practical hands on activities in the real world means that students see the relevance of what they are studying. **School inspectorates keep returning to the theme of schools needing to provide opportunities for pupils to apply their skills across the curriculum an in a wide range of real life contexts.**
2. Outdoor learning can also engage pupils who struggle in the classroom environment, with some showing improvements in their behaviour. Many teachers from the London Challenge residential commented on the increased levels of motivation towards learning

“We have looked at the Year 9 results linked to motivation and believe that the London Challenge experience had a big impact.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

As part of the 2015 Inspiring Learning through Outdoor Science and Geography project, students experienced lessons outdoors in London’s parks. Afterwards, feedback from the students themselves found that the percentage stating that they wanted more outdoor lessons increased from an already high figure of 71% to 77%.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Providing a context for numeracy and literacy**

1. ESTYN’s 2014/2015 annual reported stated that

“…there should be no tension between learning experiences that engage and excite young people and ones that ensure high standards of literacy and numeracy, of reasoning and creative ability, and of examination success”[[4]](#footnote-4)

1. Outdoor learning and fieldwork can provide an ideal context for learning other skills – particularly literacy and numeracy where ideas taught in the classroom can be applied to real life situations. Devolved administrations are currently looking at how the attainment gap is to be narrowed with improved literacy and numeracy skills being seen as a key to this aim.
2. Ofsted’s recent review into Key Stage 3[[5]](#footnote-5) highlighted slow progress in English and Maths. ESTYN’s thematic review for 2015 underlines the need for there to be more opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to apply or extend their knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide range of problem solving and real life contexts.[[6]](#footnote-6) This issue is picked up again in their 2015/16 report.[[7]](#footnote-7)
3. In Scotland, the S3 phase of the curriculum is where Education Scotland believe “learning should be deepened and expectations raised, with learning becoming more challenging”[[8]](#footnote-8)
4. As part of London Challenge, FSC developed KS3 residential courses that offered a blend of environmental and outdoor activities integrated with Maths, English and science teaching. This was relatively new at the time. As a result, students appeared to see the activities as ‘walking’, ‘climbing’ and ‘shelter building’ rather than ‘numeracy’, ‘literacy’ and ‘science’ despite the majority of the activity being curriculum focussed.
5. Outcomes reported by teachers found that students’ learning had received a unique boost in ways that were not always possible in urban schools. They learned from the practical hands on activities and recalled new ideas when they were back at school. Students could see the relevance of what they did and confidence in their subject specific abilities improved.
6. A teacher on the City Challenge residential used digital images taking from the climbing session to explore corresponding, opposite and alternating angles made from the climbing apparatus. “Whilst you lot have been hanging from trees I’ve been thinking wow! Look at those angles and shapes.”
7. Teachers saw significant impacts on the vast majority of students and a number of students appeared to be transformed by the experience. The findings suggested that moving away from the traditional school environment had a beneficial impact on student attitudes to work.[[9]](#footnote-9)
8. More recently, Natural England’s Natural Connections Demonstrations Project[[10]](#footnote-10), looked at the impact of LINE (Learning in a Natural Environment). LINE was used across the curriculum, but most consistently in English, Maths and science. The main benefits reported by teachers was that outdoor learning provided experience, wonder and creativity which fired imaginations and improved their pupil’s writing. Maths was also supported because learning outdoors made the subject come to life and could help explain and make abstract concepts real.

1. [OFSTED: Learning outside the Classroom how far should you go?](http://www.lotc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Ofsted-Report-Oct-2008.pdf) 2008 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [New Views](https://www.field-studies-council.org/documents/projects/londonchallenge/FSC%20New%20Views%20report%20LOW%20RES.pdf): Lessons learned from the London Challenge Residential courses, FSC [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [London Schools Excellence Fund: Inspiring Learning through Outdoor Science and Geography Final Report](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field_studies_council_lsef_selfevaluation_report.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Estyn Annual Report 2014-2015](https://www.estyn.gov.wales/document/annual-report-2014-2015) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [Key Stage 3: the wasted years?](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-3-the-wasted-years) Ofsted September 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Estyn: [Summary of findings from our national thematic reviews for 2015](https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/2015%20Remit%20compendium.EN_.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Estyn: [Annual Report 2015 2016](https://www.estyn.gov.wales/document/annual-report-2015-2016) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [Education Scotland: Evaluating and improving our curriculum S1-S3](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/BGEtoolkitRevised_tcm4-832345.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. City Challenge: An EvaluationHava Contini and Justin Dillon [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. [Natural Connections Demonstrations Project, 2012-2016: Final Report.](http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6636651036540928) Natural England [↑](#footnote-ref-10)